

Time 6:00PM

December 1, 2025

PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES
VARIANCE BOARD
TOWN OF SANTA CLARA

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Recording Folder E DM620076

Nancy LaBombard, Chairperson

John Briaddy

Judy Meagher

Lea Bedard

Dave Wisniewski

Robin Sullivan, Secretary

MEMBERS ABSENT: Todd Hall

OTHERS PRESENT:

Todd David, Code Enforcement Officer, town of Santa Clara

Mark Hall, Hall Design Group

Wendy Lincoln, applicant

Guy Middleton, Upper Saranac Foundation

The Variance Board of the Town of Santa Clara, County of Franklin, State of New York held a Public Hearing on December 1st, 2025, at 6:00 PM at the Santa Clara Town Hall, Route 30, Saranac Inn, New York, to hear comments on the following application:

Application of Mike and Wendy Lincoln would require a variance for the construction of a dock and boathouse. This variance would be on the applicants' property at 417 Gilpin Bay Rd., Saranac Lake, NY 12983, Town of Santa Clara, Franklin County, New York Tax Map 463.-2-2.100.

The proposed dock and boathouse would exceed what is allowed in the Santa Clara Land Use Code in total area, height, and extension from the land. Section 7.35 of the Land Use Code states that a boathouse may not exceed an area of 625 sq ft and the combined surface area of a boathouse and dock may not exceed an area of 875 sq ft. The proposed dock would be 368 sq ft, the proposed boathouse would be 1024 sq ft and the combination of those would be 1392 sq ft. The Land Use Code states that the maximum height of a boathouse is 15 ft from the mean high-water mark. The proposed boathouse would be 16 ft 6 inches in height from the mean high-water mark. The Land Use Code states that a dock or boathouse may not extend away from land more than 33 ft from the mean high water closest to such structure. The proposed dock would extend 38 ft from the mean high-water mark.

Nancy LaBombard, chairperson, began the meeting with introductions. Nancy then read the details of the variance application. She stated that some of the board members had visited the property and cove. They located the National Historical Marker on the property.

Nancy said that letters in support of the project had been received by 5 neighbors of the property.

Nancy read the opinion of the Planning Board from the Planning Board minutes. The Planning Board had no objection to approving the variance if the dock was shortened to 33ft and advised brown doors on the boathouse would make the boathouse less visible from the water. The existing dock on the property would have to be removed as well.

Wendy Lincoln asked what the difference was between the Planning Board and Variance Board. Nancy clarified the roles and stated that the Planning Board provides an opinion to the Variance Board on applications for variances.

Mark Hall passed around large prints of the plans and proposed boathouse. Dave asked about the availability of original plans or photos of the old boathouse. Mark and Wendy stated that little was available, but they tried to incorporate aspects of William Coulter's design into the boathouse and keep it in sync with the rest of the property. Judy stated that she remembered the original boathouse, as her sister did, and that the design of the new boathouse is very much like the original.

Mark and Wendy stated that they would consider changing the color of the doors to brown if strongly urged, but that the yellow doors would match all other doors on the property.

Lea asked if the current dock is to be removed. Wendy replied yes, it would and had been kept until now since the new boathouse was one of the last projects to be done.

Judy asked about the extension of the dock to 38 ft. Mark stated the main reason was to keep boats docking away from the building, but that bumpers would also achieve this if necessary.

Nancy proceeded to a vote on the 5 factors to consider when granting a variance.

1. Undesirable Change - all voted NO
2. Some Other Method - all voted NO, Nancy and Judy expressed that a smaller boathouse would not be a historical representation and would not look good compared to the rest of the property
3. Substantial - all voted NO
4. Adverse Impact on Environment- all voted NO
5. Self-Created - all voted NO

The issue of the dock length came up again and all board members agreed that the 38 ft length was acceptable.

The Variance Committee Members having taken into consideration the benefit to the applicant, as weighed against the detriment to the health, safety and welfare of the neighborhood or community and having considered the five factors has decided to GRANT the variance. The decision does not preclude on our part any APA or other authoritative approval. It is the responsibility of the applicants or owners to contact other state, county and/or local agencies to secure any necessary permits.

Wendy and Mark expressed appreciation to the Variance Board for their work on this application.

Robin Sullivan

Secretary