



VILLAGE OF AURORA

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June 25, 2024

Via Email Only

Senator Chuck Schumer
Senator Kirsten Gillibrand
Congressman Brandon Williams
Senator Rachel May
Assemblyman Jeffrey Gallahan
NYS Attorney General's Office
New York State Department of Education

Re: Wells College

To Whom it May Concern:

This letter presents the Village of Aurora Board of Trustees' unanimous support for a "one campus" sale and/or transfer goal pertaining to the Wells College campus and related improvements. The Village Board of Trustees ("Village Board") has spent a great deal of time and consideration examining the consequences that may flow from the April 29, 2024 announcement by Wells College that it is closing, permanently. Since this fateful announcement, Village representatives, led by Mayor James Orman, have conferred with New York State representatives, Wells College officials, Cayuga County representatives, the Inns of Aurora, LLC leadership, Makenzie Childs leadership, real estate professionals, and both the Village and Town of Cazenovia leaders to discuss best and worst-case scenarios pertaining to the college's closure, together with potential next steps.

We issue this letter, adopted by formal resolution (copy attached), to make clear that we believe it is in the best interests of the Village of Aurora, its residents, property owners, and constituent-businesses, to see the Wells College campus returned to use as a higher education campus, and not parceled off. We believe a regional and likely national marketing campaign is necessary for this beautiful and historic campus and should be undertaken immediately. The Village of Aurora stands by ready, willing and able to assist in many ways and seeks commitment and partnership from Wells College, involved New York State agencies and

legislative leaders and representatives in this critically important matter. This exigent matter may very well decide the continued existence of our Village, or its termination.

We believe the benefits of a one-campus concept are many, to include:

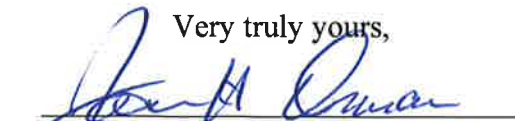
- Consistency of jobs and residencies related to local and area workforce personnel;
- Economic stability within one of the smallest Villages in New York State;
- Community continuity;
- Avoidance of abandoned buildings and checkerboarded lots in the Village;
- Preventing a historic lakeside campsite from being carved up into speculative and varied uses without established track records;
- Ease of adaptability of facilities to a similar use;
- Maintaining a logical pattern of land uses and zoning within the Village; and
- Maintenance of community pride and heritage.

The storied history of Wells College and its campus is attached, for your information, along with the campus historic district's proof of certification. We have also included photos of the various buildings and lakeside campus improvements as they exist today. People may argue that allowing the campus to be sold off in parcels makes sense, but we strongly disagree and believe that the stately, centuries-old buildings are not well-suited for adaptive reuse as the ostensibly thick block and/or stone structures lack ADA accessibility and would be supremely expensive to redevelop. Further, the campus is located in the Village "Institutional" zoning district, which currently only allows for "land for Institution such as non-profit schools, research centers, libraries and conference centers, dedicated to educational, charitable, fraternal, or similar purposes. Institutions such as reform schools, prisons, and hospitals are excluded."

We respectfully request that concerted marketing efforts be undertaken to help save this historic "jewel" of a campus along the shores of Cayuga Lake. To our knowledge, there is not another campus in our region of New York State with as much historic significance or lakeside charm. Our 323 residents and Village leaders are willing to mobilize and volunteer for steering committee work and countless other tasks that could help this proud community retain a viable institution of higher learning on the Wells College campus.

We greatly appreciate everyone's time and consideration of this existential effort.

Very truly yours,



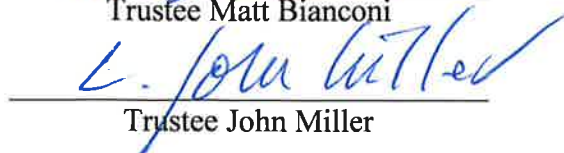
Mayor Jim Orman



Trustee JD Balloni



Trustee Matt Bianconi



Trustee John Miller


Trustee Janet Murphy

TMB/sss

cc (via email): Wells College Controller Robert Cree
Cayuga County Legislative Chair Aileen McNabb Coleman
Cayuga County Industrial Development Agency
Sue Edinger, CEO, Inns of Aurora