

March 19 VB Meeting Public Hearing on Landmarks

Linda S. Schwab,
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Tonight I respond as a private citizen. Last June 25, you wrote to State officials, “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.” You cited, among several well-reasoned points, the campus’ historic value and lakeside setting. You supported this thoughtful stance with careful zoning.

The lakefront landscape in the Scenic Landmark proposal is part of this historic value: it is within the dual Village/College National Historic District and its history has been thoroughly documented. The current Comprehensive Plan results from equally thorough assessment of community input and is to guide your decision-making. Public support for continued access to that open space is overwhelming.

There should no longer be reason for concern that failure to receive bids for the campus will lead to decades of decay. That is just not how the dissolution system works.

Landmark designation of Barler and Campbell are also extremely well supported, and of course completely in line with your June 25 letter. For that matter, a professional concert hall and a purpose-designed art studio could be assets for varied uses as well.

The purpose of Local Landmarks is *both* to recognize significant community features - structures, neighborhoods, landscapes, etc. - *and also* to provide a clear and fair process for responding to owners’ wishes. The Community Preservation Panel has explained that in detail to concerned residents in regard to the Cherry Ave./Court St. Landmark Neighborhood.

Therefore, I urge you to approve all three Landmark designations. Each is “in the best interests of the Village of Aurora, its residents, property owners, and constituent-businesses.” All of them - all of us - rely on you for that.

Thank you