

Presentation to Castleton DRB
Regarding Sand Hill Road Project
& Misalignment with Town Plan

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Key Points...

Main Point – Not aligned with **Castleton Town Plan**

(RED = direct language from Town Plan)

- Is this “affordable” Senior Housing
- Is this project aligned with Alma Gibbs Donchian Foundation Mission?
- More misalignment with the Town Plan

“Affordable” as per Town Plan

Defining “affordable housing” - From the **2018 Castleton Town Plan**, page 38 states:

- “Affordable housing is an average price new home or older home in good condition that a person with an average income ought to be able to buy or rent. In order to be considered affordable, housing costs should be no more than 30%-35% of a household’s income. For rental housing this includes: rent & utilities (fuel for heat, hot water, and cooking; electricity for lights; water and sewer charges; and trash removal). For home ownership this includes: mortgage (principal and interest), taxes, and property insurance.”

“Affordable” as per Town Plan

While Hale Resources and developer Brad Dousevicz have not provided costs or income guidelines, their “sister” facility in Berlin, Chestnut Place has rates posted. It is private pay (no Medicare/Medicaid) and has minimum income guidelines.

What is posted on the Chestnut Place website are the rates below:

- Independent Living Studio or One Bedroom starting at \$2,300 per month
- Assisted Living Studio or One Bedroom starting at \$4,800 per month
- Memory Care Studio starting at \$7,800 per month

“Affordable” as per Town Plan

Using the formula of housing costs being no more than 30-35% this converts to annual incomes as follows:

- Independent Living Studio or One Bedroom annual income of \$78,880
- Assisted Living Studio or One Bedroom annual income of \$164,571
- Memory Care Studio annual income of \$267,428.

From the VT Department of Taxes, Rutland County’s average VT Adjusted Gross Income in 2020 is \$57,255 per return filed.

With 35% maximum for housing, that’s \$1,670/month for affordable housing; 30% is 1,432/month.

The average Vermonter cannot afford to live in this proposed facility.

Conclusion – This project does NOT support the Castleton Town Plan guidelines for affordable housing. Low and middle income Vermonters can’t afford to live here. In fact, our analysis raises the question of need for an expensive senior living 99 unit PUD in Castleton, as well as in Rutland County. We have seen no local data and/or assessments supporting the need for this high end expensive senior housing.

Alma Gibbs Donchian Foundation

Mission Alignment?

From their website:

It is the primary mission of the Alma Gibbs Donchian Foundation to provide assistance to various institutions in Vermont, but not limited to Vermont. The Foundation hopes to address the following areas of concern:

- Issues affecting the elderly, particularly those "middle-income" elderly not served by other programs
- Education, particularly as it addresses hearing and/or learning impairments, or reading disabilities
- Community preservation
- Programs or agencies engaged in the furtherance of fundamental values, such as: self-reliance, respect for tradition, the value of work, the importance of family, the innate 'goodness' and 'uniqueness' of all persons, and the satisfaction to be derived from religious or similarly uplifting beliefs

Alma Gibbs Donchian Foundation Mission Alignment?

As proposed, this project does not address housing issues of “middle-income” elderly in our community, and the proposed building is an assault on our community preservation.

From **Town Plan:**

pg.3 “In adopting the Town Plan, citizens of Castleton may anticipate the future with the knowledge that a significant step has been taken in the development and preservation of their community.”

Pg 8 – “As new development opportunities present themselves, the Town of Castleton must balance preservation of its community and character with support of opportunities for economic growth in order to sustain the town’s citizens and services.” (Other than CU campus there are no other 4 story buildings in Castleton, and architecturally this building has no Castleton character.)

Town Buildings the Alma Gibbs Foundation has funded renovations of.



Buildings nothing like this...



More from **Castleton Town Plan** (pgs 40-41)

HOUSING GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Goal

Provide a variety of housing options that meet the needs of diverse social and income groups and is located conveniently to employment, services, retail centers, and educational and recreational facilities. A sufficient supply of quality housing is necessary for any community that expects to have strong, healthy families and a stable workforce.

Policy 1 *Collaborate with not-for-profit housing organizations, government agencies, private lenders, developers and builders in pursuing options and meeting the housing needs of local residents.*

Programs

❖ *Establish working relationships with the Rutland County Community Land Trust, NeighborWorks of Western Vermont and Housing Vermont.*

Policy 2 *Ensure that individuals with special housing needs, including the elderly, those with physical or mental disabilities, single parent households, as well as low and moderate-income households are able to attain suitable and affordable housing.*

Programs

❖ *Locate **affordable** and special needs housing in areas with access to appropriate services.*

More from **Castleton Town Plan** (pgs 40-41)

HOUSING GOALS, POLICIES, AND PROGRAMS

Policy 3 Maintain and promote the historic character of housing in Castleton.

