

EDR

MAY 07 2012

RECEIVED

Comments and Recommendations

**Prepared by the City of Cortland
Environmental Advisory Committee**

In re:

**The Proposed SUNY Cortland Student Life Center (SLC)
Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS)**

May 7, 2012

Introduction:

The Environmental Advisory Committee of the City of Cortland has done an assessment of the SLC DEIS released for public review on April 12, 2012. We commend the project sponsors for their attention to the concerns of the city regarding aquifer protection, flooding and stormwater management. However, our analysis has revealed a number of design, process and siting deficiencies related to the development of this project. These will be addressed in the ensuing commentary, which includes both questions and recommendations for modifications and improvements. It is our hope that SUNY, the City and neighborhood residents will be able to resolve the controversy surrounding this project in a way that will be satisfactory and accommodating to all parties.

DEIS, §1.0, page 5: “In summary, the alternatives analysis concluded that the Project as proposed offers meets (sic) the Programming goals of the Project sponsor with the fewest potential adverse impacts.”

This committee believes that alternative sites for the project were dismissed by the DEIS without sufficient consideration. The apparent resolve of the project sponsors to build the SLC according to this particular plan and on the selected site fails to adequately address the legitimate concerns of neighborhood residents, especially when other, more community-friendly options are readily available that would satisfy the perceived needs of the college. Absent more detailed, clearly stated and compelling arguments against an alternative site, it appears that project sponsors have chosen to mitigate a significant impact to the surrounding neighborhood environment, rather than eliminate it.

Example: The New Student Life Center Comprehensive Program Study of March 9, 2010 illustrates several design alternatives located on approximately the same site. On page 10 of that study is a diagram of Alternate # 1, a three-story SLC with a considerably smaller footprint. This committee submits that this design would be far more acceptable to community residents with the following modifications:

- Move the building west adjacent to or abutting the Lusk Field House
- Reconfigure the north wing of the design to wrap around the north side of the field house

This alternative would provide the following benefits to the community, with no reduction of utility to the college:

- A 30%+ smaller footprint, increasing the amount of green space and pervious surface for aquifer recharge
- A much broader buffer zone between the SLC and the Pearl/Warren/York Streets neighborhood to the east, reducing the impact of noise, odors, pedestrian traffic and light pollution
- A more distant building profile (from the east) and effectively lower horizon, reducing visual impact on neighboring properties and allowing residents a less impeded western panorama

Example: In the Executive Summary on page 2 of the same study, several diagrams illustrate the long-range plan concept for that entire area of the campus. The diagrams show the relocation of Wallace Field to the west of the Park Center and the complete dismantling of the Lusk Field House. Any of the proposed SLC designs utilizing the space vacated by the removal of either or both of those two facilities would be far more acceptable to the community and still more than adequate to the perceived needs of the college.

Four other alternative sites were considered by the SUNY Design Team and were rejected based on the outcome of their scores on what seems to be a subjective design

matrix, thus reinforcing the perception that the site that was chosen was a foregone conclusion. It should be noted that the Design Team never included any city officials or neighborhood representatives, and that at no time during the design process were members of the public involved or consulted.

This committee rejects the finding of the DEIS that no satisfactory alternatives are available.

3.0 Existing Conditions, Potential Impacts and Mitigation Measures

§3.1 Geology, Soils and Topography

§3.1.2.1: “Following construction, approximately 2.8 acres will be restored to lawn/landscaping while the remaining 5.7 acres will consist of pavements and the building footprint.”

Utilizing either of the alternative examples outlined above would result in less disturbance of presently pervious surfaces; the first example has a smaller building footprint, the second example incorporates surfaces that are already impervious and could simply swap one building for another.

§3.1.2.2: “...the Project site has been disturbed/developed for decades, and currently contains approximately 4.2 acres of pavement and impervious surfaces.”

This characterization of the site is misleading; the project site consists almost entirely of Davis Field, open green space that is neither paved nor impervious and, while technically “developed,” is quite different from a building and generally seen as a positive landscape element.

§3.2 Water Resources

§3.2.2.1: “...assuming proper implementation of sediment and erosion control measures, no adverse indirect impacts to surface [sic. ground and storm] waters are anticipated as a result of the Project.”

What mechanisms will be in place to ensure that such measures will be observed and enforced?

§3.2.3: Proposed Mitigation

Any and all “proposed” mitigation measures related to water resources during both the construction and operational phases must be adopted.

The use of non-organic chemical fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides and fungicides must be prohibited.

Spill prevention and mitigation: Storage of paints and other coatings must be in sealed containers and under cover from exposure to the weather. No on-site discharge or washout of materials from construction or service vehicles can be permitted.

§3.3 Climate, Air Quality and Odor

§3.3.3: Proposed Mitigation “A dust control program will be implemented as necessary to control fugitive dust during construction. Control measures will include the application of mulch, water, stone, or approved chemical agent on public roads, access roads, exposed soils, or stockpiled soils when dry and windy conditions exist... Typically only plain water will be used for dust suppression; chemical dust suppressants will be used only in situations where plain-water dust suppression is not effective.”

What kind of chemical suppressant(s) will be used for dust control? Are such chemicals approved for safe use in close proximity to a sole-source aquifer?

§3.6 Aesthetic/Visual Resources

§3.6.1.1 Visual Study Area, ¶ 4: “The mostly forested lands adjacent to Otter Creek, including the property located immediately north of the Project site, are designated by the Water Board for the City of Cortland as a Critical Environmental Area due to their occurrence over the Otter Creek/Dry Creek aquifer.”

