

John Hosley's comments at the Indian Lake public hearing, January 17, 1973

I think that I represent many of the people seated here uncomfortably in this heat. I'm a small landowner and a small business owner of Long Lake. My name is John Hosley and I'd like to say just a few things. I'd like to address in general most of the people who have spoke and I'd like to play with those of you who speak for the rights of individuals speak from my side of the fence. I'd like to make it totally clear, tonight, as Mr. Mitchum would do if he was here, that the individual owns his property, which is being discussed so freely as a huge zoo or whatever the case may be. In particular, I'd like to address my remarks to Long Lake. I was born and raised in this Adirondack Park; specifically, in this rural hamlet up here. Now somehow the Agency, in all its greatness, saw fit to call the rural hamlet that small part of Long Lake which includes 12 of its businesses. And it left out 28 of them. Now I don't know what the meaning of rural hamlet is. But my understanding from previous meetings was that the rural hamlets that we are talking about were to include business communities.

Less than 60 days ago, a representative of the Park Agency spoke in a meeting in Long Lake for over three hours. He was asked and gave answers questions from the members of the local community. But the one point that he was asked about and discussed the most was the boundary of our rural hamlet.

At the time, the man who spoke to us explained that the rule hamlet boundaries had not yet been drawn.

But the date of publication of this map was prior to the date of that meeting A lot's been said here this evening about mutual trust. I feel this misleading advice was delivered. And I also feel that the Chairman here will kindly explain some of the confusing parts after each speaker.

He means what he says, and maybe if he stays as chairman for a few years, what he says will in fact happen. But in the event we should get four inches of snow tonight, and on his way home his car should run into a tree, and somebody replaces him, they're not going to have his private feeling for this plan or our land. They're going to have a document which is going to be presented to the legislature of the State of New York.

And there is no guarantee in that document as its proposed, nor will there be a guarantee in the law, unless this document is substantially change, that in fact these points which he has made and made sound so real to all of us sitting here, will in fact be promulgated. How does Mr. Hackett know if it is not written in this plan that he can rebuild his house?

He brings up a point of existing and non-existing shorelines In the town of Long Lake, the water goes up and down 10 ft. Some people have 8 acres of land in the middle of summer and 20 feet from the highway in the spring.

Now it's nice to sit up here and run a committee or an organization and explain to all the kind people—who are the owners of this property—how nice it's going to be if we buy this project. But I maintain, and I'm here to say, that I don't think it's going to be nice. I wore this garb tonight [Hosley was reportedly dressed in a Native American-style headdress] because I feel that the private land use plan as currently proposed is the first government-financed land grab since the Cherokees were asked to walk across the mountains.

[applause]

It is my firm belief that this entire private land plan is unconstitutional as seen from the individuals who own the land. Now, I realize the governor of the state of New York, the chairman of the Agency, and many of the speakers who were up here earlier this evening and this afternoon consider my land, your land, my business and your business, a national resource. I consider my land my own, and if I want to sell it in quarter acres, half acres, five acres, 50 acres or 500 acres, I have a constitutional right to do so. If, in fact, I do not infringe upon the rights my neighbors. I do not consider, for instance, the Sierra Club of California a neighbor of mine, although better organized.

[applause]

Although better organized and much more wealthy than we in the local communities are. They do not represent us nor do they represent our part of the country. I might mention that just a year ago, we had a boy lost who was never found over in Newcomb. So the Sierra Club sent us some people to help us find the boy. We had a lot of [inaudible] that were out in the woods, and they were out in the woods a long time. We had some special forces troops here, and the Army, they were out in the woods a long time. The Sierra Club was here 24 hours. They couldn't take our rough land and they couldn't see any fixed landmarks so they couldn't walk through it. So why should they determine whether we have a right to buy or sell property or develop a business? My last statement, the only thing I'd like to say: in the event that this plan as it now stands is enacted into law without any substantial changes from its present form, I would like to soon as possible after the decision is made to make this plan law, I would like to be notified by the Agency where the reservation is located that you and I are going to be sent to.

[applause]

Richard Lawrence: Thank you Mr. Hosley. Now the only thing that we're missing here tonight is TV. That should be on a nationwide network.