

Town of Ossining
Building & Planning Department
Ossining Zoning Board of Appeals
101 Route 9A
Ossining, NY 10562

RECEIVED

JUL 07 2020

Town of Ossining
Building & Planning Department

July 6, 2020

Dear Sir/Madam,

This is the owners of the property at 4 Tavano Road. We are writing in response to the Bethany Art Centers recent request for continuation and expansion of the activities on their property.

We are in general in favor of their proposed activities. However, we are a bit concerned about the scope, i.e. duration, noise levels, proximity to neighboring properties, number of participants, etc. It should also be a requirement that Bethany will ask/seek approval for activities not specifically approved. As long as issues like these are satisfactorily addressed in the boards approval we see no reason why an approval should not be granted.

4 Tavano Road abuts the Bethany property along its exit driveway. Our house, including master bedroom, is less than 45 feet from said driveway. It has become increasingly noisy, especially during the winter and the accompanying snow shoveling. In the summer grass cutting machines and blowers are used too early. We are often woken up at around 3 AM. Also, garbage collection year round is done at a similar time. Any other noise making activities should also be curtailed. This is a residential neighborhood where those activities should be done during the day.

Respectfully,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of the sender.

Harald and Debbie Edegran
4 Tavano Road

Sandra Anelli

From: Ruth Ragan [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 07, 2020 4:08 PM
To: Sandra Anelli
Subject: Fwd: Bethany Application

2 of 2

This was my response to Mr. Carrera's follow-up inquiry.

RECEIVED

JUL 08 2020

**Town of Ossining
Building & Planning Department**

----- Forwarded message -----

From: <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, Jun 28, 2020 at 11:01 AM
Subject: Re: Bethany Application
To: <[REDACTED]@gmail.com>

Hi,

The Ossining matter fundraisers that I attended were indoors. Camp was indoors and outdoors. The theater productions were all indoors and the gallery viewings were all indoors. The artists in residence work in progress event I attended was indoors. I also attended a virtual Mother's Day cabaret event in May. The sculptures on the grounds are of course outside.

So much more can be done for the community outdoors and I hope the board will approve outdoor use of the space.

I hope this is helpful.

Best,
Ruth

Sandra Anelli

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, July 07, 2020 4:04 PM
To: Sandra Anelli
Subject: Fwd: Bethany Arts Community's application
Attachments: PastedGraphic-1.tiff

Dear Ms. Anelli,

My letter of support and follow up correspondence with Mr. Carrera was not uploaded with the material re Bethany's application so I am resending to you for inclusion (this is 1 of 2 emails I am sending today.)

Thanks,
Ruth

Begin forwarded message:

From: Ruth Ragan <rragan909@gmail.com>
Date: June 26, 2020 at 2:15:24 PM EDT
To: bldgdept@townofossining.com
Cc: "ruth A. Ragan" <rragan909@gmail.com>
Subject: Bethany Arts Community's application

RECEIVED
JUL 08 2020
Town of Ossining
Building & Planning Department

Dear Town of Ossining Zoning Board of Appeals,

I currently reside at 61 Sunset Drive and have been a resident of Ossining for 13 years. (I am also the younger sister of David O'Neil.) I write in support of Bethany Arts Community's application for an amendment to their special permit approval to include additional activities and programs that would take place outdoors on the property.

When I first learned that someone had purchased the former Maryknoll property I worried that a development was coming to my neighborhood. My concerns were unfounded. The entire Community of Ossining received the gift of art when Bethany opened its doors.

I am not an artist. I can't draw a stick figure, can't sing in tune, and I certainly can't dance, but Bethany Arts Community is for everyone, even the non-artists. Since Bethany arrived, my family, including my second and fifth grade sons have benefited from the programs offered at Bethany, many of which were free to community members. My children were able to participate in theater as actors and audience members. They were able to enjoy the beautiful property through camp. They were exposed to outdoor sculpture and visits to the art gallery. They learned from the artists in residents who each gave something back to the Community after their time at Bethany.

