

To: The Readfield Planning Board, Paula Clark, Chair

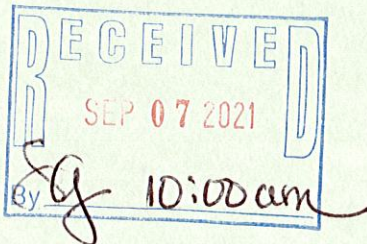
From: Will Harris 

Subject: Submission of Exhibits in Support of My Statements to the Board on August 25, 2021

Date: September 7, 2021

The application before you regarding the property at 26 Mill Stream Road alleges to be for a change of use for a non-profit community center unrelated to the property owner Mr. Robert Bittar's previous iterations for the use of this property. Please accept the attached as a few (of many) mass mailings, articles in the Community Advertiser, and the Kennebec Journal, etc. which are examples of Mr. Bittar's involvement in the use of the Mill Stream property. Please note that they are substantially unchanged from one another and all are focused on the same change of use within the rural residential and resource protection zones for which he previously signed a consent agreement to only use the property for a single family dwelling.

Thank-you for the opportunity to provide this information and I wish you the best of luck in reviewing and deciding upon this request.



Testimony of Willard Harris

To

Readfield Planning Board

August 25, 2021

Good Evening. I am Will Harris and my wife Bonnie and I live at 26 Old Kents Hill Rd. Our property abuts the property at 26 Mill Stream Rd.

I come here tonight, once again, to express my opposition to permitting a public use of the Robert Bittar property at 26 Mill Stream Rd. This property was, and continues to be zoned rural residential in Readfield's Land Use Ordinance.

Mr. Bittar has sought since 2013 to develop the property as a bar/music venue despite its location in a Rural Residential location.

He has sought, unsuccessfully, to have the area re-zoned to accommodate his intended use.

He has sought several times to portray the usage as some kind of community center or club in order to include its intended use to be allowed within the Rural Residential zoning designation.

- In 2015 he called it the Readfield Country Club
- In 2018 he filed to set up a "non-profit" corporation called the Music and Arts Coalition of Maine at 26 Mill Stream Rd; at which, among other things, they would "sell products and food; rent space within the facility for events."
- Now in 2021, you have been presented with the opportunity to permit the same types of activities under the title of "Safe Space Meeting House."

At least for the last two permit attempts you are being asked to overlook the fact that Mr. Bittar, on July 18, 2017 signed a Consent Agreement with the Town of Readfield that stated that 26 Mill Stream Rd. would ONLY (all caps in the agreement) be used as a single family dwelling. Having read the Consent Agreement several times I can find no wherein it that it is time-limited. Has the agreement run out, or do its terms still stand?

Does the fact that the permit request before you states that it is brought by the Safe Space Meeting House and not Bob Bittar mean that he no longer has to abide by the agreement that he signed, even though he still owns and controls the property? Mr. Bittar was denied an occupancy permit in large part because he did not abide by the terms of the Consent Agreement. Should a shell organization be permitted to do what had been denied to the owner?

As an abutter within the Rural Residential zone I believe that I am entitled to the protections and restrictions of that zone, I am entitled to the quiet enjoyment of my property and I look to you on the Planning Board to help me protect those rights. If you approve this project – which is essentially the same one you have been presented with many times since 2013 – it will mean significant noise and traffic both adversely affecting my property. The questions regarding types of usage, numbers of people using it, public safety, parking, and runoff issues in an environmentally sensitive wetland area (to name just a few), have not been addressed satisfactorily.

Bob Bittar can call this the Readfield Country Club, the Music and Arts Coalition, Helen's Barn, the safe Space Meeting House, the Dew Drop inn or the Number 10 Saloon. They are all just names for the same business venture that is Not Allowed under the guiding regulations of the Land Use Ordinance.

I urge you to reject this permit application.

Thank-you for the opportunity to speak.