

Meredith Crandall

From: Joe Castellano <joecaste@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, January 31, 2023 10:26 AM
To: Meredith Crandall
Subject: RE: Sending over comments for the DRB to consider regarding VCFA's Campus PUD application on Feb. 6th
Attachments: Comments regarding VCFA Campus PUD proposal 1.31.2023- Joe Castellano.pdf

Good morning, Meredith,

I hope that you are doing well. I'm sending over some comments that I would like the DRB to consider when considering whether to approve or deny the VCFA's Campus PUD application at their upcoming meeting on Feb. 6th at 7:00 p.m.

Thank you,

Joe Castellano
Sabin Street
Montpelier, VT 05602

Longer version of comments against VCFA Campus PUD proposal

I'm writing to express my concern about VCFA's proposed Campus PUD that is currently under review by the DRB.

The VCFA initially presented what is essentially the same proposal as is currently under review for Sketch Plan Review in December of 2021. They were told by the Sketch Plan Review committee at that time that they needed to narrow down their proposal so the committee could decide as to whether they would be able to approve their application. There was, however, no mention of a Campus PUD proposal in this application.

During the few meetings with Katie Gustafson of the VCFA throughout 2022, I and some of the neighbors were led to believe that in their hiring of White and Burke, that the firm was going to submit a report that would, based on market data and thorough research, narrow down the number of uses being proposed. A number of us also felt that given the expertise that White and Burke has, that some more in-depth demographic and economic data would be presented in their report. I, for one, was hoping that there would be some information in the report indicating what the likely uses of each of the buildings might be rather than a list of permitted and conditional uses allowed under current zoning regulations.

For example, I was expecting to see something that would detail the most likely use of each of the buildings. As an example, I was hoping to see something along the lines of:

- Dewey Hall. This building, which contains 9,598 sq. feet of space, most probably should be turned into a residential use. Our research shows that this building could contain a minimum of 12 residential units and possibly more, depending on the size of the units. Given Montpelier's aging population, the most likely best use of this space would be to allow congregate housing, i.e., studio or one-bedroom condos or apartments for low to middle-income seniors.

But the report presented lacks enough detail for the reader to conclude as to what the most likely and logical use of each of the campus buildings should be.

The application submitted is essentially a marketing document that is being presented for approval by the DRB. In it the VCFA gives no support as to the reason why the board should approve changing the conditional uses to approved uses.

And one of my neighbors, who has gone through Montpelier's zoning regulations, has pointed out that the VCFA's Campus PUD application directly contradicts with some parts of the existing zoning regulations.

As an example, I believe that it does not comply with Section 3408.E in that the conditional uses that they wish to have approved is not incidental to or supportive of the primary purpose of campus development.

It has been documented in the local press (and confirmed during a meeting with Leslie Ward, Katie Gustafson and David White) that it is the intention of the VCFA is to sell 10 of the 11 remaining campus buildings. They have also told us that they will no longer be holding summer residencies in Montpelier with the residency program being located in Colorado at another institution. It is also my understanding that the winter residency program will also be relocated outside of Montpelier. Therefore, the property would no longer qualify as a campus or have any academic use whatsoever. If that is the case, then the DRB should reject the application outright.

While I, like many of my neighbors, would like to see the buildings on the VCFA's campus more fully utilized, we do not want to give up our ability to weigh in on potential future uses. Therefore, I am requesting that you turn down VCFA's request to convert existing conditional uses to permitted uses. Thank you.

Joe Castellano
3 Sabin Street
Montpelier, VT 05602

Meredith Crandall

From: Elinor Bacon <ebacon@erbacondevelopment.com>
Sent: Thursday, February 2, 2023 11:59 AM
To: Meredith Crandall
Cc: katie.gustafson@vcfa.edu
Subject: VCFA Development Application, Campus Master Plan/PUD
Attachments: VCFA DRB 2-2-23.pdf

Ms. Crandall,

Attached is an electronic copy of a letter I am sending by mail to the members of Montpelier's Development Review Board, in care of you, as Zoning Administrator.

I am copying Ms. Katie Gustafson at VCFA, as well, and have also written to Mr. William Fraser, City Administrator.

Thank you for your consideration,

Elinor Bacon

*6B Tremont Street
Montpelier, Vermont 05602
(525 Water Street, SW, Washington DC 20024)*

February 2, 2023

Development Review Board Members
City of Montpelier, 39 Main Street
Montpelier VT 05602

Dear Members of the Montpelier Development Review Board:

I am writing as an 8-year part-time (soon to be full-time) resident of Montpelier, and as the development partner leading community engagement for The Wharf in Washington DC. With over 40 years of experience in real estate and community development, I have been involved in many developments and have learned the value to all parties of community engagement. I therefore urge the City of Montpelier and its Development Review Board to deny the request of the Vermont College of Fine Arts to change existing Conditional Uses to Permitted Uses. This change would eliminate community engagement in determining the future of this cherished asset and must not be approved.

For the past 15 years I have worked as a partner in Hoffman Madison Waterfront, the entity selected by The District of Columbia to redevelop Washington DC's mile-long Southwest Waterfront. The recently completed 3.2 million square foot development, The Wharf, consists of offices, mixed-income rental housing, condominiums, four hotels, public parks, promenades and piers, retail and restaurants, and a music hall, the Anthem, that accommodates up to 6,000 people.

A fundamental precept of the development is full and transparent engagement with the community. My role, as Partner in The Wharf, was to lead our community development efforts, and to assure that the community was engaged from the time we were selected as developer throughout the development process. The Wharf was completed at the end of 2022 and the results speak for themselves – The Wharf is a highly acclaimed asset for the City, beloved by the community, and enjoyed by millions of visitors per year.

The City of Montpelier and its residents deserve a full and transparent review of the plans proposed by VCFA's new buyer(s), consistent with existing review procedures. I, and so many of my neighbors, look forward to the next era of the college campus, and are eager to engage with the new buyer or buyers and the City, in a constructive and collaborative manner, to achieve a highly successful redevelopment that benefits the new owners, the city of Montpelier and the community. For this reason, I urge Montpelier and its DRB to preserve public review and vote no on VCFA's request for a change in the long-standing and long-honored zoning review processes and procedures of the Board.

Sincerely yours,



Elinor Bacon

Pelin Kohn, City Council Member District 2
Jack McCullough, City Council Member District 2
Leslie Ward, President, Vermont College of Fine Arts
William Fraser, City Manager