Our community and schools have also directly benefited from the Ossining Matters fundraisers that have taken place at Bethany.

I trust that the board recognizes that the pandemic heightens the need for outdoor space where community members can connect in a socially distant and safe manner and hope that the Board will support Bethany's vision for these activities.

I urge the committee to approve Bethany Arts Community's application so that they can continue to share much needed programming with our community.

Respectfully submitted,
Ruth Ragan

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Ruth Ragan.

RECEIVED

JUL 08 2020

Town of Ossining
Zoning & Planning Department

Thursday, July 2, 2020

To The Town of Ossining Zoning Board:

I am writing in support of the Bethany Arts Community's application for a special permit to expand the use of their outdoor space.

My family and I have been lived in Ossining for almost 6 years, and we attended events of all kinds at the Bethany Arts Community since its inception. We feel very fortunate to have the BAC in our community. It's one of the reasons Ossining is a great place to live. Two of our sons have performed multiple times in Theatre O productions at BAC and guests from out of town are always impressed with the facility. Also, our 9-year-old has attended The Camp of Witchcraft and Wizardry at BAC, and it was truly a magical place for such a camp.

Again, I support the Bethany Arts Community's application for a special permit to expand their outdoor space. I believe the expansion will benefit the community as a whole and will not create undo disturbance to the neighbors surrounded the facility. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Rebekah Shackney
7 Still Court
Ossining, NY 10562

Sandra Anelli

From: Howard Fleischer [howard@royaltypros.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 08, 2020 9:25 AM
To: bldgdept
Cc: RoyaltyPros Admin
Subject: BAC List of questions and a few observations

Importance: High

RECEIVED

JUL 08 2020

Town of Ossining
Building & Planning Department

Dear Mr. Carrera,

During the last meeting, you advised that BAC would answer questions from the comments & letters received by the zoning board. Please post the list of questions that you have culled for David Lyons to answer prior to the next scheduled meeting. This way members of the community can avoid sending in any duplicate questions they may have.

With reference to the Zoom meeting, I would like to point out that you specifically encouraged a speaker who had several negative issues, to send them in writing while hurrying up speakers who spoke in favor of the amendment.

While I know that the Board is supposed to be neutral and open to all comments, in the overall handling of the meeting, it felt as if you already have a scornful attitude towards the applicant which was a surprise to my wife and I, and I suppose several others on the call.

Respectfully,

Howard Jay Fleischer
22 Tavano Rd.
Ossining, NY 10562

Sandra Anelli

From: Mary Ellis mary@maryellisart.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 08, 2020 1:01 PM
To: bldgdept
Subject: Bethany arts amendment permit

RECEIVED

JUL 08 2020

Town of Ossining
Building & Planning Department

To -Town of Ossining Building Department,

I am writing on behalf of the Bethany Arts communities request to amend their special permit approval to include additional outdoor programs.

I am an artist living in the Ossining area for the last 25 years and have been participating in The Bethany Arts community programs since its inception. Having a physical place to meet and collaborate with all the arts is a gift.

The BAC mission is to provide a space where all aspects of the arts can connect for all age levels. It is a community based art environment. All the programs are conducted on the highest level of professionalism with the the greatest care toward education and giving back to the community. The surrounding land has been carefully planned and is certainly a tremendous addition to existing projects.

I am hoping you will grant this permit as soon as possible. The safest place we have right now during COVID is the outdoors and The Bethany grounds are an exquisite place to be for kids and adults. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



<https://www.maryellisart.com/>
<https://maryellisnewyork.com/>

Sandra Anelli

From: Gary Golio gary@garygolio.com
Sent: Wednesday, July 08, 2020 2:25 PM
To: bldgdept
Subject: Bethany Arts Council Proposal...

RECEIVED

JUL 08 2020

Town of Ossining
Building & Planning Department

Dear Ossining Building Department Members--

Though not affiliated with the Bethany Arts Community (BAC), I have attended several of their indoor events where presenters, performers, and audience members were always respectful of one another. That is the tone set by BAC staff, and it tells you a lot about their way of doing things. I have no doubt that being similarly respectful of their neighbors is uppermost in their minds.

