

HVSF/GGC

Letters from the public

Jan 6, 2022 to Jan 26, 2022



CHERYL ROCKETT <crockett@phillipstown.com>

(no subject)

1 message

betsy calhoun <marieelizabethc@gmail.com>

Thu, Jan 6, 2022 at 12:57 PM

To: editor@pcnr.com, Rhonda Kay <rhonda.donohue@icloud.com>, CHERYL ROCKETT <crockett@phillipstown.com>

The SHAKESPEARE SAGA

Many unexpected effects have come from the HVSF idea. It never has been more than an idea - ephemeral, provocative, widespread, controversial. It has shaken up our community - that is both bad and good.

Of the benefits, or "good" aspects:

1. Soul-searching for our values
2. Increased participation in the community, leading to education -rules and regulations, political responsibility
3. **Surprise! we are not all of the same hopes and demands.**

What we aren't proud of:

1. Political bullying
2. Financial influences
3. Blind eyes
4. False assumptions
5. Forgetting climate change.

What Now?

1. Develop a PROCESS that is public and conforms with current regulations.
2. Support decisions based on community values and goals.
3. Admit that there haven't been any valid decisions yet.

Betsy Calhoun



CHERYL ROCKETT <crockett@phillipstown.com>

gcc/hvsf application

1 message

highfield <highfield@optonline.net>

Sun, Jan 9, 2022 at 4:17 PM

To: ntomann@phillipstown.com

Cc: CHERYL ROCKETT <crockett@phillipstown.com>

Dear Chairman,

We would like you and your fellow Planning Board members to read and consider the below letter that was our recent submission to the editors of both local newspapers and for it to then be included in the record of the considerations of this application. We believe that the full build out of this development will make this small hamlet of Garrison into a "Destination" for people far and wide, swamping its 2,500 inhabitants, rather than a quiet place in which to live which we thought we were conserving in the Comprehensive Plan.

Many Thanks

Stan Freilich & Carol Marquand

Dear Editor,

We wish to correct an erroneous statement which was quoted in your paper and has been printed on HVSF ads. This is that the proposed development on The Garrison Golf Course is protecting the land from "suburban-style development" similar to that proposed at Hudson Highlands Reserve.

The truth is that Chris Davis protected the land from such development when he originally bought it and then the community itself at a charette on the future of Phillipstown put in place zoning and regulations which we understood were to protect the land into the future. We are very thankful for Chris Davis' promise that The Garrison will not ever become "a suburban-style housing estate". So the threat of the latter happening should the HVSF plan not go through is an empty one. The Garrison Golf Course was and is designated a Scenic Protection Overlay District in order to "protect the Town's scenic beauty and rural character". You can read the specific regulations online but they do specify "ridgeline and hillside" protection among much else. The zoning is Rural Conservation.

As such the following construction and uses are not permitted:

- Outdoor permanent theatre
- Indoor theatre
- Outdoor Pavilion
- Rehearsal Space
- Offices
- Guest (actor etc.) lodging
- Back of House facilities (dressing rooms, green room etc.)
- Hospitality Facilities (including toilets for hundreds of people)
- Box Office

- Suburban type housing on 200 acres

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JAN 10 2022

In order for the proposed plan to achieve any or all of these, the following have to be thrown out the window:

- the community agreed upon Comprehensive Plan
- the Scenic Protection Overlay District
- the Rural Conservation Zoning
- the environmental impact on the land and this hamlet of Garrison (approx 2,500 people excluding Continental Village and Putnam Valley that are included in the Census), of hundreds and hundreds of cars and over a thousand people at any one time until after 11 p.m. as compared to 70 plus golfers at any one time who disappear at dusk.

To hear the traffic expert for the developers talk in the most glib and unprepared terms about the numbers of cars and people at The Garrison (and with a Saturday matinee plus evening performance in 2 theaters plus 2 weddings at peak summer times, there will be a huge number) is extremely disheartening. Instead of 2 large wedding venues (Highlands Club and The Garrison) and 1 theatre at Boscobel, simultaneously in the summer, the proposal will enable 3 large wedding venues (Boscobel, Highlands Club, The Garrison) and 2 theaters (at The Garrison) to function simultaneously. This would result in a huge increase in traffic in Garrison and a further splitting in half of Garrison by the 4 lane highway with traffic light that rte 9 will effectively become.

Great that the chemically fertilized mono culture of the golf course will no longer exist. However, any environmentalist knows that a huge increase in cars and people has a correspondingly large environmental impact. A simple "move up the hill from Boscobel" this is not. Incidentally, we would like to know how many of the 300 new trees that are promised to replace the 172 mature trees to be cut down, are the 2 ft high whips being grown at Glynwood and how many are decent sized 12 to 14 ft trees.

As long time supporters of HVSF we want it to have a home with a view, a longer season as is in the plan, and actor housing for the Festival. But as long time residents within sight and sound of The Garrison who have fought hard to keep the rural nature of this area intact we know that if this entire plan is built out, this area will be changed utterly.

We would like to see some compromise in line with the SPOD and current zoning that e.g.

- preserves intact the sweep of the land from the lake up the rise without cutting it in half with a giant parking lot.
- moves the site of the proposed tent off the highest contour without losing a magnificent backdrop.
- deals with 1,000 toilet flushes a night with some eco friendly plan rather than saying the surrounding water basin can be drawn on i.e. us and our neighbors who already have trouble sometimes in the summer with recharge in our 500 ft deep wells.
- plants trees around the tent as a buffer as well as as the proposed buffer between the Davis retained land and the Festival.
- We could go on

The task is to weigh the clear good that the Festival brings to the entire Hudson Valley and beyond while also considering the huge impact on this specific part of the world. And, by the way, we *lose* tax income - another red herring in those HVSF ads.

Stan Freilich & Carol Marquand

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JAN 11 2022

To the Editor

Dear Community,

Have you seen #lifeonourplanet with David Attenborough (Netflix)? It's hard to watch but I think mandatory for every human that has the capacity to access it. What we have done to our planet is devastating. What we are leaving for our kids and grands to deal with is heartbreaking.

