

To: The New London Planning Board, New London, NH.  
CC: New London Barn Playhouse, c/o Keith Coughlin  
From: Everett Park Friends of the New London Barn Playhouse (listed at the bottom)  
Date: March 21, 2021

Dear Planning Board:

We have had a number of discussions among neighbors of the New London Barn Players living on Everett Park near the Barn Playhouse. While we are all very supportive of the Barn Playhouse, we have concerns about the proposed expansion of the programs of the Barn and the impact of the year-round use that will be possible with the expansion. We are writing to summarize these concerns so that they may be considered when applications from the Barn come to the Planning Board or other town offices.

The discussions began when we discovered the January minutes of the New London Planning Board, at which the Barn made an informal presentation to the Planning Board discussing year-round activities possibly involving as many as 120 participants. None of us had known about that presentation in advance, and we felt it appropriate to lay out several concerns, in the hopes that they might be considered and perhaps resolved before the Barn submits further formal applications to the town. We sent an earlier version of this letter to the Barn Playhouse and had a Zoom meeting with representatives of the Barn. They listened attentively, asked questions, and said they would consider our ideas as development went on.

We are all supporters of the New London Barn Playhouse, who are following with interest (and, when we can, donations and volunteer hours) the expansion of the Playhouse and its move toward a more year-round program. We very much want the Barn Playhouse expansion to be successful. We note that the Barn has already been very responsive to several suggestions that we have made or supported earlier, such as insulating the new building for winter use and having an elevator located for improved handicapped and winter access.

While we hope the Barn will continue to grow and prosper, some neighbors fear that it will become more like a commercial enterprise than “a quaint summer theater”. We do not all agree on all the thoughts and suggestions in this letter, but several of us felt that giving you a list of concerns and suggestions would be more helpful than a pile of separate communications.

#### 1. Drainage

As you know, there is a significant groundwater and run-off problem in this area of New London, and a risk that it will be made worse as the Barn parking lot is paved and more ground is covered by buildings. We are aware of the professionally done drainage and retention pond system the Barn is planning. The Barn representatives told us they hope “not to make matters worse”; we hope drainage can be improved.

Water at present flows from the Barn properties to the land of Susan and Don Cox (whose backyard floods badly), Tom Koehler, and sometimes Margie Weathers, all on the Barn side of Everett Park. The town has storm drains on Williams Street and Everett Park which drain into the yards south of Everett Park, affecting Nan Putnam and Ed Blanchard, Stephanie Bonewald, and

Edward Ordman and Heidi Hill Tobin, who have 6 acres at 132 Everett Park and 112 Parkside, which have significant wetlands and streams fed by water coming from those town drains.

We have been told that Barn representatives will walk the area with some of us after the snow is gone to survey possibilities. We very much hope that drainage trenches or pipes can be routed to control the water so that it flows into existing drains and seasonal streams rather than yards and broad areas.

We also know that such drainage systems are complex and that future problems (mosquitos, siltation, unusual rain or snow melt patterns, deferred maintenance) can cause problems. We would like to have in place a system by which we can report any problems or difficulties with the system that are observed in the next few years, so that problems which arise can be responded to promptly. In other words, who do we call or write if we have questions or problems, and who will be responsible for responding?

## 2. Parking and Traffic

Everett Park is a favorite walking and dog-walking street, with pedestrian groups, children, baby strollers, bicycles, and skateboards. It is also a favorite place for Barn patrons and staff, such as the summer interns, to park. There have been instances in past years of cars parked on both sides and/or so near the corner of Williams Street and Everett Park that fire trucks would be unable to get through. When the Barn declined to interrupt a performance to ask people to move their cars, cars have had to be towed away. The issue of such announcements is between the Barn and police or fire departments. Changing street parking rules may need the Selectmen. In summer 2019 parking was allowed only on one side of Everett Park (the side nearer the theater) which helped. The Planning Board in November 2020 approved year-round events at the theater. Given the cancellation of the 2020 summer season, and the 2021 season performances being at Colby-Sawyer, this seems like an ideal time to take a closer look at the parking arrangements. Can action be taken now to prevent further serious parking and traffic problems on Everett Park?

We hope an arrangement can be made with the town that will solve the parking problems on a continuing basis (at a minimum permanent “no parking here to corner” signs, and seasonal one-side parking.) Will there be no on street parking when there is snow on the ground? No on street parking after dark in the winter? Will patrons understand these rules? Some residents living close to the Barn Playhouse may prefer permanent no parking signs in front of their homes.

We doubt that the proposed barn parking lot is adequate for the proposed winter programs, especially if they expand to 120 people (plus staff?) If there is a large program when on-street parking is not feasible, the Barn may have to be required to make advance arrangements such as the use of the Spring Ledge parking area and provide someone to direct traffic there and assist pedestrians across Main Street. We urge you to keep event size to a number that will clearly fit in the parking lot (e.g., 50 people in winter) until you can get a more accurate estimate, based on actual experience, of the number of parking spaces used.

Traffic on Everett Park is rarely a problem as people arrive. It is a problem when they leave in a large group after dark, which will be aggravated when snow leaves no room for pedestrians. We are delighted that the Barn plans a separate entrance and exit and directed traffic flow in the

parking lot. We propose that there be “Right Turn Only” exiting the lot on Williams Street after shows, which particularly in bad weather might mean providing someone to direct traffic at Williams Street and Main Street.

