

Community Preservation Panel August 6, 2025, Meeting Minutes

The meeting was held at the Aurora Firehouse meeting room at 7:00 pm

Present: Chairperson Jim Burkett, Jeff Blum, Claire Morehouse, and John Wendler

Absent: Julia Rossmann

Others Present

Village Officials: Clerk Ann Balloni, ZBA member Laura Holland, and Historian Dr. Linda Schwab

Aurora Historical Society: Kay Burkett, President Shirley Egan, and Treasurer Ken Larson

Inns of Aurora: General Manager Sue Edinger and Facilities Manager Corey Guerrette

Members of the Public: Jodi Baldwin

Public Hearing for Application #25-20 to demolish a building at 348 Main Street (Tax Map #182.13-1-24.114)

On motion by Wendler, second by Morehouse, the CPP voted to open the public hearing for Application #25-20 at 7:02 p.m.

AYES: Blum, Burkett, Morehouse and Wendler

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Rossmann

Motion carried.

Ms. Edinger explained contacting Mayor Orman in 2022 with the offer for any person or organization wishing to remove and renovate the building (known as the Walter Wood Law Office) could do so at the remover's expense. There were no takers. Mr. Guerrette added that he recently consulted with the Village Code Enforcement Officer, Bob Rhea, regarding demolition or removal and Mr. Rhea determined that the structure is not safe and gave a deadline of August 10 for removal or demo. Additionally, Mr. Guerrette consulted with a structural engineer who concluded that it is not "economically feasible" to restore the building.

Ms. Edinger reiterated that interested parties had three years to remove the building at their expense and noted that Pleasant Rowland (owner of the property and founder of the Inns of Aurora) donated \$65,000.00 to the Aurora Historical Society which could have been used to move the building.

Ms. Edinger added that per Ms. Rowland's attorney, Wendy Marsh, the Affirmative Maintenance clause in the Village Zoning Law does not apply because the building is not habitable.

Mr. Burkett explained the procedure for the public hearing comments.

Public Comment

Shirley Egan (see attached)

Dr. Linda Schwab (see attached)

Jodi Baldwin (see attached) Ms. Baldwin added that she finds it disingenuous that the Inns of Aurora are claiming that it is not "economically feasible" to renovate the Walter Wood building. Ms. Baldwin also questioned the application submission coming from the Inns of Aurora as Pleasant Rowland is the owner of the property. Ms. Balloni explained that Ms. Rowland signed the application as the owner of the property and that the Inns of Aurora submitted the application for her, much like contractors submit applications for their clients and the Aurora Historical Society submitted the application for Patrick Tavern for the Village.

Mr. Burkett referred to emails that were received from Wells alum, Karin Wikoff, and Steve Zabriskie (attached) against demolishing the building. Mr. Burkett noted that, as a Mason, Steve Zabriskie remarked on the connection between the Walter Wood building and the Masonic Lodge. Mr. Burkett added that the CPP determination for Application #25-20 could set a precedent.

On motion by Morehouse, second by Blum, the CPP voted to close the public hearing for Application #25-20 at 7:19 p.m.

AYES: Blum, Burkett, Morehouse and Wendler

NAYS:

ABSENT: Rossmann

Motion carried.

Mr. Burkett called the regular meeting to order at 7:20 p.m.

Approval of Minutes: On motion by Wendler, seconded by Morehouse, the CPP voted to approve the July 2, 2025, minutes.

AYES: Blum, Burkett, Morehouse, and Wendler

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Rossmann

Motion carried.

Changes to the Agenda: No changes

Announcements: No announcements

Old Business

Article VII Amendments to the Village Zoning Law: Mr. Burkett reviewed the recommended changes with the panel, including streamlining the public hearing process, decreasing the required number of days for notices (to be consistent with the other boards), “replacement-in-kind” definition, updating the title for the Office of Interior Standards, and giving authority to the CPP Chair and Village Code Enforcement Officer to determine “ordinary maintenance”.

On motion by Morehouse, second by Blum, the CPP voted to submit the Article VII amendment recommendations to the Village Board of Trustees.

AYES: Blum, Burkett, Morehouse and Wendler

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Rossmann

Motion carried.

New Business

Application #25-20 to demolish a building at 348 Main Street (Tax Map #182.13-1-24.114)

Ms. Egan explained that the Aurora Historical Society is consulting with the Inns of Aurora on “coalition building” with the Village Historian and the Masonic Lodge. Both the Aurora Historical Society and the Inns of Aurora expressed urgency in finding a solution as the CEO deadline of August 10 is imminent. Ms. Egan noted that the \$65,000 donation from the Pleasant T. Rowland Foundation is specific to the porch restoration at Patrick Tavern and no funds from the donation are available for the removal of the Walter Wood building.

Dr. Schwab advised the panel that two estimates have been received for the removal, one high and one low. Ms. Morehouse questioned if Rick Lazurus submitted an estimate and Dr. Schwab confirmed that he did.

Mr. Burkett noted that he will discuss the August 10 deadline with Mr. Rhea and inform him that all parties are negotiating in good faith.

On motion by Blum, second by Morehouse, the CPP voted to table discussion of Application #25-20 to the September 3, 2025, meeting.

AYES: Blum, Burkett, Morehouse and Wendler

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Rossmann

Motion carried.

Application #25-26 from Thea Miller for a sign at 286 Main Street (Tax Map #182.17-1-24)

The application documents that the current owner kept the previous sign and painted over it.

On motion by Morehouse, second by Wendler, the CPP voted to approve Application #25-26 as “replacement-in-kind”, per section 7.09.E.2 of the Village Zoning Law.

AYES: Blum, Burkett, Morehouse and Wendler

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Rossmann

Motion carried.

Adjournment: On motion by Wendler, seconded by Morehouse, the CPP voted to adjourn the meeting at 7:37 p.m.

AYES: Blum, Burkett, Morehouse, and Wendler

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Rossmann

Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Ann Balloni

Village Clerk