On behalf of Art Omi

From: Annie Brody <abrody@crandelltheatre.org>
sent from gmail.com
Sent: Mon, May 4, 2020 at 12:23 pm
To: gfrench@townofghent.org, agroom@townofghent.org, lmachiz@townofghent.org, gocean@townofghent.org, dbarufaldi@townofghent.org, jstoner@townofghent.org, slazar@townofghent.org

crandell_email_signature.gif (4.9 KB)

Images not displayed. **SHOW IMAGES** | **ALWAYS SHOW IMAGES FROM THIS SENDER**

Dear Town of Ghent Planning Board,

As a peer, arts organization in the Chatham area, the Crandell attests to the positive cultural and economic impact that Art Omi has on Ghent and in the surrounding Hudson Valley.

Art Omi brings a unique opportunity to experience world-class contemporary sculpture and architecture outdoors for at no charge and enjoy the talents of emerging writers, dancers, musicians, architects from around the globe right here in Ghent.

Their educational programs foster inclusivity and provide young people with opportunity to explore creative expression, important goals in the Town of Ghent Comprehensive Plan.

Where else in our region can people walk through a stunning Columbia County landscape, curated both artistically and ecologically and enjoy outsized sculpture, or attend performances by artistic residents. or have one's children attend an arts-based summer camp?

Plus Art Omi often provides free admission and educational programs. Art Omi is a tremendous asset asset to the cultural landscape and arts community of the Chatham-Ghent area.

Sincerely,
Annie Brody

Annie Brody
Executive Director
Crandell Theatre
Office: 518.392.3445
Mobile 1: 518.781.0446
Mobile 2: 413.344.3423

48 Main Street Chatham, NY
http://www.crandelltheatre.org

At Omi Education Center Expansion Project

From: Brian Wood <brian@brianwoodstudio.com>
Sent: Wed, May 6, 2020 at 12:47 am
To: gfrench@townofghent.org
Cc: agroom@townofghent.org, lmachiz@townofghent.org, gocean@townofghent.org, dbarufaldi@townofghent.org, jstoner@townofghent.org, slazar@townofghent.org

---

Dear Ghent Town Planning Board:

I'm writing in strong support for your approval of Art Omi's Education Center building expansion. Art Omi is in great need of a permanent space to support activities that are currently held in a space that is not adequate to its needs. This will not change the programming or audience for their events but will provide much better accommodation for events and programming which will greatly benefit the community.

The proposed expansion is perfectly in alignment with your Comprehensive Plan. Art Omi has always been extremely sensitive to maintaining an experience of naturally discovering art in the landscape and their architecture follows the same discreet relationship - a mutually beneficial merging, if you will, with our local landscape and its natural rhythms and beauty.

While serving the community with its free admissions to events and exhibitions and its broad educational programs, it is also a very stimulating presence in the local economy. Because of its renown, Art Omi attracts visitors not only from Albany, Boston, and New York but brings national and international visitors to enjoy both Art Omi's programs and the region.

Granting Art Omi's proposed expansion is an important benefit for us all in this wonderful community.

Best regards,
Brian Wood
brianwoodstudio.com
917-886-1768

626 County Route 5
East Chatham, NY 12060

Art Omi, comments on traffic considerations

From: Lewis Streeter <lew1313@outlook.com>
Sent: Wed, May 6, 2020 at 6:44 am
To: Geoffrey French
Cc: aaron.groom@groomweb.net, garyocean22@gmail.com, machizmail@fairpoint.net, Mitchell Khosrova, jstoner@townofghent.org, ereis@townofghent.org, dbarufaldi@townofghent.org, slazar@townofghent.org

Hi Geoff,

I'm providing a brief follow up to some of my comments at the last public hearing regarding the traffic study. Please consider asking Art Omi if the recent submittal by Grant & Lyons, LLP, dated May 1, 2020 expands or changes the previously submitted materials. I think it does. With that as background I offer the following comments on increased traffic.

First off, I recognize that there has been an increase in traffic in this neighborhood resulting from normal population growth, and this is unavoidable. However, my comments at the public hearing were specific to the incremental traffic increase from a use that is currently attracting on the order of 40,000 visitors per year, has caused an increase in truck traffic for the service and delivery of items needed to support that level of use and will expand significantly in the future if left unchecked.

