

Meredith Crandall

From: Mark Greenberg <markgvt@yahoo.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 3, 2023 4:40 PM
To: Meredith Crandall
Subject: VCFA proposal

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

To: The Members of the Montpelier Development Review Board cc/Zoning Administrator, City Council, Town Manager

Regarding: VCFA Development Application/Master Plan/PUD

I live at 12 Guernsey Ave., Montpelier and am concerned about the Development Application and Master Plan/PUD submitted by VCFA on December 5th 2022, to be reviewed by the DRB on January 3, 2023. I request that you reject this application as the "conditional uses" cited in the application have the potential to negatively affect the neighborhood and nearby properties. It is essential that nearby residents retain the right to review and participate in public hearings regarding any changes to the use of the buildings and/or grounds of the current VCFA campus. If, as VCFA proposes, current "conditional uses" be changed to "permitted use" or "administrative approval" neighbors and community members will no longer receive clear and direct notification of changes in use and permit filings and will have our ability to review future changes to the uses of VCFA buildings significantly reduced.

This, in turn, may affect the quality and the character of our neighborhood. VCFA should not have this power.

I've lived just below the VCFA campus for 42 years and have seen its owners/operators change many times. But I have never before felt distrustful of the owner institution's plans. The VCFA application, however, is unclear and does not address concerns that have been expressed and brought to VCFA's attention by community members. Instead it seeks to bar citizen participation in determining the character and use of the College Hill neighborhood.

In light of these and other of my neighbors' concerns, I urge the Development Review Board to schedule as many additional hearings as needed to give Montpelier residents the opportunity and time to thoroughly understand and respond to the complex VCFA proposal.

Thank you – Mark Greenberg, 12 Guernsey Ave., Montpelier

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Meredith Crandall

From: Emily Donaldson <embillybee@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 3, 2023 5:00 PM
To: Pelin Kohn; Jack McCullough; Meredith Crandall
Cc: katie.gustafson@vcfa.edu; William Fraser; ccasey@leg.state.vt.us; acumming@leg.state.vt.us
Subject: VCFA Development Application/Master Plan/PUD

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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Dear Members of the Montpelier Development Review Board, City Zoning Administrator, City Council, and City Manager,

I write regarding the proposed development application from the Vermont College of Fine Arts for their campus, including their new Master Plan and campus PUD. I will be attending tonight's meeting by Zoom, unfortunately I am unable to attend in person due to child care needs. But I have concerns and would like some time to submit my comments for the record.

I am especially concerned about the college's proposal to change existing conditional uses to permitted uses. I have not had the chance to provide feedback or comment up until now (with help from neighbors!) and I am wondering how the identification of "conditional uses" in our zoning regulations can have any meaning if the public impacted by specialized development projects does not have an opportunity to weigh in?

My home at #22 First Avenue is just a few houses down from the College Green, and my two young daughters and I have spent many happy hours with our dog on the basketball court, in the open parking lot and on the green itself. It is such a valuable community space, cherished by everyone who live nearby (we moved here in 2016). We are also closely implicated in each of the college's in-residence sessions, with the increase of traffic and people up at the green (which is often fun and pleasant, it's nice to see a diversity of faces!). That said, on New Year's morning a few days ago I found a severely broken bottle the covered about 10 feet of sidewalk, coming down from the college just beyond the dining hall building. The pieces were tiny and I took the time to carefully collect each one so my dog's paws wouldn't get cut up (hopefully I got them all!). I can't say with any certainty who was responsible, but I did wonder whether it might have been a few students who let the party atmosphere get the better of them. In any case, that is one of the rare negative experiences I have had with the college and I have really enjoyed having an educational institution so close by.

The existing application leaves open the option to significantly increase parking, both in existing permitted areas and in angled spots along West and College Streets. I'm worried that we could end up with a major increase in traffic on First Avenue and, ultimately, a very different neighborhood that suffers both in terms of aesthetics and safety. I want to make sure my neighbors and I retain our rights to understand more fully and review these changes as they occur.

I am also concerned that the future possible uses and (hopefully) preservation of the College Green is not clearly addressed. I would really hate for the use of that space to change significantly, and especially hope that no additional structures will be built there. It is a rare open, flat place in this part of Montpelier that is so incredibly valuable to the community. It's where both of my daughters learned to ride their bikes!

I am also wondering, if the college takes on one of the suggested scenarios and acts as the administrator of a "condominium" with regard to grounds and building maintenance, whether such needs would be adequately prioritized or funded. Not all of the current buildings are in the best shape, and with the impending reduction of college staff and activity up there it seems unlikely that would improve.

I am very hopeful that the college properties will be appropriately used and developed to make our neighborhood even stronger. They have such enormous economic potential, wonderful historic character, and they are a wonderful piece of our local history and culture. I just hope that we neighbors will be able to retain the right to comment and have an influence on what that future might hold.

Please share this email with the Development Review Board members on my behalf.

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Emily Donaldson
22 First Avenue
781-413-5611

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Emily C. Donaldson (she/her/hers)
emilydonaldson.org
[Learn an endangered language!](#)

Meredith Crandall

From: leah greenberg <leahvictor@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 3, 2023 5:30 PM
To: acumings@leg.state.vt.us; ccasey@leg.state.vt.us; Jack McCullough; katie.gustafson@vcfa.edu; Meredith Crandall; Pelin Kohn; William Fraser
Subject: VCFA Development

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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To: The Members of the Montpelier Development Review Board cc/Zoning Administrator, City Council, Town Manager

Regarding: VCFA Development Application/Master Plan/PUD

From: Leah Greenberg, 19 Guernsey Ave

I feel the VCFA application is not in the interest of the greater neighborhood community and encourage you to Vote no on this application.

