

## Windsong Recording Studio Proposal

Request for revision to a conditional use permit for Windsong Retreat O&I

May 21, 2007

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Thank you for considering our request to allow the operation of a music & media arts studio as a permitted use of our O&I property in the township of New Hope. I would like to take three minutes to introduce myself and to summarize what we hope to do with your permission.

Historically, Windsong was a working farm, with a large barn, a chicken coop, and a congregation of outbuildings. Today, we have a mission of serving the community by hosting retreats, yoga classes and other community events, enhanced by the natural beauty of pastoral land, forests, streams, and a pond. Our desire for the future is to expand our existing facility by constructing a new building in the location where the old barn--which collapsed before we owned the property--once stood, restoring that part of the land to productivity in a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.

The plans you see in the submission represent our absolute commitment to three fundamental considerations:

- \* Acoustic Performance
- \* The Natural Environment
- \* Educational Outreach

These three considerations are reflected in three practical ways:

- \* Adoption of Innovative Technologies
- \* Green Building and Operating Plans
- \* Economic Development & Cultural Benefit

Every stone that is laid, every corner that is made expresses in form and delivers in function the design considerations of the project, as you can see from the interior and exterior renderings of the studio and throughout our responses contained in the Five Findings document. The 20" thick, acoustically isolated, double masonry walls are but one example of our total commitment to ensuring both the integrity of the recording environment inside the studio and the preservation of rural tranquility outside the studio.

This body is charged with the responsibility of determining appropriate land use. We have studied the Chatham County Zoning Ordinance documents and the Strategic Plan, and as we wrote in the Five Findings, we believe our proposed use is consistent with the laws of the land, it is beneficial to the people, good for

business, and it is respectful to the environment. Our plans also match the growing market demands for top-flight production facilities located in beautiful and peaceful environments that stimulate creativity and inspire artistry.

We recently learned that Pittsboro's General Store Cafe is planning to expand their facility to provide a much larger venue for live musical performance. As members of the Pittsboro community and as customers of the General Store Cafe, this is great news to us. And in light of the plans we have submitted for your review, this is truly wonderful news. The more artists they attract to Pittsboro to perform, the more they increase the market of those who may wish to record, mix, or produce media at our facility. Conversely, artists looking to record in our facility (which will rival the finest studios in Nashville) will be able to "keep it real" by playing live at the nearby General Store Cafe. Business is risk, and the music business is one of the riskiest. But the complementary nature of our two businesses, one focused on live music, the other focused on recording, mixing, production, and education, increases opportunities for both of us while reducing the risks that each of us face.

Other local business will also benefit. One constant need of working studios is catered meal services, and we can expect to send a lot of business to Chatham Marketplace and other catering companies as clients book time in the facility. We will discuss the economic aspects of our plans in more detail at the June 12th board meeting of the Economic Development Committee.

Back to land use. If approved, the total impervious surface of both the existing buildings and the new construction remains less than 4% of the property-possibly among the lowest percentage of any O&I property in Chatham County. If approved, the facility will create a small but respectable number of good-paying, professional jobs. If approved, the facility will enhance the value of other Chatham County businesses, such as the General Store Cafe and the Chatham Marketplace. And if approved, Chatham County can look forward to a facility that protects the natural resources, preserves the rural character, and promotes artistic development, education, and commerce consistent with Chatham County's cultural heritage and economic future.

We are happy to answer any questions that you or the public may have about this project, and we hope that we have the opportunity to see this vision take root and grow at Windsong.