Unfortunately, this increase in traffic very likely occurs primarily from Friday through Sunday and primarily from May through October. In my opinion, the traffic study missed an opportunity to provide information regarding this impact, and assuming the number of proposed events has been revised, may not reflect the current proposed expansion.

Further, because the traffic counting device was installed east of the main entrance, there is no definitive way to determine how much traffic is going into Art Omi. Installing a counting device both east and west of the entrance would have provided that information and the Planning Board could then have used this very definitive information in its evaluation of traffic impacts on the local neighborhood.

The study determined that adequate infrastructure exists to handle the assumed peak traffic load, which is valuable information, but again, this conclusion does not help further the understanding of traffic impacts to the local neighborhood from the proposed expanded use. The Planning Board should not conclude that simply because the local roads have the capacity to handle a significant increase in traffic that there is no impact to the neighborhood from this increase. The Board will need to come to its own conclusion regarding the increase in the number of vehicles from this expanded use as well as the impacts to the local neighborhood caused from this increase.

Thank you for your time in reviewing the above and please feel free to follow up with any questions.

Lew

Comments on Art Omi's application

From: Lewis Streeter <lew1313@outlook.com>
Sent: Tue, May 5, 2020 at 7:16 pm
To: Geoffrey French
Cc: aaron.groom@groomweb.net, garyocean22@gmail.com, machizmail@fairpoint.net, Mitchell Khosrova, jstoner@townofghent.org, ereis@townofghent.org, dbarufaldi@townofghent.org, slazar@townofghent.org

Hi Geoff,

This message is from Lew Streeter, chairman of the zoning board and a neighbor of Art Omi. I'm going to send a couple of emails providing some feedback for the Planning Board to consider.

It is not surprising that the many people who have shared their support of Art Omi's proposed expansion have remained silent on the actual and potential impacts from this proposed expansion; sharing concerns about impacts to the neighborhood may appear to be non-supportive of Art Omi's mission. However, those who have voiced concerns about the real and potential impacts from the proposed expansion have stated that they support Art Omi. What is my point? This process is not about being in favor of or against Art Omi, rather this process is about the real and potential impacts to the local neighborhood, but, even larger than that, the compatibility of the proposed expansion with the local neighborhood and the Town as a whole.

I think this is most easily considered by comparing Art Omi's proposed uses with other uses allowed by the Town Code. Stated more directly, this is not simply an expansion of an Artists Cultural Center or Retreat, this is a proposed expansion into several additional uses, many of which have their own special use provisions. The list of alternate uses, taken from the project narrative or marketing materials, includes but is not limited to:

- Event Rentals
- Routine/recurring events
- Education programs
- Residency programs
- Lodging/inn/motel
- Outdoor recreation area

While the Planning Board can, does, and should, allow subordinate uses to a primary use, I would ask that due to the size and location of the current facility and the proposed expansion, the Planning Board carefully review the special conditions associated with, at a minimum, the following special permit uses. And, where appropriate, assign conditions to alleviate or lower the impacts from this expanded use. I understand that the provisions for each special permit use may apply only to that use, however I ask that the Board consider the impacts from the proposed uses along with the fact that the Town has put in place conditions for those uses to limit their impacts.

Special conditions and safeguards for certain special permit uses from 190-19:

- Artists cultural center or retreat 190-19 C
- Auditorium, meeting hall 190-19 D
- Bed and breakfast facility 190-19 E
- Commercial rural recreation facility 190-19 J
- Concerts, exhibitions or Festivals, 190-19 L
- Lodging 190-19 Q
- Nursery school 190-19 W
- Special event venue 190-19 CC

To help illustrate my point that the Board should review and discuss the conditions for each of the above listed uses, at a minimum, I provide the following example. Based on the May 1, 2020 submittal by Grant & Lyons LLP, it appears that Art Omi is proposing 55 events hosting up to 100 guests, 25 events hosting up to 250 guests, 20 events hosting up to 500 guests, and 3 events hosting up to 1,000 guests. This comes to a total of 105 events hosting 100 people or more. This appears to be in addition to the normal daily flow of visitors. Based on the number of events, I think the Board should review the requirements for the special permit uses listed above, and specific to events 190-19 CC, when discussing this application.