We are CODE RED on the planet. I'm sure you don't need me to tell you this. And the UN has declared the next decade a time of ecosystem restoration -- not of ecosystem destruction.

So why is my community of Garrison, historically one of the most privileged and sensitive to environmental stewardship ON THE PLANET, allowing HVSF to come in with a major commercial development and tear up what has been so hard won?

At this moment in time, with all of our smarts and wealth here, we should be doing our utmost to demonstrate the very best of green leadership. We should be a microcosm, a laboratory, a pilot project of what is needed planet-wide.

HVSF, with a lot of slick lawyers that have been wearing us all out, have paid lip service to green leadership, but the 'devil is in the details' folks -- or rather in the proposed carbon footprint.

I am not opposed to HVSF being here, I am opposed to the scale of what they propose. It is TOO MUCH.

New York City is full of theatre and honestly they need our patronage desperately right now. We do not need to bring New York City here, for chrissake. We do not.

With the current plan, thousands of people will be coming here daily, 24/7, creating huge congestion, making our home a tourist attraction, and transforming this area forever.

This has been a very frustrating process for those of us who believe in democratic principles. The community has had NO opportunity to truly have a conversation about this except through indirect channels like our community papers and private gatherings.

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JAN 11 2022

So, I hope you will come to the first, public meeting, January 27, at the Town Hall or on zoom.

Whatever your sentiments, or however much you have followed it so far, please attend, listen and think about what is best for our very special community.

We can shape what is happening.

It is not a done deal.

Once it is done, it will be done and there will be no going back.

Susan Coleman
Garrison, New York

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JAN 10 2022

John and Tamara Benjamin
265 Avery Road
Garrison, New York 10524

Philipstown Planning Board
Attn: Cheryl Rockett, Secretary
2 Cedar Street
Cold Spring, New York 10516

January 10, 2021

To Whom It May Concern:
Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival: Traffic Study, the DOT and Route 9.
A Disaster in the Making?

My wife and I are extremely concerned that the huge scope of the HVSF Development is going to give the New York State Department of Transportation the impetus to turn the Route 9 corridor into a "Full Monty" four lane highway all the way through Philipstown.

Backstory:

1. It is basically only through Philipstown that Route 9 is NOT a four lane highway.
2. Back in the late 1970's the DOT acquired a considerable amount of property along Route 9 to expand their Right of Way. These "acquisitions" were accomplished with the understanding that an eminent domain proceeding could be used if a minimal cash offering was not agreed upon by the property owners.

Thus: Rights of Way were acquired to expand various sections of the road for speed and "safety." The three lane hill south of the "Bird and Bottle" was thus enabled and the property was bought from the landowners.

Also, the properties on either side of the Philipse Brook Road Underpass were added; some "taken" from the present Garrison Golf Club Property to create the third passing lane and the eventual widening of the bridge.

Additional land was "taken" at the junction of Frazier Road and Route 9; land now owned by Watergrass Sanctuary aka Audubon; as well as the junction with Old Albany Post Road.

A complete survey of the Route 9 corridor through Philipstown needs to be studied to discover other "takings."

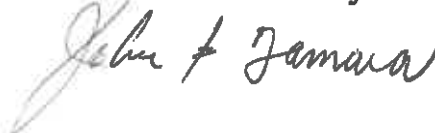
3. Of course, the real concern, the disaster in the making is the "four-laning" of Route 9 through Philipstown. The HVSF Campus and the tremendous traffic load that this development of regional consequence, and this epicenter for Shakespeare, plays right into the plans of the DOT engineers who are paid to Build, Build and Build.

The cumulative growth in traffic and the "mitigations:" Traffic Light at 403, traffic light at Perk's Plaza, and the traffic light at the 301 intersection; the 3 laning of 4 sections of Route 9 already built out, combined with the major permitted or proposed developments; Magazzino Art Complex, the development at North Highlands named Glassbury Court, the proposal for the Equestrian Center and Development near Horton Road, etc. The huge added load from the Shakespeare Regional Development of will most likely create the final impetus to Build Back Bigger, faster and of course "safer." In other words, the Planning Board must consider the cumulative impacts of this development and the negative impacts on the quality of life in the community.

The four "laning" of Route 9 will be an unmitigated disaster for Philipstown, it's wildlife and it's way of life.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter,

John and Tamara Benjamin



To the Philipstown Planning Board,

Our names are Jay and Patty Brenner and we are residents of one year in Garrison. Our address is 29 Snake Hill Road. It has come to our attention that the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Society is planning to build a new entrance and bridge to the Garrison Golf Course property directly across the road from our driveway entrance.

Our first thought is why build a new entrance? The existing access to the property has been there for thirty+ years. There is an entrance to The Garrison on Phillips Brook Road from Snake Hill Road down the hill and west of the current entrance. If used, that choice would keep attendees off the major roads all together. Why impact major thoroughfares when there are options? Why impact local homeowners when there are wooded areas with no private properties down the road?

Our other concerns:

- 1: The traffic pattern will be directly across from our driveway. We are entitled to see a study on this anticipated traffic. It will absolutely impact access to our own property on the day of performance
- 2: Removal of existing trees that are now part of the wonderful landscape.
- 3: Noise pollution during peak periods.
- 4: Light pollution.
- 5: Removal of our post office box and our neighbor's box as well, which are directly in the way.

We have other major concerns about the intersection of Snake Hill Road and Route 9.

We believe that if a traffic light is installed it will cause a huge noise pollution problem based on large trucks and that will have to downshift and then accelerate back up to speed. What type of light are you planning? Hopefully a smart light that is only used during performances.

Please be advised of our major concerns outlined above. We have attended many Shakespeare Society performances over the years and want to be supportive neighbors. We anticipate your response and consideration.

