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<http://www.oconeesc.com/Council/CommitteeAgendasMinutes.aspx>

Scroll down to the appropriate date(s) (7/22-8/26) under the BZA section of the webpage.

Timothy B. Burton
PO Box 125
Mountain Rest, SC 29664

26 September 2014

Honorable Members of Board of Zoning Appeals
415 S. Pine Street
Walhalla, SC 29691

RE: Whetstone Academy

Dear Sirs:

I am Brandon Burton and I reside in Mountain Rest and very near the Whetstone Academy (WA), in fact I live on the other end of the road from it. I have spoken several times at the public hearings at the Council Chambers during the BZA meetings. I have spoken against the BZA allowing expansion of this facility. I believe the residents of the area have provided ample documentation and voiced their concerns regarding this.

Having read the original "Special Exception for Permit No 110412"-1 dated April 11, 2011. I believe sufficient facts have been presented to the BZA that DO NOT affirm the five (5) conditions set aside in the Special Exception. At first I was taken aback that the Zoning Administrator did not want a blanket vote on either granting or denying the new special exception for expansion of Whetstone Academy. But the more I think about it, looking at each of the five (5) conditions reinforces the fact that Whetstone Academy has not met the considerations set forth by the 2011 Special Exception.

1. The Board concludes that traffic flow from the facility shall not present a danger to local residents, motorists, and pedestrians.
 - a. During the July 2014 hearing two local residents that live on Rocky Gap Road that leads to WA stated there has been several near misses due to speed and carelessness of the workers at WA.
 - b. Also during the July 2014 hearing residents along Galloway/Mongold Gap Road stated that they too have met WA workers driving too fast and meeting them on a blind hill.
 - c. WA has brought a greater number of service vehicles and general traffic to the local roads that previously did not have any.
 - d. During both the July and August hearing adjacent landowners have stated that they are now unable to walk along the road they share with WA due to fear they may be struck by a worker running late to work or to an appointment.
 - e. I, myself, live on the far end of Galloway Road. I constantly get "lost" drivers looking for WA. They use GPS to navigate and end up in my yard every time. The road does not continue through as the GPS would like to show. I have had drivers drive very fast on my driveway and if I am on my private driveway there is a danger of getting in a crash. I have contacted WA twice regarding this. They state they have told folks not to use GPS. Telling someone does not prevent them. We never had this amount of "turn-a-rounds" until WA went into operation.

2. The Board concludes that noise, light, and activities carried out on the premises of the facility shall not present a nuisance to local residents.
 - a. During the July hearing three (3) residents that adjoin WA or each other have on numerous occasions heard loud and vulgar language coming from the interior of the academy or by boarders walking down the road. One resident had her horse cursed at and hit at with sticks. She was a witness to this behavior.
 - b. During both hearings residents have stated that there is a great increase in traffic. This is a nuisance to them that moved and built here or lived here all their life.
 - c. One resident had to remove their two(2) year old child from their very own porch and put him inside due to the vulgarity of the boarders at WA
 - d. I, myself, live on the far end of Galloway Road. I constantly get "lost" drivers looking for WA. They use GPS to navigate and end up in my yard every time. The road doesn't not continue through as the GPS would like to show. I have had drivers drive very fast on my driveway and if I am on my private driveway there is a danger of getting in a crash. I have contacted WA twice regarding this. They state they have told folks not to use GPS. Telling someone does not prevent them. We never had this amount of "turn-a-rounds" until WA went into operation. The last nuisance caused by WA was a lost driver that turned around in my front yard and left spin out tracks. I also had to turn around large trucks looking for WA. Since this has been reported to WA, who will be responsible should damage occur to my property? .
3. The Board concludes that residents of the facility shall not present and potential danger to local residents
 - a. According to the attached CAD reports from the Oconee Sheriff's Office there have been numerous 911 calls and responses to WA. These calls have included boarders who have been violent to staff and other boarders.
 - b. One local resident has witnessed a runaway boarder, seen and heard the curse fight he had with the staff before they coaxed him into the staff vehicle.
 - c. These incidents are alarming and violent. One can only surmise will increase with an increase in the number of boarders. These CAD reports prove that there is potential danger to the adjacent residents.
4. The Board concludes that the residents of the facility shall reside in a safe and healthy environment
 - a. By WA own admission they are not required to have any oversight. As it is now, there is no State regulation whatsoever of WA. The only permit they have is for the septic system. How can you provide a safe and healthy environment at a place of business when there are no inspections from the State whether it be fire codes, food safety codes, drinking water codes, medical codes for dispensing medications, or social work standards?
 - b. I recently traded emails with the American Montessori Society. The respondent stated that there is no single agency that has oversight. Basically, anyone can "adopt": the Montessori name and have no oversight or have to adhere to any standards. How is freelancing a way to promote a healthy and safe environment when there are no standards in which to hold one accountable to?

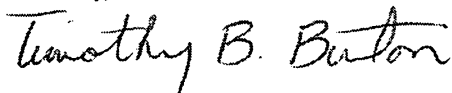
- c. I realize the BZA has neither authority in permitting nor regulating, but just by looking at the fact that we have an unregulated, unlicensed group facility in our back door that has already demonstrated they cannot positively manage 10 or so boarders how can they provide for the health, safety, and welfare of more.
- 5. The Board concludes that the proposed development is in compliance with the other provisions of Chapter 32, Article V of the Oconee County Code of Ordinances.
 - a. Since the Special Exception dated April 11, 2011 is referenced to a parcel number, and the WA website touts the use of the 57 acre parcel as "a full therapeutic program in a Montessori environment" and "Our curriculum is an Erdkinder, or farm school following Maria Montessori's guidelines" aren't they using the property as a facility? According to Oconee County Code Chapter 32, Article V, Section 32-181 Distance Requirements, it states "A group residential facility shall not be located within 1000 feet of the nearest residence." The structure itself is around 1347 feet from the nearest residence. However, the field and other areas they use as the "facility" are less than 1000 from the nearest residence. I pulled this information using aerial photographs and GIS.

I am not trying to be arrogant or demeaning, but I would like to point out the word "shall not" is listed in three of the five conclusions. The word shall not means that there is an obligation and no deviation is expected of the condition. Black's Law Dictionary states the word SHALL is generally imperative or mandatory.

I respect the Boards concern that you do not want to overstep or get into regulation since that is the State of South Carolina's purview. I do believe that looking at the facts presented by the local residents removes that concern and affirms that Whetstone Academy has failed to meet the requirements the County set forth in April 2011. I firmly believe that if they cannot meet these requirements with the staff and questionable number of boarders now, there is no way for them to meet the same requirements with an increase in staff or boarders.

I strongly urge you to DENY the request for Special Exception for expansion of Whetstone Academy.

Sincerely,



Timothy B. Burton

CC:

County Zoning Administrator

DSS

Serving Children and Families

AMBER E. GILLUM
ACTING STATE DIRECTOR

NIKKI R. HALEY
GOVERNOR

September 19, 2014

Ms. Sharon Stricker
Director of Admissions/Business Development
Whetstone Academy
P.O. Box 87
Mountain Rest, South Carolina 29664

Dear Ms. Stricker,

In response to your request for an exemption letter for Whetstone Academy, the South Carolina Department of Social Services has reviewed the information you have submitted for your school and made an unannounced visit on September 18, 2014. Based on interviews with residents, observations of the school, and the information you have provided, we have determined that Whetstone Academy is exempt from licensure at this time.

The agency's decision is based on **DSS Regulation 114-590. A. (7)**, which states:

For the purposes of these regulations, the term facility includes those organizations which provide temporary or long term, full time residential care for children on a year round basis such as child caring institutions, emergency shelters, group homes and organizations with supervised individual living facilities. Child caring institutions and group homes may also be further categorized as low management facilities, moderate management facilities, and high management facilities. **Boarding schools that do not operate year round or do not offer services beyond those associated with school programming are not encompassed within these regulations.** All facilities are considered "residential institutions" for purposes of SC Code Section 20-7-670, governing institutional abuse and neglect.

According to your personal statements, as well as Whetstone Academy's website and brochure, the school will close to students on the following dates for the remainder of 2014 and 2015:

September 26 – 28, 2014
December 19 – 29, 2014
March 27 – April 6, 2015
June 26 – July 6, 2015
September 25 – 27, 2015
December 18 – 28, 2015

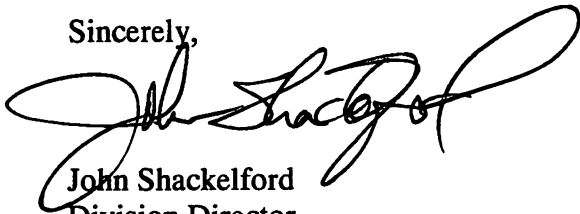
September 19, 2014

Page 2

Should you make changes to your program's dates of operation, please contact the South Carolina Department of Social Services immediately, as the changes may impact this decision.

