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FEB 20 2024

Public Hearing, Village of Aurora

February 21, 2024

Comment on Revision of Village of Aurora Zoning Law from members of the
Ad Hoc Committee to revise the Village Zoning Law

The Zoning Committee appointed by the Village of Aurora Board of Trustees fulfilled its mandate of working with planning professionals to recommend a revised village zoning law based on the December 2021 Comprehensive Plan. The committee worked on the revision beginning in October 2022, and the recommended law was sent to the Village Board, posted for the public, and introduced without change at the January 17th Board meeting. A well-attended public informational session was held on January 24th based on the law as introduced by the Board for adoption. A final committee meeting was scheduled for the 26th, two days after the public meeting, to iron out any small changes.

At that meeting, the County Planners proposed removing the lakeshore land across from Wells College from the Open Space / Recreational District (green) and designating it Lakefront Residential (blue) based on conversations with College and the Aurora Rt 90 Group. After considerable deliberation a vote was taken of all voting members and unanimously affirmed designating the district as Open Space/Recreational. Mayor Orman did not vote but said, although he did not agree, he would go along with the committee decision.

Yet, without a public vote by the Board of Trustees, or public discussion of reasons for such an action, the committee's recommendation was set aside, and all mention of an Open Space/Recreational District was removed from the proposed law on February 7th. The law is now so changed that we believe it should be rejected and reintroduced for public review and comment, or simply returned to its previous version.

The committee can give many reasons for its proposed zoning map. First and foremost is to confirm the goals of the Comprehensive Plan to protect the lake and natural beauty of the village, and to work toward greater public access to the lake. Local government must be prudent in this time of great change as Wells College is divesting itself of many properties. The new law wisely changes all the other Wells property from Institutional (meaning only uses connected with the college's mission are allowed) and Agricultural / Residential to Mixed-Use, a new classification that allows for numerous and varied creative land development uses to assist Wells going forward. To balance this, the lakefront should be zoned to benefit all uses of campus land and not be allowed to be built up for private residences or uses. Please look to the future. Protect and preserve the lake-shore view as an Open Space/Recreational zone for the future of Wells College, the Village of Aurora, and all who will travel Route 90.