

Hugh A. Butler, President, Chautauqua Property Owners Association

RE: Chautauqua Institution Trustees Meetings February 1-2, 2013

Following are my notes from the recent sessions held in the Colonnade and Bellinger Hall with most of the Trustees and senior staff in attendance.

Corporation Trustees and other CPOA members also attended these sessions and lent their thoughts to these notes, for which I am grateful.

As CPOA President, I enjoy observer status at these meetings. The four Trustees who were selected by the CPOA board and then elected by property owners represent us well and, along with other Trustees who are also property owners, promote a fair hearing of concerns which impact quality of life on the grounds.

Items of interest to property owners are the only ones I report here, though I was privileged to hear about program elements and other interesting matters.

CUD Wastewater Treatment Plant Options Being Explored

Your Chautauqua Utilities District continues to explore cost effective means to achieve the goals mandated by the state and federal environmental authorities concerning nutrient “load” in their lake effluent. As an alternative to expanding the existing wastewater treatment plant, pumping effluent to neighboring plants in communities such as Celeron or Westfield is being evaluated. The primary reason for exploring these options is not dollar savings to the district but rather to take advantage of existing plant underutilization in these communities. Of course, sending our effluent to Westfield would remove it from the Chautauqua Lake input entirely.

Architecture and Land Use Draft Regulations

Submitted by Bob Jeffrey

The third draft was posted on the Institution’s web site in December of 2012 with a request that the public review the document to make suggestions and recommendations by January 15, 2013. To date there have been 24 emails received with comments, questions, concerns and recommendations. Several respondents had only a single issue or question; several of the respondents had 2 or 3 pages of input. One individual provided over 20 pages of input. In total there were 56 issues raised in the review project that will warrant further discussion or clarification. For projects of this magnitude, this amount of response is considered exemplary. It was evident that the people who provided commentary did so after a thorough reading of the document.

The ALU Study Group is producing a fourth draft for public comment. This next draft will provide clarity regarding the remaining issues to be addressed by the Board as well as many of the issues raised during the public input process.

The fourth draft will be produced and distributed for public input in March. At that time final revisions will be made and the Board might be able to take action at the May meeting.

2013 Capital Improvement Projects

Upgrades to several Institution buildings will occur and the Hotel upgrades will continue at a pace equal to the funds available. A new Visitor’s Center will be established by the Post Office; Publications will move to the current police station and the police headquarters will soon be in the Fire Hall on Massey.

The “On the Grounds” tab (<http://www.ciweb.org/on-the-grounds/>) is updated periodically to display project status and other items of interest to property owners, including a link to the CPOA website at www.cpoa.ws.

Stormwater Management and Shoreline Rehabilitation

Submitted by Greg Miller

As not only Chautauquans but also fellow citizens of the county become ever more cognizant of the deleterious effects human activity has had on the health of the lake, the Institution has wholeheartedly embraced multiple efforts to mitigate Chautauquans' impact on our end of the lake. To that end, the administration presented its "Sustainable Shoreline Action Plan" component of the overall Drainage Management Plan to the board. Both plans consist of multiple initiatives aimed at controlling storm water runoff, the primary culprit in dumping an overabundance of nutrients into the lake. This endeavor is designed to coordinate several projects that will help to filter out nutrients cascading downward from the sloping Institution grounds directly into the lake.

Institution planners have taken into account the need to sustain, or even improve, the aesthetics of the shoreline while simultaneously softening the impact our lifestyles and daily activities have on the lake. Recognizing that this undertaking represents Chautauqua's sincere effort to contribute to solutions while developing models and methods that in the future can be shared with our neighbors around the lake, the board enthusiastically endorsed the Sustainable Shoreline Action Plan.

You may see long grasses at the Institution here and there from now on. Increased vegetation can help absorb nutrients before they enter the lake. Dean Gowan, the landscape architect who designed the rain garden at Fletcher and the new brickwalk to the School of Dance, advises that “let it grow” is good policy along the shoreline and in the watershed wherever plant life does not interfere with enjoyment of the lake.

Amphitheater Project

The Amphitheater Project is currently in design development phase. Commencement of the project depends on full funding through philanthropic dollars, and major donors are currently being sought.

A design for the grounds around the refurbished AMP is nearing completion which contemplates landscape and lighting features of a modern and neighbor-friendly design. Property owners nearby should continue to monitor the project status via the Institution website, consulting with CPOA representatives as well as neighbors and Institution staff as needed to assure a pleasant outcome.