Several members of our group find that the noise outside their homes of car doors slamming and engines starting near 11 PM interferes with their sleep. We hope that in the long run better parking arrangements will reduce or eliminate that.

### 3. Automobile Noise and Lights.

It is common for commercial enterprises to be required to provide visual and auditory protection for adjoining residential neighborhoods. We understand that outdoor lighting on the Barn buildings and parking lot will be aimed to prevent light pollution affecting surrounding houses. However, lights and noises from automobiles in the lot are audible and visible at a number of surrounding houses, not just the Cox’s. We believe the present proposal is to put a collection of evergreen plants along the sides of the parking lot. The deciduous plants now there provide no visual barrier much of the year. Visually shielding the Cox’s lot would probably require 8-to-10-foot trees, which are considerably more expensive than six-foot ones; we don’t know the present plans. And even after a few years’ growth, these trees provide little meaningful sound barrier. This may become more urgent in the future if the venue hosts weddings, concerts attracting a younger audience, or other events that might bring a more boisterous crowd. While the harder problems may be some years in the future, providing a barrier such as is commonly placed between commercial and residential spaces may be much less expensive to do now. We propose a dark green wooden fence, preferably eight feet high, along at least the entire bottom edge of the parking lot and at least parts of both ends. The fence should be on the Barn’s land, surrounding trees and shrubs outside the fence on the Barn property line and also inside if they prefer. This might allow less expensive trees (and even less total expense) than trying to do an effective visual and auditory shield with plants alone.

### 4. On-Site Planning

John Finck, Chairman of the New London Barn Players board, has told us there will be an on-site meeting, that is, a walk through and discussion in the Barn parking lot, once the snow is sufficiently gone that we can see exactly where the boundaries of the land and proposed parking lot are, and better understand the proposed drainage system

Sincerely,

*Everett Park Friends of the Barn*

This letter was written by Edward Ordman based on discussions with those on the next page, who have discussed and approved this letter.

(Tom Koehler and the Latvas are listed as they are neighbors, however, they did not join these discussions.)

## New London Barn Players

## Friends on Everett Park

| Name  | Phone Number                 | Email  | Address  | New London Lot # |
|---|------------------------------|--|--|------------------|
| Edward (Chip) Ordman                                  | 603-526-6428                 | <a href="mailto:ETOrdman2@gmail.com">ETOrdman2@gmail.com</a>   | 132 Everett Park<br>New London, NH 03257               | 15, 14, 26, 9    |
| Heidi Hill Tobin                                      | 603-526-6428<br>913-605-6472 | <a href="mailto:Heidi.Tobin@gmail.com">Heidi.Tobin@gmail.com</a>   | 132 Everett Park<br>New London, NH 03257               | 15, 14, 26, 9    |
| Susan Bucklin Cox                                     | 603-682-5978                 | <a href="mailto:coxsusanb@gmail.com">coxsusanb@gmail.com</a>   | 165 Everett Park<br>New London, NH 03257               | 28               |
| Don Cox   | 603-512-9414                 | <a href="mailto:CoxDonaldR@gmail.com">CoxDonaldR@gmail.com</a>   | 165 Everett Park<br>New London, NH 03257               | 28               |
| Donna Sparks  | 603-717-1080                 | <a href="mailto:donnaspar@aol.com">donnaspar@aol.com</a>   | 127 Everett Park (PO Box 132)<br>New London, NH 03257  | 26               |
| Nancy Durocher  | (603) 344-4976               | <a href="mailto:DurocherN@yahoo.com">DurocherN@yahoo.com</a>   | 108 Everett Park<br>New London, NH 03257               | 16               |
| Margie Weathers                                       | 603-491-9998                 | <a href="mailto:margaret.weathers@fourseasonssir.com">margaret.weathers@fourseasonssir.com</a>                                   | 197 Everett Park (PO Box 2338)<br>New London, NH 03257 | 30               |
| Nan Putnam + Ed Blanchard                             | 603-526-2832                 | <a href="mailto:Nputnam51@gmail.com">Nputnam51@gmail.com</a>   | 154 Everett Park<br>New London, NH 03257               | 12               |
| Tom Koehler   | 603-526-9857                 | (Nan Putnam will keep Tom informed)  | 182 Everett Park<br>New London, NH 03257               | 29               |
| Stephanie Bonewald                                    | 603-494-2112                 | <a href="mailto:SBonewald@mail.smcvt.edu">SBonewald@mail.smcvt.edu</a>   | 144 Everett Park<br>New London, NH 03257               | 13               |
| Penny Latva<br>Mitch Latva                            | 603-848-4914                 | Penny <a href="mailto:Latva@comcast.net">Latva@comcast.net</a><br>Mitch <a href="mailto:Mitch@comcast.net">Mitch@comcast.net</a> | Everett Park<br>New London, NH 03257                   | 11               |
| NLBarn Players<br>Keith Coughlin<br>Elliot Cunningham | 917-548-2968                 | <a href="mailto:Keith@nlbarn.org">Keith@nlbarn.org</a><br><a href="mailto:Elliott@nlbarn.org">Elliott@nlbarn.org</a>             | 84 Main Street<br>PO Box 19<br>New London, NH 03257    | 41, 40, 27       |

Neighbors on Everett Park

NL Barn Players Lots: 41, 40, 27

Town of New London, NH <https://www.nl-nh.com/>

Assessing/GIS Mapping [https://www.axisgis.com/New\\_LondonNH/](https://www.axisgis.com/New_LondonNH/)

