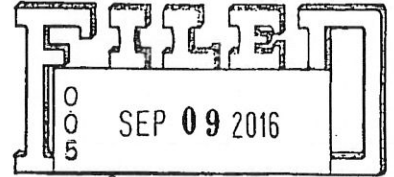


IN THE KOSCIUSKO CIRCUIT COURT
121 NORTH LAKE STREET
WARSAW, INDIANA 46580

GERRY LEE POWELL and)
PATRICIA ANN POWELL,)
Plaintiffs,)
VS.)
EPWORTH FOREST ADMINISTRATION)
COMMITTEE, INC., ROBERT MILLER and)
DEBORAH MILLER,)
Defendants.)

CASE NO. 43C01-1602-MI-47



Anna Jorpy
CLERK KOSCIUSKO CIRCUIT COURT

**FINDINGS OF FACT, CONCLUSIONS OF LAW
AND JUDGMENT**

Trial was held August 10, 2016. By stipulation of the parties, all evidence submitted at the preliminary injunction hearing held May 4, 2016 was deemed a part of the record without being repeated. Plaintiffs appeared in person and by counsel, Stephen R. Snyder, and Defendant, Epworth Forest Administration Committee, Inc., appeared by counsel, Matthew R. Shipman, and by its designated agent, Richard Presser. Intervening Parties, Robert J. Miller and Deborah S. Miller, appeared in person and by counsel, John B. Powell. Evidence was submitted and argument heard and the Court took the issues under advisement directing the parties to submit proposed Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Judgments by August 26, 2016. The Court having reviewed the evidence, the arguments of counsel and the entire record herein, and being duly advised, now enters its Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and Judgment.

FINDINGS OF FACT

1. Plaintiffs are the owners of the following described real estate located in Kosciusko County, Indiana:

Lot 12 in Block C in the Plat of Epworth Forest;
which property does not front on Webster Lake. ("Powell Lot").

2. Defendant is an Indiana corporation established pursuant to Order of the Court dated April 15, 2014 in Cause No. 43C01-9109-CP-732.

3. Since 1941 and during the ownership of the Powell Lot by Plaintiffs and Plaintiffs' predecessors, there has been a pier maintained at a location on the waterfront of Lot 48 Block C in the Plat of Epworth Forest, which lot is now owned by Robert J. Miller and Debra S. Miller ("Lakefront Lot").

4. The location of the Powell pier assignment on the Lakefront Lot was approved by this Court in its Order entered January 21, 2014 in Cause No. 43C01-9109-CP-732.

5. Defendant Epworth Forest Administration Committee, Inc. ("EFAC") has demanded relocation of Plaintiffs' pier assignment to a location different than that previously approved by this Court in Cause No. 43C01-9109-CP-732.

6. Plaintiffs appealed the determination of EFAC and all appeals have been denied and this litigation followed.

7. The rights and obligations of non-lakefront owners of lots in the Plats of Epworth Forest have been determined by judgment and various orders of this Court in Cause No. 43C01-9109-CP-732, in particular, the Judgment entered August 2, 1994 (Exhibit 2), the Order dated November 7, 1997 (Exhibit 3), the Order dated January 21, 2014 (Exhibit 5) and the Order dated April 15, 2014 (Exhibit 6).

8. Pursuant to Exhibit 6, EFAC was established by the filing of its Articles of Incorporation with the Secretary of State of Indiana (Exhibit 7) and the adoption of its Bylaws (Exhibit 8).

9. EFAC now administers the lakefront in the various plats of Epworth Forest including, but not limited to, assignment of pier locations for both onshore and offshore lot owners.

10. The various Orders of this Court and, in particular, Exhibit 6, states:

Onshore owners' pier assignments will continue from year to year and be presumed permanent. An offshore pier assignment/location, in accordance with the 1994 judgment, may be changed only for substantial change of circumstances making the prior assignment unreasonable under current facts and circumstances.

11. Exhibit E to Exhibit 5 is a listing of assigned pier spaces approved by the Court as part of its Order dated January 21, 2014, and specifically assigned Pier Space 35A to Plaintiffs and Pier Space 34 to the predecessor of Defendants Robert J. Miller and Debra S. Miller, Suetta Johnson. The same exhibit indicates that the lake frontage of the Miller property is 50 feet and at the time of the January 21, 2014 Order, consisted of 16 feet assigned to Plaintiffs for Pier 35A, 24 feet assigned to Suetta Johnson for Pier 34 and 10 feet of open shoreline, a total of 50 feet.