Programs

- ❖ Encourage home ownership and property upkeep efforts of Castleton residents.*
- ❖ Ensure that new and rehabilitated housing is constructed to meet safety and sanitary minimum standards and coordinated with existing public services (water, sewer, and transportation networks).*
- ❖ Maintain a detailed inventory of the condition of Castleton's historic housing units.*

Policy 4 Enable our aging citizens to remain within the community by providing differing types of housing options.

Programs

- ❖ Promote the development of commercial or private senior housing*

- **Note:** This project does NOT maintain and promote the historical character of housing in Castleton AND again I challenge the premise that our Castleton aging residents will be able to afford to live here.

Town Plan and Housing

- While the Town Plan does state as a housing policy goal to “Enable our aging citizens to remain within the community by providing differing types of housing options” (p. 41), and recommends programs that “Promote the development of commercial or private senior housing” (p. 41), other than that there is not much in the Castleton Town Plan that supports high end expensive senior housing in Castleton.
- In many ways, the proposed four story 99 unit building with its large parking lot out front is in complete opposition to the goals of the Castleton Plan – for example “fits the character of existing development” (pg 9); “scenic and natural resources are among the town’s primary assets” (pg 9); Policy 4 (pg 10) “Preserve agriculture, scenic resources and open space” and “preservation of the character of surrounding properties” (pg 10-11).

Castleton Town Plan, Housing, Preservation, Character



Castleton Town Plan, Housing, Preservation, Character



More Misalignment with the Town Plan...

Direct excerpts from the Castleton Town Plan NOT supporting the Sand Hill Project Permit #8177

Pg 3 - The policies and programs stated within this comprehensive plan were developed to preserve and protect the town's assets while providing a future vision for town officials, businesses, and citizens of Castleton.

Pg. 3 - In adopting the Town Plan, citizens of Castleton may anticipate the future with the knowledge that a significant step has been taken in the development and preservation of their community.

Pg 3 - Surrounding communities promote low-density land development and continuation of resource-based uses (such as agriculture) in outlying areas and higher density and commercial uses in existing built-up areas. (A 99-unit rental building directly next to one of two operating farms in our town is the exact opposite of this!)

Pg 8 - As new development opportunities present themselves, the Town of Castleton must balance preservation of its community and character with support of opportunities for economic growth in order to sustain the town's citizens and services. (Other than CU campus there are no other 4 story buildings in Castleton, and architecturally this building has no Castleton character.)

Pg 8 – Castleton encourages planned growth and concentrated development in those areas of the town which provide for higher density and which can provide the necessary infrastructure to more readily support development than more rural sections of town. (This would not include Sand Hill Road!)

More Misalignment with the Town Plan...

Direct excerpts from the Castleton Town Plan NOT supporting the Sand Hill Project

Pg 25 - Primary agricultural soils are depicted on Castleton Natural Resources Map 2. The Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) has classified Vermont's soils into four categories with respect to their potential for agriculture – highest, good, low and limited. NRCS recommends that highest and good categories qualify as primary agricultural soils as defined in Act 250. As is the case with most Vermont towns, there are a number of active farms in Castleton sustaining families and making an important contribution to the economy and the culture of the town. (Again, why are we putting a 99-unit rental building on a residential street next to one of two functioning farms in the Town of Castleton?)

Pg 29 – Impervious Surface Minimization and Site Design (entire section)

Pg 33 - Open Space and Scenic Resources

In the course of planning for Castleton's future, it is important that the presence of high quality open space and scenic resources, broad scenic areas as well as scenic landmarks, are recognized and the integrity of such resources is preserved. Scenic resources have aesthetic, historical, and economic value. Siting of future construction as well as community facilities and infrastructure should always consider the potential impact on the aesthetic qualities of the community and preserve the undisturbed integrity, wherever possible, of Castleton's quality scenic and open space resources.

Conclusion

You get the point!

I didn't even include the parts of the Castleton Town Plan that cover protecting prime agricultural lands.

While this project has been promoted as supporting the Castleton Town Plan, there are **MANY** ways it does the exact opposite!