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April 12, 2023

To: Members of the New London, NH, Board of Adjustors
Via: Adam Ricker, Zoning Administrator

Re: **Case # ZBA 23-01**

Dear Zoning Board of Adjustors,

I, my wife Kristen and our family are the abutters most directly impacted by the Gilman Trust's request for a variance from Article XIV, Section C.1 to construct a new driveway on land with existing slopes in excess of 25%. I apologize for not being able to attend the April 18th hearing, as we have long-standing plans to be away but Attorney Mike Chiarella will attend the meeting in our stead as our meeting representative.

While we did support the Gilman's original subdivision effort - we strongly oppose the granting of this variance based on the following considerations.

As I reviewed their application, the "Facts supporting this request" include #4., "The value of surrounding properties are not diminished" – I respectfully and strongly disagree with this assessment. While not addressed in their application, enhancing the value of their property at the expense of our property value will be the undeniable result of their request. This 12.5 acre parcel (with the building lot as defined in the original Board-approved configuration, and already cleared of timber) has been for sale for many months. To my knowledge, the Trust has not received an offer close to their \$6 million asking price. Gaining the steep slope driveway variance will then enable the relocation of the building envelope from the original site to the proposed area much closer to the lake and squeezed in between our west lot-line and existing wetlands. No doubt the Gilman's hope the variance-enabled, enhanced placement will boost their sale price and resulting profit.

Granting this variance will have a deleterious effect upon the value of our abutting premises. There would be a large new structure within 50-75 feet of our home, eliminating our "privacy premium" and degrading our views and quality of life. Our property is on the lake, the last home on Plothouse Road and are currently surrounded by woodland on three sides). Local real estate agent Dan O'Halloran estimates our property's current value in the \$6,500,000-\$7,000,000 range. By my math, a valuation hit of even 5%-10% would equate to a projected loss-of-value to us of between \$325,000 (5% on \$6.5mm) and \$700,000 (10% on \$7mm).

The sellers may argue that the impact on our valuation is unknowable. But common sense would refute their claim that "#4. The value of surrounding properties are not diminished." Can anyone reasonably

expect our property to be worth the same/more with elimination of privacy and a degraded view? By granting this variance, the Trust's "unnecessary (economic) hardship" would be transferred to us.

Another issue for this request for the variance is the steepness of the driveway. I have learned from Jay Lyons, New London Fire Department Chief, that driveways carved (or blasted?) into granite slopes, in excess of 25%, present real safety hazards to first responders, be they fire, police or EMTs. I certainly wish to avoid a scenario where a fast-moving fire occurring during construction or later cannot be properly fought because of the inability of fire-fighting equipment to reach the fire, engulfing our home as well, less than 75 feet away.

Please do not allow the creation of conditions that needlessly put abutters at risk and compel our valued town employees to navigate a long, (still) very steep driveway – especially on a snowy day.

Further, we also urge the Board to also consider the following:

- the potential negative impact of a steep driveway's runoff, erosion, and drainage;
- a future septic field placement's impact on our well;
- impact of the new proposed building envelope and future septic field on the site's identified wetlands;
- impact on the lake itself, with input from the Lake Sunapee Protective Association which has been notified of this proposal on the Gilman premises; and
- that there already exist other suitable locations for a house on a lot this size

