

**Johanna R. Ames  
Matthew T. Coats  
972 Beechwood Lane  
Cortland, NY 13045**

Mr. John Finn, Chairman  
Zoning Board of Appeals  
Town of Cortlandville  
3577 Terrace Road  
Cortland, NY 13045

February 3, 2020

Dear Mr. Finn:

Please accept this letter as our objection to the Area Variance request filed by Luke and Lisa Rotunno concerning the vacant lot on Walden Pond Lane, number 96.00-06-02-112. We are unable to be present in person for your meeting but sincerely hope that you will consider our concerns.

Our response to various components of the application are below:

**Question 2:**

**“I cannot maintain (the lot) as I have moved out of town.”**

Mr. Rotunno’s decision to buy what many of us have known to be an irregularly shaped, significantly sloped lot with poor drainage should not result in the permanent desecration of the viewshed for a neighborhood in which he no longer resides. The fact that he has moved out of town should not abdicate him of his responsibilities to maintain and ultimately dispose of that lot appropriately.

**Question 2:**

**“Building so would add value to all homes in the neighborhood”**

We fail to understand how placing a home on a lot never intended to be buildable and, in our opinion, too small to support a home in keeping with the size and nature of the community, could add value to our homes. One of the reasons we choose to remain in the Walden Oaks development is the bucolic setting and the beautiful views overlooking the pond and the golf course.

The view from many homes, particularly those around the pond, would be severely impacted by construction of another building in this space. In our opinion, the placement of a “too large” home on a “too small” lot would detract from the values of homes in the development rather

than add to it. The value of the homes potentially impacted is significantly greater than the highest potential value of any home that could physically fit on that lot!

**Question 4:**

**“The variance would not have an adverse impact on the physical or environmental conditions in the neighborhood”**

While we are not trained environmental engineers, we have lived in this neighborhood for over 15 years and can attest that the lot in question is always “soggy” and seems to harbor a direct flow of runoff from the properties uphill down to the pond. We do not know what the construction of a structure on this lot would do to runoff and if it would cause subsequent negative issues by diverting that runoff elsewhere. But, we suspect Mr. Rotunno is not an environmental engineer either and simply checked “no” to this question.

In addition, the physical safety for residents in the neighborhood is a concern, as a variance would place the structure very close to the road on a curve where there are often families and others walking, running, and bicycling.

**Question 5 – this difficulty was “not” self created:**

**“That’s just how the lots were formed from the beginning of Walden Oaks”**

First and foremost, the difficulty was self-created when the lot was purchased. The challenges associated with the future development of the lot should have been discovered in a normal due diligence process prior to its purchase.

Secondly, we believe that Mr. Rotunno is factually incorrect regarding “how the lots were formed from the beginning” of the development. As we understand the history, the lot he owns was not part of the original subdivision of Walden Oaks. It was part of the property owned by the golf course and was only recently created (2016?) when the owners of the Walden Oaks Country Club chose to liquidate some property assets. This lot was not intended as a buildable lot at the time the development was created.

**The construction of a physical dwelling on this lot would significantly and negatively impact our neighborhood for generations to come.**

We hope that you will find grounds to deny this application for a variance.

Sincerely,



Johanna R. Ames



Matthew T. Coats

February 3, 2020

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To whom it concerns:

We are residents of the Walden Oaks neighborhood and recently became aware that a little triangular piece of land on Walden Pond, which has been for sale since we moved here in July, 2018, has been sold with an intent to build a house on it. We have often commented on our walks by this parcel that it would surely be impossible to put a house on. (Parcel # is 96.00-06-02-112).

Besides what would seem to us to be drainage difficulties, it would totally spoil the view of the pond from many angles, and endanger the property values around it. Our house is *not* proximate to this property, but feel that the impact on the neighborhood would definitely be negative.

At the very least, can a representative from the Board of Appeals visit this spot on Walden Pond Road to appreciate our concern firsthand?

Sincerely,

Paulette Fry  
Carol Foster

3310 Wellington Drive  
Cortland, NY 13045