

**DRAFT**

**Community Preservation Panel Public Hearing and Regular Meeting Minutes**

The meeting was held at the Aurora Firehouse meeting room at 6:00 pm

**Present:** Chairperson Jim Burkett, Chris MacCormick, Claire Morehouse, Julia Rossmann (6:05), and John Wendler (alternate)

**Absent:** Jeff Blum

**Others Present**

**Village Officials:** Clerk Ann Balloni, ZBA member Laura Holland, Historian Dr. Linda Schwab, and Planning Board member John Wade

**Wells College:** Trustee Katie Fong and President Susan Henking

**Members of the Public:** Bob Egan, Jeremiah Kimball, Todd Smith, Bruce Spiegel, and Ethan Wilson

**Call to Order:** Mr. Burkett called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

**Changes to the Agenda:** Application #25-01 will be reviewed ahead of the public hearing.

**Approval of Minutes:** On motion by Morehouse, second by MacCormick, the CPP voted to approve the December 4, 2024, minutes.

AYES: Burkett, MacCormick, Morehouse, and Wendler

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Blum and Rossmann

Motion carried unanimously.

**Announcements:** No announcements

**Public Hearing for Historic Landmark Recommendations (Cherry Ave/Court Street neighborhood, Boathouse Lawn, and Barler & Campbell buildings)**

Mr. Burkett read his response to questions received via email about property restrictions on designated local landmarks (attached).

Mr. MacCormick noted that the CPP is chartered with reviewing and recommending landmarks and that it is a continuing process as properties become eligible.

On motion by Morehouse, second by Wendler, the CPP voted to open the public hearing for historic landmark recommendations at 6:15 p.m.

AYES: Burkett, MacCormick, Morehouse, Rossmann, and Wendler

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Blum

Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Burkett referenced many emails (attached) submitted in favor of recommending Barler & Campbell buildings on Wells College campus, as well as the Wells College Boathouse lawn. Mr. Burkett then referred to a letter from Bond, Shoeneck & King (attached), attorneys representing Wells College, disputing the eligibility of Barler, Campbell, and the Boathouse Lawn for landmark status.

Additionally, Mr. Burkett read an email (attached) from Ethan Wilson, a Cherry Ave resident, opposing the designation of the Cherry Ave/Court Street neighborhood. A letter opposing the Cherry Avenue/Court Street designation was also submitted by Marcia Signorelli.

### **Public Comment**

**Bruce Spiegel** (attached): Mr. Spiegel voiced concerns regarding restrictions and inconsistency with the CPP review process.

**Susan Henking** (Wells College President): Ms. Henking referenced the Bond, Shoeneck, & King letter echoing their concerns that designating Wells properties as landmarks will negatively effect Wells ability to sell the campus.

**Dr. Linda Schwab** (Village Historian): Dr. Schwab brought up several points:

- thanked the CPP for all the hard work and time that went into these designations and emphasized the historic documentation, particularly of Henry Wells' property plan for the lakeshore, in blueprints, photographs, and maps.
- reiterated that designating Landmark Neighborhoods supports fair procedural treatment; treating people differently based on address in a small village is not good.
- expressed appreciation for a resident-initiated proposal and commended the documentation provided (Barler/Campbell)
- pointed out the significance of the Peach Orchard to the Traditional Cayuga (Gayogoho:no), that that use had been promised by Wells and maintained annually, read a sentence to that effect from the letter from the Chiefs to the Village Board, and that caring about this is being a good neighbor.

On motion by MacCormick, second by Rossmann, the CPP voted to close the public hearing for historic landmark recommendations at 6:35 p.m.

AYES: Burkett, MacCormick, Morehouse, Rossmann, and Wendler

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Blum

Motion carried unanimously.

### **Old Business**

#### **Landmark Recommendations**

Mr. Burkett explained the process for each recommendation:

Boathouse Lawn – recommending the lawn was first discussed in February 2024, 2 months before Wells announced their closure, and had the support of President Gibraltar. The Village Board was revising the Village Zoning Law and advised waiting until the new law is adopted.

Cherry Avenue/Court Street Neighborhood: Much research was conducted and documented on the history of each property. Information was submitted to the Village Board in August 2024 for their perusal.

Barler & Campbell Buildings: Village residents nominated the two Wells campus buildings due to their association with Long Library, a local landmark. Barler & Campbell were completed in 1974 and eligible for designation in Fall 2024.