On the subject of multiple uses, I would ask that the Planning Board discuss and determine for the record, how this proposed expansion complies with or is consistent with Chapter 190-5. I would also request that the board determine how large the ancillary uses can or should be relative to the permitted use. For perspective on this topic, please consider the significant use of this facility as a rural recreation facility during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Finally, evaluation of this application relative to chapter 190-5 is an important issue for areas within RRA-1 and RRA-2. If, in the Planning Board's decision, it appears that the Town is allowing a significant expansion of uses beyond those allowed as an Artists Cultural Center or Retreat, there is the real potential that an increase in the number of similar applications will be seen throughout RRA-1 and RRA-2.

Thank you for taking the time to review this and feel free to contact me with any questions.

Lew

Art Omi's request for an expansion

From: Lewis Streeter <lew1313@outlook.com>
Sent: Wed, May 6, 2020 at 6:24 am
To: Geoffrey French
Cc: aaron.groom@groomweb.net, garyocean22@gmail.com, machizmail@fairpoint.net, Mitchell Khosrova, jstoner@townofghent.org, ereis@townofghent.org, dbarufaldi@townofghent.org, slazar@townofghent.org

---

Hi Geoff,

Here is a second email with a few things for the Planning Board to consider when discussing Art Omi's application.

The Planning Board should not approve an expansion of this size because it more than doubles the size of the facility, requests up to 105 events/uses, increases parking by over 100 spots, and will have a negative impact on the rural character of this community. However, if the Planning Board does approve this expansion, several conditions should be attached to the approval to eliminate or mitigate the negative impacts. Further, these conditions should be measurable and enforceable by the Town. Some conditions to consider include the following.

Define what an "event" or "use" is and include a cap on these. As an example, in the fall of 2019 there was advertising on Instagram for Yoga at Art Omi, $10 drop in class. This is and should be considered an additional use or event.

Do not allow outdoor amplified music before dawn or after dusk.

Do not allow cooking facilities and do not allow a restaurant/coffee shop/cafeteria, or any of the more than 30 synonyms for preparing and serving food to guests. Experience shows that if the Town prohibits a coffee shop use, Art Omi will simply call it an eatery, a luncheonette, or one of the other 30 plus synonyms. Also, please do not allow alcohol to be served at any events. This facility is located in a RRA-1 neighborhood and taverns are not allowed in rural, residential, agricultural districts.

Do not allow outdoor amplified music before dawn or after dusk.Cap the number of visitors allowed both daily and on an annual basis, except for allowed events and ask for an annual report with those numbers.

Do not allow equipment rentals; for instance, golf carts, bicycles, snowshoes etc.

Do not allow illuminated art due the potential impacts on neighbors and the surrounding community in general. Illuminated art should not be treated any differently than any other lighting discussed by the Planning Board. No outdoor display regardless of its name or purpose (i.e. art, sculpture, architecture etc.) should be allowed to have illumination or lighting. Further to this point, no lighting is allowed for signs in RRA-1 and carefully placed illuminated art, although called art, could serve as a sign, especially after dark. Consider as an example the cultivated hedges on display at Maple Lane Nursery in Valatie. Is this a display of their product or a sign advertising their business? A piece of illuminated art could serve a similar purpose to an illuminated sign.

Limit the height of the outdoor displays to something less than the Town standard of 35 feet.

Do not allow outdoor amplified music before dawn or after dusk.

Do not allow the display of art or architecture that is visible from County Route 22 as this becomes a safety hazard due to cars stopping and/or slowing down to look at and take pictures of this art.

Limit the delivery of items via truck to normal business hours during weekdays.

Recognize that their use of the property does have an impact on the land and review the SEQR form in the context of Art Omi's entire use, not just the proposed building expansion.

Set conditions that ensure this use remains in harmony with the Ghent Comprehensive plan, specifically Goals 1, 4, 7, 9, and 10. Specific to Goal 1, placing art, architecture, and trails throughout most of their land does not protect its natural beauty nor is it being preserved. Additionally, bringing 40,000+ visitors per year to the facility through a rural residential area does not protect the rural character of this neighborhood.

Consider requiring a performance bond to remove the displays in case Art Omi ceases to exist in the future. Displays of art and/or architecture spread across approximately 300 acres of land will have a significant cost for removal and the Town should not assume the risk for those removal costs.

Finally, due to the proposed size of this expanded use, and given that it is in a rural residential and agricultural area, the Planning Board should require an annual report in which Art Omi should demonstrate that they have complied with all established conditions. Given that this proposed expansion could cause significant impacts to the local neighborhood, and that this is an allowed use in both RRA-1 and RRA-2, the Planning Board should establish a condition that puts the onus of demonstrating compliance to set conditions, squarely on the applicant, for this and potential similar future uses.