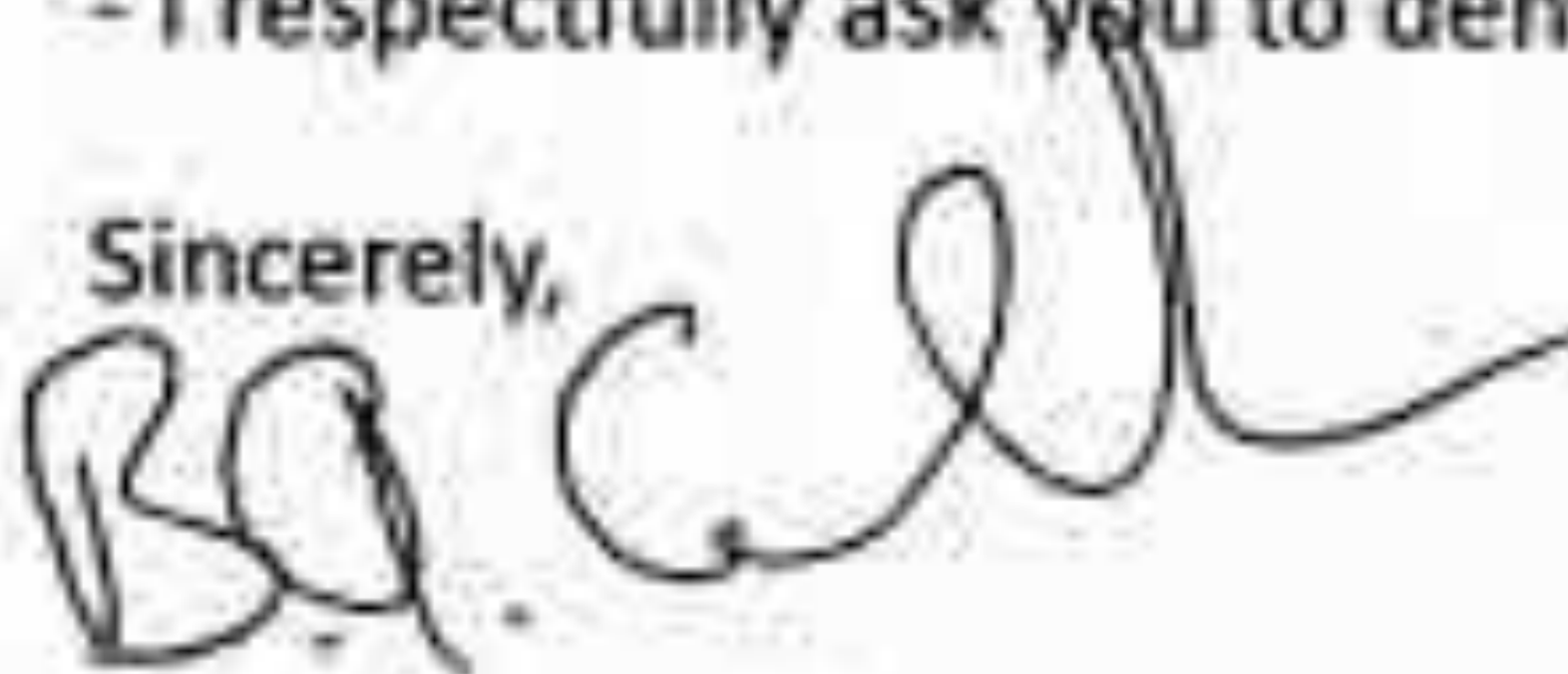
The Trust's counsel may state these points should not be considered or are not relevant in making the driveway variance decision – I'd suggest they illuminate the very "slippery slope" we will all soon find ourselves on, for the granting of said harmless variance.

While the engineer and lawyer for the Gilman's will likely advocate their position that they have bullet-proof solutions to stay in compliance on any and all such issues. I remain highly skeptical and only certain of three decision-relevant realities. The granting of the requested variance:

- will devalue my property for the likely future benefit of the Gilman Trust;
- steep slope access will pave the way for a clear, unmitigable (and unnecessary) safety risk to first responders, abutters, and their property; and
- will have an impact of the waters of Lake Sunapee

In closing, please know for the record that we are not obstructionists by nature, just 20-year New London residents requesting thoughtful consideration of our precarious position. For the reasons detailed above - I respectfully ask you to deny the Application for Variance, Case # ZBA – 23-01.

Sincerely,



Bruce A. Cerullo

cc: Michael Chiarella