

Building Guide

CLA LAND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE OFFERS ASSISTANCE

by Ann Beaver

The Land Development Committee was created to help achieve the goals of the Cullen Lakes Association's Lake Management Plan. Of its many responsibilities, perhaps one of the most important is to assist property owners in developing lake-friendly plans when they want to improve or alter their lake property.

The committee has a copy of the Crow Wing County, Nisswa, and Sibley Township zoning ordinances, and its members have experience with the sometimes complicated variance process. We would like to work with property owners when they are considering additions to their lake home or extensive remodeling which might require seeking a variance.

The variance procedure, a process in which a property owner asks to be allowed to do something not permitted by ordinance, can be costly and frustrating. Why a government board approves one variance and denies another is not always easy for citizens to understand -- there are many factors that are considered.

Because the granting of a variance can result in a building project that could cause potential degradation to the lake (usually in the form of increased runoff), the CLA board of directors usually takes a stand regarding the variance, either objecting or not objecting to it, and submits a letter stating its position to the government board hearing the matter. Experience is showing that these boards are listening more and more to what lake associations have to say.

If you are considering an improvement to your property for which you may need a variance, please feel free to [contact me](#) to set up a meeting with the Land Development Committee. We will work with you to try to develop a plan that meets your needs as well as the needs of protecting the lake.