I am a resident of the neighborhood adjacent to VCFA — I was raised here (my parents moved to 12 Guernsey Ave when I was three) and I returned here to live with my own children over five years ago to 19 Guernsey Ave. I want to express my concerns regarding the VCFA development application/PUD/campus Master plan. Many of my neighbors and I feel that since the VCFA filed these papers during the busy holiday season in December and the zoning administrator and DRB issued a report on the application as late as December 29th, 2022, the vote on this matter by the Development review Board should be postponed and a new hearing scheduled several weeks from now so community members have a chance to further review the submission and comment.

All the “Conditional uses” that will be converted to “Permitted uses” or “Administrative Approval” under the VCFA development application have the potential to impose adverse impacts on the neighborhood, the community and nearby properties. It is absolutely necessary that we as neighbors retain, through the existing conditional use structure, as it exists now, the right to public review and public hearings to preserve public engagement regarding any changes to these uses on the VCFA campus.

This development application/PUD/ master plan is in effect a significant zoning change. The current system that exists with “Conditional uses” works just fine for development of the campus AND allows neighbors to have a voice. We support the possibility for the “Conditional uses” listed in the document to take place on the campus, but we do not support giving up our rights as neighbors to be informed and to weigh in on the specifics of how these “conditional uses” would be enacted or to ask for revisions to a proposed development. "

Concerns I have include:

- significant increases in parking/traffic
- future possible uses and/or preservation of the College Green
- the College as administrator of “condominium” with regard to maintenance of the grounds and buildings given its track record

We the public, especially the neighbors, must be able to retain the right to comment and have an influence on what that future might hold.

I ask that you share this email with members of the Development Review Board, and ask them to extend their review to additional hearing(s) to give the public more time to respond to a very complex proposal.

Thank you,
Leah Greenberg
January 3, 2023

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Leah Greenberg 415.518.9110

Meredith Crandall

From: susan calza <susancalza@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 3, 2023 6:23 PM
To: Meredith Crandall
Subject: Vermont College

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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We, Susan Calza and Mark Horowitz have lived at 10 First Ave in Montpelier for 19 years. We are writing to express our concerns regarding the VCFA development application/PUD/campus Master plan. We feel that since the VCFA files these papers during the busy holiday season in December and the zoning administrator and DRB issued a report on the application as late as December 29th, 2022, the vote on this matter by the Development review Board should be postponed and a new hearing scheduled several weeks from now so community members have a chance to further review the submission and comment.

All the "Conditional uses" that will be converted to "Permitted uses" or "Administrative Approval" under the VCFA development application have the potential to impose adverse impacts on the neighborhood, the community and nearby properties. It is absolutely necessary that we as neighbors retain, through the existing conditional use structure, as it exists now, the right to public review and public hearings to preserve public engagement regarding any changes to these uses on the VCFA campus.

This development application/PUD/ master plan is in effect a significant zoning change. The current system that exists with "Conditional uses" works just fine for development of the campus AND allows neighbors to have a voice. We support the possibility for the "Conditional uses" listed in the document to take place on the campus, but we do not support giving up our rights as neighbors to be informed and to weigh in on the specifics of how these "conditional uses" would be enacted or to ask for revisions to a proposed development.

We want to make sure that all neighbors concerns are heard and respected.

Sincerely,
Susan Calza
Mark Horowitz
802-224-6827

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website: <http://www.susancalza.com/>
The Susan Calza Gallery
138 Main St., Montpelier, VT

FaceBook: <https://www.facebook.com/susan.calza>
Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/susancalza/>

Meredith Crandall

From: Amanda Sardonis <ajswans@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 3, 2023 5:18 PM
To: Pelin Kohn; Jack McCullough; Meredith Crandall
Cc: William Fraser; katie.gustafson@vcfa.edu
Subject: VCFA Development Application/Master Plan/PUD

Follow Up Flag: Follow up
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To: The Members of the Montpelier Development Review Board

Regarding: VCFA Development Application/Master Plan/PUD

As a residential abutter to VCFA, I want to submit my comments on their new Master Plan/PUD ahead of the DRB public hearing on January 3, 2023.

I want to register my concern *regarding the proposed request to change existing conditional uses to permitted uses* for the buildings on the VCFA campus. It is my opinion that VCFA has not made a compelling case justifying the change in the existing permitting process – a change that if approved by the DRB would circumvent community input and review of future proposals.

I understand that several neighbors have submitted letters outlining their general and specific concerns re the new VCFA Master Plan – and I support their right to do so. As a relative newcomer to Montpelier and the neighborhood (2020), I have not experienced the VCFA campus as anything other than its current use – an underutilized collection of buildings around a valuable and desirable open space (the college green). I've often wondered what a vibrant, revitalized campus would look like – and I support a development process that entertains the “conditional uses” listed in the VCFA Master Plan/PUD. But I am concerned that changing the existing conditional use structure will limit the public review process.

I respectfully request that the Montpelier Development Review Board hold a second community hearing and postpone a vote on VCFA's Development Application/Master Plan/PUD until more community voices can be heard.

Sincerely,

Amanda Sardonis
7 West Street
Montpelier, VT
ajswans@gmail.com
1-617-458-9878