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May 16, 2021

Via email to [boardassistant@templenh.org](mailto:boardassistant@templenh.org)

Zoning Board of Adjustment  
Attn: John Kieley, Chair  
Temple Town Offices  
Temple, NH 03084

Re: Stepping Stones Farm and Event Center

Dear John:

I'm writing in support of Temple resident Boo Martin's application for a zoning special exception to operate the Stepping Stones Farm & Event Center ("Stepping Stones") off Webster Highway. I believe the new operation, which replaces the instructional operations of Pony Farm and other equestrian-related operations, still meets the zoning criteria and should be approved.

As you well know, I recently went through a similar zoning situation as an abutter to the proposed Ben's Sugar Shack expansion off Webster and Old Revolutionary roads. I supported that project with stipulations given its size and commercial nature. I welcome commercial development in Temple when it echoes the agricultural and rural nature of our community and voters' wishes as established in local zoning law.

Boo Martin ("Boo") is going to preserve the agricultural atmosphere with her operation of Stepping Stones. Animals will continue to be housed on the property and riding will be available. The barn and riding rings will continue to be used. I know that events and functions held there will likely tie-in with this atmosphere. Consequently, I expect that local property values will only increase, since the property will be well maintained and funded.

I have toured the property several times in the past year, including in the past week. The barn and offices are immaculate, the log house beautifully clean, the grounds are being improved, and the facilities updated. I've visited the property many times over the years and actually learned to ride horses there. We also boarded a horse there for more than a year. My wife, Anne, has driven a horse cart in one of the indoor arenas.

The traffic to/from the property will not likely increase with the new operations. I think that there might actually be fewer trips given that lessons are not being held. I regularly run past the farm including on the dirt road where the bridge is out. I expect my runs to be very safe while going past the facility. No new egresses are proposed; currently, these are limited to a couple of driveways.

I believe the Stepping Stones operation meets all the criteria in Sections 13A and 13B of the Zoning Ordinance. There is ample parking for the events to be held on the property. Traffic will not pose a public hazard, and there are established buffers for abutters to feel that noise and smells will not be an issue. The property is large, and abutters are not close. There is screening with trees and outbuildings. Glare from lighting will not likely be an issue since the Town can enforce the dark sky ordinance and require appropriate evening lighting.

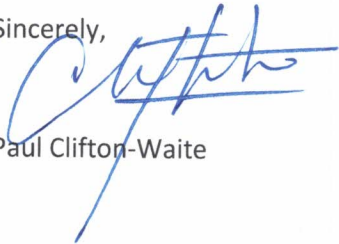
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Also, and most importantly, this operation has Boo behind it. I believe most people in the community know Boo's reputation as a business leader. She is thoughtful and considerate, deliberate and smart. I feel confident that with Boo behind this, Stepping Stones will be a beautiful addition to our rural community. We currently don't have any local commercial spot to hold business meetings, to hold weddings, to celebrate, and to foster business, cultural, recreational and agricultural plans. This would be a welcome space in our community.

Furthermore, events can be viewed as typical of agricultural operations; in past times, neighbors would frequently gather at farms and town centers to celebrate seasonal dates, weddings, and deaths, and to mull town business and town operations. Food operations would not be retail at Stepping Stones, since servings will be related to functions and events. I expect that outdoor decorations and displays would remain temporary and client driven. I doubt that any would be distasteful or overly produced.

Boo knows this community, its thinking and its values, and I expect that she will continue to uphold the rural aesthetic that this facility has presented to the community for decades. I look forward to using the property as a neighbor, a town resident, and as a local entrepreneur. I believe that abutters can feel confident that this operation not only meets local zoning, but that it will enhance their property values and enjoyment of this beautiful part of town.

Sincerely,



Paul Clifton-Waite