Please contact our office at (803) 898-7837 if you need additional information or if we can be of assistance in the future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Shackelford". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

John Shackelford
Division Director
Knowledge Management and Practice Standards

cc: Jacqueline Lowe, Program Manager
Lauren Staudt, Program Coordinator
Dawn Stoner, Licensing Consultant

Deonee County Zoning Board Member,

Each day we learn more about Whetstone Academy since its inception in 2011. I have been contacted by past employees and even one current employee. The information they have is not good and sometimes grim.

I have listened to the taped recordings from all three hearings and the most glaring fact is that at all the hearings the Whetstone personnel misrepresent the actual facts.

April 2011 Sharon Stricker states their ratio for student and staff is 6 to 1

July 2014 Sharon Stricker states the ratio is 8 to 1

August 2014 Margaret George states the ratio is 6 to 1

July 2014 Sharon Stricker states to expand to 32 boys she only has to hire "1 more staff member" so that will not affect the traffic much. In actuality they have three shifts so that would be 3 additional staff member per day. If you take Margaret George's ratio it would be 6 extra staff per 24 hour period.

April 2011 Sharon Stricker states multiple times they only take "mild profile" boys. We have the 911 calls and other evidence to show that is not true.

April 2011 Sharon Stricker states you cannot enroll a boy without going through a lengthy screening process. We have heard from 2 parents that told us all they did was to call up the school, send the money, and bring the child. **DIRECT ADMISSION.**

August 2014 Butch Clay states the school provides "solid academic lessons" and "counseling." One parent told us that her son only received 10 minutes of counseling/therapy once a week. There are no accredited teachers.

April 2011 Sharon Stricker states the school does not have to be licensed because the school will close down three times per year for a period of 10 days each. Ms. Stricker also told DSS in Columbia this was going to be their policy. Factually, the school has never closed down until December of 2013.

August 2014 Sharon Laney states she is going to just talk "honestly from her heart." In our research we find Sharon Laney was involved in 2009 with a school

called Three Springs. Ms. Laney was listed as CEO of Three Springs. There was an investigation into the Three Springs program but Sharon Laney would not talk with anyone and even alluded that she was not the CEO but the fact was Ms. Laney was considered the "public face" of Three Springs. Margaret George was the school Administrator during this time.

August 2014 Margaret George states she is the new Executive Director and has made "a couple of calls" to the local neighbors concerning the traffic. In reality, Ms. George made 1 phone call, only to the Heddens and that was August 21. She is an Executive Director "in abstentia". It is Sharon Stricker we see go into Whetstone every day. Margaret George is mainly in North Carolina.

Margaret George is a Clinical Addiction Specialist. Will this mean the additional students would be a more 'Hard Core' boy with addiction problems. I know the school enrollment has always fluctuated up and down. I feel to have a consistent enrollment of 32 boys Whetstone would have to reach boys with more serious behavioral problems and issues.

I will quote from a published report from Family Light, an educational consulting firm that specializes in "boarding schools"

"Most of the programs operated by Three Springs accept state-funded placements only (juvenile court order or foster care alternative). Three Springs, like many other programs in this industry, keeps a 'tight-lid' on any specific information regarding their staff, qualifications, and practices"

Three Springs acquired the New Dominion programs, and these schools progressively deteriorated in quality now under the leadership of Three Springs. As Three Springs becomes investigated, now Three Springs closes, and currently operates under the name of Sequel TSI. You will find in this industry the personnel move from school to school.

This is another direct quote "Please don't place your loved one in a Three Springs program and rescue them if they are there now." This is chilling.

Please keep in mind, Sharon Laney and Margaret George worked together at Three Springs for several years. Now they are involved in Whetstone.

We still have problems with speeding cars, especially the weekend staff. On Monday, September 21 about 12:00 noon I saw a school car come out of the school drive and continued to accelerate up to the crest of the blind hill, never slowing, seeing that 4 people were standing there. Just as he topped the hill there was the postman coming up the other side. The school car never stopped or even tried to slow down and sped on down the other side, barely missing the postman. It was a narrow escape for both of the drivers.

We know there have been fire code violations in the bunkhouse. This past month the Academy has been very busy refurbishing the bunkhouse and the Office.

I spoke with a past employee who now lives out of state and is studying for the ministry. They said one of the staff's inside joke was "they felt like they were helping to raise future serial killers". They said there were occasions of animal abuse and the children were not watched closely. The boys were afraid of the woods because they had been told there were rattlesnakes out there so they would not go far. They stated there were only a few boys they would consider in the category of a mild profile. They also felt the profanity by the boys was terrible and could not understand why Sharon Stricker did not address this. They also said there was a quick turnover in most of the new staff, some would not even stay a week. *The runaway that came to my house came straight down the Road.*

I feel for the boys. This is not how 10 to 14 year old boys should have to live during this vulnerable stage of their lives.

Section 32-172 of ARTICLE 5. Purpose of Article.

The regulations of this article is intended to lessen the adverse impact.....and to ensure the health, safety and general welfare of residents and citizens of the county.

I can not believe there could be any actual positive outcome, for student or neighbor, with any expansion for Whetstone Academy.

My last question to you would be: Would you honestly want this school in your neighborhood?

Elizabeth McFarland
J.P.O. Box 31
551 Mongeld Gap Rd.
Mountain Rest, SC
29664

Patrick K McNulty Sr.
354 Colonial Circle
Geneva, IL 60134
(630) 777-5564

Oconee County Zoning Board
Oconee County, SC

August 23, 2014

To whom it may concern,

It has come to my attention that you are reviewing a permit to allow the construction of a new building on the grounds of the Whetstone Academy. I encourage you to allow the school to proceed with the construction so that they may continue to serve their students and your community.

My son Patrick is a graduate of Whetstone Academy. In 2012 at age twelve Patrick was diagnosed with an anxiety disorder that prevented him from attending the public school in our community. I engaged a respected educational consultant certified by The National Association of School Psychologists. After spending time with Patrick she informed me that there were no schools in the Chicago area appropriate for him and that I should travel to Mountain Rest, SC to meet the staff at Whetstone Academy.

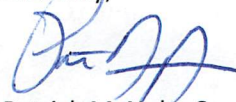
My first impression of the school was that this tranquil property surrounded by one of our nation's most beautiful forests would be a safe place for my son. While observing the staff I learned that aside from having excellent credentials, they have the experience to provide a highly structured environment in which students would be nurtured and cared for but also held accountable. This unique therapeutic school is where my son received the therapy that he needed while learning skills to cope with his disability in the future. He spent nine months away from home in the care of the staff at Whetstone. It was a terrifying leap of faith but ultimately a tremendous experience for our family.

Today Patrick is a sophomore in high school. He gets good grades and is a member of the cross country and track teams. Recently, he told me that he wants to become a psychologist and return to Whetstone as a member of the staff. Patrick's experience at Whetstone allowed me to meet other parents of students who face similar challenges. We adults have formed friendships and continue to support one another with the skills that we learned while participating in family workshops sponsored by the school.

I hope that the story of my son's experience helps you to understand how fortunate you are to have a school like Whetstone Academy in your county. This project to improve their facilities at no cost to the taxpayers is an opportunity to continue their work while providing jobs for a dedicated and professional staff. I encourage you to allow this project to go forward without delay.

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Patrick McNulty Sr.', written over a light blue horizontal line.

Patrick McNulty Sr.

August 20, 2014

Oconee County Board of Zoning Appeals
415 South Pine Street
Walhalla, S.C. 29691

Dear Sir:

Thank you for informing me of the hearing on August 26, 2014, in regard to the construction of a group home on the property adjacent to my property at Mountain Rest, S.C.

Since I will be unable to attend, I would like to express some of my concerns.

I attended a meeting a few years ago, when a group of people had purchased this property, with the intention of starting a small facility for children with possible social or behavior problems. I did not think they had made a smart decision, because of several reasons, the location is so remote and the environment could be a problem since this property backs to a undeveloped area extending to a rough mountain area all way to Georgia and North Carolina line, with a lot of wild animals bears, possum snakes etc. They will find these on their property also. These can be harmful for the children.

This location is entirely too far from a hospital, Doctor or Nurse. Since these Children have problems and on medication, also accidents can happen.

The strip of land is not large enough to have a group home and larger than ~~is~~ now there.

They need more land to expand, they will need room for activities and etc. This would be a great concern.

The road they are now using to get to the property, is not good, it is only a dirt narrow road, not wide enough to take care of the traffic at present, nor will it be wide enough for any future traffic. This creates a unsafe travel condition.

Your local emergency and law enforcement can be effected, if a home is approved in this area.

As far as the home owners already living near or around this facility, it could become a undesirable area for families as well as children growing up in the area. After checking I find where these group homes exist, it greatly effects the value of other property near by. All this depends on the number of children that are allowed to be housed at these facility.

My wish for this planning board to consider all these concerns, and consider the children and their safety, the property owners, the families there. This area is not a business area it is a quite mountain community.

I truly wish that your staff will not approve a group home at this location.

