

Notes from Board of Trustees meeting

From the Desk of Hugh A. Butler, President, Chautauqua Property Owners Association

RE: Chautauqua Institution Trustees Meetings November 4-5, 2011

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.

As CPOA President, I enjoy observer status at these meetings. The Trustees who are elected by property owners represent us well and, along with other Trustees who are CPOA members, assure a fair hearing of our concerns.

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.

Lake Quality

Chautauqua Lake is rated “impaired” by the environmental agencies, state and federal, which have authority over fresh water lakes. The Institution is assuming a leadership role in modeling best practices having to do with storm water runoff and restricting use of phosphates in detergents and fertilizers.

Property owners are also asked to play a role in reducing detrimental runoff. The health of the lake is everyone’s concern as we may have reached a “tipping point” where algae and noxious weeds lead to more beach closings and a reduction in tourism. Property values will decline if the lake is fouled permanently.

Mitigation efforts are helpful as are common practices, such as sequestering pet wastes, but investments will also be required, particularly at our aging wastewater treatment plant. Nutrients, such as phosphorus and nitrogen are infused in our soil, so additional methods of removal are required. One pound of phosphorus equals 1,000 pounds of weeds, according to the Chautauqua Lake Association. Expect to hear much more about our lake and what we’ll do to defend it in the coming months.

During Week 4 whose theme is “Water,” the Chautauqua Bird, Tree and Garden Club will partner with the Watershed Conservancy and the Lake Association to present a series of 5 nightly programs on topics related to the lake. The Institution is also planning to address local lake issues this week with other lake organizations and program partner National Geographic.

Storm Water Drainage

The promised project which will improve drainage at Bestor Plaza is nearing completion of the primary phase. Pratt Avenue from Miller to Scott was affected for most of the last month. New drains will guide storm water away from the plaza and into the ravine which will have rip-rap rock barriers to slow the water flows and remove sediment.

This is a small part of a comprehensive water management plan that has been developed by Chautauqua Institution. Approximately \$1.5 million will be spent by the Institution to achieve the goals of reducing the daily load of materials in runoff which stress the lake. Two federally funded state grants assisting this effort, distributed through the New York State Innovation Grant and Green Infrastructure Planning Programs, will reduce the Institution's contribution to less than \$1M potentially.

Road Projects

Capital expenditures will continue in priority order as funds become available. No road work is contemplated prior to Spring 2012. Property owners will be notified via US Mail in advance of work done in your neighborhood, where feasible. The primary address used for notification is that used by the County Assessor to send out tax notices.

The Community tab <http://www.ciweb.org/community/> 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.

ALU Study Group

Bob Jeffrey (CPOA Area 6 representative) promised the Trustees that his group's report will be available for the February retreat and will reflect contributions from individuals who provided input during the 2011 season. Changes in the existing rules are necessary and desirable; a more detailed plan should emerge from the February retreat.

Contractor & Parking Regulations

Trustees have delivered significant support to Institution Staff for the purposes of addressing complaints about individuals and contractors who create a disturbance or hazard in our community. Parking illegally often creates a public safety hazard, blocking access for emergency vehicles. This can happen during any month of the year. Property owners are responsible for their guests and contractors. New penalties have been adopted for parking violations. New procedures are being introduced for registration of contractors as well as notification of intention to bring them onto the grounds.

Ticketing and Parking Fees

Making online ticket purchasing easier has been a goal of Chief Marketing Officer, George Murphy, since his arrival last year. Simplification will not only allow Chautauquans to easily complete transactions but it will also reduce errors made by staff and guests who often become confused when multiple or crossover situations occur.

Most notably, this means simplifying various ticket categories. For example, second child tuition will now be the same as first child. Second car parking passes, where permitted, will be the same as first car costs. Changes will appear in the ticket booklet (scheduled for a mid-December mailing) and on the ticketing website (launching Jan. 9, 2012).

Amphitheater Study Group

The report was delivered to the board and summarized by Charlie Heinz. It will be further discussed at the February retreat with a presentation by architect Marty Serena. Site studies are taking place this winter (geotechnical study, building and site survey).

