

Dear Jim and Panel members:

As Secretary of both Aurora Masonic Center (a 501(c)(3) Historical Society) and Scipio Lodge No. 110—and because of the short notice of one topic of your impending Community Preservation Panel meeting we have not had time for corporate consideration of the issue—I must presume to speak for both organizations. I wish to express that the AMC and Lodge have an interest in each of the Walter Wood office building and its neighboring Chimney Corner from a historical perspective.

Scipio Lodge No. 58 received its charter in 1797 in response to a petition submitted in 1795 by thirteen Masons, some of whom were Revolutionary War veterans. The name of Walter Wood appears in the Lodge Treasurer's record at an early day—1799. Our member was first Postmaster. The Lodge met in a few locations for the first years, and then in the new Cayuga Academy building until a fire displaced them. The members built their first home in 1806, the property known as Chimney Corner.

I would observe that the members of Scipio Lodge were among the movers and developers of the young village and the surrounding land. The Lodge history is stamped upon the Village of Aurora by virtue of these members, the institutions they created, their involvement in local and state events and beyond, and by their descendants.

The worthy mission of the Aurora Masonic Center is preservation and maintenance and that responsibility is foremost in our minds. Their Masonic association urges us to claim and assert relevance for both the Walter Wood Post Office and the original Lodge Hall, Chimney Corner. Their respective states of dilapidation are deplorable. It seems time and opportunity for a community rescue.

I think back a little way. Fifty years ago we could have saved the Old Mill. But cost consciousness or investment aversion led to Inaction and neglect....

Thank you for receiving this

Stephen L. Zabriskie