From what I understand, the BAC's proposed children's programs will take place from 9 am to 3 pm, Monday to Friday, for a few weeks in the summer. This sounds to me like a gift to the entire community. As a clinical therapist who's worked a great deal with young people, I can tell you that kids have been powerfully affected by recent lockdown conditions. In this New World of ours, outdoor activities will be immeasurably important to the health of our children, *especially for the next several years*. As for the value of Arts programs in general, I quote former US Secretary of Education William Bennett:

"The arts are an essential element of education, just like reading, writing, and arithmetic...music, dance, painting, and theater are all keys that unlock profound human understanding and accomplishment."

As a long-time artist myself (Hudson River landscape painter, author of children's books), I know that Arts education is not intended to produce more artists, only well-rounded and happier human beings. By offering such programs, the BAC is providing a service not just to kids and their parents, but to the entire Ossining community. And that's what being a good neighbor is all about.

Respectfully,

Gary Golio

*prior resident of Ossining for 36 years

--

GARY GOLIO – Children's Book Author

www.garygolio.com

Everywhere Beauty is Harlem – The Vision of Photographer Roy DeCarava (Calkins Creek/Boyds Mills & Kane)

Sonny on the Bridge - A Surprising Story about Jazz Legend Sonny Rollins (Penguin/Nancy Paulsen, 2021)

Dark Was the Night - Blind Willie Johnson's Journey to the Stars (Penguin/Nancy Paulsen, 2020)

SMILE - How Young Charlie Chaplin Taught the World to Laugh (and Cry) (Candlewick, 2019)

Carlos Santana - Sound of the Heart, Song of the World (Henry Holt, 2018)

Strange Fruit - Billie Holiday and the Power of a Protest Song (Millbrook Press, 2017)

Bird & Diz – Two Friends Create Bebop (Candlewick)

Spirit Seeker – John Coltrane's Musical Journey (Clarion/HMH)

When Bob Met Woody – The Story of the Young Bob Dylan (Little, Brown)

JIMI: Sounds Like A Rainbow – A Story of the Young Jimi Hendrix (Clarion/HMH)

Sandra Anelli

From: Judyth Stavans [redacted]
Sent: Wednesday, July 08, 2020 3:01 PM
To: bldgdept
Subject: Bethany Arts Center

RECEIVED

JUL 08 2020

Town of Ossining
Building & Planning Department

I am an artist and a member of Hudson River Potters. We have had a number of shows at the Bethany Arts Center and I am writing in support of BAC offering outdoor programming.

From the very beginning, BAC has been friendly, responsive, and always professional. They are a tremendous asset to the northern Westchester community, bringing us a wide variety of art programming.

In any year, being able to hold programs outside brings a very special perspective to all participants. Given what we know at this point about the transmission of COVID-19, outdoors is a much safer place than indoors. BAC is uniquely positioned to bring us environmentally friendly and safe outdoor programming for all ages.

I ask that you please approve their request for the benefit of the entire community.

Sincerely,
Judyth Stavans
Winter Tree Pottery

Sandra Anelli

From: Lindsey Francis <lindseyf@bethanyarts.org>
Sent: Wednesday, July 08, 2020 10:36 AM
To: bldgdept
Subject: Letter of Support for Bethany Arts Community Zoning Appeal

RECEIVED

JUL 08 2020

Town of Ossining
Building & Planning Department

Dear Zoning Board,

I am writing in support of Bethany Arts Community (BAC) to have use of its outdoor spaces. I am a current Board Member of BAC, Ossining Arts Project Member, Teaching Artist, Visual Artist, Muralist, and Project Manager for the national creative aging organization Lifetime Arts. Before I was a BAC board member I was involved at BAC in other ways too. I helped to curate several art shows and I have taught several adult drawing classes there.

I am also proud to say that one of the reasons I call Ossining home is because of BAC. As an artist it is vital for me to live in a community thriving with artistic practice of all kinds. When I first moved to Ossining, BAC was just getting started, it hadn't even opened yet but even then I could see its potential and decided to stay.

