

TOWN OF SANTA CLARA PLANNING BOARD

5367 State Route 30
Saranac Lake, NY 12983

July 22, 2025

PRESENT: Planning Board Members: Scottie Adams, Beth Hall, John LaHart, Mike Ritchie and Alternate Board Member Connie Rockefeller. Code Enforcement Officer (CEO), Todd David

ABSENT: Bill Young

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Scottie Adams at 9:00 AM.

Beth Hall moved to approve the minutes from the previous meeting. Mike Ritchie seconded the motion. All members present were in favor of the motion. The minutes from the Planning Board meeting on 06-24-2025 are approved.

John LaHart made a motion to allow the alternate member to vote in the absence of one of the Board members. The motion was seconded by Beth Hall. All members voted in favor of the motion.

Variance Application:

APPLICANT: Michael Bird for Paul and Stephanie Schaeffer

PARCEL ID: 473-1-10-300

LOCATION: 476 Bungalow Bay Rd, Upper Saranac Lake

This application is for the construction of a new boathouse with dockage. A variance is required because the property on which the proposed boathouse/dock is located has 157 ft. of shoreline. The planned boathouse/dock is 28 ft. 4 in. wide which covers 18.1 % of the shoreline. Section 7.35 of the Santa Clara Land Use Code specifies that any structures along the shoreline cannot exceed 15% of the width of the shoreline. Additionally, a sideline setback variance from 25 ft. to 0 ft is requested. The applicants own the adjoining lot, which has a deed restriction barring any construction, development, structures or improvements, and has 126 ft. of shoreline. The applicant requests that the shoreline of both lots be considered as one lot. The combined shoreline is 283 ft. and therefore the boathouse/dock would now be only 10.1 % of the shoreline. The boat house is reported to be 616 sq. ft. with 259 sq. ft. of dockage for a total square footage of 875 sq. ft. , which meets the Town code.

Members of the Planning Board discussed the application and alternate solutions to the variance. The obvious suggestion was to merge the 2 lots onto 1 lot, so that no variance would be required. Deed restrictions are not enforceable by the Town and if the deed restriction were ignored, it would require a civil suit to be filed to prevent violation of the deed restriction. However, any construction on the deed restricted lot would require a building permit issued by the Chief Enforcement Officer and waterfront construction would require approval by the Planning Board. After discussion Beth Hall made a motion that the Planning Board recommend to the Variance Board that they have no objection to the variance being granted, although it would be preferable to combine the 2 lots and avoid a variance. The motion was seconded by John LaHart. All board

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members present voted in favor of the approval. This approval is dependent on the new boathouse/dock being the only structures on the combined waterfront.

Trash Situation

Once again, it seems like the trash situation on Hoel Pond has been resolved. The trash cans were not on the side of Hoel Pond Rd, but were around the corner on the shared driveway, out of traffic's way. The trash containers were put out on the road for trash pickup and then removed not only from the side of Hoel Pond Rd, but also are not visible on the shared driveway. A great improvement to the neighborhood both aesthetically, environmentally and traffic safety wise.

Sign Law

The chair reported that there was a resolution included in the packet for the last Town Board meeting that concerned prohibiting signs along lakefront properties: preserving the pristine nature of our shared lakefront. This resolution did not arise from any action by the Planning Board. The chair pointed out that any regulations concerning signs should be enacted as part of the Land Use Code, Section 6.43: Conforming signs without review. The resolution was tabled at the Town Board meeting. This action was confirmed by Curt Reynolds, town councilman who was in the audience.

Septic

There was extensive discussion about the increase in HABs in the past few years and whether the Planning Board should initiate some specific septic system regulations. Beth Hall reported algae blooms on Upper Saranac Lake in 5 months of last year and showed pictures of some of these algae blooms. She also reported the blue green color in Follensby-Clear and Little Clear ponds. While there are blooms on Upper Saranac, there are also blooms on ponds on which there are no structures. And there have been no blooms on small ponds with many camps, such as Church Pond. There was further discussion about the current state of septic system inspections upon sale. Apparently, septic system inspection is not a critical factor in sales. There seems to be no hard scientific data that there is a correlation between algae blooms, HABs and septic systems. Some discussion members consider any further septic regulations to be unnecessary. Others felt that further septic regulations would be beneficial, while others felt the situation should be studied further. It was agreed that the changing weather patterns are probably the major factor and septic systems may play a role, but it is difficult to know what if any measures to take.

Open Discussion

Curt Reynolds said he was attending the meeting to familiarize himself with the Planning Board activities. The chair and other board members gave an overview of the many Planning Board Projects to update the Land Use Code over the last 10 years in addition to their regular duties of reviewing Site Plan Applications and providing input on Variance applications. Some major projects included increasing boat house sizes and lengths, allowing Eagle Island to become an

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active camp again, creating a color-coded zoning map of the town, adding special use permits and commercial marina regulations to the Land Use Code and developing STR regulations. There were no further topics for discussion.

Connie Rockefeller moved that the meeting be adjourned. Mike Ritchie seconded the motion. All were in favor of the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 9:45 AM.

Next Meeting

The next meeting will be scheduled as needed.

PSA