Sincerely,

Alberta Balloway Sullivan

THE JOURNAL

210 W. North 1st Street, Seneca, SC 29678
Ph. 864.882.2375 Fax: 864.882.2381
classadmgr@upstatetoday.com

THE JOURNAL online
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OCONEE COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPM
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Salesperson: PVINSON

Classification: Legals

Ad Size: 1.0 x 1.80

Advertisement Information:

Description	Start	Stop	Ins.	Cost/Day	Total
The Journal	08/30/2014	08/30/2014	1	23.13	23.13
Affidavit Fee	-	-	-	-	5.00

Payment Information:

Date:	Order#	Type
08/29/2014	10430	BILLED ACCOUNT

Total Amount: 28.13

Amount Due: 28.13

Comments: Public Hearing - 9/30/14 - Tucker Harding

Attention: Please return the top portion of this invoice with your payment including account and ad number.

Ad Copy

The Oconee County Board of Zoning Appeals will conduct a public hearing on Tuesday, September 30, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the County Administrative Complex, 415 S. Pine Street, Walhalla, SC 29691. The applicant, Tucker Harding, is requesting a Special Exception regarding the proposed construction of a group home to be located at 186 Briars Lake Rd., Mountain Rest, SC 29664 (TMS# 080-00-01-018). If you would like additional information concerning this request please contact the Community Development Office at 864-638-4218.

OCONEE COUNTY COMMUNITY DEVELOPM

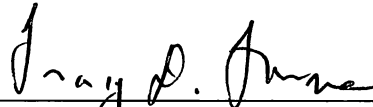
IN RE: Public Hearing - 9/30/14 - Tucker Harding

BEFORE ME the undersigned, a Notary Public for the State and County above named, This day personally came before me, Hal Welch, who being first duly sworn according to law, says that he is the General Manager of **THE JOURNAL**, a newspaper published Tuesday through Saturday in Seneca, SC and distributed in **Oconee County, Pickens County** and the Pendleton area of **Anderson County** and the notice (of which the annexed is a true copy) was inserted in said papers on 08/30/2014 and the rate charged therefore is not in excess of the regular rates charged private individuals for similar insertions.

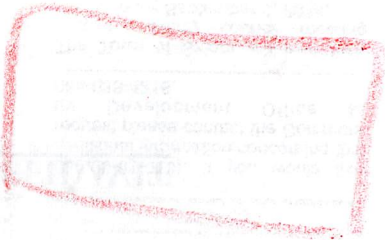
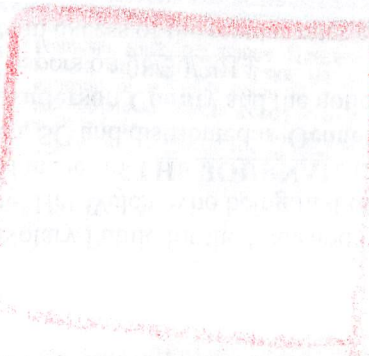


Hal Welch
General Manager

Subscribed and sworn to before me this
08/30/2014



Tracy D. Turner
Notary Public for South Carolina
My commission Expires: 11/26/2022



LEGAL NOTICES**LEGALS**

U WILL ALSO TAKE NOTICE that Plaintiff will move for an Order of Reference or the Court may issue a General Order of Reference of this motion to a Master-in-Equity/Special Referee, pursuant to Rule 53, of the South Carolina Rules of Civil Procedure.

U WILL ALSO TAKE NOTICE under the provisions of South Carolina Code 29-3-100, effective June 16, 1993, any collateral assignment of rents contained in the scheduled mortgage is perfected and Attorney for Plaintiff hereby gives notice that all rents shall be payable directly to it by delivery to its undersigned attorneys from the date of default. In the alternative, Plaintiff will move before a judge of this Court on the 10th day after service of process, or as soon thereafter as counsel may be heard, for an Order compelling the assignment of rents, if any, and compelling payment of all sums covered by such assignment directly to the Plaintiff, which motion will be based upon the original note, mortgage and the Complaint attached hereto.

NOTICE OF FILING COMPLAINT
THE DEFENDANTS ABOVE
NAMED:

U WILL PLEASE TAKE NOTICE of the original Complaint, Cover Sheet for Civil Actions and Certificate of Exemption from ADR in the above captioned action was filed in the Office of the Clerk of Court for Oconee

LEGAL NOTICES**LEGALS**

County on May 11, 2012.
J. Martin Page, SC Bar No. 100200
Brock & Scott, PLLC
3800 Fernandina Road, Suite 110
Columbia, SC 29210
Phone 888-726-9953
Fax 866-676-7658
Attorneys for Plaintiff
Wilmington, North Carolina

SURPLUS SALE

Tamassee-Salem Middle/High School will have miscellaneous vintage sports uniforms and other athletic items for sale during athletic events during September 22, 2014 through January 30, 2015. These items will be sold where is/as is with no warranties. The condition of sale items are not known. All sales are final. Cash Only at time of sale. The School District and Tamassee-Salem Middle/High School reserves the right to add/delete items at their discretion.

The Oconee County Board of Zoning Appeals will conduct a public hearing on Tuesday, September 30, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers of the County Administrative Complex, 415 S. Pine Street, Walhalla, SC 29691. The applicant, Tucker Harding, is requesting a Special Exception regarding the proposed construction of a group home to be located at 186 Briars Lake Rd., Mountain Rest, SC 29664 (TMS#

LEGAL NOTICES**LEGALS**

080-00-01-018). If you would like additional information concerning this request please contact the Community Development Office at 864-638-4218.

The Town of Salem will hold their regular monthly council meeting

Monday September 8, 2014,
at 6pm in Council Chambers
5A Park Ave. Salem SC 29676

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\$314,900, 304 Cedar Post Ct., Seneca, 3 BR, 2 BA, MLS #20151705, [Re/Max Realty Professionals](#), Adrienne Hennes, 864-241-8200



\$310,000, 135 Ricks Rd, Fairplay, 3 BR, 2 BA, MLS #20154784, [Lake And Land Realty](#), Jackie Donahue, 864-972-2662



\$230,000, 198 Lakeview Lane, Fairplay, 2 BR, 2 BA, MLS #20156372, [Lake And Land Realty](#), Jackie Donahue, 864-972-2662



\$225,000, 1 Spy Glass Lane, Salem, 4 BR, 3 BA, MLS #20153614, [Keller Williams Seneca, Patti Donahue](#), 864-903-1234, 864-903-0312



 Mr. Nichols,

We are writing you again in regards to the Whetstone Academy expansion. After the last meeting we received a phone call from a concerned parent of a former student at Whetstone Academy. This parent found Danny's name in an article on the WGOG website and in the Daily Journal. Since Danny was in opposition of the expansion they wanted to contact us and tell us their concerns. The parent stated the following: "the students are not watched at all and are alone at many times", "horrible language comes out of his mouth after leaving the school - so bad that he couldn't attend a normal camp for more than two days, he was then asked to leave camp because of his foul language and talking about pornography". The parent also stated: "my son is now questioning being bisexual since leaving Whetstone and had never talked about it before being there". This parent said the children there were very ragged, "their clothes smelled; they had to take cold showers; the staff didn't want anyone to just drop in; you have to call in advance to visit." The parent also states the student "only received four 10-minute therapy sessions a month, and was given no step-down program or behavioral plan after graduating from the school, and as far as an education, that was a joke. It was more like babysitting." I want to assure you we are not out looking for this type of information. It has been brought to us out of nowhere simply because Danny was quoted a few times for being against the expansion. Hearing things like this makes us even more worried about the students at Whetstone. With places like this not having any oversight, do we really know what goes on at these "group homes"? Looks like a disaster waiting to happen to me. It's really hard to hear things like this about places anywhere; but especially when the place is your neighbor.

We feel that the local residents have provided enough information that shows that Whetstone Academy has not abided by the 5 guidelines that you originally set in 2011 when they opened. Below are the designated guidelines and how they have not met these requirements:

1. **The Board concludes that traffic flow from the facility shall not present a danger to local residents, motorists, and pedestrians.**
 - Traffic flow is still a constant problem. I was almost hit head-on when leaving my home one morning (Sept. 10) on the blind hill exiting Brians Lake Rd. The speeding also never changes and has been an issue since the school opened. We can call about it; we hear it's being taken care of but nothing changes for more than a day or two. There is constant traffic day and night on a one-lane dirt road that was not built to accommodate this much traffic. Someone will get hurt on this road one day!
2. **The Board concludes that noise, light, and activities carried out on the premise of the facility shall not present a nuisance to local residents.**
 - Aside from all of the traffic noise, the fact that we have had to take our little boy inside from playing on our porch to keep from hearing enraged cussing and screaming coming from the school is unacceptable. Other residents have also had to deal with the kids yelling and cussing off the school property. This is a nuisance to our community; we shouldn't have to live with this!
3. **The Board concludes that the residents of the facility shall not present any potential danger to local residents.**

