

[Insert Date]

[Insert Your Inside Address]

Town Council Members  
Town of Santa Clara, Saranac Lake, New York (Franklin County)  
5359 NY-30, Saranac Lake, NY 12983

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NOTE: All email addresses need to be separated by a comma  
Please cc: UpperSaranacLakeGroup@gmail.com

**RE: Lot 9 Development, Deerwood Subdivision**

Dear Town Council Members/Board Members,

I am writing you to request that you deny the APA amended permit request proposed for Lot 9 in the Deerwood Subdivision in the Town of Santa Clara. **We request that any development permitted by the Town of Santa Clara comply with the original restrictions and conditions of the Deerwood APA Permit 87-74.**

We reside at (your address) in the Town of Santa Clara [or provide an alternative address if outside the Town, but are part of the lake community], pay our taxes and enjoy the quality of life provided under the excellent stewardship of our elected representatives. We are writing to oppose the extreme development being considered for Lot 9. We are concerned that Town approval of such development will significantly compromise the community and environmental values we treasure most in residing in our Town of Santa Clara and the broader Upper Saranac Lake Community.

We, along with a great many of our neighbors, strongly opposed APA's recent decision on Lot 9 which provides a permit amendment for the development of 1) an on-site septic system which is prohibited in APA Permit 87-74, and is now allowed 100 feet from the wetland, 2) a house, breezeway and an attached garage apartment with a kitchen, exceeding the definition of one principle dwelling; 3) spa and hot tub area; and 4) constructed boardwalks through the wetland which when installed by the previous property, led the APA to pursue an enforcement action for removal. More specifically, the applicant was granted APA approval to construct a six or seven bedroom 40-foot tall home complex with the above listed amenities. Further, extensive impervious surface coverage will be constructed for a small upland site with no consideration for the impact of runoff on an extensive surrounding wetland. In addition, the applicant has also requested a boat house and extensive tree removal within the forested wetland, to obtain a lake view from the home site, set 500+ feet back from the lake.

We believe that the APA permit amendment was decided in error and failed to consider objective, science-based technical information. In response to the proposed plans, residents and lake associations wrote more than 70 letters to the APA expressing complete opposition to the project. Not one letter expressed support of the project, as currently proposed. The APA failed to consider any of these comments and refused to meet with the adjacent property owners, concerned residents and lake associations, an independent ecologist and engineer, before their final decision was rendered.

We are emphatically opposed to the use of this APA permit amendment by the Town of Santa Clara as a basis for a building permit for Lot 9. The APA's decision-making process lacked an up-to-date engineering survey map with accurate hydrological and topographic information. Instead, the APA relied solely on the applicant-paid engineer without accessing an independent engineering expert to validate claims. The APA ignored important site information including a highly valuable Category 1 wetland (i.e., a Fen which is a type of wetland connected directly to groundwater), the adjacent pond and open streams within Lot 9 which all eventually flow into the north bay of Upper Saranac Lake. The APA also rolled back their standard requirement of a 200-foot buffer zone between the wetland and the on-site septic system to 100 feet from the wetland.

The APA's recent decisions on broadly waiving the original development requirements for Lot 9 in the Deerwood Subdivision sets significant precedents and will threaten the water quality on the Upper Saranac Lake. There will be cumulative detrimental impact to the Deerwood freshwater wetlands with long term, and irreversible consequences to our northern bay of Upper Saranac Lake. The subdivision contains a 25+/- wetland complex and a 1.56-acre pond, and HOA walking trails. This wetland is home to rare orchids, loons, bald eagles, and bobcats.

Concerned citizens retained outside experts to assess the suitability of a large home and septic system, on Lot 9 which is a marginal building lot that include a Category 1 wetland, several open streams meandering through the parcel, and spring fed water supplies beneath the bog mats that flow directly from Lot 9 into the lake. Technical experts evaluating the site included two licensed Professional Engineers, an environmental scientist, and a wetland ecologist. All advised against proceeding with the project as planned and were ignored.

We are asking that the Town of Santa Clara NOT defer to the APA approved permit amendment of Lot 9 of Deerwood. Instead, we ask the Town to rely on independent experts and enforce Santa Clara Town codes pertaining to a permit for Lot 9.

The Town of Santa Clara Code Enforcement Officer has the right to conduct investigations, examinations, test and site evaluations deemed necessary to verify information contained in a wastewater treatment system application.

Elected officials have full authority to develop independent decisions from the APA and are not bound to rely on APA decision making for the development of Lot 9.

All applications for wastewater treatment systems must identify “any surface waterbodies” including open streams and spring fed sub surface streams, “or wetlands within 200 feet” of the wastewater treatment system,” as per Section 11.53.A.d of the Town Code. The current Engineering Plan is incomplete and inaccurate and does not delineate such water bodies even though streams and a connecting network of freshwater beneath the bog mats exist on the lot. All fresh cold water discharged from Lot 9 provides a freshwater interchange into Upper Saranac Lake from three distinct discharge areas on Lot 9 and help to combat Hazardous Algae Blooms (HABs). All locations have been documented, even during drought conditions, shared with the APA, have been seen in person by the APA staff, and were ignored.

In closing, we oppose the current development plans for Lot 9 which demonstrate significant current and future damage to some of our most sensitive wetlands in the Adirondack Park and to the quality of the Upper Saranac Lake. We believe that the Town of Santa Clara Codes should be strictly enforced to protect this valuable wetland and our quality of life. Modifying or eliminating the original APA permit conditions for this property is in direct conflict with the written Town Code and presents severe threats to the water quality of Upper Saranac Lake.

**We request that any development permitted by the Town of Santa Clara comply with the original restrictions and conditions of the Deerwood APA Permit 87-74. To the extent that the Town is considering granting a permit beyond the original APA Permit 87-74, we request a public hearing on Lot 9.**

[Signature

Date

Email Address:

Cell Phone:

Landline Phone:

Camp Phone]:

Email cc: UpperSaranacLakeGroup@gmail.com