



Castleton University

May 8, 2022

Statement of Support for the Senior Living Facility at Sand Hill Road (Permit application #8177 – Section 417

My name is Dr. Francesca Catalano, the Dean of Health and Sciences at Castleton University. Thank you for the opportunity to address this committee. I would like to review the original intent for the use of the land gift from Castleton University as well as discuss the impact this proposed development would have on the education of Castleton University students.

Healthcare reform constantly challenges communities to improve the overall health of its constituents by innovating ways to not only increase the quality of the healthcare received but to improve access while decreasing overall cost. This Sandhill project will create an independent, assisted living and memory care facility that supports this industry push to a more community-based healthcare infrastructure.

The concept of a senior living project is in alignment with the use that Castleton University envisioned when it donated the parcel of land to the town of Castleton years ago. In August of 2021, retired CU President David Wolk wrote the following to the Castleton Zoning Administrator:

"I offered to deed the property to the town with the express interest that it would be used for "the public good", and in fact that was part of our written agreement. We even conceived of a senior living environment, somewhat akin to Elderhostel arrangements at many universities, concepts growing around the country where active seniors participate in the social, educational and cultural opportunities afforded to them. Universities benefit from the community service opportunities for students, academic as well as co curricular, that would enhance undergraduate and graduate education. I can envision several academic departments offering internships and shadowing experiences for students, and I can imagine concerts, plays, poetry readings, and the widely acclaimed Soundings Program being very attractive opportunities for seniors and students to mix together for mutual benefit."

The project as currently envisioned dovetails perfectly with the intended use as articulated by President Wolk.

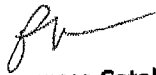
In addition, I believe this facility will significantly impact the clinical training of students studying in several different programs at Castleton University, notably nursing, social work, and athletic training. The project will directly impact nursing education by providing additional clinical learning opportunities for students enrolled in our nursing program. The national shortage of nurses is acutely felt in Vermont, resulting in the state placing renewed focus on nursing education as a key area of workforce development. Clinical site experiences for our nursing students are currently limited in part because



facilities cannot always extend their staff to provide these experiences for our students. For example, our second-year nursing students must use simulation laboratories for the required clinical hours needed to meet accreditation standards. This facility would directly provide these students access to an additional and local clinical site, a significantly improved education experience over simulations. The community-based nature of the project would also allow specific training for student-nurses interested in practicing community-based medicine upon licensure.

The benefits of the site extend beyond nursing education. Social work students might gain valuable experience working with the elderly as well as supporting family dynamics centered on elder care. Athletic training students in our master's program are required to gain experience treating a wide variety of client populations; this facility might prove itself to be a viable clinical site for these students. Other programs like exercise science and even music might find ways to incorporate internships and performances with this facility, either in credit bearing ways or in developing co-curricular experiences.

All of these opportunities increase the number and types of experiential learning for our students while at the same time providing meaningful social and intellectual interactions with members of the facility. These relationships underscore the ways a community can support, educate and care for its own members. The proposed use of this properly reflects its intended use and will provide rich educational and social experiences for all members of the community. I offer these reasons in support of this permit and I thank you for the opportunity to speak to the committee.



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Good evening,

For those of you who don't know me my name is Bryce Taylor, I currently live on East Hubbardton Rd, and I have been a Castleton resident for 36 out of my 38 years of life. I am fortunate to live next to a dairy farm that I grew up on which is one of the few remaining farms in town. I have had multiple residences and properties in Castleton over the years and much like the residents of Sand Hill are facing now... I was displaced from those homes by the use of surrounding properties. For reference In 2009 I bought a log home on 20 acres Point of Pines Rd across from the Green Mountain Conservation camp. As some of you on the board may recall.. I loved it so much that I made it a priority to acquire most land on the road and even spanning to adjoining properties across the town line into fair haven, including +/- 45 adjoining acres I purchased from the town on Castleton, for a total of 202 acres. I had planned to live there the rest of my life, It was a quiet dirt side road off the lake through a peaceful valley which saw little to no traffic or disruption. We lived there for years and it was great..until the state decided to expand the use of the conservation camp to every day functions and events for hire. Before we knew it the state expanded the property to the following uses

- *holding regular state business meetings at the camp
- *Trainings for all state agencies
- *holding K-9 training courses
- *used it as home base for game warden boats to disperse from
- *expanded the use of the pistol firing range for officer practice and handgun qualification
- *public skeet shooting courses almost every night of the week until 9pm..or later
- *leasing classrooms for night courses for Green Mountain College
- *expanding walking trails which led to continuous trespass and garbage
- *and the last straw was leasing the building out for venues like weddings only a couple hundred feet from my bedroom window..