- Knowing that many of these kids are on medications that can alter their behavior, and after seeing the 911 reports that clearly show violent behavior from the students to the adult staff, tells us that there is a safety issue for the local residents. Would you feel okay letting your son play outside alone when he gets older next to a facility like this? Also, the amount of traffic poses a safety hazard on this one-lane dirt road.
4. **The Board concludes that the residents of the facility shall reside in a safe and healthy environment.**
- After seeing statements that were written by a former employee and now after hearing from a parent, I cant say the boys of Whetstone are in a safe healthy environment. I don't believe we would continue to hear negative things, if something wasn't wrong in this environment. We love kids and I hate to think even one child is being mistreated, but without any oversight and regulation it shouldn't surprise anyone when bad things happen in places like this (which has already happened in similar facilities in this state). There needs to be some kind of investigation to assure the safety and care of these boys.
5. **The Board Concludes that the proposed development is in compliance with the other provisions of chapter 32, article V of the Oconee County Code of Ordinances. *{The regulations of this article are intended to lessen the adverse impact of large-scale group residential development on neighboring residential areas and to ensure the health, safety and general welfare of resident and citizens of the county.}***
- Whetstone Academy's presence in the local community has not been a positive one. Local residents have had to deal with a tremendous increase in traffic. There have been several local residents almost hit by speeding cars going in and out of the Academy. The overall feeling of safety in our community has changed. All the local residents have been here many years, and the reason they decided to make this area home was because of the peace and quite of a safe country area with hardly any traffic, where people care about each other and would let you know if a strange car was creeping around. Whetstone Academy has greatly impacted this area in a negative way, changing all that was appealing to the local residents. We all feel that we have lost our sense of community here that we have grown to love. It is no longer a place to walk the neighborhood freely with a child and not worry.

I feel we gave Whetstone a chance. This is not the place we once called home and where we started raising a family. As a community, we gave them the benefit of the doubt. Everyone in the local community wants the best for the children at Whetstone Academy. It worries us all that they are not getting the care and help that they deserve. We were extremely misled by Sharon Stricker and I feel the zoning board was too. Let's not make the same mistake twice! Please do not allow Whetstone Academy their requested expansion. Thank you.

Faith and Danny Hedden – 177 Briars Lake Rd, Mountain Rest

STATE OF SOUTH CAROLINA

)

)

AFFIDAVIT

COUNTY OF OCONEE

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PERSONALLY APPEARED BEFORE ME, Jodie Farmer, being duly sworn, states the following:

I am Jodie Farmer, a previous employee at Whetstone Academy. I was hired in May of 2011 and with the exception of being temporarily laid off from October 2011 to February 2012, I have continued to work there until earlier this year. I have previously written a letter to the Oconee County Board of Zoning Appeals about my knowledge and experience concerning the school. After hearing some comments about being just a "disgruntled employee," I have decided to submit this sworn affidavit addressing the issues at hand. Further, I know of several employees who left because they could not stand what was happening to the children at the school, and I hope they will come forward to share their information.

1. Traffic flow from the facility shall not present a danger to local residents, motorists, and pedestrians.

I know that the roads to the school are very narrow and at certain spots only one car can pass at a time. I know that a staff member got a ticket for driving in the staff vehicle very fast on these back roads with the students in the vehicles. It became common knowledge that this same employee would pull the kids on their skateboards using the staff vehicle.

2. Noise, lighting, and activities carried out on the premises of the facility shall not be present a nuisance to local residents.

Cursing: The children cursed a lot and as loud as they could. Hearing about it may seem like a petty complaint to the county, but the boys use it all the time, and it was never addressed. When I complained to the management, I was told it was my job (to be cursed at) and to deal with it. In fact the only time I know of anyone being corrected for cursing was the time I used the word "damn." The boys would scream the curse words at everyone, so I do believe the neighbors could hear it at their homes. I would be shocked if they couldn't.

3. The residents of the facility shall not present any potential danger to local residents.

I have witness a series of events that I reported to other staff and management of a prowler on the premises. My statements were immediately discarded without any investigation. It was later discovered to be a staff member who had a problem with addiction and had been stealing the student's medication at night.

Ignored mental issues: I know of several boys had problems that were ignored or barely addressed. Some were minor, others were scary. One child had severe anger issues and would attack staff and other students. There are several times 911 had to be called and the student placed in a restraint hold. It took several incidents before he was sent to a mental hospital for the help he needed.

Another student apparently attacked a student while swimming in the lake and yelled that he was going to kill him while he held him under water.

Another student had a mental break down and went berserk in the bunkroom, tossing the beds, screaming, and throwing things. I keep the rest of the boys in another area until someone else arrived. From then on we (the over-night staff) was told to leave him as he had only 2 more months left and he would leave. Until then, we were to leave him in bed and let the day-time staff address him.

Animal abuse/neglect: One student killed the school cat; Sharon said he drank Clorox, but acted like the cat happen upon a bowl of Clorox instead of the child doing it on purpose. I heard about another staff member witnessing another student break the neck of a baby chick. I saw one of the duckling broke his leg, but no one brought him to the vet for help him.

4. The residents of the facility shall reside in a safe and healthy environment.

In July 2012, three staff members, including myself, all came down with a staph infection around the same time. (My voiced concerns were ignored.)

Unsanitary conditions: The school had gone several days ~~without electricity~~ and the conditions of the bathrooms become intolerable with an accumulation of human waste. It was just as bad the times the water went out as well.

Food: The school did not provide much food to feed these boys, and they often complained of being hungry. There were time I could give only give them dry cereal, as there was no milk. Sometimes there was barely enough eggs to feed the boys and there was always something that was out. I could only cook what I was provided with. I have seen one of the boys go into the pig's slop bucket because he was still hungry. Another time, Mazie who ran the kitchen told me to feed the boys a casserole she made on Friday. It was Wednesday and it looked bad. When I question her about it, she told me to cook it.

Health of the students: In May 30, 2012, I came into work and informed as part of my duties that a particular student had a seizure earlier that day, and while an ambulance was called then, by the time it arrived, the student came to and he did not go to the hospital. I was not never trained about seizures and I was very concern about the situation. I watched that child very closely and the next morning (May 31, 2012) around 6:30 a.m. sure enough he had

a seizure. I was terrified as he thrash around, and when he started vomiting I was scared that he would choke on his vomit. When the ambulance arrived and questioned us about the cause, the other employee stated that the child was without his medications for 4 days.

On March 3, 2013 a student fell off his bike and suffered a concussion and needed stitches. Since it was the weekend, there was the minimum of 2 just 2 employees present and Sharon could not be reached. After about 90 minutes of trying to get someone, one staff brought the child to the hospital and the other was left to supervise all the boys alone.

5. The proposed development is in compliance with the other provisions of this chapter. : N/A

Jodie Farmer
Jodie Farmer

Sworn to and subscribed before me

this 26th day of September, 2014.

Shelly Backer

Notary Public for South Carolina

My Commission expires: 6-6-2015



I was hired by Whetstone Academy in May of 2011. At that time there was 2 boys enrolled, O. and J. About June 4 more boys came for the summer but left shortly when school started. They were pretty good boys and there was very little cussing.

October 2011 I was laid off from Whetstone because at that time the school only had the 2 boys, O. and J.

February 2012 I returned to work at Whetstone. There was about 6 or 8 boys and the boys began to use more profanity.

May 2012 We have a new boy L., who is a problem child. Sharon was aware that L. had a medical history of seizures when he came to the school. I was not made aware of his medical condition earlier.

May 30 2012 When I came to work that night the second shift staff told me L. had a seizure earlier and they had to call an ambulance but by the time the ambulance arrived L. had settled down so the ambulance left. The second shift told me that L. had been out of his medicine for four days and the EMS person said to watch him closely for L. could have another seizure during the night. I did check on L. constantly during the night.

May 31 2012 L. had a seizure this morning around 6:30 and we did call an ambulance. L. was a large child and it was hard to try to keep him from thrashing around and hurting himself. Also, he was vomiting and I was trying to hold his head so he would not get choked. It was very, very bad. The ambulance people questioned us and James Holcomb told the people that L. had been without his medication for 4 days. When Sharon got to the hospital and the hospital staff questioned Sharon she said that was not correct. When she got back to the school she called me at home and said I was not to tell the ambulance people information like that. At that time we learned that L. had a seizure earlier in the month. The only training we have had is how to "put a boy in a hold" if he gets violent. L. left within a month.

July 2012 Three employees have become infected with Staph, myself, Sherman and ~~one~~ Andrew, within about a ten day period. We all worked different shifts and

we had to go to the doctor to get the infection cut out. We felt we got it from the school. Sharon told us we did not get it from the school but she did buy a large can of Lysol for us to spray on the couch in the bunkhouse.

The boys are supposed to keep the bathroom clean but there are only 2 commodes for everyone to use in the bunkhouse. It can get really filthy at times and they don't do a very good job so eventually the third shift will mop and clean. The boys are using more and more profanity. If you say anything to Sharon she tells us to just "deal with it".

July 18 2012 When I came into work they had Jn. on the couch asleep. He is a child with a very foul mouth and he had been violent earlier in the day and the police had been called.