Concerned Garrison Residents,

Jay and Patty Brenner

29 Snake Hill Road

Garrison N.Y. 10524

516-313-7670

Jay@Brennerphoto.com

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JAN 11 2022



CHERYL ROCKETT <crockett@phillpstown.com>

Letters for submission to public record.

1 message

highfield <highfield@optonline.net>

Mon, Jan 17, 2022 at 8:03 PM

To: CHERYL ROCKETT <crockett@phillpstown.com>

Dear Cheryl,

I would be grateful if you would submit the following two letters to the the Chairman and members of Planning to be entered into the public record?

Many thanks, as ever,
Carol

Dear Chairman and Members of the Planning Board,

Deep in the GCC/HVSF Environmental Application Form, (pp 103/104 Tables 25 & 26) prepared by their 6 consultants, project manager and lawyers, is the erroneous claim that they are saving us from suburban sprawl and its resulting costs. The argument in the EAF goes thus: the cost born by the taxpayer already is high because the golf course was never developed with housing which would have generated tax income; the current proposal is now saving us increased costs because the tax income generated by the handful of houses that could be allowed on the property under present regulations would be less than the cost of more children attending Garrison School, using state wide average costs, Here they claim that building houses would in one instance generate more tax income and in the second instance generate increased tax costs.

Aside from that, the School, can absorb considerably more children per class than the current 13 at little to no extra cost. GUFFS does *not* conform to State wide averages. High school tuition has always been considerably reduced by a drift to private schools, currently 40%. The argument in the EAF is null and void, victim to another instance where these top-class consultants have zero knowledge of our town.

The community, according to the GCC/HVSF (EAF pp 103/4), currently bears the price of approximately \$155,000 in lost taxes for the Golf Course to exist. This proposal is asking us to increase this to about \$280,000 p.a.

The Festival will no longer pay very large annual costs of rent, erecting and taking down the tents, storage of same. What is a gain for HVSF is a loss in tax income for the Town, and especially Garrison as school taxes are the major component. I understand that the nonprofit Scenic Hudson makes a payment to the Town in lieu of taxes for many of the areas it owns. However, I would be happy to bear the cost of extra taxes in return for a moderation in the scope of the plan.

We don't need to be saved. We already saved ourselves almost 20 years ago and re-committed ourselves with the November 2021 update to our Comprehensive Plan.

Please attend the Public Hearing of the Planning Board on January 27 at 7.30 in person or on zoom.

Stan Freilich

Dear Chairman and Members of the Planning Board,

There is a very timely separate section in the Sunday Times of January 16th, 2022 on the subject of 'over tourism' and 'sustainable sightseeing' which we as a community should take to heart. Our beautiful town is in danger of becoming a tourist destination that threatens to overwhelm the stated mission/vision of both our Comprehensive Plan and the Hudson Highlands Land Trust to preserve the rural character and scenic beauty of our town.

Garrison currently has three major wedding venue destinations, a retreat center and potentially a major cultural center in its midst. Its 2,500 inhabitants who opted for a quiet, rural home here are beginning to feel beleaguered. Hiking on a weekend or beautiful week day is no longer a quiet walk in nature. Anthony's Nose is a zoo. Rte 9 is horrible.

We need to weigh very carefully the consequences, intended and unintended, on our community of 'over tourism' and large scale development, cultural or otherwise.

Carol Marquand

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JAN 18 2022

Frederick H. Osborn III
Post Office Box 347
Garrison, NY 10524-0347
Telephone 845-424-3683; cell 914-672-3919; email osbornf@aol.com

Neal Zuckerman, *Chairman*
Philipstown Planning Board
238 Main Street
Post Office Box 155
Cold Spring, NY 10516-0155

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JAN 21 2022

Friday 21st January 2022

Dear Neal:

I write in **support of the proposal from the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival** (“HVSF”) to establish a year-round theatre complex on the grounds of the current Garrison Gold Club at the corner of Snake Hill Road and Route 9 in Garrison (TM# 60.-1-59.2 & 59.3).

Philipstown is a thinly settled area whose affluent and well education citizens appreciate and preserve their natural surroundings; they are equally enthusiastic about access to intellectual stimulation and cultural experiences of high calibre.

The presence of the HVSF at Boscobel over the last 30+ years has given the community a region-wide reputation for thoroughly professional theatre, attracted sophisticated audiences, and provided a cultural and artistic anchor to the region.

Of course there will be local citizens who will object to the size of the project at The Garrison; they have valid concerns about the traffic, the visibility of structures, the sounds, the existence of local zoning laws that may need to be waived. Indeed, a very vocal small group buys ads in the local newspapers to complain almost every week, so it LOOKS as if there is substantial opposition to the project. Those who support it – of which there are many – are NOT buying ads in the weekly newspapers and are NOT writing letters every week. But they are interested in seeing the project proceed.

So I want to add my input to the Planning Board’s careful and methodical deliberations about approvals for this project.

Issues of parking, visibility of structures, crowd control, traffic patterns, sound and light pollution, are all being addressed by professionals in each of the respective fields. I feel they will be carefully attended and the various challenges and concerns properly mitigated.

And I heartily support the approval of a temporary permit for HVSF to have a season at the new site next summer. Doing that will give a “dry run” for all of us to see how issues of traffic, viewsheds, night lighting, sound leakage and parking can be addressed.

Despite our town’s elaborate Master Plans and zoning regulations, the overall impact of this project will have such benefit to the community and the region that it justifies adjustments to the current town planning and zoning restrictions.

HVSF are a “known quantity;” they have had a beneficial presence in Philipstown for over thirty years; they are known to conduct their affairs with restraint, professionalism, artistic quality, and sensitivity to the neighbors.

I urge the Planning Board and the Town Board to continue their detailed, careful assessment of the proposal and to issue the appropriate approvals and waivers and permits to enable this important enhancement of the cultural life of our town to take place.

Thank you for your consideration, and for the energy and expertise that you and the Planning Board have exhibited.

