

Art school nixed by town commission

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Neighbors' complaints, private road cited for recommended denial

There likely will not be an art school on Silver Beach North in the Town of Belgium.

On May 19, the town's Plan Commission unanimously turned down a request for a conditional-use permit by Deborah Kern, who wanted to operate overnight art workshops at 6684, 6692 and 6698 Silver Beach North.

The Town Board will act on the request Monday, June 7.

Kern, who purchased the properties two years ago, had envisioned three-day workshops for eight to 10 people at a time, two or three times during the summer.

"It was primarily because it is a private road. We have no control over a private road, and because of the opposition from neighbors. It's like a driveway for residents," Town Chairman Francis Kleckner said. "Because there are fees involved, it would be considered a business."

At a public hearing held in April, David Bowman, who lives next to the house earmarked for student lodging, objected to the school, saying it would infringe on his family's privacy and enjoyment of their property.

"This house is our sanctuary to relax and enjoy quality time with our family," Bowman said. "This is a private road. You're essentially traveling across people's back yards. I'm concerned about property values, traffic and safety. It seems a dangerous precedent and would be a Pandora's box."

Kern said she believes the school would have enhanced the neighborhood rather than detract from it, and said the artists would not have disturbed anyone.