July 2012 The children began to see someone looking in the windows of the bunkhouse.

August 2012 Sharon questions all the staff about a missing check from the school checkbook. Also, this month we receive paychecks that we can not cash because of insufficient funds and the school issued now paychecks. We have only a couple of good kids. All the others are very hard to get along with, lots of profanity, and they are very belligerent when I am trying to fix breakfast.

We have no security light outside at the bunkhouse. There is supposed to be a light at the door but when it does work the children throw rocks at it and break the light. The light has been out all summer. I have even said I would pay to get a new light. Sharon never disciplines any of the children for anything, like breaking the light, profanity, etc. I bring my own flashlight. There is no back-up generator and when we lose power it is dark.

August 2012 Someone has gone in the Office/House at night. We notice lights on at the Office and then they will go off. Michael Durham has seen this. We called Shawn Ziluck (who is in charge when Sharon is out of town) and he said we must be watching too much TV. He did not take us seriously.

Another night as I came into work at 11 the lights were on at the Office. I told Michael and Kory and when they came out to look the lights were out. They walked over to the Office and they heard someone upstairs. Again, we called Shawn and he said "it was probably a ghost". The only two windows in the bunkhouse are on the two sides that face the woods.

September 5 2012 When Sharon came in to work early she said the lights were on in the Office. Wanted to know if anyone went over there during the night. She said she had made sure the lights were off when she left.

September 27 2012 During the night someone was throwing things on the roof of the bunkhouse. Michael Durham went out to check.

October 2012 Tiffany was letting the boys tie ropes on the back of a company car and she was pulling them down Rocky Gap Rd. while they were on their skateboards. The back cargo door was up and several students were riding in the back with the door open. All the staff knew about this for the boys had told everyone. Tiffany was also bringing cigarettes for some of the boys. It was known by the staff that Tiffany had gotten a ticket for going "over a 100 miles an hour" with some of the boys in the school car with her. Sharon let Tiffany by and then about 3 weeks or so after the Skateboard incident the neighbors called Sharon about it and it became an issue so then Sharon fired Tiffany.

October 31 2012 We now find out that our prowler at night is Michael Deal, the school therapist. He had worked at Cherokee Creek Boys School with Sharon and came to Whetstone shortly after the school opened. Michael was doing all this so he could steal the kid's drugs and medications. Sharon did not want to press charges and Michael promised to go to a rehab program.

Fall 2012 We now have a student G. who has very serious behavioral problems. G. is very aggressive, throws things (at students and employees), and is very hard to handle. G. threw a shovel at Andrew, hitting him on the arm, cutting his arm and breaking his watch. When Andrew talked to Sharon he said she blamed Andrew and told Andrew he should have handled it better. Again, there is never

any discipline for the students. The only instructions we have had by upper staff against bad behavior is to restrain them or put them in a "hold".

We learned G. was at Whetstone now because G. had been at a baseball game in Clayton, Ga. and G. had gotten angry and hit another child with a bat and caused serious injury to this child. We have had all sorts of problems with G. because of his anger and his excessive use of profanity in any kind of situation. Even something as simple as speaking to him at breakfast.

February 2013 G. in a rage. G. attacked Mallory (female staff person). The police came and as soon as the police left James Holcomb had to put G. in another "hold". Sharon stated she wants to give G. another chance. G. has been very disruptive to the school ever since he was admitted. All the staff feels Sharon overlooks these issues and none of us see where there is any "therapy" that is helping. Sharon expects the staff to "handle it".

February 2013 We have a new boy R., who is very sweet natured, but he is quick to tell you he is Gay. He wears earrings, pink nail polish, dresses feminine, etc.

Lights are out at bunkhouse once again.

March 3, 2013 Sunday afternoon Ni. Went over the handle bars of his bike and Andrew could tell Ni. was hurt. There was only one other staff person there. There are usually only 2 staff for each shift on weekends. Andrew called Jeremy to come to take Ni. to the hospital. Jeremy told Andrew to call James. When James was called James told Andrew to call Sharon. When he called Sharon she was in Atlanta. Finally, after an hour and a half, Andrew took Ni. to the hospital. Ni. had a concussion, a laceration at his eye, and a fractured wrist. While Andrew was at the hospital with Ni. that left one staff member with 10 or 12 boys. When I came in that night I could see Ni. was still in a lot of pain.

April 18 2013 G. kicks out a window in the bunkhouse. Again, out of control and violent.

April 26 2013 G. becomes aggressive and violent. Someone comes and takes him away and we learn he has gone to a mental hospital and will not return to Whetstone. My observance is that none of the school policies/therapy helped this child. The staff just coped with his issues because of the money his parents paid the school to board him.

We discover that Nc. has made holes in the bathroom wall so he could watch the women use the bathroom. The only discipline was he had to repair the holes.

April 27 2013 The staff see that R. and T. are missing. The staff sends A.J. and A to look for them. R. and T. are out in the woods by themselves. A.J. and A. come back and report they see R. giving T. a blowjob. T. was asked to leave school.

May 2013 A bear has started coming around at night because of the garbage. I reported it to James the next morning but when I came back the next night the second shift was not told about the bear or to be on alert for the bear. The bear made a lot of noise getting in the garbage and several of us did see it. Information is not always passed on from shift to shift.

May 26 2013 When I came to work Sherman told me the bear was around about 9 that night. Around 10 Jt. had started misbehaving really bad so he had pushed Jt. out the door of the bunkhouse and would not let him back in until Jt. said he would behave.

May 29 2013 About 6 a.m. Jn. came in the living room where Michael Durham and myself were. Jn. told Michael that he needed to come in the bedroom area. Michael found R. giving Tm. a blowjob. There was no discipline and both kids remained at school. The only change was now the night staff had to stay in the bedroom area at all times and R. would be watched closed.

July 2013 Tm. has had a major mental breakdown this morning. He was turning over the beds, breaking beds, screaming, throwing things. All the boys and I left the area. We stayed clear until the first shift came and talked to him until he calmed down. The only change was the Tm. did not have to get up in the morning with the rest of the boys. Tm. was allowed to stay in bed as long as he wanted to and then first shift would work with him.

July 7 2013 There is no water in the bunkhouse, commodes can't be flushed, bathroom is in terrible shape. This went off and on for several weeks.

Daily we deal with profanity from the boys. When we talk with Sharon about this and discipline we are always told to "deal with it". We are not to try to discipline the boys. She will have the therapist to address the issues with the boys.

December 18 2013 ?

January 2014 C. has headlice

Every morning C. gets up and he starts fighting with the other boys. He runs around cussing and screaming. He has tried to break the windows. This morning he kicks Travis in the privates and takes off running outside. Calls the staff, bitches, whores, S.O.B.s and his favorite, motherfuckers. Every other word is MF. Again, I go to Sharon about the language and ask about discipline, Again, she says that this is part of my job and I could not say anything about their language.

April 28 2014 E. has been here several months . He is a large boy and is constantly causing trouble . The kids were at the lake and E. got mad at P. He held P under the water with his legs around P.,s neck screaming "Drown, Bitch, Drown" three times before a staff member could get to them to pull E. off of P. 911 was called. There was no lifeguard at this time. The other staff was on the other side of the house with a couple of the other boys. It was a close call.

When Sharon asked E. what had he learned from his time at Whetstone he told her his mother should have taken the 66 thousand she had paid and flushed it down the shitter for any good he didn't get from being at Whetstone.

There is very little food for breakfast. Cereal with no milk, Oatmeal with only brown sugar, no milk. Rarely has sausage and biscuits, waffles with no syrup, pancake mix with no griddle to cook on. Hardly ever have enough eggs to cook. It is this way every morning. The boys are always hungry. One morning Mazie called and told me to cook a casserole she had made for the weekend and the staff did not cook it. She made it Friday and this was Wednesday. It looked bad and I questioned about cooking it but I was told to cook it.

One morning we found one of the cats dead. E said he killed it but then denied it to Sharon. Sharon told some of the staff that it drank Clorox water but I didn't see any Clorox water sitting around. Jn. broke the baby chickens neck and another staff member had seen him break another baby chicken's neck.

The morning staff has to cook and watch boys and when some of them act out that leaves one staff to cook and watch an average of 10 to 12 boys and cook while the other staff member deals with boys misbehaving. One of the three ducks has a broken leg. They just let it walk round with it and no one took it to the vet to help the duck.

I feel this school is more about the money then the welfare of the boys. I know of no one moving to Oconee County that works there. Two employees are from Georgia. Before Butch Clay left to go to another school it was common knowledge he called Whetstone CAMP RUN-A-MUCK. The reason he left Whetstone was Sharon wanted him to lie to a parent about the son's improvement and Butch refused to lie because the boy had not improved. At times there wasn't food to feed the animals and they would be without food for several days. The boys do scream and cuss outside and I do believe the neighborhood can hear them.