In 2019 after spending a decade of our life building what we thought was a home we would raise our kids and retire in... we couldn't tolerate it any longer and made the decision to sell as it was simply unbearable for us to live next to...the quiet country road we saw and fell in love with in a mere 10 years had turned into one of the busiest evening dirt roads in the town.

So I may not live on Sand Hill, but I know exactly they're feeling right now.. and I can tell you it's a pretty terrible feeling.. as I'm sure the vast majority of them bought homes on Sand Hill with the hopes of residing there long term or even forever. My use of the road consists of my wife and children frequently riding our bicycles up the rail trail past the college to south street, onto sand hill, to rt4a, and back into Castleton to eat at one of the local businesses. We do this loop about weekly throughout the summer and frequently encounter walkers, joggers, and other cyclists, but rarely more than a vehicle or two along Sand Hill rd. This is one of the only loops we have in Castleton where you can reasonably expect light traffic and low vehicle speeds. It's just a quiet country road holding another of our last remaining

farms in town with a few well maintained houses along it. With countless other locations for such a facility in just about every direction, many of which are much better suited...It seems to me the Town of Castleton should be protecting the interests of its residential taxpayers first, especially those most directly impacted should be a priority...because that's why they elect you.

As I look back on the political structure of Castleton and surrounding towns one thing is clear.: town managers, select board members, and people in other roles of varying importance come and go over the years. On the other hand, physical structures come, but rarely in a human lifetime do they ever go. Once developed the structures are there indefinitely whether it be an assisted living facility.. low income housing.. a building that rotates through tenants yearly.. or just a structure that ends up having no use and falls into disrepair... I Remember that not all that long ago someone had a great success plan at the diamond run mall in Rutland town.. and at Green mountain college in Poultney.. or any of the other dozens of vacant factories and buildings in Rutland City.. the only thing that's for certain is it will not be a field, and it will transform this neighborhood whether it succeeds or fails.

As a Castleton resident it is beyond frustrating with the issues already present in our town that we continually need to be on the defense of.. and we clearly already have enough to worry about that we don't need town officials creating more unnecessary disruptions.

*the blasting from quarries on Blissville, Brown, and Mary lane

*the concerts and venues now being held at the old meadowbrook farm on rice willis

*the potential herbicide use in Lake Bomoseen and lake residents domestic water supply

*the constant shooting that continues at the conservation camp affecting the west side of the lake

*the proposed windmills on Grandpas knob that seems to never go away...

*now the proposed MASSIVE facility on Sand hill and transformation of a residential area into an industrial/commercial complex..

I'd like the select board and town administrators to take a step back, pretend for a moment that any of these are the street you live on, and see if you would still be so excited to have this transform your neighborhood...Then start doing what you were elected or employed to do, which is putting this towns resident property owners and their interests first. We've got enough to worry about that we certainly don't need the town creating more issues for residents.

Bryce Taylor

March 30, 2022

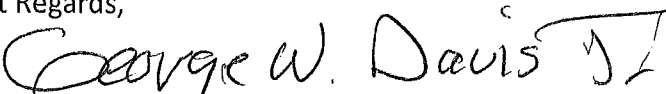
Dear Development Review Board Members,

I was very excited and interested to learn about the Senior Citizen complex proposed to be constructed in Castleton! I currently serve as Board Chairperson for the Southern Vermont Council on Aging and have personally had to procure appropriate housing/ care for my own parents and two mother in Laws! I am very aware of the need for this proposed facility in our area. What a wonderful asset for area seniors and their families to have housing, support services and healthcare including memory care clinic, in conjunction with the local University's Nursing School. To have this available in our town is a phenomenal win for everyone: seniors and their families, residents, Castleton and the University.

Vermont has the dubious distinction of being the third oldest state. The aging segment of our population will continue to increase in numbers and will live longer than prior generations. We need an economically viable facility such as this to meet the increasing needs of our aging residents and to support their families. This facility will also provide many professional level employment opportunities, and substantial retail and tax dollars for the community.

I hope our community sees the value in the proposed Senior Care Facility, and I fully support the endeavor.

Best Regards,


George Davis, Hubbardton VT