#### **Boathouse Lawn**

The CPP noted the following during their discussion:

- a “symbolizing view of Aurora” similar to the Wells campus view of the sycamore tree and Main Building
- refuted the Bond, Shoeneck, & King assertion that the space is not eligible for designation by referencing section 705.B.1 and 705.B.2 of the Village Zoning Law
- Unchanged since its design by Henry Wells
- Within the Wells College/Village of Aurora Historic District
- Iconic space for village residents and the Wells community
- No negative impact as it is zoned Open Space/Recreation

On motion by Morehouse, second by Wendler, the CPP voted to recommend the Boathouse Lawn to the Village Board of Trustees for local landmark status.

AYES: Burkett, MacCormick, Morehouse, Rossmann, and Wendler

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Blum

Motion carried unanimously.

### **Cherry Avenue/Court Street Neighborhoods**

Mr. Burkett refers to sections 705.A and 705.B.3 in the Village Zoning Law, describing the designation criteria and process.

The CPP discussed the public perception of “restrictions” of landmark properties. Ms. Morehouse noted that many houses in Aurora, and specifically along Cherry and Court, were pieced together from existing buildings along Main Street. Mr. MacCormick, referencing his own property, noted that alterations are allowed if the original structure is respected, and Ms. Morehouse added that designations can be advantageous as grants are sometimes available for repairs.

Mr. Burkett and Dr. Shwab both noted that the neighborhood is a “unique section of Aurora”. The first African Americans and Irish immigrants settled there, and the first Catholic Mass held in the Village was in a dwelling on Cherry Ave.

On motion by MacCormick, second by Morehouse, the CPP voted to recommend the Cherry Avenue/Court Street neighborhood to the Village Board of Trustees for local landmark status.

AYES: Burkett, MacCormick, Morehouse, Rossmann, and Wendler

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Blum

Motion carried unanimously.

### **Barler & Campbell Buildings**

Mr. Burkett again referred to section 705 in the Village Zoning Law and noted that Barler & Campbell are located outside of the Wells College/Village of Aurora Historic District but are eligible given that they were built 50 years ago.

Mr. MacCormick referred to a letter (attached) from the architectural firm, Skidmore, Owings & Merrill, who designed the buildings as companions to the Long Library.

The CPP questioned Ms. Henking on how giving the Barler & Campbell buildings landmark status will hurt potential sales of the campus. Ms. Henking replied that it is another instance of the Village intervening in the campus sale, along with the zoning restrictions. Mr. Maccormick argued that most of the buildings on the campus are already designated landmarks and doubts that adding two more is detrimental to potential buyers. Ms. Henking replied that the realtor

representing Wells can produce documentation supporting that any restrictions decrease the chances of selling the campus. Ms. Henking further warned that the Village will be left with “zombie buildings” to its own detriment.

Ms. Balloni reminded everyone that the CPP public hearing and review is the first step in a lengthy process to designate local landmarks. Recommendations are sent to the Village Board of Trustees (BOT) for their review and, if they agree that the recommendations deserve consideration, they will schedule their own public hearing. Following that public hearing, the BOT will decide whether to introduce the recommendations as an amendment to the Village Zoning Law, which requires a third public hearing, and then vote to adopt/deny the zoning law amendments.

On motion by Morehouse, second by Rossmann, the CPP voted to recommend the Barler & Campbell buildings on the Wells College campus to the Village Board of Trustees for local landmark status.

AYES: Burkett, MacCormick, Morehouse, Rossmann, and Wendler

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Blum

Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Burkett noted that he has some reservations on the Barler & Campbell recommendations.

### **New Business**

#### **Application #25-01 from Ron Siegemund for a roof repair at 320 Main Street (Tax Map #182.13-1-32.1)**

Mr. Siegemund’s contractor, Jeremiah Kimball, explained that the roof is leaking and requires immediate attention. Mr. Kimball submitted “look-alike slate” due to the difficulty of finding any original material. Mr. Kimball noted that the building is protected with a tarp and plywood and there is a 36–50-week timeline for the replacement materials.

The CPP appreciated Mr. Kimball’s sensitivity to the historic nature of the building.

On motion by MacCormick, second by Morehouse, the CPP voted to approve Application #25-01 as submitted.

AYES: Burkett, MacCormick, Morehouse, and Wendler

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Blum and Rossmann

Motion carried unanimously.

**Adjournment:** On motion by MacCormick, second by Wendler, the CPP voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

AYES: Burkett, MacCormick, Morehouse, Rossmann, and Wendler

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Blum

Motion carried unanimously.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Balloni  
Village Clerk