Sincerely,

Fred Osborn III

cc: John Van Tassel, *Supervisor, Town of Philipstown*

January 21, 2022

Dear Members of the Philipstown Planning Board:

How lucky are we to have Hudson Valley Shakespeare in our town! I have carefully looked at their plans for using the former space at the Garrison Golf Course. I believe that this theater company, which has always shown regard for conservation and the environment in their mission, is the perfect steward for this beautiful land. As a non-profit that depends upon audience and community support, Hudson Valley Shakespeare has a mission that is intrinsically tied to benefiting our community.

The current plan makes a minor impact on the land while allowing the residents of Philipstown access to a variety of resources. Hudson Valley Shakespeare offers career building opportunities for our community. Many local teenagers and college students have found work at the Shakespeare festival, and the experiences gained there have led them to land jobs as they move on in their lives. Additionally, Hudson Valley Shakespeare does a lot of community outreach. Personally, I have acted in their production of *Our Town* and I have participated in their playwriting workshops and contest. I have also, of course, been an audience member at many of their productions.

I am excited that the proposed plan allows Hudson Valley Shakespeare to create housing for artists on site. At the moment, actors have to travel back and forth to Boscobel for rehearsals, which is taxing for them and for the environment. It seems like the move to the golf course and the proposed plan actually puts less of a traffic burden on Philipstown in this way—since actors do not have to travel to and from the performance space daily. Also, moving the already minimal Shakespeare traffic from 9d to Route 9 detangles the performance traffic from the weekend tourist traffic in Cold Spring.

Thank you so much for your time and careful attention to Philipstown's needs. I am so happy to support this project by Hudson Valley Shakespeare.

Sincerely,

Megan Shea

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JAN 24 2022



CHERYL ROCKETT <crockett@phillpstown.com>

In support of HVSF

1 message

Susannah <susannahkm@hotmail.com>

Sat, Jan 22, 2022 at 12:33 PM

To: "editor@highlandscurrent.org" <editor@highlandscurrent.org>

Cc: "crockett@phillpstown.com" <crockett@phillpstown.com>

To Whom It May Concern,

A little note of gratitude for the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival.

Around fifteen years ago, I was hired soon out of college to be a part of the Festival. That job would give me enough working weeks to enter my union which has since been the backbone of my career as an artist - providing essential security, stability, guidance and health insurance.

I met two of my closest friends that first summer, so too providing some of the most trusted support, nurturance and care of my life to me and my family.

They met at the Festival themselves, fell in love, married and now have a child together... A daughter who is now one of my own daughter's best friends. My oldest daughter. She was born shortly after I married the man I worked with my third year working at the Festival.

My husband and I have gone on to have two more children together. Our son will celebrate his one year old birthday the day after the Festival's public hearing for the Phillipstown Planning Board.

This past summer I was hired as a choreographer for the Festival. One day, I brought both my daughters to dance under the Festival's tent. It was just us three. To try and describe their experience would be a disservice. But I have had it myself. I had it that first summer and have every summer since...I might call it transcendence. Most call it magic. They call it "that Place"!

We have now been Cold Spring residents since July of 2019, called back to the magic that brought us together. Our oldest daughter will enter Haldane in the Fall. We celebrate Halloween like we never thought possible.

To say that the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival has shaped the course of my life would be a gross understatement.

Our family was, in great part, born of the opportunities the Festival provided for us. Our children now carry on that opportunity and potential into the community. I would wish that for every young family whether they are residents or just spending a weekend.

We are so grateful to the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival and we wish them many more more seasons to come.

Warmly,
Susannah Millonzi

Sent from my iPhone

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JAN 24 2022



CHERYL ROCKETT <crockett@phillipstown.com>

Fwd: Attending Public Hearing on 1/27 via Zoom

2 messages

Susan Allen <susanha70.5@gmail.com>
To: crockett@phillipstown.com
Cc: John Allen <johnallenny@gmail.com>

Sat, Jan 22, 2022 at 2:04 PM

- >
- > Hello, My husband, John, and I would like to attend the hearing via Zoom. I hope it is not to late to address our concern.
- > We saw the HVSF model in Cold Spring on November 14th and when we asked about water usage and our concerns about the aquifer, we were told there would be no additional usage.
- > The list of HVSF LOCALS in yesterday's Highland Current lists a considerable increase in estimated water usage. Our home is 1 mile south on the west side of route 9. This issue should be explored throughly and aired widely.
- >
- > Sincerely, Susan Allen
- >
- >
- >
- > Sent from my iPad

CHERYL ROCKETT <crockett@phillipstown.com>
To: Susan Allen <susanha70.5@gmail.com>
Cc: John Allen <johnallenny@gmail.com>

Mon, Jan 24, 2022 at 8:58 AM

Hello,
Below is the link to register. I will also pass your note on to the Planning Board members.
Thank you,
Cheryl

When: Thursday, January 27, 2022 at 7:30 PM Eastern Time

Topic: Phillipstown Planning Board "GGC/HVSF Special Meeting/Public Hearing" January 27, 2022

Register in advance for this webinar:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_I_C_foYURi2ML5u4GrtStQ

Webinar ID: 879 2248 6749 Passcode: 507942

One tap mobile: 1-646-558-8656,,87922486749#,,, *507942#

After registering, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the webinar.

[Quoted text hidden]

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JAN 24 2022

To the editors: about HVSF

From: Roger Lipsey, PO Box 570 / 92 Moog Road, Garrison NY 10524

For confirmation, tel: (landline) 845.424.3710

To the editors: About HVSF

From: Roger Lipsey, PO Box 570 / 92 Moog Road, Garrison NY 10524

For confirmation, tel: (landline) 845.424.3710

Philipstown is culturally rich beyond anything that could be expected of a town of our size. It is rich in landscape and history, from the riverside to the highlands, from the Great Chain across the Hudson to the Foundry that helped win the Civil War. Living here, we are heirs to it all and responsible for it all. We need to be—and can be—both conservators and, where needed, visionaries looking past what is to what could be. Among our very greatest treasures is the Shakespeare Festival, now in a visionary phase, guided by steady hands.