Jodie Garner
09/26/14

Shelly Backer
Exp: 6/6/15



Call Type

C59 - SHOTS FIRED IN AREA

73 - BURGLARY

C44 - FOLLOW UP

C15 - TRASPASSING

C19 - PATROL REQUEST

79 - PROWLER

C26 - FRAUD / ID THEFT

80 - SUSPICIOUS PERSON

46 - ALTERED MENTAL STATUS

846 - ALTERED MENTAL STATUS

3 - SEIZURE

83 - SEIZURE

3 - SEIZURE

83 - SEIZURE

3 - SEIZURE

83 - SEIZURE

C30 - 911 HANG UP

49 - DISTURBANCE

47 - SUSPICIOUS VEHICLE

TEST

C30 - 911 HANG UP

14 - MESSAGE / INFORMATION

10:27

10:14

CHD cells
Actual front out

10:41
10:14

200

Staff member stealing
Report drugs & medications

Incident Number
2013-00000517
2012-00037328 - Report

CAD Narrative

02/08/2013 09:26:16 Neill Burkett Narrative: E911 Info - Class of Service: BUSN Special Response Info: SHERIFF DEPT WALHALLA MOUNTAIN REST FIRE #4 EMS ER-6 ER-4
02/08/2013 09:26:37 Neill Burkett Narrative: 13 YOA OUT OF CONTROL
02/08/2013 09:26:48 Neill Burkett Narrative: ADHD , OPOSITIONAL DEFIANT
02/08/2013 09:26:55 Neill Burkett Narrative: GARRETT VANCE
02/08/2013 09:27:07 Neill Burkett Narrative: HE HAS GOTTEN PHYSICAL
02/08/2013 09:27:13 Neill Burkett Narrative: NO INJURIES
02/08/2013 09:27:19 Neill Burkett Narrative: HE HAS ALREADY BROKEN SOME DISHES
02/08/2013 09:27:44 Neill Burkett Narrative: HE IS ON THE PORCH , A STAFF MEMEBER HAS HIM RESTRAINED
02/08/2013 09:28:03 Neill Burkett Narrative: AT THE END OF BRIANS LAKE RD
02/08/2013 09:28:20 Neill Burkett Narrative: HE HAS ACTED OUT BEFORE IN THE PAST
02/08/2013 09:28:55 Neill Burkett Narrative: HE IS ON MEDS, HE HAS ALREADY TAKEN THEM TODAY
02/08/2013 09:29:09 Diane Shook Narrative: EST ON HIGHLANDS HWY FROM WALHALLA, LEFT ON VERNER MILL RD, LEFT ON CHATTOOGA RIDGE RD, RIGHT ON ROCKY GAP RD, RIGHT ON GALLOWAY RD, LEFT ON MONGOLD GAP RD TO THE END, WILL BE STRAIGHT AHEAD
02/08/2013 09:29:44 Neill Burkett Narrative: CALLER DISCONNECTED, STATED SHE FELT LIKE THE WOULD FINE
02/08/2013 09:30:18 Neill Burkett Narrative: PER CALLER , NOTHING REALLY INITIATED THIS EPISODE TODAY, IT "JUST HAPPENED" . STATES IT IS PART OF HIS CONDITION

CAD Narrative

04/18/2013 18:47:09 Lisa Willis Narrative: KID IS BEING VIOLENT
04/18/2013 18:47:12 Lisa Willis Narrative: 14 YOA
04/18/2013 18:47:24 Lisa Willis Narrative: TRYING TO HIT EVERYONE
04/18/2013 18:47:59 Lisa Willis Narrative: JOHNATON SEABOURN
04/18/2013 18:48:02 Lisa Willis Narrative: NO WEAPONS
04/18/2013 18:48:21 Lisa Willis Narrative: HE IS ON MEDS FOR BEHAVIOURAL
04/18/2013 18:48:29 Lisa Willis Narrative: DOES NOT TAKE IT AGAIN UNTIL 8PM
04/18/2013 19:17:58 Lisa Willis Narrative: CORY CALLED BACK STD THAT EVERYTHING HAS CALMED DOWN
04/18/2013 19:18:35 Lisa Willis Narrative: 10-4 TO STILL COME TO CHECK ON THEM

CAD Narrative

08/02/2013 17:43:12 BRIAN K. SANDERS Narrative: E911 Info - Class of Service: BUSN Special Response Info: SHERIFF DEPT WALHALLA MOUNTAIN REST FIRE #4 EMS ER-6 ER-4
08/02/2013 17:43:41 BRIAN K. SANDERS Narrative: 14YO OUT OF CONTROLL
08/02/2013 17:44:55 BRIAN K. SANDERS Narrative: 10-68 ISSUES
08/02/2013 17:45:11 BRIAN K. SANDERS Narrative: SCREAMING AND FUSSING
08/02/2013 17:45:23 BRIAN K. SANDERS Narrative: ADULT STAFF IS HOLDING HIM DOWN
08/02/2013 17:45:43 BRIAN K. SANDERS Narrative: STD THAT HE HAS BITTEN AND HIT PEOPLE
08/02/2013 17:47:01 BRIAN K. SANDERS Narrative: THEY HAVE HIM RESTRAINED AS WELL
08/02/2013 17:47:13 BRIAN K. SANDERS Narrative: HE HAS CALM DOWN SOME NOW
08/02/2013 17:47:25 BRIAN K. SANDERS Narrative: NO WEAPONS
08/02/2013 17:47:38 BRIAN K. SANDERS Narrative: NO DRINKING OR C22
08/02/2013 17:47:54 BRIAN K. SANDERS Narrative: WAS HITTING STAFF WITH STICK EARLIER
08/02/2013 17:48:05 BRIAN K. SANDERS Narrative: DOES NOT HAVE IT NOW TOOK IT AWAY
08/02/2013 17:48:27 BRIAN K. SANDERS Narrative: STILL HOLDING HIM
08/02/2013 17:49:32 BRIAN K. SANDERS Narrative: THEY HAVE LET GO AT THIS HE IS SEATING DOWN WITH STAFF

CAD Narrative
01/01/2014 12:18:02 Allen O'Kelley Narrative: E911 Info - Class of Service: BUSN Special Response Info: SHERIFF
DEPT WALTHAM MOUNTAIN REST FIRE #4 EMS ER-6 ER-4
01/01/2014 12:18:48 Allen O'Kelley Narrative: unable to reach anyone got fax line
01/01/2014 12:18:48 Allen O'Kelley Narrative: unable to reach anyone got fax line
01/01/2014 12:18:48 Allen O'Kelley Narrative: unable to reach anyone got fax line

CAD Narrative
 12/19/2013 08:54:14 Allen O'Kelley Narrative: E911 Info - Class of Service: BUSN Special Response Info: SHERIFF
 DEPT WALTHAM MOUNTAIN REST FIRE #4 EMS ER-6-ER-4
 12/19/2013 09:55:14 Allen O'Kelley Narrative: PER CALLER EVERYTHING IS FINE AND THIS HAPPENED
 YESTERDAY AS WELL
 12/19/2013 09:55:40 Allen O'Kelley Narrative: HE HAS BEEN TRYING TO TRACK THIS TO SEE IF HE CAN FIND THE
 PROBLEM

CAD Narrative
12/18/2013 14:32:12 Diane Shook Narrative: E911 Info - Class of Service: BUSN Special Response Info: SHERIFF
DEPT WALTHAM MOUNTAIN REST FIRE #4 EMS ER-6 ER-4
12/18/2013 14:32:20 Diane Shook Narrative: CALLING BACK
12/18/2013 14:32:20 Diane Shook Narrative: SPOKE TO SEAN ZIUCK / NOTHING GOING ON / MISDIAL
12/18/2013 14:33:31 Diane Shook Narrative: WILL CHECK
12/18/2013 14:33:39 Diane Shook Narrative: SHAWN ZILICK - DIRECTOR .. SAYS EVERYTHING IS OK
12/18/2013 14:38:56 Rebecca Carter Narrative: HE WILL WATCH FOR OFFICER AND TRY TO STEP OUT
12/18/2013 14:46:42 Neill Burkett Narrative: PER B8 HE KNOWS SHAWN AND IS GOING 10-8

CAD Narrative
10/01/2013 23:34:42 Kathrine Voss Narrative: E911 Info - Class of Service: BUSN Special Response Info: SHERIFF
DEPT WALTHAM MOUNTAIN REST FIRE #4 EMS ER-6 ER-4
10/01/2013 23:35:01 Kathrine Voss Narrative: @ WHESTONE ACADEMY
10/01/2013 23:35:04 Kathrine Voss Narrative: POSS HEART ATTACK
10/01/2013 23:36:10 Kathrine Voss Narrative: NO ROOM NUMBER
10/01/2013 23:36:12 Kathrine Voss Narrative: BIG RED BLDG
10/01/2013 23:36:15 Kathrine Voss Narrative: IT'S A SCHOOL
10/01/2013 23:36:27 Kathrine Voss Narrative: STAFF MEMBER
10/01/2013 23:36:52 Kathrine Voss Narrative: SUBJ IS STILL CONSCIOUS
10/01/2013 23:37:02 Kathrine Voss Narrative: ADVD HES REALLY HURTING
10/01/2013 23:37:20 Kathrine Voss Narrative: HAS HIGH BP THAT TAKES MEDS FOR IT
10/01/2013 23:37:50 Kathrine Voss Narrative: HAS TAKEN ASPIRIN
10/01/2013 23:38:54 Kathrine Voss Narrative: TONED

I am, Elizabeth McFarland, a neighbor of Whetstone school. I reside at 551 Mongold Gap Road.

