

Dear Dr. Schwab and members of the Aurora Community:

I read the letter written by Dr. Schwab several times and wanted to provide my perspective. When a person drives into the Village of Aurora from the north, one sees a pristine village with renovated houses and, of course the Inns of Aurora. One sees this beautiful village for what it is—a place to be treasured, admired, visited and loved.

When a person enters the village from the south, one sees a waterfront that is overgrown blocking view of the lake and, a bit further along, McGordon House, a house that has not been occupied for 40 years and is on the verge of collapse. I have been in the house several times as, when I first arrived in Aurora, I thought that the house could be renovated as student housing. What I found was a house that was not worthy of renovation that was easily affordable. In short, the entire house would have to be gutted and I would imagine that based upon its history, contains lead paint and asbestos. The windows are broken and the house is occupied by animals and birds. The chimney is collapsing, the floor is unsteady, the house would need a completely new HVAC system, new roof and the issues continue on and on. At the time we were considering using it for student housing, we estimated the price of renovation to be close to 2 million dollars. At this point, the village code enforcement officer has deemed the house unsafe and has condemned it. I believe that was done for good reason. At this point in time, if someone were to enter the house and the roof collapsed or the floor caved in, Wells College would have the responsibility for someone's life and safety and, also, would bear the liability for such.

At this point, I ask the village residents what do you want for your future? Sometimes my observation is that we try to hang onto the past, whether it serves us well or not. We hold onto principle even though, in short order, once a structure such as McGordon House is gone and new homes built, we can imagine the south entry to our village in the same way as the north entry. We can imagine construction of new homes to be rented or sold and, at that point, these homes become part of the tax base of the village providing additional revenue. In addition, I would add that while I have only known Kevin Fitzgerald for a couple of years, I have seen him to act with integrity and honor. I can assure you that whatever he does will honor the integrity and beauty of this village. I certainly cannot tell any of you what to do or how to feel about this. All I can do is offer my humble opinion. Wells College is not seeking to sell this house to Kevin for the money—we are seeking to sell it to Kevin because we share a vision of the future of our village and, hope that you all will share in that vision as well. Let's all vote to demolish this house because if it stands as it is—in time—it will collapse and we will have nothing left on that hill but a pile of rubble which would be not only unfortunate but, very sad as well.

Jonathan Gibraltar, President
Wells College
170 Main St.
Aurora, NY 13026