The shared vision of a conservation-minded philanthropist and thoroughly experienced Festival leaders, the plan is to relocate the Festival to a highland location well known to us all. This will be its permanent home, preserving the hallmark tent theater, providing living quarters for the seasonal acting company and strengthened educational programs. This is an extraordinary gift to Philipstown, to the tri-state region and the State of New York. I have confidence in this vision, and we all should.

I don't know that any theater festival in North America does as much to refresh and stage the works of the world's greatest playwright, alongside the work of emerging American playwrights. Night after night, those words, those dilemmas and passions and loves project out into our lives. For that time the Festival tent becomes the center of Philipstown, deservedly so.

We must not set a Great Chain of our own making in the way of this project. Care for it, help it find its way.

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JAN 24 2022



CHERYL ROCKETT <crockett@phillpstown.com>

HVSF — Memorandum of Comment

1 message

leighseippel@aol.com <leighseippel@aol.com>
Reply-To: leighseippel@aol.com
To: "crockett@phillpstown.com" <crockett@phillpstown.com>

Mon, Jan 24, 2022 at 10:10 PM

RECEIVED
JAN 25 2022

Dear Philipstown Officials,

As a 30-year neighbor of HVSF's Boscobel site, valuing its observed cohesive role in our community, I wrote the attached letter to the editors of our local newspapers.

Since a planning hearing is imminent it seems appropriate to submit it to you authorities now also.

I have been a director of both Scenic Hudson and a national conservancy for over 20 years. As a conservationist of public use land I am mystified by what has appeared in the press from a handful of individuals.

From a Philipstown governance perspective this project nicely expands public access to our mountaintop vistas. Its buildout occupies only minimally functional new space in an area long developed, and the project collaterally links significant additional acreage to our tens of thousands of acres of Highlands conserved forest land. Further environmentally considered, the HVSF project is within a plan to return the now permanently terminated money-losing subsidized, and annually heavily chemically treated, golf course back to natural state land.

From a public safety and convenience standpoint HVSF's close adjacency to a Route 9 traffic light is clearly preferable to the Boscobel site's Route 9 D well known dangerous lightless traffic congestion.

And from a town planning perspective the HVSF location up near Route 9 will not bring disruption from theater and event goes to either Garrison or Cold Spring.

Thus as the attached letter conveys I myself consider this HVSF project clearly a great benefit to Philipstown. Originating from a philanthropic citizen and joined with probable government funding in the interest of our community, It

will be a great enhancement of the quality of life in Phillipstown through its long treasured cultural resource HVSF.

Sincerely,

(Mr.) Leigh Seppel
1653 Route 9D, Cold Spring 10516

 **HVSF Letter to Editor Jan 18 2022 (1).pdf**
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To the Editor,

Our Shakespeare Festival is at the heart of Phillipstown community. I have attended it for a quarter century, observing HVSF as a splendid gathering of the full diversity of our people children to seniors. Whatever enhances its ability to continue should be encouraged.

The proposed move to a site beside Route 9 is just that, it is a wonderful opportunity for permanent stability. With it will come new public access to Highlands vistas previously open to a few golfers. The privately heavily subsidized golf course is closed permanently in any event.

The building site is on land already developed. It is modest in necessary scale and tiny in proportion to the tens of thousands of acres of permanently conserved public parklands to which it is peripheral and adds substantial new area. A new traffic light at the theater's Route 9 entry will deliver safety and congestion improvement over prior irregular congestion at Route 9D of the Boscobel site.

So this urges our officials to approve HVSF's plans in perspective of their many benefits to our community.

Leigh Seippel, Cold Spring / 845-321-2118

RECEIVED

JAN 24 2022

To the Editor:

One way or another, the Garrison golf course will soon be history. That is the express desire of its owner, Mr. Davis, who no longer wants to run an 18-hole golf course. HVSF was offered the use of a portion of the land and has proposed and extensively researched a thoughtful, long-term site plan that prioritizes environmental restoration. HVSF will play an active role in land conservation and stewardship in a way that few other entities eyeing the site ever would. No one should forget that a housing development was once proposed for the same site – perish the thought!

A cost-benefit analysis is always wise, but it is also only as good as the relative weighting given to the variables included in it. There are understandably diametrically opposed, positive or negative conclusions before the Planning Board that are entirely dependent upon the variables chosen and their weighting. HVSF has been tremendously accommodating and continues to listen to and change in response to local concerns. It should be underscored that the plans proposed would be undertaken over two decades, not all at once. This long term approach is unusual and far-sighted, encouraging really adaptive land use.

From an environmental perspective, the proposal has so many advantages. All one has to do is walk to the top of the 11th hole to notice the conspicuous absence of birdsong and insect noises, particularly bees, anywhere on the golf course. This is because golf courses do not encourage the interlacing ecosystems which encourage the growth of integrated life. You find geese in passage and their many droppings and the occasional crow. There are at present neither flowers for insects nor bushes for birds and other animals.

From a safety perspective, there is a huge advantage to having HVSF at the Garrison site. Increased traffic will underscore the need for a traffic light at the intersection of Snake Hill Road/Travis Corners Road and Route 9. There has already been a death at this intersection and many near misses as anyone who makes this crossing daily knows. The DOT apparently requires two deaths before they take a serious look at the need for a traffic light! However, statistics showing increased traffic flow are the key gating metric justifying the addition of a traffic signal, and this will surely be the case here.

From a social and personal enrichment perspective, HVSF is a huge gift. The presence of Shakespeare and exposure to other playwrights afforded by the countless, marvelous performances at Boscobel over the years has given untold pleasure and enrichment to thousands and thousands of people. The removal of that benefit would be devastating. HVSF could have gone across the river, upstate, who knows where. The perpetuation of all this organization does in our cultural life is a benefit which is quite literally incalculable. It is intangible. It would be crude pseudo-science to even attempt to put a dollar value on it — and HVSF is an important local employer.

