

TO: Hingham Zoning Board and Hingham Planning Board

FROM: Liza O'Reilly, 19 Porters Cove Road

DATE: June 18, 2019

RE: Review of Impacts of the "Parking Circulation and Amenities Project at Worlds End, 0 Martins Lane"

The A3 Special Permit granted in February 2017 by the Planning Board and Zoning Board Permit have established a better experience than the neighborhood was facing in 2015 and 2016. However, the past two years have not been without incident and I remain cautious based on my experience with how The Trustees and the Town have paid attention to the traffic and activities at World's End. There are still occasional cars parked on my street because there is no parking at Worlds End or the gate is locked.

The decision stated "**The Applicant represented that the current level of programming would be maintained following completion of the Project.** The Applicant committed to implementation of measures identified in a "Traffic and Parking Management Plan" to mitigate impacts on the neighborhood that may arise during certain large events and peak holidays or weekends with favorable forecasts." This representation must be respected, reinforced and upheld.

My major concern is that the Program Offerings Appendix should be better defined and held to the current decision. The TTOR have not been focused on meeting the representation to maintain the current level of programming. The Town has not always been cooperative in assisting with this. It has been left to the neighbors to monitor this aspect of the permit.

1. Last year and this spring, I had to actively pay attention to the event schedule and monitor the TTOR activities. Last summer, we communicated to The Trustees and Town Officials regarding numerous events that were occurring in conflict with the permit. Of key concern were the campouts scheduled. The permit allows for two campouts. However, The Trustees scheduled a series of over-night backpacking events, Boy Scout troop sleepovers, and other activities occurring in the Spring and into June in addition to two Family Campouts. There was also increased traffic and visitor activity into June and July. I raised the issue with Trustees General Manager Matt Slayton and we did communicate about it to gain clarity but no events were canceled. (Attachment #1)

I communicated these concerns to the Planning Board in late July and it was acknowledged as received. (Attachment #2) Also, on August 1st, I filed a request for enforcement with the Building Commissioner over the campouts but unfortunately never received a response from the Town. (Attachment #3)

On August 30th, I received an email from Matt Slayton stating that all programs after September would be canceled. (Attachment #4)

This Spring, we have learned that a Boy Scout troop sleepover has already occurred. Two Family Campouts are being promoted for July 20 and 21st. The understanding of what constitutes a campout is in question. The campouts create a significant amount of traffic and noise all night long because kids are running around the property and slamming the doors of the port-a-potties. (Attachment #5)

In March, there were 10+ cars parked in front of my house from approximately 7:30-10:00 pm. After reaching out to my neighbors to see if it was their guests, we learned that it was a night-time

photography class from the New England School of Photography that went to World's End. I communicated with Matt Slayton but I never received a definitive answer if the TTOR knew about the event or not. This is disturbing to our properties and also a violation of the permit for a night time event occurring on the property. (Attachment #6)

This Spring, the TTOR announced a 13-session series of evening yoga classes for the summer. The TTOR responded that they were following the parking rules but I had to remind them about the number of programs allowed, times, and that the permit said they wouldn't increase the number of programs by more than 10%: "Below is a list of public programs offered at World's End between 2016 and 2017. We expect that future program offerings will be along the lines of what has been offered in the past. Future offerings could include additional kayak tours, and audio or app tours of the property available at the gatehouse. In 2016, about 5% of our visitors or an estimated 3000 people engaged with us in a public program. We see public programming as a tool to deepen our relationship with visitors, not to increase visitation."

I questioned them about the event schedule for the summer. In addition, I questioned the evening event timing since the only other Tier 3 evening events were monthly full-moon hikes. We traded two emails and then nothing. (Attachment #7)

As a result, I filed a request for enforcement on June 4th. (Attachment #8)

This on-going supervision is time consuming and demanding. The TTOR need to respect the permit conditions imposed by the town and manage their own property.

2. Clearer description of the programming allowed will be in the best interest of all parties. TTOR Management and Town Boards have changed since the original decision. As far as what has been communicated to the neighbors, the TTOR do not currently have a General Manager. They have gone through two since this process began. We were beginning to develop a productive and positive relationship with Matt Slayton and he left in March. Since his departure, there has been no proactive communication to the neighbors and limited reactive communication.

The Zoning Board, Planning Board and Board of Selectmen all have new membership since the original hearings. The Town Administrator and Assistant Town Administrator are new to their positions. However, the neighbors are all the same homeowners. As the taxpayers and voters, we request that the permits be clearly written so that anyone can understand the requirements of the permit.

