

Salisbury Lakes Homeowners

SalisburyLakesHomeowners@gmail.com

<https://bit.ly/SalisburyLakesHomeowners>

March 15, 2021

Mr. Larry Burcroff
Chairman of the Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission
Town of Salisbury CT

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I write to you on behalf of Salisbury Lakes Homeowners, a large and growing group of homeowners with homes and real estate located on and around the regulated lakes in the Town of Salisbury, including the Twin Lakes.

As you know, the Inland Wetlands & Watercourses Commission (“IWWC”) has recently proposed new regulations that may, we believe, have a material and adverse impact on homeowners and property values. On Friday, March 12, a small group of our representatives met for an hour via Zoom with First Selectman Curtis Rand to express our concerns about the purpose, timing, content, and impact (intended and unintended) of the proposed regulations. We had a productive conversation and Mr. Rand undertook to relay the substance and gravity of our concerns to you, the IWWC and Abby Conroy.

We were advised by Mr. Rand to seek a dialogue with the leadership of Lake Wononscopomuc Association (“LWA”). It is our understanding that the leadership of the LWA played a material role in providing direct input to the new proposed regulations over the course of many months. If this is the case, we are at a loss as to why no one from the Twin Lakes was invited to be part of that process. The aggregate value of the real property surrounding the Twin Lakes represents significant tax revenue for the Town of Salisbury. And as taxpayers directly impacted by the proposed regulation changes, we have not had any role in the development of the proposed regulations, unlike the LWA.

Our conversation with Mr. Rand was helpful as he enumerated the Town’s challenges concerning future development in and around the lakes as well as clear cutting, which often occurs prior to the filing of an application with IWWC or Planning and Zoning. We respect these concerns and do not take issue with the need to consider how best to preserve and protect our water resources, but we are deeply concerned with the lack of transparency and the timing of, and process for, the evaluation and adoption of the proposed regulations.

We intend this letter as a formal request to you, as the Chair of IWWC, to pause the current process and gather input from a larger group of property owners. Specifically, we would like substantially more time for all waterfront property owners to understand the problems to be addressed. As well,

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we request the ability to partner with the IWWC and to participate in the development of any regulatory changes. While we share the strong desire to protect our lakes and the environment, we remain concerned that the current proposed regulations do not actually solve many of the problems summarized by Mr. Rand in our discussion.

Once the current process is paused, we suggest that the IWWC work with the Board of Selectmen to appoint an IWWC Advisory Committee comprised of designated representatives of homeowners on all regulated lakes of the Town and members of the IWWC with the specific task of educating, researching, and recommending solutions which will balance environmental concerns with those of property owners.

We feel strongly that property owners, waterfront and otherwise, need more time, input, and education about all these matters before any new regulations are adopted. This is especially true today as we continue to deal with meeting restrictions due to COVID 19 and the challenges of explaining complicated regulations and holding an interactive dialogue in a Zoom environment. In addition, a huge number of affected property owners are not in residence in Salisbury during the winter months. Many are completely unaware of the proposed regulations and their potential adverse impact. They deserve to participate in this process when they are in residence during the summer and when some semblance of more normal times prevails.

We welcome a conversation with you, Mr. Rand and the IWWC about the best way to achieve our common goals.

Sincerely,

Grant Bogle
Salisbury, CT