Thank you for taking the time to review this email, I appreciate the time you dedicate to your role on this Board.

Lew Streeter

Art Omi

From: Mary Anne Davis <mad.maryanne@gmail.com>
Sent: Wed, May 6, 2020 at 7:35 am
To: gfrench@townofghent.org

Images not displayed. **SHOW IMAGES** | **ALWAYS SHOW IMAGES FROM THIS SENDER**

Dear Geoff,

As an artist living in Columbia County for 20 years, full time, I see Art Omi as one of the stellar parts of our cultural landscape. I am delighted that they are working toward strengthening their impact on our community and economy with a more comprehensive educational component. I strongly encourage you to accept Art Omi's request to expand their activity to give them a permanent space for activities already taking in place in inadequate facilities. This proposal is in keeping with Ghent's Comprehesive plan, increases Art Omi's economic impact on the community all while protecting and preserving Ghent's natural and rural landscape. Art Omi is free and offers all sorts of educational and cultural benefits to Ghent. We are so lucky to have them here!!

So, please say YES!!! tonight to Art Omi's proposal.

Sincerely yours,

Mary Anne Davis

--

davistudio

Mary Anne Davis | Founder, Owner and Chief Potter
maryanne@davistudio.com | (518) 821-5769

davistudio
(518) 392-7308
486 Pratt Hill Road
Chatham, NY, 12037
www.davistudio.com

htmlsig.com

--

davistudio

Mary Anne Davis | Founder, Owner and Chief Potter
maryanne@davistudio.com | (518) 821-5769

davistudio
(518) 392-7308
486 Pratt Hill Road
Chatham, NY, 12037
www.davistudio.com

htmlsig.com

Letter of Support for Art Omi

From: Jeffrey Lependorf <jeffreylependorf@gmail.com>

Sent: Wed, May 6, 2020 at 9:36 am

To: gfrench@townofghent.org, agroom@townofghent.org, lmachiz@townofghent.org, gocean@townofghent.org, dbarufaldi@townofghent.org, jstoner@townofghent.org, slazar@townofghent.org

---

Dear Ghent Planning Board,

I'm writing in support Art Omi's plans for an Education Center. Art Omi has long been a jewel in the crown of Columbia County, and the plans for it's Education Center will provide a much-needed space the children of our community. Particularly in light of current pandemic, and the general anticipation that social distancing measures will likely need to be maintained in the future, the planned expansion is even more necessary to provide adequate facilities for programs that are already deeply valued by families throughout the region. It's not a question of growing current programs, which are at the correct size, but of providing the necessary space to provide them as intended, with appropriate facilities to do so and with safety in mind.

I wrote to urge you to support this project, which will significantly enhance the quality of life for our local families by providing access to exceptional educational art programming, which in these challenging times becomes is more meaningful.

I'm personally also grateful to Art Omi keeping its grounds open for all during the pandemic, and to how thoughtfully and prominently they have provided signage reminding visitors of the importance of social distancing.

Thank you,

Jeffrey

JEFFREY LEPENDORF
www.jeffreylependorf.com

Art Omi Proposal

From: Tara Fracalossi <t.fracalossi@gmail.com>
Sent: Wed, May 6, 2020 at 10:37 am
To: gfrench@townofghent.org

To the Planning Board,

Please consider this letter of support for the expansion of Art Omi's education facilities.

We are full time residents of Kinderhook where we have lived for twenty-three years. Our son, now fifteen, has quite literally grown up at Art Omi. From his attendance at Saturday morning workshops starting in Kindergarten through his participation in years of Summer Camps to his present Counselor in Training role at those same camps, Art Omi has been a constant in his life and ours.

Having been involved in these workshops and camps for over a decade, it is clear to us that the facilities of Art Omi need this space only expansion to better deliver the educational programs that reach so many children and families throughout the region. The current education pavilions are only useful during our limited warm weather seasons and therefore limit cold weather education opportunities to the very small and insufficient gallery and reception spaces of the current visitors' center.

An increased and augmented permanent space for existing workshops and classes will allow Art Omi to provide improved and consistent educational opportunities for the surrounding community. This is a benefit that will clearly be felt by the children and families of Ghent and Columbia County. This opportunity for enhanced arts learning will cascade through the years and the many generations of children, like our son, who have been surrounded by the art and natural spaces of Art Omi and have come to see it as a home away from home.