My recommendation is that Appendix J (Attachment #9) be rewritten to clearly define the events allowed and the number of events permitted. The number of events in WORLDS END YEARLY PROGRAM OFFERINGS & ENGAGEMENT OUTLINE can basically remain as is however equipment rental should be defined. The descriptions of the PUBLIC PROGRAMMING should be clearly defined allow for flexibility of programming in the future but at the same time limit the timing and number of events.

The timing of the programming is important to reduce the impact on the neighbors, maintain safety of participants on the property, reduce the impact on Town resources, etc. I also note that this permit was **"authorized pursuant to a Special Permit A1 under Section III-A, 3.6 (Private non-profit library, museum, or community center) rather than as originally requested by the Applicant under Section III-A, 3.7 (Country, golf, swimming, skating, yacht, or tennis club, or other social, civic, or recreational lodge or club – not conducted as a business)."**

If I recall, the reason that a library, museum or community center was limit the scope of activities as focused on planned educational programs. The property is conservation land open to the public. This is **not** to be an outdoor recreation activity location.

Attached is my recommendation for how to revise Appendix J. (Attachment #10)

3. The programs and communication of the programs drives the marketing of the property which as a result impacts the traffic. This was a key concern in 2016 and continues to be a concern. Expanding the number of events creates more activity from the events as well as the promotion and awareness of the property. A visitor may not be able to attend a promoted event but will consider coming to the property at another time. We know this as a fact from the promotion of the art installation. The TTOR promotes the events proactively through their Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and social media feeds, newsletters, website, etc. In addition, visitors are encouraged to tag their own photos which expands attention to the property, as well.

In March 2019, Conde Nast Traveler hosted a South By Southwest talk about the shared evidence of overtourism and how social media and Instagram-ability of a property is causing hardships on the local community. The panel included discussion about overtourism in Amsterdam, New Zealand and Venice. Together they talked about “the buzzword making it around the world of travel—overtourism—and dove deep into who is responsible and what can be done to save some of our favorite destinations.” One key point of the discussion focused on how to manage the traffic to accommodate the local community in addition to the management of the site. <https://www.cntraveler.com/story/how-technology-can-help-us-tackle-overtourism>.

“**ME (Conde Nast):** who is to blame? It's easy a lot of the time—Instagram and ‘grammers are the whipping boy for this. Why is this happening?”

GU(Director of Tourism in Amsterdam): Because we all love to travel. When you read about overtourism, did it influence your behavior in where you traveled to? No! We are the problem and we have to face the problem. Look at the world scale: we have more money, we can travel easier, we have more free time. It's not any more about having big cars. It's all about the experience. It's a sort of Catch-22. We are the problem that we're complaining about. We should discuss it—**behave with respect for the area and locals.**”

We all know that Worlds End is the top rated “Thing to Do in Hingham, MA” on Trip Advisor. https://www.tripadvisor.com/Tourism-g41608-Hingham_Massachusetts-Vacations.html We are simply asking The Trustees and The Town to support the neighbors in respecting the locals and follow the recommendations of Conde Nast Traveler to tackle the overtourism.

4. Relationship with TTOR. It is well documented that the neighbors have experienced ebbs and flows of traffic and relationship issues with the Trustees ever since the Community raised the money to purchase the property in the 1960s. (See A History of Worlds End, orange booklet and testimony from this permit) We were developing a relationship with Matt Slayton and he left in March. (Attachment #11 and 12) No one from The Trustees have proactively communicated with us since then.

Once again, the neighbors are in the position of having to request that our neighbor, The Trustees of the Reservations who manage World's End, be respectful of your neighbors who reside on the peninsula with your property. We have had good relationships with the staff who have chosen to 'be a good neighbor' with us. That is all that we are asking.

We have done what the Boards asked:

- Work with The Trustees – We did that with Matt Slayton. We are asking The Trustees to talk with us, AGAIN. We have not heard from anyone since Matt Slayton left in March.
- File Request for Enforcements with the Building Commissioner – we have done that but didn't get a response
- Wait for the Lookback – we are finally having this but with all due respect have been requesting asking for this for more than six months and it is well beyond the six months required in the permit.

We are asking our elected and appointed Town officials to **uphold the decisions made by the Zoning Board and Planning Board** and to please respect our properties rights by retaining our residential, peaceful neighborhood.