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Even should local taxes be raised a bit, our children and grandchildren will have the advantage of summer job opportunities and possibly a chance to perform themselves.

Theater and the arts more broadly should never be taken for granted. If HVSF were to shutter completely, or move to another locale far from Philipstown, the void left by its absence would be felt by an enormous number of people, some die-hard theatergoers, other first timers who have never seen a Shakespeare play performed before. The magic created every summer by HVSF is something that could disappear in a heartbeat. Life in the Hudson Highlands would not be the same without the HVSF. Anyone who believes we could simply move on and find some other source of cultural nourishment should think long and hard about just how accustomed we have become to having a marvelous theater experience in a stunningly beautiful setting on our doorstep every summer. The loss of HVSF would be catastrophic. We urge everyone to think about this as you do your own cost-benefit analysis. For us, there is simply no question that the benefits far outweigh any potential costs, whether a slight rise in taxes or traffic.

HVSF and the Hudson Highlands Land Trust are extraordinarily wise choices for the ongoing stewardship of this beautiful piece of land. The benefits will accrue for generations to come.

Hildreth and Dan Potts
57 Travis Corners Road
Garrison NY 10524

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CHERYL ROCKETT <crockett@phillipstown.com>

HVSF

1 message

Stephen Ives <ives@insigniafilms.com>

Tue, Jan 25, 2022 at 9:41 AM

To: editor@highlandscurrent.org

Cc: crockett@phillipstown.com

To The Editor:

We have read with interest the various letters supporting and opposing the new Hudson Valley Shakespeare Project, and we sympathize with our neighbors who worry that it will bring increased traffic, sound pollution, and a disruption of the rural character that makes Phillipstown precious to us all, but at the end of the day, we remain supporters of HVSF's new plans. Here is why.

Growth. The pressure from increased development and tourism that has radically increased during the Covid-19 pandemic is here to stay. In fact, it was already happening before 2020 because of social media. The question, we believe, is not can we stop this trend, but how do we best manage it. Having a critical open space in the heart of our community, under the use and stewardship of a non-profit organization with deep roots in our town, is far superior to a golf course catering to an almost exclusively well-to-do clientele, or another luxury housing development (even one on a small scale), or a larger upscale hotel complex.

Traffic. We are concerned about traffic jams on Route 9 and the Snake Hill intersection, but we almost lost a family member in a crash there and have witnessed horrific accidents at that site on a regular basis. We think it is past time that a traffic light and adequate safety measures were put in place. The fact that HVSF provides sufficient parking is a plus in our minds.

Diversity. Phillipstown remains a racially homogenous community, and HVSF has a proven track record administering a diverse educational outreach program that will be expanded under their new plan. Providing economical housing for artists working with the festival is another much-needed opportunity to change the kind of people who can call Phillipstown home.

Ecology. The Garrison is a stunning golf course and have nothing against the game. But keeping a manicured stretch of endless grass required excessive irrigation, pesticides, and herbicides. This open space, which more people will now enjoy, can be managed with an ecological lens, reducing chemical inputs into our ecosystem.

Scale. Friends have raised concerns about the scale of the HVSF campus, but it seems clear that future expansion plans will occur over a significant time period, allowing the community to adapt as the festival grows.

Like many of our neighbors, HVSF has enriched our family in ways large and small – from providing summer jobs, to teaching our kids in school, to creating memorable nights of theater. This project is an important change to our town, and we encourage people to show up and ask HVSF and their consultants tough questions, but we also disagree with the idea of reflexive opposition to any kind of development. Societies inevitably grow and evolve, and a plan for Phillipstown that puts art, diversity, and inclusion at the heart of our community seems to us to be a positive vision for the future.

Stephen Ives and Anne Symmes

Stephen Ives
Founder/Producer/Director/Writer
845-519-9321- mobile

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241 Centre Street, 6th floor front



CHERYL ROCKETT <crockett@phillipstown.com>

letter about proposed HVSF project

1 message

Jacob Weisberg <jacob.weisberg142@gmail.com>
To: crockett@phillipstown.com

Tue, Jan 25, 2022 at 10:34 AM

January 25, 2022

Dear members of the Phillipstown Board,

I'm writing on behalf of my wife, Deborah Needleman, as well as myself. We have owned a house at [781 Old Albany Post Road](#) for 25 years. As we live less than a mile from the proposed permanent home of the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival at The Garrison, we have been paying close attention to the discussion about how it may affect us, our neighbors, and the larger community.

While we appreciate the sincerity of many of the concerns and objections expressed, we favor the proposal. A primary reason we support the plan is the way the HVSF enriches the life of our town. Summer theater at Boscobel has been one of the strongest attractions of living in Garrison. The magic of the many performances we've attended over the years has been, for me, inseparable from the magic of the Hudson Valley. Having taken our children to performances from the earliest possible age, it was no surprise when our daughter was inspired to study Shakespeare in college. Her career ambition is to be a director -- a role she first understood from seeing plays at Boscobel. Inspiring young people to pursue careers in the arts is one of the downstream effects we ought to consider.

I hesitate to wade in on topics on which neighbors are divided, but it does seem to me that many of the worries expressed are unwarranted, or at least exaggerated. There will no doubt be some increase in summer traffic in the evenings on Route 9. But our big concern about traffic has always been the hazard of crossing Route 9 at Snake Hill Road. A traffic light at that dangerous intersection might literally save our lives someday -- it seems like a fair trade. As for noise, distant applause and music seem unlikely to compete with the regular train whistles and West Point artillery exercises we have all learned to live with.

When it comes to the environmental impact, the combined theater and preserved open space will be a vast improvement over a golf course or the potential alternative of more residential development. No one has done more to protect open space and public access in Garrison than Chris Davis. He has prevented commercial development at the Garrison to date by serving as an owner of last resort. Chris's past record shouldn't give the HVSF proposal a free pass. But his tremendous commitment to protecting land and preserving the rural character of the town should provide some assurance to skeptics.

