



VILLAGE OF AURORA

456 Main Street
Aurora, New York 13026
villageclerk@auroranewyork.us

(315) 364-7293
DPW (315) 364-5239
auroranewyork.us

December 4, 2024

VIA ELECTRONIC (Ed.Thompson@ag.ny.gov) AND REGULAR MAIL

AAG Edward Thompson
NYS Attorney General's Syracuse Regional Office
300 South State Street, Suite 300
Syracuse, New York 13202

Re: Village of Aurora/Wells College

Dear Assistant Attorney General Thompson:

I forward this letter to your attention on behalf of the Village of Aurora, Cayuga County, New York. As you are aware, Wells College's closure announcement on April 29, 2024, has spurred a great deal of action here in our tiny Village. Not only has the Village been forced to problem-solve the issue of taking over ownership and operation of an 80 +/- year-old Water Treatment Plant and related infrastructure, but it has also advanced an analysis of the Village's immediate and forward-looking goals relating to Wells-owned properties which greatly impact the Village and its residents.

For your information, the Village of Aurora has taken the following proactive steps, and it is our hope that the Attorney General's Office will support the Village's endeavors:

1. Water Treatment Plant. The Village, at the behest of Wells College, has entered into a License Agreement for the operation of the Water Treatment Plant to ensure the continuity of service and safeguard the life/safety concerns related to the provision of potable water to our residents and businesses. A copy of the License Agreement signed by both the Village and Wells is attached. Importantly, the Village has also drafted and provided a Purchase and Sale Agreement (PSA) for the Water Plant, its many improvements, and related real estate, so that the Village can assume ownership of the same as soon as possible. The importance of Village ownership cannot be overstated as many grants and funding streams hang in the balance and can only be directed to the owner of the property/plant. This PSA was provided to Wells' legal counsel in September but has not been signed by Wells as of the date of this communication.

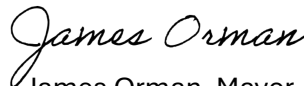
2. Dock and Waterfront Open Space. The Village of Aurora has also approached Wells to secure the conveyance of important community spaces on Cayuga Lake, on the west side of Route 90 (across from the Wells campus). Approximately 4.7 acres, north of and including the Wells College dock, are sought by the Village as open/community space. Village programs and activities, such as Aurora's summer swim program, Farmers' Market, musical events and other public benefit activities have occurred at this property for decades, benefiting residents in and around Aurora, as well as tourists. With the uncertainty of the future of the historic Wells campus, this represents a unique and compelling opportunity to secure this property for the public benefit in perpetuity. There is some 100 miles of shoreline around Cayuga Lake and this 1,000 feet would serve an important public purpose and grant Village residents their only public access to the lake. For these reasons, the Village has also provided a PSA for this area owned by Wells but as of the date of this communication has not received a response.

These are challenging times for the Village of Aurora and great change is currently upon us. Since we only have 167 households in the Village, it is imperative that we take steps now to stabilize the Village's future through the above requested transactions, together with other important strategic planning initiatives. Our annual Village budget is only \$1,121,110.00, so there are only very limited ways we can try to create some sort of net positive impact for our taxpayers. It is thus imperative that our New York State and County partners and brother and sister agencies step forward to assist our good faith goals.

It is our hope that with your assistance and support, Wells will respond positively to the PSAs and the Village can continue to protect the health, safety, and welfare of our residents. The future of our beautiful Village, literally, depends upon it.

We greatly appreciate your time and consideration of these critical matters.

Sincerely,


James Orman, Mayor
Village of Aurora