12. Defendants Miller desire to place a boat lift on each side of their pier without relocating their pier within the 24-foot space assigned to them by Exhibit 5. Doing so without relocation of the Miller pier would leave insufficient space for the Powell boat and pier as assigned by Exhibit 5.

13. The Court's Order dated January 24, 2014 approving the then existing pier assignments approved not only the then existing pier placements (actual and based on prior usage), but also the assignment of a certain location zone for pier and other equipment usage (based on actual prior usage), as noted on the list and map showing pier assignments for 2014 attached to the Court's Order as Exhibit E.

14. It was further the Court's intention, and order, that the pier assignment based on Exhibit E was assigned based on an allocation of the frontage of each lot and created a zone of use for these assignments (an actual area assignment), which would not be subject to future change except as specifically provided by the Court's Orders, as the original and subsequent assignments were controlled by frontage or footage necessarily.

15. It was further the Court's intention, and order, that each assignee of a pier assignment be free to fully and freely utilize their zone assignment, but not so that this usage would affect others, especially adjacent pier location assignments, (i.e. the pier or other equipment may be moved within the assigned area, but may not be moved to affect the use of an adjacent assigned area.)

16. Therefore, the proposed change of actual use of an area by an assignee cannot be a substantial change of circumstances making the prior assignment unreasonable under current facts and circumstances.

17. Exhibits 11 and 12 clearly indicate there is ample space lakeward from the Miller lot to allow Miller to place a 4 foot wide pier with a 10 foot wide boat lift on each side of the pier and still maintain in excess of 4 feet of open space if the Miller pier were moved slightly west within the 24 feet of lake frontage assigned to Miller.

18. As indicated by Richard Presser, Vice President of EFAC, if the Powell pier is eliminated, they would be placed on a "waiting list" for a new pier assignment. Presser was unaware of when a new pier assignment space would be available.

19. If the Powell pier is left within the 16 feet assigned to Powell, Defendants Miller will retain the same 24 foot zone assigned to their predecessor, Suetta Johnson, and Millers are free to locate whatever structures they desired within the same 24 foot zone, so long as this does not affect the usage of the adjacent pier assignments.

20. The Court's Order of January 21, 2014 in Cause No. 43C01-9109-CP-732 established the area (zone) along the shoreline assigned to particular onshore and offshore owners. That Order was based on historic usage of the shoreline and not necessarily the exact location of a pier within the assigned shoreline.

21. Persons to whom a portion of the shoreline has been assigned are free to locate any structures within the assigned shoreline and may relocate those structures as long as they are located within the assigned area.

22. Assigned shoreline areas are based on historical usage as determined by this Court in prior Orders in Cause No. 43C01-9109-CP-732 and are not controlled by the location of platted lot lines extended to the water's edge.

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

23. The judgment and various Orders in Case No. 43C01-9109-CP-732 of this Court clearly indicate that it was the intention of this Court that assignments of pier assignments for onshore owners were intended to be permanent, and offshore pier assignments were not to be changed without a significant change in circumstances.

24. The desire of Defendants Miller to place two boat lifts, one on each side of their current pier location, is not a significant change in circumstances.

25. The determination made by EFAC requiring Powells to remove their pier and boat lift was necessarily arbitrary and capricious and was, as a matter of the law of

the case, not in conformity with the prior Judgment and Orders of this Court, the Articles of Incorporation of EFAC and the Bylaws of EFAC.

26. The placement of the Powell pier is in conformity with the Judgment and Orders in Cause No. 43C01-9109-CP-732 and no significant change in circumstances exists which would require the elimination or relocation of the original Powell pier assignment.

27. The determination of the Epworth Forest Administration Committee, Inc. made January 26, 2016 requiring Powells to remove their pier should be reversed.

JUDGMENT

IT IS, THEREFORE, ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED that the determination made by Defendant, Epworth Forest Administration Committee, Inc., requiring Plaintiffs to relocate their pier is reversed, Plaintiffs' pier assignment as determined by this Court's Order of January 21, 2014 in Cause No. 43C01-9109-CP-732 is affirmed, and Plaintiffs are entitled to the use of their allocated waterfront area without interference from Defendants. The costs of this action are taxed to Defendants.

SO ORDERED THIS 9th DAY OF SEPTEMBER, 2016.



Michael W. Reed, Judge
Kosciusko Circuit Court

Distribution:
Stephen R. Snyder
Matthew R. Shipman
John B. Powell

MWR/st