I believe that the economic impact of the project will be a net positive as well. A decrease in property tax revenues will be offset not only by limiting growth in costs for education and services, but also by sales tax on new and increased economic activity. For young people growing up in the area, the HVSF will open gateways to careers, as well as experiences in the arts. When all the pros and cons are tallied up, this project will be an economic boon to the community.

Nothing is perfect and no change is without risk. But the balance, in this case, tilts strongly in favor of building a permanent home for the HVSF at The Garrison. We support the plan in the firm belief that it will make life better for us, for our community, and for the town.

Yours sincerely,

Jacob Weisberg
[761 Old Albany Post Rd](#)
Garrison, NY 10524

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CHERYL ROCKETT <crockett@phillipstown.com>

Question re: Passing lanes on Route 9 near The Garrison/Travis Corners/Snake Hill Road Entrances

1 message

Friedrike Merck <friedrike@friedrike.com>
To: crockett@phillipstown.com

Tue, Jan 25, 2022 at 10:45 AM

Hello,

If the DOT approves the installation a traffic light at the intersection of Rte 9/Travis Corners/Snake Hill Road, **will the DOT also be approving the elimination of the southbound passing lane that ends less than a minute north of the Rte 9 entrance to The Garrison?**

The southbound passing lane is unnecessary, as there is a more extensive southbound passing lane five minutes to the north.

The second, shorter southbound passing lane that ends near the Garrison entrance, encourages/allows, aggressive drivers to quickly pass uphill, so that by the time they have over-taken a car that is going at or five MPH over the speed limit, the passing car is easily moving at 65 MPH, and by the time the passing car has cleared the incline, about a half minute north of the Garrison entrance, it can easily be traveling at 70 MPH.

And will the DOT reduce the length of the northbound passing lane that ends less than a minute south of the existing Rte 9 / Snake Hill/ Travis Corners intersections?

The northbound passing lane is definitely useful, as there is no other passing lane south or north of this one for miles BUT this passing lane also ends at the crest of a hill, about ten seconds south of the Rte 9/SH/TC Intersections and again, drivers going the speed limit are regularly overtaken by aggressive drivers who are easily clocking 65MPH by the time they crest the hill. This northbound passing lane can still be very useful if reduced in length by one third.

Is the DOT addressing these associated, passing lane traffic safety concerns?

Thank you very much for giving the public the opportunity to ask questions on these important safety issues.

Best,
Friedrike Merck

Evarts Hill Road
Garrison

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CHERYL ROCKETT <crockett@philipstown.com>

Re: HVSF

1 message

Kathy Plummer <kplummer@highlands.com>
To: crockett@philipstown.com

Tue, Jan 25, 2022 at 5:11 PM

Dear Philipstown Planning Board:

We wanted to write to you about our experience over the years with HVSF giving back so much to the community. It was founded here and has consistently demonstrated pride and gratitude for this valuable part of their identity. From the early days of its inception, the Festival has had an outreach program to local schools. They hire local young people, probably way more than they need, to help usher and welcome patrons at the plays every summer, giving them a great experience as well as wages. With free tickets and local talent, the production of Our Town was an over the top gift to the community.

A recent heartwarming story about Our Town tells much about the ongoing caring nature of this organization. A few weeks ago we had a phone call from Father Mark Connell (San Miguel Academy) in Newburgh wanting to get in touch with someone at HVSF in case there would be some film footage from Our Town. A former San Miguel middle school student who had been a cast member in Our Town wanted to get pictures for his college application. With one phone call, the student was remembered and the staff went to work to help out. No professional film documentation had been made but Sean McNall's mother had taken some footage that included the young student and within hours was able to make that available to him.

One more point about community and Our Town: When rehearsals began, the middle school student mentioned above was living in Newburgh and his family was unable to get him to and from rehearsals. Heartbroken, he prepared to drop out when HVSF Board member, Nat Prentice, heard about it and volunteered to help. Nat faithfully drove this aspiring young man back and forth from his home throughout the entire run of rehearsals and performances.

Yours truly,
Kathy and Joe Plummer

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Robert Calderisi
7 Northern Gate
Cold Spring, NY 10516
Tel. (917) 318 6862
Email: calderossi@gmail.com

January 25, 2022

Ms. Cheryl Rockett
Secretary,
Zoning, Planning, and Conservation
Philipstown Planning Board
2 Cedar Street
Cold Spring, NY 10516

Dear Ms. Rockett,

I am writing in support of the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival proposal, to be considered by the Planning Board in a public hearing on January 27th, 2022 at 7:30 pm.

I have lived in Cold Spring since November 2018 and was impressed from the start that the greatest writer in the English language was a central part of Philipstown's identity.

As a former director of the World Bank in Washington DC and an economist who has worked on economic and social development issues around the world for nearly fifty years, I was also struck by the impact of the Shakespeare Festival on local jobs and incomes. That impact can sometimes be taken for granted. Or, as the songwriter Joni Mitchell put it in the 1970s, "You don't know what you've got till it's gone."

In country after country, governments have sacrificed important sources of wealth and employment in the hope of finding "better" ways of creating income. Whether for social reasons, such as sparing people the need to work on a farm, or environmental ones, like making tourism more eco-friendly, governments have sometimes hobbled agriculture and tourism altogether through over-taxation and regulation, while having nothing to replace them with.

In some cases, governments find a happy middle ground. Costa Rica, which utterly destroyed its original forests through excessive logging, is now renowned as a mecca for eco-tourists seeking the flora and fauna of entirely regenerated tropical woodlands. The HVSF proposal is a Costa Rica-type win-win solution. Moving a cultural activity that has been “temporary” for 34 years to a permanent site where it will replace a golf course – one of the most environmentally unfriendly uses of land – seems positive in every respect.

