

Dear Conservation Commissioners,

Please accept my email as comments for your public hearing scheduled on Tuesday 10/21 regarding Parcel U-12-14-0.

I am writing to you as a resident and close neighbor of the area. I am **not** expressing the views of the Long Lake Neighborhood Association (LLNA). The Association has had no discussions and made no decisions on whether or not to comment on the compliance issues on the parcel. I am the acting president of the association but am here speaking only my own opinion.

When I first moved here in 2019, walking Long Lake along Lakeshore Drive quickly revealed several structures that seemed unusual. After a few inquiries, I was told the land around the lake was public property and the docks and parking areas and other structures had been there for a long time and were tolerated. 'Neighbors do not want to begrudge neighbors their dock', was the usual comment.

This immediately seemed unfair and incomprehensible to me. It may be that the affecting residents simply were unaware of the fact they do not own the land. In that case, it may have been important to inquire about ownership before construction. To me, it seemed that the structures were basically illegal and that the governing body had not yet acted to enforce rules.

After living along the impaired lake for six years now and attending meetings aiming to help the lake environment, I welcome the rigorous enforcement of the Wetlands Protection Act by the Conservation Commission. I believe and trust that the Wetland Protection Act was created with the future of areas like Long Lake in mind, a future that starts today. Uninformed actions and construction around the lake likely damage the precious shoreline and further deteriorate the conditions of the entire lake. I do believe that it is possible to allow for careful recreation on and around the lake. Educating the public to the do and don'ts around a watershed is paramount. I have learned so much in the last several years and cannot say I have understood it well enough to assume I can make my own choices around such a sensitive environment. It is the responsibility and prerogative of the Conservation Commission to do exactly that: educate the public on the conservation aspect of the land, enforce the rules dictated by state and municipalities and encourage recreation and enjoyment in ways that will make this recreation possible for several generations more.

While I understand the frustration that some neighbors may feel due to the long standing allowance of the structures, I would encourage the Conservation Commission to exercise its right to take charge of the parcel. I would also encourage the Commission to review town records as to the arguments of structures being on private land or permitted and remove all doubt in either direction.

I acknowledge that a plan to allow some carefully chosen access to the water from the side of the Lakeshore Drive neighborhood may be helpful and fair to all residents. I am hopeful and would encourage the Conservation Commission to also devise clear instructions for future neighbors and consider the creation of a maintenance plan that removes invasive plants, plants native vegetation helpful to birds and other wildlife while creating a few visual corridors to allow for calming vistas. This kind of stewardship will help the residents trust in the decision making of the Commission and help us understand our precious watershed. Clearly marked parking areas and a few more benches for resting could truly benefit everyone.

Thank you so much for your consideration of my comments.

Tess Degen