From then on I have only seen positive programming and community connections made at BAC. As a teaching artist I understand the many different ways that people learn an art form. Some may find an outdoor art program to be more opening and conducive to their learning than a typical classroom space. While the art forms and in class projects themselves can be inspired by the outdoors.

As an arts non-profit Project Manager I can see the potential that the outdoor spaces could provide to BAC by allowing them to maximize their program offerings and stay in Ossining for the long term. Especially with COVID19 it is vital that they have the opportunity for their participants to distance themselves outside safely while not limiting their program offerings. Therefore allowing them to continue to profit from their arts programming and stay afloat during the pandemic, something that most new Arts Non Profits have struggled to do.

It would be a shame not to use all of the grounds that BAC has to its fullest potential now and in the future to reach as many community members both near and far. BAC should be seen not just as a place for arts programming but a reason why people choose to come to Ossining for the first time and in some cases stay.

Lindsey Francis
175 Ogden Rd
Ossining, NY 10562

Sandra Anelli

From: david press [mailto:presspeck@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, July 08, 2020 11:31 AM
To: bldgdept
Subject: Bethany Arts Center Special Permit

I'm writing in support of the BAC petition for a special permit for outdoor events. I know them to be a very careful group that would provide wonderful, safe activities for the children here in Ossining.

Thank you for your consideration.

David Press, teacher

--

Message sent by David Press from my Smart Fern (available now from Plant Parenthood)

See my latest work at:

www.stringsculpture.com - my documentation of the works of artists and mathematicians

www.davidpressdesigns.com - my documentation of my own work

or just Google "David Press string"

RECEIVED

JUL 08 2020

Town of Ossining
Building & Planning Department

Letter of Support: **Bethany Arts Community**, 40 Somerstown Rd, Ossining, NY
From: **Anna Adler**, local arts and culture worker, village resident, 33 Beach Rd, Ossining, NY

July 8, 2020

Dear Sal Carrera & Fellow Town of Ossining Zoning Board Members,

I write to you in strong support of Bethany Arts Community (BAC), a vital cultural asset to the Town and Village of Ossining, as well as the surrounding NY area.

I am aware that BAC has requested a special permit that would allow the use of their unique outdoor landscape as a space for summer art camps for kids (including a bilingual theatre scholarship program and a camp for inner city youth), as well as events such as the popular Artoberfest, outdoor music, drawing, painting, and more.

In this historic moment, when we are facing the health crisis of COVID-19 as well as coming to terms with systemic inequity in our society, art and nature can be truly equalizing and healing forces. As Bethany strives to adapt and embrace these unique circumstances, bringing art programming outdoors will allow the organization the ability to deliver programs safely and effectively, to the benefit of our whole community.

As a local arts and culture worker, having curated several events and exhibitions at Bethany, as well as a resident who grew up between Croton and Ossining, I can attest to the value of this cultural space and its beautiful (well cared for) surrounding landscape, as a place to explore, create, and foster genuine human exchange and understanding.

While BAC faces opposition from neighbors who are concerned about disruption to their current way of life, I am certain that BAC artists and staff will do everything within their power to make sure this does not happen. In fact, I believe that BAC outdoor programming will create the exact opposite of disruption to the surrounding community, as it will provide enriching educational opportunities and build investment in the arts and our local environment.

Thank you very much for your time and please do not hesitate to contact me if you have further questions.

Best,

Anna Adler she/her

artist | educator | cultural worker

 | www.annavictoriaadler.com

RECEIVED

JUL 09 2020

Town of Ossining
Building & Planning Department



Ossining Arts Council
P.O. Box 408
Ossining, NY 10562
914.502.4157
Web: OssiningArtsCouncil.org
Email: info@OssiningArtsCouncil.org
Allison Midgley - Vice President
Keith Gordon - Treasurer
Miriam Haas - Secretary

Hon. Sal Carerra, Chairman
Hon. James F. Blair
Hon. David Krieger
Hon. David O'Neil
Hon. David Whitlinger
Town of Ossining Zoning Board

RECEIVED

JUL 09 2020

Town of Ossining
Building & Planning Department

Re: Application of Bethany Arts Community for a Variance/Special Use Permit
at 40 Somerstown Rd.