Some of the supposed disadvantages of the project – like installing a traffic light on an already-dangerous stretch of highway – will be beneficial on their own terms. Other objections treat aspects of the project (like the wedding venues) as entirely new activities created by the HVSF project rather than ones that have been underway for some time. And some objections can appear elitist.

A recent letter to *The Highlands Current* suggested that Philipstown is already “over-developed” (“Hiking on a weekend is no longer a quiet walk in nature. Anthony’s Nose is a zoo. Route 9 is horrible.”). That the area attracts a large number of walkers should be something to celebrate rather than complain about, while also reasonably expecting that local parking and safety rules should be respected. Not everyone has moved here to enjoy a “quiet, rustic” setting. Many are long-term residents whose families depend on every dollar that the local economy can generate. And it would take a great deal of “bad” development – very sensibly resisted until now – to upset the balance of what will remain a nearly idyllic combination of country and urban attractions.

In addition to being a sparkling jewel in its own right that many other communities might envy, the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival is an important part of the local community. That central role is reflected in the breadth of studies and debate that have been part of the planning process. Concluding it successfully will open a new chapter not just for the Festival but also for Philipstown, which has demonstrated its ability in the past to build on its existing advantages rather than take them for granted.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Calderisi



CHERYL ROCKETT <crockett@phillipstown.com>

FW: Letter to the Editor In support of HVSF

1 message

Elizabeth M. Nevins <Elizabeth.M.Nevins@hofstra.edu>
To: "crockett@phillipstown.com" <crockett@phillipstown.com>

Wed, Jan 26, 2022 at 11:35 AM

Please be advised that I have submitted the letter below to local papers to show my unwavering support for HVSF's move from Boscobel to the Garrison Golf Club. I regret that I have a conflict for the Town Board meeting (at least the first part of the meeting), as I would otherwise be there to show my support in (virtual) person.

Warm regards,

Betsey Nevins-Saunders

From: Elizabeth M. Nevins
Sent: Wednesday, January 26, 2022 11:33 AM
To: editor@pcnr.com
Subject: Letter to the Editor In support of HVSF

To the Editor:

I write to enthusiastically support the move of the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival to a new, permanent home, at the Garrison Golf Course. For some years, my husband had been campaigning for us to buy a home in the Garrison area. But it was only after seeing my first performance under the tent at Boscobel that I was finally ready to commit. I was so moved by the integration of the beauty of the Hudson Valley and the mindblowing creativity of the performance that I felt confident in planting roots in the town. Since that summer more than ten years ago, I have attended almost all of the offerings of HVSF each year, and each year, I am reminded how lucky we are to have this cultural richness just down the road. While Boscobel has provided a lovely temporary residence for HVSF, we must seize this once-in-a-lifetime chance for a permanent home at the Garrison Golf Club. The new site is equally beautiful, and by providing housing for artists and doubling the ingress and egress, the move will make this gem even more accessible than the site at Boscobel. As a member of the board of a local environmental organization, I am proud that HVSF has also made careful plans to limit the environmental impact of the move, revitalizing the old golf course and opening the space to the public. I strongly urge approval of the project.

Betsey Nevins-Saunders

Garrison, New York

(cell: 202-486-9092)

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JAN 26 2022

Elizabeth Nevins | *Clinical Professor & Attorney-in-Charge* | Criminal Justice Clinic | Maurice A. Deane School of Law at Hofstra University | 108 Hofstra University, Joan Axinn Hall | Hempstead, NY 11549 | elizabeth.nevins@hofstra.edu | ph: 516-463-5934 | fx: 516-463-5937

Joe Regele
1039 Route 9D / Garrison, NY 10524

January 26, 2022

Philipstown Planning Board
Neil Zuckerman Chairman

RE: Request for Recusal – Board Member Kim Connor – HVSF application

Dear Chairman Zuckerman and Board members,

Happy New Year to all and good health and 2022.

It has been brought to my attention that one of the Planning Board members, Kim Connor, is also a member of the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Insiders Circle. Membership in “The Circle” is granted after a donation of no less than \$10,000*. This is a significant amount of money.

While sitting in judgment of Shakespeare’s application, after such a donation, may or may not be a statutory violation of Town Law but it does raise the question as to whether a significant “facilitator” of the Hudson Valley Shakespeare mission has lost the requisite impartiality to be able to vote on Shakespeare’s request to amend Town Laws.

I respectfully request that you require board member Kim Connor recuse herself from all deliberations concerning the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival.

As I’m sure you are aware I have been a vocal proponent of “Honoring the Process” by which I have intended to convey the importance of seeing that this application, which has been submitted by a very well-funded and socially prominent applicants, be treated openly, fairly and like any other application.

Please see that this item is added to your agenda and discussed openly so that there is no question as to the efficacy of the process.

Sincerely,

Joe Regele

*Source <https://hvshakespeare.org/supporters-of-hudson-valley-shakespeare-festival/>

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JAN 26 2022



CHERYL ROCKETT <crockett@phillipstown.com>

A letter in favor of Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival

1 message

Phoebe Geer <phoebe.geer@gmail.com>
To: crockett@phillipstown.com

Wed, Jan 26, 2022 at 1:33 PM

Dear Ms. Rockett and the Town Planning Board,

As a resident of Phillipstown with a multi-decade understanding of our town, I am writing to express my personal support for the Hudson Valley Shakespeare Festival's proposed plan to establish a permanent home at the former Garrison Golf Course.

A long-established nonprofit arts organization, HVSF has a proven track record of investing and reinvesting in our local community and providing enriching theatrical experiences for audiences around the tri-state region. They are among the most respected and long-tenured charitable arts organizations in our town, and continue to offer educational and enjoyable experiences to our residents, young and old.

The opportunity before us, to create a beautiful, permanent home for an established, healthy non-profit on a property that has reached the end of its natural existence as a golf course, is a win-win for Phillipstown. HVSF's proposal shows great attention taken towards our town and the environment, and I believe it will ultimately make our town a better place.

I support the proposal, without reservation.
Sincerely,
Phoebe Geer

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