

Submittal for Sketch Plan hearing to the Town of East Montpelier

From Ellen Leonard and Janice Walrafen
[170 Cherry Tree Hill Road](#)

September 22, 2017

Request to update zoning designation to a Planned Unit Development:

History

Ellen Leonard and Janice Walrafen purchased the property in April of 2004. We received home occupation permits for 1) Ellen to operate a licensed home preschool Mon - Fri, 8 am -5 pm with 15 children attending and 3 staff; and 2) Janice to operate her Art Tiles ceramic studio and offer art classes.

When we purchased the property the main house had been empty for two-years and the other residences (see descriptions below) on the property had renters in them. Prior uses of the main house include: a family farmhouse, a single-family residence, a two-apartment residence, and a bed and breakfast.

We are coming before the East Montpelier DRB to update the zoning designation of the property to be considered a Planned Unit Development(PUD).

We call our place AllTogetherNow! Community Arts Center and our mission is to create a place for creative living and learning, for people of all ages, committed to peace, ecological renewal, earth-centered living, and community celebration.

Janice and Ellen hold the deed and mortgage. Our stewardship and management of the property consists of renting rooms and buildings to create affordable housing, and nurturing a peaceful and joyful community through: a fully licensed preschool, arts education, summer youth programs, environmental education, community gardens, and celebration.

Currently on the property there is:

- The main house which holds the preschool, one shared kitchen, an art classroom, and two bay garage on the first floor. The basement houses a ceramic studio, the furnaces, and storage. The second floor has four bedrooms, each with their own bathroom, and a shared office/community room.
- A 20 x 60 in-ground swimming pool surrounded by fencing, on the east side of the main house
- A small one-bedroom residence with a pool equipment shed. (Cottage)
- A two-bedroom apartment with a one-car garage built on the cement foundation of the old milking parlor of a pre-existing barn. It is adjacent to the barn. (Barn Apartment)
- A shed roof barn with a second floor loft. (Barn)
- A cloth and lattice frame yurt, permitted as a studio.(Yurt)

- A metal frame, plastic covered greenhouse.(Greenhouse)
- A small chicken shed. (Chicken shed)
- A shed roof over wood-fired cob oven. (Cob oven)
- Two-solar trackers producing electricity for the main house.
- A parking area

We have a flock of chickens and extensive gardens that grow year-round produce (through storage and preserving) for residents and friends. We have been planting fruit bearing trees and bushes, and plan to build a rainwater catchment system to use in the gardens. We plan to purchase another solar tracker to provide solar electricity for the entire property.

Included in this proposal we want to:

1. Add 3 units for a total of 6 to the property.
2. Change to parking layout and additional driveway access (See attached map)
3. Change the use of one unit to a studio and move the home to a different location.

Descriptions of existing and proposed structures on the property as follows:(map attached*)

Main House -no change

The Main House will remain as a multi-use building with the first floor to remain as a community art center and preschool with the shared kitchen, and the second floor remain as four bedrooms for renters and a community room.

Cottage -change of use to studio from residency.

The Cottage was built as a woodshed and to house the pool pump and equipment. It is in need of roof repair. It currently houses a long time resident/renter. In our proposal we would like to take this building out of designation as a resident dwelling and turn it into an art studio.

Barn Apartment -no change other than building out second floor.

The Barn Apartment is in need of a new roof, windows, and insulation. We are making plans to renovate this apartment with a new truss roof structure. It will remain as a two-bedroom dwelling and also continue serve as a music classroom/studio on the first floor.

Yurt - change of use to residency

The Yurt site becomes a residence. This will require a building permit for permanent foundation, water and power service as well as septic permit. There may be structural modifications as well.

New House Proposal 1

A new two-bed-room house-site is proposed for behind the Barn Apartment on Northern side of property.

New House Proposal 2

A new one- bedroom house-site is proposed for south side of property near cob oven.

New apartment Proposal 3

A new studio apartment above the existing barn.

Septic Capacity

Main House - In 2016 we rebuilt the septic system for the main house. A new leach field was permitted and installed with a capacity larger than its current use. In the repair we learned that the tanks had been improperly installed and pumped, most likely causing the failure.

Cottage and Barn Apartment - Each has a 1000 gallon tank and share a leach field in the grass behind the barn. This system is grandfathered in and will require no change with this plan.

Three New House sites - We had our septic engineer dig test pits and we have found a leach field along the far bank of the hill that may be sufficient for all three proposed dwellings. We understand that if these house-sites are designated, it will be contingent on adequate capacity and permitting.

Barn Apartment - proposed as an option and would be contingent on septic capacity and PUD approval.

Water Supply

Currently all the buildings are supplied water from a single well that has abundant capacity for all the current uses. Another well would be dug to accommodate three new dwellings.

Power

Planning to use existing power utility

Parking area reorientation

The existing parking area is poorly drained causing flooding of the barn garage and access from the road is steep causing dangerous conditions in the winter.

We would like to reorient the parking area to be leveled out at the top of the property and run along the road rather than downslope into the property. We would also like to create a less steep access drive to the parking area from the road. Finally, we would like to create an overflow parking area adjacent to the road. This would be used to lessen the impact of cars parking on the road.

Conclusion

We see this application as a reasonable request for our property and consistent with the Town Plan. To cluster the housing and buildings in a dense neighborhood leaves the rest of the property open for agriculture. It does not increase the visual impact of the property greatly, as the building will fit into an already existing area of high density. It proposes only two new buildings. Because the additional units will be occupied by people who already live on site or frequently visit, we don't see much of a difference in traffic. We have been living this way for nearly 15 years and would like to do so for at least the next 15 years.