Gentlemen:

The Ossining Arts Council (OAC) was established in 1995 to "unite the diverse interests of the Greater Ossining area through the arts and ... sponsorship of community arts events, experiences for children, development of experimental creative and performance spaces and importation of major creative talent." We currently have 63 member artists who reside in the Town and Village of Ossining and surrounding communities.

Both the Town and Village of Ossining have recognized that arts activities and events benefit the local economy and by making Ossining a more desirable place to live, help to enhance property values as well. When Bethany Arts Community (BAC) was established, OAC members and officers participated in multiple meetings with BAC's founders to discuss how best to complement and supplement existing arts resources and activities in Ossining. OAC has co-sponsored exhibitions at BAC, including the May 2019 Artist Retrospective on the occasion of Ossining artist Ed Malsberg's 100th birthday. We are very familiar with the dynamic and varied arts events hosted by BAC.

We support BAC's pending request to be allowed to have outdoors arts activities, including children's art camp, "Artober" and other art-related events. We urge the Ossining Zoning Board to recognize that the arts activities hosted and promoted by BAC be broadly interpreted, including musical, theatrical, performing, culinary and visual arts.

Given the large parcel of property occupied by BAC, permitting outdoor activities such as youth art camp, drama, and games that stimulate the imagination and creativity of participants should not place a significant burden on the community, including adjacent neighbors. Involving children in gardening can enhance their personal connection with nature and the food we all eat, allowing for more vivid drawing, painting and drama that relates to nature.

BAC's outdoor events will be primarily during daytime and not disturb the residential character of the Somerstown Rd. neighborhood. Indeed, the community impact of BAC summer arts camp outdoor activities would pose no greater impact than the children at nearby Brookside School during recess and outdoor sports activities. With the current pandemic-related safety restrictions on indoor gatherings and activities, it is more important than ever that the public be afforded as much opportunity to use outdoor spaces creatively. Indeed, there is a good likelihood that the "new normal" will continue for an extended period, and groups like BAC should be allowed to adapt to changing circumstances without undue restriction.

The OAC members and Trustees listed below thank you for your consideration of these comments in support of Bethany Arts Community's zoning application.

Sincerely,

Allison Midgley
Keith Gordon
Elena Sabatini
Sondra Haywood
Alan Haywood
Helen Arbor Young
Anne Zimmerman
Mark Sarazen
Elsa Rubenstein
Bonnie Coe
Beatrice DiMartino
Miriam Haas
Karen Allen
Tamar Drucker
Peg Tarnowsky

Sandra Anelli

From: Roberta Socolof <hudsoninteriors1@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 09, 2020 7:22 AM
To: bldgdept
Subject: BAC

RECEIVED

JUL 09 2020

Town of Ossining
Building & Planning Department

Dear Mr. Carrera and zoning board members,

As a resident of Ossining, residing at 137 Cedar Lane, I am submitting my support to request that a special permit be granted as soon as possible to Bethany Arts Community. It is an incredible asset to our town. Especially during this unprecedented time, using an outdoor space, to teach art enhances the love of nature. Don't you want these future adults to remember Ossining as a place of beauty and support during the 2020 plague? This has been a difficult time for all of us. Taking art classes has helped me through this. I think the opportunity to create releases our boundaries and what better way is there to support the community than to give them a place where they can be fulfilled during this time. BAC gives opportunity to those who could not otherwise receive it. I have been a beneficiary of their programs and a few should not stop their mission. Thank you.

Roberta Socolof
Hudson Interiors

Sandra Anelli

From: jbenzenberg@gmail.com <jbenzenberg@gmail.com>
Sent: Thursday, July 09, 2020 6:59 AM
To: bldgdept
Subject: BAC

RECEIVED

JUL 09 2020

Town of Ossining
Building & Planning Department

I Support that you grant a special permit that would allow BAC to use the outdoors in a residential area as space for summer art camps for kids (including our bilingual theatre scholarship program) and also future events like Artoberfest, music, drawing/painting and more.