1. Traffic flow from the facility shall not present a danger to local residents, motorists, and pedestrians.

Mongold Gap Rd. is an old settlement wagon road that has changed little in 70+ years. It is 10' in width. There is no deeded right-of-way on either side of the road. There is a blind hill with a one-lane approach from either side. No one walks on this road anymore because of the school traffic and the speeding vehicles. This continues to be an everyday event.

As the school traffic increased in number the traffic also increased in speed. There is even more of a danger with speeding school vehicles on Rocky Gap Road.

2. Noise, lighting, and activities carried out on the premises of the facility shall not present a nuisance to local residents.

All through out the spring and summer months, until July 23, when the boys were outside at the school, the noise from their general everyday activity was loud and you could clearly hear yelling and screaming. At times this continued until dark.

3. The residents of the facility shall not present any potential danger to local residents.

The community does feel there is a clear danger by the students to the local residents.

The students at the school have behavioral problems. That is why the boys are there. They are on medications and the school staff knows that some of the boys have a violent nature. Their mental and emotional status can change from moment to moment. We have the 911 Reports to show how violent a student can become.

I have had a runaway boy come to my property. He walked straight down the road to my house. It was alarming to hear the extreme profanity and screaming from the child. He was yelling "at the top of his lungs" that he would rather go to jail" than go back to the school. There was a staff person following the boy and after a while a school car came and carried the two of them back to the school. It was a disturbing incident.

What if Roy Cook decides to sell the school. We know this can happen overnight. What kind of boy would then be housed at the school that could pose a greater threat to the neighborhood?

Again, we have seen the 911 Calls where there have been attacks on the Whetstone staff, male and female, by the boys. The majority of our community are older residents. We are in easy walking distance from the school.

4. The residents of the facility shall reside in a safe and healthy environment.

On researching Whetstone, you find this is a turbulent industry. These programs are prone to student abuse within. Again, there are the 911 calls that show there is danger to the children

housed at Whetstone . There is an ongoing investigation by HEAL.com into Whetstone and alleged child abuse: restraining, physical holds of the child, withholding food, abuse between the children, unsanitary conditions in the housing , etc.

There is an inordinate amount of these school in N.C., S.C. and Georgia. We know of 4 of these programs in Oconee County . They all have problems and there are 911 Calls to all the programs.

For the safety and well-being of the young boys at Whetstone I do not feel any expansion by the school would be beneficial for the boys or the community. Please vote to deny this request by Whetstone Academy to expand to house 32 boys.

Thank you,

Elizabeth McFarland
551 Mongold Gap Road
Mountain Rest, SC

Elizabeth McFarland
9/29/14

Attachments



Fire destroys dorm at school for troubled teens

JUNE 26, 2008 1:00 AM • BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

ABBEVILLE, S.C. - Authorities say fire destroyed a dorm at a boarding school for troubled teens in Abbeville County, but no one was injured in the blaze.

Carolina Springs Academy Director Elaine Davis says several students returning to the dorm after lunch Wednesday smelled smoke.

Fire officials say the blaze burned for more than two hours and destroyed the dorm at the school which specializes in helping students that aren't reaching their potential because of their behavior.

The school has moved the boys to another dorm on campus. The Red Cross plans to give them bedding, clothes and school supplies.

John Smith Says:

April 29, 2014 at 1:03 am

I was a CSA for 8 months it was the worst time in my life from the abuse to the good etc. I miss a lot of the guys from the program and while I was there we had a fire one kid tried to burn the building dynasty down. There were many. Fights it was pure hell but never the less I made it out after my mother realized what a horrible decision sending me there was. Since then I've graduated college and I'm doing great in my life. The program did absolutely nothing for me. I'm glad those who made it out made it out ok!

Reply

4.



Stacy Lee Says:

June 4, 2014 at 12:09 am

I was at C.S.A. back in 07' for about 7 months and it was the worst place I've ever been. I would take 10 more deployments before I'd ever wanna go back there.

CAD Narrative

02/08/2013 09:26:16 Neill Burkett Narrative: E911 Info - Class of Service: BUSN Special Response Info: SHERIFF DEPT WALHALLA MOUNTAIN REST FIRE #4 EMS ER-6 ER-4
02/08/2013 09:26:37 Neill Burkett Narrative: 13 YOA OUT OF CONTROL
02/08/2013 09:26:48 Neill Burkett Narrative: ADHD , OPOSITIONAL DEFIANT
02/08/2013 09:26:55 Neill Burkett Narrative: GARRETT VANCE
02/08/2013 09:27:07 Neill Burkett Narrative: HE HAS GOTTEN PHYSICAL
02/08/2013 09:27:13 Neill Burkett Narrative: NO INJURIES
02/08/2013 09:27:19 Neill Burkett Narrative: HE HAS ALREADY BROKEN SOME DISHES
02/08/2013 09:27:44 Neill Burkett Narrative: HE IS ON THE PORCH , A STAFF MEMEBER HAS HIM RESTRAINED
02/08/2013 09:28:03 Neill Burkett Narrative: AT THE END OF BRIANS LAKE RD
02/08/2013 09:28:20 Neill Burkett Narrative: HE HAS ACTED OUT BEFORE IN THE PAST
02/08/2013 09:28:55 Neill Burkett Narrative: HE IS ON MEDS, HE HAS ALREADY TAKEN THEM TODAY
02/08/2013 09:29:09 Diane Shook Narrative: EST ON HIGHLANDS HWY FROM WALHALLA, LEFT ON VERNER MILL RD, LEFT ON CHATTOOGA RIDGE RD, RIGHT ON ROCKY GAP RD, RIGHT ON GALLOWAY RD, LEFT ON MONGOLD GAP RD TO THE END, WILL BE STRAIGHT AHEAD
02/08/2013 09:29:44 Neill Burkett Narrative: CALLER DISCONNECTED, STATED SHE FELT LIKE THE WOULD FINE
02/08/2013 09:30:18 Neill Burkett Narrative: PER CALLER , NOTHING REALLY INITIATED THIS EPISODE TODAY, IT "JUST HAPPENED" . STATES IT IS PART OF HIS CONDITION

CAD Narrative

04/18/2013 18:47:09 Lisa Willis Narrative: KID IS BEING VIOLENT
04/18/2013 18:47:12 Lisa Willis Narrative: 14 YOA
04/18/2013 18:47:24 Lisa Willis Narrative: TRYING TO HIT EVERYONE
04/18/2013 18:47:59 Lisa Willis Narrative: JOHNATON SEABOURN
04/18/2013 18:48:02 Lisa Willis Narrative: NO WEAPONS
04/18/2013 18:48:21 Lisa Willis Narrative: HE IS ON MEDS FOR BEHAVIOURAL
04/18/2013 18:48:29 Lisa Willis Narrative: DOES NOT TAKE IT AGAIN UNTIL 8PM
04/18/2013 19:17:58 Lisa Willis Narrative: CORY CALLED BACK STD THAT EVERYTHING HAS CALMED DOWN
04/18/2013 19:18:35 Lisa Willis Narrative: 10-4 TO STILL COME TO CHECK ON THEM

CAD Narrative

08/02/2013 17:43:12 BRIAN K. SANDERS Narrative: E911 Info - Class of Service: BUSN Special Response Info: SHERIFF DEPT WALHALLA MOUNTAIN REST FIRE #4 EMS ER-6 ER-4
08/02/2013 17:43:41 BRIAN K. SANDERS Narrative: 14YO OUT OF CONTROLL
08/02/2013 17:44:55 BRIAN K. SANDERS Narrative: 10-68 ISSUES
08/02/2013 17:45:11 BRIAN K. SANDERS Narrative: SCREAMING AND FUSSING
08/02/2013 17:45:23 BRIAN K. SANDERS Narrative: ADULT STAFF IS HOLDING HIM DOWN
08/02/2013 17:45:43 BRIAN K. SANDERS Narrative: STD THAT HE HAS BITTEN AND HIT PEOPLE
08/02/2013 17:47:01 BRIAN K. SANDERS Narrative: THEY HAVE HIM RESTRAINED AS WELL
08/02/2013 17:47:13 BRIAN K. SANDERS Narrative: HE HAS CALM DOWN SOME NOW
08/02/2013 17:47:25 BRIAN K. SANDERS Narrative: NO WEAPONS
08/02/2013 17:47:38 BRIAN K. SANDERS Narrative: NO DRINKING OR C22
08/02/2013 17:47:54 BRIAN K. SANDERS Narrative: WAS HITTING STAFF WITH STICK EARLIER
08/02/2013 17:48:05 BRIAN K. SANDERS Narrative: DOES NOT HAVE IT NOW TOOK IT AWAY
08/02/2013 17:48:27 BRIAN K. SANDERS Narrative: STILL HOLDING HIM
08/02/2013 17:49:32 BRIAN K. SANDERS Narrative: THEY HAVE LET GO AT THIS HE IS SEATING DOWN WITH STAFF