Thank you for your careful consideration of this letter and proposal.

Sincerely,

Thomas Lail and Tara Fracalossi
Kinderhook

Letter of support for OMI project

From: Betsy Jacks <betsy_jacks@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wed, May 6, 2020 at 10:44 am
To: gfrench@townofghent.org, agroom@townofghent.org, lmachiz@townofghent.org, gocean@townofghent.org, dbarufaldi@townofghent.org, jstoner@townofghent.org, slazar@townofghent.org

---

To the Ghent Town Planning Board,

I am writing to express my support for the Education Center at Art OMI. Their education program is outstanding but their current space is not up to the task. They greet children and give instruction right in the middle entrance hallway where other visitors are trying to walk, using the floor as a work-table. Their instructors are so creative and so engaging to the children. My two daughters love the programming and learn so much about their own inner creativity, thinking outside the box, expanding their sense of possibilities in the world. The free programming that they offer, such as their wonderful Halloween Trick-or-Treat event, makes outdoor sculpture fun to explore. This organization is such a wonderful part of our Ghent community and the addition of adequate facilities would be fantastic. They have my full and enthusiastic support!

Betsy Jacks
Chatham, NY

Art Omi Special User Permit Application

From: Raymond Jurkowski <RJurkowski@CPLteam.com>
Sent: Wed, May 6, 2020 at 10:59 am
To: jlyons@grantlyons.com
Cc: Geoffrey French, Mitchell Khosrova, Kenneth Wersted

image001.png (3.1 KB)

Images not displayed. **SHOW IMAGES** | **ALWAYS SHOW IMAGES FROM THIS SENDER**

Hi John,

I hope this email find you safe.

I just received you correspondences of May 1st, and May 5th regarding the above referenced project.

I have few questions regarding the Future Program Event and Event Rental projections provided in Tables 9 and 10:

1. It appears that the information contained with these tables represent an *increase* to the levels previously provided in Art Omi's Project Narrative.
   Please confirm.

2. Has the new information (Tables 9 and 10) contained within your correspondence been shared with Creighton Manning and have they provided an opinion regarding the potential impact on the accuracy of their traffic study? If the new information represents an increase in traffic volume from what was evaluated in Creighton Manning original report, it is recommended that the traffic report be updated.

Raymond Jurkowski, PE | Principal
Direct: 518.267.3294 | Office: 518.828.2300
ARCHITECTURE. ENGINEERING. PLANNING.
CPLteam.com

Morris Associates is now **CPL**
Please note that my e-mail has changed as Morris Associates is now part of the architecture, engineering, planning firm CPL. Click here to learn more:* ***CPL acquires Morris Associates*

Re: Art Omi Education Expansion proposal

From: Kevin Lippert <lippert@papress.com>
Sent: Wed, May 6, 2020 at 11:11 am
To: agroom@townofghent.org, slazar@townofghent.org, lmachiz@townofghent.org, gocean@townofghent.org, jstoner@townofghent.org, gfrench@townofghent.org

Dear members of the Ghent Planning Board,

As both a neighbor and frequent visitor to Art Omi, I am writing in strong support of their proposal to expand rhe Education Center. My daughter regularly attends art classes there on Saturday mornings and the popularity of these makes them a bit crowded and compromises the ability of everyone to move safely around any installed art, let alone maintain safe social distancing, assuming this will be the new normal moving forward. We often eat lunch in the café portion of the building after class, and it would be great for them to be able to expand their offerings and seating capacity, if that's in their plans, The current building is, I think, as both a trained architect and publisher of books on architecture and landscape, a very sensitive one that manages to blend in with the its surroundings and still provide something of a landmark for visitors and locals (although the new towering deer sculpture certainly offers competition in this!). It's easy to imagine an addition on almost any side that would preserve the sense of scale and harmony of the current building, while making this an even more vital part of the Hudson Valley art scene. I'm often surprised by the reputation Art Omi enjoys among people even far away, and there's no reason a appropriate and well-designed addition to the existing structure couldn't bring more acclaim and visitors to this treasure on Route 22, and, possibly, a few more jobs.

I sincerely hope you will give approval to Omi's plans; I am available at both numbers below to offer more opinions or answer any questions you might have for me, a neighbor, user, and fan of the entire Art Omi complex.

