

To: Readfield Planning Board
From: John Knox, 16 Old Kents Hill Rd., Readfield ME
Subject: Application for a Community Center

I have lived 35 years abutting the discontinued portion of Mill Street and of Mill Stream. As I have since its beginning, I am writing to oppose passage of usage of the barn at 26 Mill Street.

1. My Property

From a vision standpoint, I am the closest abutter to this property both from my lawn by the stream, and at times, when there are no leaves I can see it from my house. If this venture takes place, I would have to draw the curtains in my bathroom at night. I can hear noise from the proposed parking lot. I would imagine in the summer windows will be open and probably activities taking place outside. I was well aware of the swimming hole formed by the stream when the dangerous activities mentioned took place.

The proposed activity would seriously affect the enjoyment of my home and the reasons I originally bought it.

2. Factory Square

At the time of the Readfield bicentennial, I volunteered to bring Factory Square (where the current new barn is located) into the celebration and put together a considerable program. Because of this I have been asked to help with the Historical Section of the new 10-year Comprehensive Plan currently being prepared. While my work is not completed, I have proposed that the site be declared a local historic site, so further disruption such as caused by the barn, cannot take place. I feel the current existence of the barn might make this declaration difficult. If the barn is removed, I propose a walking trail connecting the sites which are exposed or can be exposed.

3. The Permit Application

I believe the Permit Application is so full of errors and omissions that it should not be acted upon in its current state. Because of this, I have not taken a great deal of time verifying the issues listed below. They may be hearsay or secondhand. However, I have lived here 35 years and have been very involved with the area in question.

- A. Application states it will be available to residents yet it refers to members-only.
- B. Application states activities would only be indoors. As stated previously in this document, I believe this to be unlikely.
- C. Application states that existing buildings have improved the area. I believe it is exactly the opposite.
- D. What does "historic property" mean? I believe it refers to the recently completed trail.
- E. I have been retired on my property for a considerable time and have never seen a tour bus.
- F. Application states "no permits required" but that they may be required in the future. It does not state what they are and gives the impression they are subject to approval only by the lessee committee.

- G. Application mentions their committee but no member names are given.
- H. Application states that activities will conform to "state and federal laws" but does not mention town ordinances.
- I. Application mentions a "Mill Stream Park." As an abutter, I should have heard of this. I have not.
- J. Application mentions Fire Department's studies of the project, but only states that there is no problem for emergency vehicles.
 Mill Street dead ends at one end and connects with Giles Road where that road intersects Route 17. Giles Road also dead ends at its other end as does Mill Street. Route 17 leads to two major ski areas and two paper mills. The lessor should talk to the sheriff and the Department of Transportation.
- K. The application mentions a committee and then mentions a board again with no members or specific mission for each.
- L. Since one third of my property is in shore land zoning, I am surprised some of the proposed property is not also in shore land zoning.
- M. The application shows concern for the one home on Mill Street in terms of noise but does not show concern for abutters facing the stream. A document recently received from the lessor included a frightening list of possible activities. I would insist on such a list from the applicant.
- N. The application states that there are other houses in Town that are close to a similar organization. I believe they mean the Readfield Union Meeting House. The two are not similar. One Meeting House board member I spoke to agreed with me.
- O. The application gives the impression that the discussed land is without incline. However, there is a fairly major hill in back of the barn that contains the remains of the Factory Square mills.
- P. The property in question is not near other buildings, is on a dead end road, and the applicant sites activities which have previously existed in the area. How can this be "safe and secure?" The applicant even sites activities since the barn was built.
- Q. The application sites members as having access but does not identify by who, when, and how many.
- R. Previous to this application the lessor offered the building to the Town as a community building and, as near as I can tell, there was not enough interest.
- S. The applicant states that they will "police" their area but does not mention the parking lot.
- T. Was the "parking lot" at the Giles Road end of Mill Street ever approved?
- U. I have not seen, nor do I hope to see, restroom facilities at this "Town Park."
- V. I have read the most recent (2009) Comprehensive Plan and see no mention of the Planning Board relative to this property. In fact, in the most recent proposed land use plan it appears to result in the barn being removed. It was not passed. Possibly I feel this may have been due to lobbying efforts by the lessor.
- W. The application suggests the National Register of Historic Places. I do not believe Factory Square is eligible even before the barn. Also, the Register does not protect the designated items. It only adds fundraising and "prestige."
- X. Will the lessee carry liability insurance?

- Y. "Quiet enjoyment." How is this defined? What about guests?
- Z. Lease provisions should prohibit persons sleeping in the structures mentioned.
- AA. Lease provisions should have a notice if tenant wishes to terminate the lease early.
- BB. The application refers to "property" as "historic." Nowhere in the document is it mentioned that the barn is only several years old.
- CC. The application mentions that the lessee is a fundraising nonprofit. What is the purpose of the funds raised? Is that stated in a non-profit state application, assuming there is one?
- DD. Application mentions parking spaces for 35 cars. This space was cleared by the Town many years ago with no mention to this abutter. It has been a source of trash and, possibly, drugs. At the time of its construction I was told it was a place for the Town plow to turn around. Parking for 35 cars is a far reach from snow plow turnaround.
- EE. Application should detail the following about the proposed project:
- The number of persons utilizing the building on an average day.
 - How will this differ by winter/summer and is it heated?
 - Children and Adults
 - Are children required to have an adult present?
 - Definition of children?
 - Members/residents. Is there a fee or membership for either?
 - Days and hours open.
 - Manager on duty? Paid or volunteer?
 - Who will clean up when building is closed for the day?
 - Will swimming be allowed?
 - Should be regulation about walking on the dam.