CAD Narrative
10/01/2013 23:34:42 Katherine Voss Narrative: E911 Info - Class of Service: BUSN Special Response Info: SHERIFF
DEPT WALHALLA MOUNTAIN REST FIRE #4 EMS ER-6 ER-4
10/01/2013 23:35:01 Katherine Voss Narrative: @ WHETSTONE ACADEMY
10/01/2013 23:35:04 Katherine Voss Narrative: POSS HEART ATTACK
10/01/2013 23:36:10 Katherine Voss Narrative: NO ROOM NUMBER
10/01/2013 23:36:12 Katherine Voss Narrative: BIG RED BLDG
10/01/2013 23:36:15 Katherine Voss Narrative: ITS A SCHOOL
10/01/2013 23:36:27 Katherine Voss Narrative: STAFF MEMBER
10/01/2013 23:36:52 Katherine Voss Narrative: SUBJ IS STILL CONSCIOUS
10/01/2013 23:37:02 Katherine Voss Narrative: ADVD HES REALLY HURTING
10/01/2013 23:37:20 Katherine Voss Narrative: HAS HIGH BP THAT TAKES MEDS FOR IT
10/01/2013 23:37:50 Katherine Voss Narrative: HAS TAKEN ASPIRIN
10/01/2013 23:38:54 Katherine Voss Narrative: TONED

CAD Narrative
12/18/2013 14:32:12 Diane Shook Narrative: E911 Info - Class of Service: BUSN Special Response Info: SHERIFF
DEPT WALHALLA MOUNTAIN REST FIRE #4 EMS ER-6 ER-4
12/18/2013 14:32:20 Diane Shook Narrative: CALLING BACK
12/18/2013 14:33:31 Diane Shook Narrative: SPOKE TO SEAN ZIOUCK / NOTHING GOING ON / MISDIAL
12/18/2013 14:33:39 Diane Shook Narrative: WILL CHECK
12/18/2013 14:38:56 Rebecca Carter Narrative: SHAWN ZILICK - DIRECTOR .. SAYS EVERYTHING IS OK
12/18/2013 14:39:09 Rebecca Carter Narrative: HE WILL WATCH FOR OFFICER AND TRY TO STEP OUT
12/18/2013 14:46:42 Neill Burkett Narrative: PER B8 HE KNOWS SHAWN AND IS GOING 10-8

CAD Narrative
12/19/2013 09:54:14 Allen O'Kelley Narrative: E911 Info - Class of Service: BUSN Special Response Info: SHERIFF
DEPT WALHALLA MOUNTAIN REST FIRE #4 EMS ER-6 ER-4
12/19/2013 09:55:14 Allen O'Kelley Narrative: PER CALLER EVERYTHING IS FINE AND THIS HAPPENED
12/19/2013 09:55:40 Allen O'Kelley Narrative: HE HAS BEEN TRYING TO TRACK THIS TO SEE IF HE CAN FIND THE
PROBLEM

CAD Narrative
01/01/2014 12:18:02 Allen O'Kelley Narrative: E911 Info - Class of Service: BUSN Special Response Info: SHERIFF
DEPT WALHALLA MOUNTAIN REST FIRE #4 EMS ER-6 ER-4
01/01/2014 12:18:48 Allen O'Kelley Narrative: unable to reach anyone got fax line
as we will check on this when we can

CAD Narrative
04/28/2014 08:29:10 Neill Burkett Narrative: HAD TWO 14 YOAS GET INTO A FIGHT IN THEIR POND YESTERDAY
04/28/2014 08:30:22 Neill Burkett Narrative: THE MOTHER OF ONE OF THE BOYS IS WANTING SOMEONE TO
TALK TO THE BOY WHO HIT HER SON
04/28/2014 08:30:38 Neill Burkett Narrative: ONE OF THE ONES INVOLVED HAS BEEN EXPELLED
04/28/2014 08:30:53 Neill Burkett Narrative: THE MOTHER MAY WANT TO PRESS CHARGES

To Members of the Zoning Board,

We are writing you again in regards to the Whetstone Academy expansion. After the last meeting we received a phone call from a concerned parent of a former student at Whetstone Academy. This parent found Danny's name in an article on the WGOG website and in the Daily Journal. Since Danny was in opposition of the expansion they wanted to contact us and tell us their concerns. The parent stated the following: "the students are not watched at all and are alone at many times", "horrible language comes out of his mouth after leaving the school - so bad that he couldn't attend a normal camp for more than two days, he was then asked to leave camp because of his foul language and talking about pornography". The parent also stated: "my son is now questioning being bisexual since leaving Whetstone and had never talked about it before being there". This parent said the children there were very ragged, "their clothes smelled; they had to take cold showers; the staff didn't want anyone to just drop in; you have to call in advance to visit." The parent also states the student "only received four 10-minute therapy sessions a month, and was given no step-down program or behavioral plan after graduating from the school, and as far as an education, that was a joke. It was more like babysitting." I want to assure you we are not out looking for this type of information. It has been brought to us out of nowhere simply because Danny was quoted a few times for being against the expansion. Hearing things like this makes us even more worried about the students at Whetstone. With places like this not having any oversight, do we really know what goes on at these "group homes"? Looks like a disaster waiting to happen to me. It's really hard to hear things like this about places anywhere; but especially when the place is your neighbor.

We feel that the local residents have provided enough information that shows that Whetstone Academy has not abided by the 5 guidelines that you originally set in 2011 when they opened. Below are the designated guidelines and how they have not met these requirements:

1. **The Board concludes that traffic flow from the facility shall not present a danger to local residents, motorists, and pedestrians.**
 - Traffic flow is still a constant problem. I was almost hit head-on when leaving my home one morning (Sept. 10) on the blind hill exiting Brians Lake Rd. The speeding also never changes and has been an issue since the school opened. We can call about it; we hear it's being taken care of but nothing changes for more than a day or two. There is constant traffic day and night on a one-lane dirt road that was not built to accommodate this much traffic. Someone will get hurt on this road one day!
2. **The Board concludes that noise, light, and activities carried out on the premise of the facility shall not present a nuisance to local residents.**
 - Aside from all of the traffic noise, the fact that we have had to take our little boy inside from playing on our porch to keep from hearing enraged cussing and screaming coming from the school is unacceptable. Other residents have also had to deal with the kids yelling and cussing off the school property. This is a nuisance to our community; we shouldn't have to live with this!
3. **The Board concludes that the residents of the facility shall not present any potential danger to local residents.**

- Knowing that many of these kids are on medications that can alter their behavior, and after seeing the 911 reports that clearly show violent behavior from the students to the adult staff, tells us that there is a safety issue for the local residents. Would you feel okay letting your son play outside alone when he gets older next to a facility like this? Also, the amount of traffic poses a safety hazard on this one-lane dirt road.
4. **The Board concludes that the residents of the facility shall reside in a safe and healthy environment.**
- After seeing statements that were written by a former employee and now after hearing from a parent, I can't say the boys of Whetstone are in a safe healthy environment. I don't believe we would continue to hear negative things, if something wasn't wrong in this environment. We love kids and I hate to think even one child is being mistreated, but without any oversight and regulation it shouldn't surprise anyone when bad things happen in places like this (which has already happened in similar facilities in this state). There needs to be some kind of investigation to assure the safety and care of these boys.
5. **The Board Concludes that the proposed development is in compliance with the other provisions of chapter 32, article V of the Oconee County Code of Ordinances. *{The regulations of this article are intended to lessen the adverse impact of large-scale group residential development on neighboring residential areas and to ensure the health, safety and general welfare of resident and citizens of the county.}***
- Whetstone Academy's presence in the local community has not been a positive one. Local residents have had to deal with a tremendous increase in traffic. There have been several local residents almost hit by speeding cars going in and out of the Academy. The overall feeling of safety in our community has changed. All the local residents have been here many years, and the reason they decided to make this area home was because of the peace and quiet of a safe country area with hardly any traffic, where people care about each other and would let you know if a strange car was creeping around. Whetstone Academy has greatly impacted this area in a negative way, changing all that was appealing to the local residents. We all feel that we have lost our sense of community here that we have grown to love. It is no longer a place to walk the neighborhood freely with a child and not worry.

I feel we gave Whetstone a chance. This is not the place we once called home and where we started raising a family. As a community, we gave them the benefit of the doubt. Everyone in the local community wants the best for the children at Whetstone Academy. It worries us all that they are not getting the care and help that they deserve. We were extremely misled by Sharon Stricker and I feel the zoning board was too. Let's not make the same mistake twice! Please do not allow Whetstone Academy their requested expansion. Thank you.

Faith and Danny Hedden – 177 Briars Lake Rd, Mountain Rest

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