



**LAKE • GEORGE**  
**WATERKEEPER®**

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July 20, 2011

Hon. Ron Conover, Supervisor  
Town of Bolton  
4949 Lake Shore Drive  
Bolton Landing, NY 12814

**Re: Required Site Plan Review Public Hearing**

Dear Mr. Conover:

The Lake George Waterkeeper urges the Town of Bolton to consider amending its Town Code to require public hearings for all Site Plan Review applications within the Critical Environmental Area surrounding Lake George.

There are noticeable changes in the water quality of Lake George from excessive algae growth that has been documented along the entire shoreline within the Town. Water clarity is less in the southern basin as compared to the northern basin. Each summer we see the development of the "dead zone" in the southernmost basin of the lake. It is imperative that the approach to and review of land use and development is improved to reduce negative impacts to Lake George.

One way negative impacts can be mitigated is to improve the opportunity for public involvement in the planning process on projects with the greatest potential for harm to the lake. The Town of Bolton Planning Board has dedicated volunteers who review, evaluate and deliberate applications and balance the needs of the applicant with the affects to the community and environment. The opportunity for public involvement and comment would greatly improve information available for the Board members, provide differing perspectives, technical information, and allow local information that may not be part of the application. All of these factors will provide the Planning Board additional information necessary to make informed decisions regarding projects.

It should be noted that the Town of Bolton Planning Board has the lowest percentage of public hearings for any Town within the Lake George watershed. Since 2006, only 7% of the applications to the Town of Bolton Planning Board had public hearings (18 out of 251 applications). In the Critical Environmental Area within 500 feet of Lake George, 8% of the applications held public hearings (5 out of 60). This is much lower than the Town of Queensbury, which holds public hearings on all Planning Board applications; the Town of Lake George, which holds public hearings on approximately 24% of the projects within the Critical Environmental Area of Lake George and recently decided to require public hearings for all



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projects within the Critical Environmental Area; and the Town of Putnam, which holds public hearings on 43% of their applications.

This would not duplicate public hearings on applications that may have appeared in front of the Town of Bolton Zoning Board of Appeals since the Zoning Board has stated publicly they do not take into consideration many of the aspects of a site plan review, such as wastewater treatment, stormwater, disturbance limits, clearing, or shoreline buffers.

In the end, the Town should be focused on approving the best possible project that will obtain the goals of the applicant while minimizing negative impacts to the community and environment. Concern should not focus on the perception of project delays or increasing the length of meetings because the public has involvement in the planning process. This would clearly increase the public input and make the process more transparent. And this is the basis of our democracy – the involvement of the public in the process of decisions.

The Lake George Waterkeeper urges the Bolton Town Board to consider this amendment to its Code for the benefit of the community and for the protection of Lake George. We look forward to working with you and the Town Board on this amendment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Chris Navitsky". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Christopher Navitsky, PE  
Lake George Waterkeeper

cc: Bolton Town Board members