Watertown Daily Times

Letter: Cape Vincent Should Heed Carleton Island's Owners

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The deteriorating villa on Carleton Island on Oct. 10. Watertown Daily Times

The near-unanimous opposition of Carleton Island's property owners to the proposed commercial campground is not a routine neighborhood dispute. Under the Cape Vincent Joint Comprehensive Plan, this unified opposition is a direct, live application of the town's own planning policies.

Our Comprehensive Plan does not define the Island District (Zone I) in the abstract; it defines it explicitly by the people who live there, **mandating that the town "discourage any type of development that would diminish or degrade the unique rural community lifestyle these islands provide to their owners."** When a supermajority of those very owners state that a high-density transient development disrupts their community fabric, their consensus serves as the primary benchmark for measuring the project's impact.

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Furthermore, the plan officially recognizes that **island properties "do not want or need elaborate infrastructure development,"** prioritizing large-lot seasonal residential use instead. By opposing a commercial venture that requires complex wastewater, docking, and emergency logistics, the neighbors are actively defending the self-reliant, low-impact infrastructure model the town promised to protect. Under the State Environmental Quality Review (SEQR) process, local boards are legally required to evaluate impacts on existing community character. **There is no clearer indicator of a clash with community character than the unified resistance of the entire surrounding neighborhood.**

The island owners are simply asking our leaders to enforce the plan as written. **The Planning Board and Town Board must recognize that this neighborhood consensus is the plan's vision in action, and reject a project that directly threatens the integrity of Zone I.**

Mary Jordan

Cape Vincent