Thank you for your consideration,
Kevin

-- Kevin Lippert
49 Curtis Road
Ghent, NY 12075
518-392-6813
646-207-5367 (mobile)

cc: Geoffrey French
Dan Burafaldi
Stephanie Lazar
Larry Machiz
Gary Ocean
Jen Stoner

Art Omi Education Center plans

From: Dave King <davekingwriter@gmail.com>
Sent: Wed, May 6, 2020 at 11:39 am
To: gfrench@townofghent.org, agroom@townofghent.org, lmachiz@townofghent.org, gocean@townofghent.org, dbarufaldi@townofghent.org, jstoner@townofghent.org, slazar@townofghent.org
Cc: Ruth Adams, Frank Tartaglione

Dear Ghent Town Planning Board members:

First of all, I hope you and all your loved ones are managing to stay safe and sane in the current moment. Thank you for continuing to keep our community strong and vibrant.

I am writing on behalf of myself and Franklin Tartaglione, 30+-year residents of Ghent, in support of Art Omi's plans for an expanded educational center on their property. In our view, Art Omi, with its many diverse programs, is the primary cultural institution in this community and a reason we consider ourselves fortunate to live here.

As a novelist and winner of the 2006 Rome Prize, I value the Omi/Ledig House literary programs for both personal and professional reasons. Several close friends, notably Sigrid Nunez (winner of the 2019 National Book Award). Alex Halberstadt (best-selling biographer) and the Spanish experimental writer Mercedes Cebrian have benefited from Omi residencies, and several former residents, notably Dutch poet Lucas Hirsch, have become friends and colleagues. Both Lucas and Mercedes have been visitors to my classes at NYU.

Frank, who is a painter, feels very much the same way about the visual arts programs. The director, Claudia Canizzaro, is a friend and colleague from our time in Italy, and we never miss an open studio; we view those visits as an invaluable way to keep up with exciting work from beyond the NYC art world.

Omi is an inevitable destination when we have visitors; preservation and maintenance of the grounds strikes me now as an especially essential mission. The Omi music concert is the one thing each year I try not to miss. We follow the dance programs and the architecture programs, and for years I have sent my great-niece (now age ten) to the summer art camp. For a child from a family with limited resources, it's been an extraordinary experience.

Please note: the expansion of the education center is about upgrading facilities for current staff and for programs already occurring--not for increased programming, traffic or broad institutional expansion. With that in mind, we feel it's essential that Omi be granted the permit to improve and upgrade what is already part of its mission. Please vote to approve Art Omi's proposal.

I'm sorry not to be able to join you via zoom for this evening's meeting; I'll be zooming the term's final class of NYU grad students at that time. But I wish you all the best, and again, Frank and I thank you for your excellent service to the beautiful and rich community we all share.

Warmly,
Dave King
Franklin Tartaglione

--
for information on Dave King and THE HA-HA, please visit www.davekingwriter.com

Public Comment in SUPPORT of Art Omi's Education Center

From: Sophie Henderson <sophie.o.henderson@gmail.com>
Sent: Wed, May 6, 2020 at 12:32 pm
To: Geoff French, Aaron Groom, Larry Machiz, Gary Ocean, Dan Barufaldi, Jen Stoner, Stephanie Lazar
Cc: Ruth Adams

Dear Chair French and Members of the Ghent Planning Board,

I am writing in support of Art Omi's Education Center project. I am a neighbor to Omi, and a regular patron of many of their programs as well as a regular visitor to the Sculpture Park. Art Omi is an incredible resource for the community - it's glorious open spaces and programs that bring so much extraordinary art to our community offer so much to our community as well as our region more broadly, and I wholeheartedly support the Education Center project.

My husband and I are members and have been aware of the planned expansion of the Education Center, and fully support the plans. Omi has been clear and transparent throughout this project, laying out thoughtful plans to create a permanent space for their current activities, and clearly showing that the project is not intended to expand either their roster of programs or their audience.

Beyond their programs, Omi is a good neighbor in their efforts to preserve and protect Ghent's wondrous natural landscape. The organization employs over 70 people from our community, both full time and seasonal staff, and welcomes local, regional and national visitors, all of which has an important, positive economic impact on our local economy and local enterprises. And we all benefit from their year-round calendar of FREE events - where else can you see world-class art or listen to internationally-renowned musicians in their incredible, pristine setting, for FREE.

What they offer to our community, to schools and parents, is invaluable, and I strongly urge the Planning Board to approve this project.

Thank you,

Sophie Henderson
55 County Route 9
Ghent, NY 12075