Thank you
Sincerely
Jill Benzenberg

Sandra Anelli

RECEIVED

From: Camila Rodriguez Perusse <cieloconluna@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, July 08, 2020 11:15 PM
To: bldgdept
Subject: BAC needs a special permit for outdoor area use

JUL 09 2020

Town of Ossining
Building & Planning Department

Hi,

I am writing in support for Bethany Arts Center in their request to obtain a special permit to allow BAC to use their beautiful and expansive grounds for both children and adults to enjoy enriching and culturally important events like their summer art camps, as well as Artoberfest and other creative classes.

I live in Yorktown, but I take classes and my family and children enjoy many things at BAC. It would be such an incredible loss to the community of Ossining and other surrounding towns, not to mention people that come up from NYC to no longer be able to enjoy outdoor activities and events, a fact of life that has become a necessity with the continuing pandemic. Please consider allowing BAC to maximize the way in which it can serve the Ossining community by providing it the outdoor permit that it needs.

If BAC lost the ability to run it's programs outside it would be a huge loss for BAC. We need to ensure that places like this continue to thrive, and be a refuge for us all to convene during such a difficult time when we are all being asked to quarantine and social distance.

Best,
Camila

Camila Rodriguez, LCAT
1505 Hanover St.
Yorktown Hts, NY
10598

Sandra Anelli

From: B. Miller [mailto:brendanmiller@gmail.com]
Sent: Thursday, July 09, 2020 5:03 PM
To: bldgdept
Subject: In Support of Bethany Arts Community

RECEIVED

JUL 10 2020

Town of Ossining
Building & Planning Department

July 9th, 2020

To whom it may concern,

I am writing today in support of Bethany Arts Community (BAC) being allowed to use her outdoor spaces for various arts programs.

As someone who has been involved in the arts my whole life, I have witnessed and participated in numerous high quality art events and activities, many of which have taken place inside the walls of BAC. To name a few: musical performances, theatre productions, gallery showings by local artists and Artists-in-residence, general art exhibitions and sales. The latter two of these have not only supported our local artists, but also provide our community access to arts and culture from around the world in a convenient and easily accessible manner.

As such it is my firm conviction that the community as a whole may be best served in seeing the good works of BAC be rightly permitted to continue outside. The utility of quality outdoor spaces to artists and the community, like those provided at BAC, are invaluable and cannot otherwise be replicated in any practical way. So to have these spaces not be allowed to be used to their full potential (while knowing that sensible compromises likely exist to ameliorate tensions between BAC and those who currently oppose her efforts) it is evident that a common good would be withheld from the town and its residents.

Furthermore, I have never known BAC to be anything but willing and forthcoming in its engagement of its community, nor act in any way that doesn't aim towards the community's betterment. Therefore I have full faith that BAC will continue to take every reasonable measure in maintaining itself in good standing and provide the community with the one-of-a-kind outdoors art activities that it deserves.

In closing, I wish the board sound judgement in their deliberations, and hope that the right decision is made in granting Bethany Arts Community her requests in a timely fashion.

Thank you for your time, sincerely,

Mr. Brendan Miller
175 Ogden Rd.
Ossining NY 10562

Sandra Anelli

From: youngman [REDACTED]
Sent: Friday, July 10, 2020 9:52 AM
To: bldgdept
Subject: In support of Bethany Arts Community

RECEIVED

JUL 10 2020

**Town of Ossining
Building & Planning Department**

Dear Zoning Board,

I am writing in support of Bethany Arts Community's use of its outdoor space for programming, such as summer camps and so forth. Especially now as we need to socially distance, holding programs outdoors is vital to bring people together safely. BAC's programs are community programs, not late night rock concerts. They are a responsible group, exist to serve the community and unite people in a celebration of creativity and joy.

Thank you so much for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Vicky Youngman

Hudson River Potter's member