This sentence neglects to mention that **the entire project site** is now designated as a CEA since its inclusion in the recently enacted City of Cortland Wellhead Protection Zoning Overlay District.

§3.6.2.2.2 Visual Simulations, ¶ 3: “...the scale, mass, and form of the proposed building result(s) in a significant change compared to the existing views of open space (Davis Field) available from areas east/southeast of and immediately adjacent to the Project site. From these areas, the Student Life Center is a dominant feature in the view and obstructs visibility of vegetation and other landscape features located north and west of the Project site.”

This passage speaks for itself.

§3.6.3 Proposed Mitigation: “The only visually sensitive site (as defined per the NYSDEC) with potential views of the Project is the Cortland Rural Cemetery...”

In spite of the DEC’s definition of what is or is not “visually sensitive,” it is abundantly clear that neighborhood residents consider their visual resources to be compromised by the proposed siting of the project.

§3.8 Open Space and Recreation

§3.8.2.2 Operation: "...by providing an indoor facility that allows for use throughout the year, regardless of weather conditions, the proposed facility will have a positive impact on recreational opportunities at the Project site."

The recreational impact for students, faculty and college staff will undoubtedly be positive, but just as surely will prove to be a negative for the public at large, to wit:

"The Project will not result in any permanent loss of public open space or recreation."

This statement is uninformed as to the realities of campus and public interaction. There will be a massive loss of open space if this project is built as planned. While it may not be considered "public" open space, it is open space nevertheless, and is and has been used extensively for decades by members of the public for exercise, fresh air and recreation. The public quality of life that is currently enhanced by that de facto open space will be lost forever. Furthermore, the project sponsor has suggested no provision for public use of the SLC.

§3.9 Traffic and Transportation

§3.9.2.2 Operation: "The proposed Project will not require a significant amount of parking..."

The amount of additional parking needed to accommodate large numbers of students who live in off-campus housing and will likely drive to and from the SLC has been significantly underestimated. Without more on-campus parking, there will be an even greater demand for spaces on already overburdened local streets.

No mention is made in the DEIS of the potential for increased traffic problems at the campus entrance intersection of Tompkins St. and Folmer Dr. As this busy junction also involves a nearby railroad grade crossing and an elementary school with numerous young pedestrians, attention must be given to mitigate possible problems associated with greater SLC-related traffic.

§3.10 Noise

§3.10.2.2 Operation: "Potential sources of noise associated with the operation of the Student Life Center include noise associated with mechanical equipment, such as the building's HVAC system. However, the proposed mechanical systems are entirely located inside the building and are not expected to generate significant external noise."

HVAC systems associated with other campus buildings create frequent objectionable levels of low and mid frequency "droning." What data is available to demonstrate that the SLC's system will be any different?

“In addition, noise from pedestrians traveling to, from, and through the building, as well as students congregating in the outside areas adjacent to the Student Life Center, could affect residents in nearby areas. Overall, operation of the Student Life Center is not expected to generate any significant noise that could potentially impact the adjacent community.”

This statement is self-contradictory.

§3.10.3 Mitigation: “Restricting construction activities to the period between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.”

No mention is made of construction work being performed on weekends. Such work must be prohibited to give neighborhood residents a respite from construction-related noise, dust and congestion.

We do recognize that there may be some noise reduction with the addition of a building, since it will cancel out noise associated with an open recreation field.

Conclusion

The Environmental Advisory Committee believes that edr has generally performed a competent and workmanlike job in preparing the DEIS, with the reservations mentioned above

One of the charges of this committee is to evaluate the environmental impacts of projects that will have a noticeable effect on the city and its residents, and to suggest ways and means of minimizing those impacts. With that in mind, we are of the opinion that relocating the SLC to a location further west, and with a smaller footprint deserves careful consideration. We urge the project sponsors to reconsider their commitment to the present design and to incorporate our recommendations into the final plan or provide a more adequate explanation for why the legitimate concerns of the adjacent neighborhood must be sacrificed to accommodate competing interests.

Respectfully submitted,

The City of Cortland Environmental Advisory Committee

Ron Powell, Chair

Frank Kelly, Vice Chair ✕

Anna Bennett

Ralph Hesse

Denise Hotchkiss

Donna Lieberman



Rice, David

From: McSorley, Peggy
Sent: Monday, May 14, 2012 11:31 AM
To: 'Pat Heaton'; Rice, David
Cc: Donlon, Dan; Kanarkiewicz, Robert; Marcella, Chris
Subject: FW: Concerns re: new building location at SUNY Cortland

From: Susan Williams [<mailto:susangnwilliams@yahoo.com>]
Sent: Monday, May 14, 2012 11:30 AM
To: McSorley, Peggy
Subject: Concerns re: new building location at SUNY Cortland

Dear. Ms. McSorley,

I hope you will take the time to read the concerns being shared here by myself, a resident of the 2nd Ward in the City of Cortland, who lives one block away from the SUNY Cortland campus, as well as others who contact you, regarding our concern about the location of the new SUNY Cortland student center proposed to be built.

SUNY Cortland is a wonderful addition to our community, however, areas in the city of Cortland where it is desirable to live are becoming smaller and smaller, thanks in no small part to some of the inconveniences that come with having a college spread its impact over a wider and wider area. Will SUNY Cortland still be an attractive and desirable location for students to attend school if there is eventually no worthwhile community left beyond the borders of the campus? Please ask yourself the question of whether you would want this new building in your own backyard?

I have included several bullet points below that you may have already read from other concerned Cortland residents, but which I thought were worth repeating:

1. SUNY is doing the utmost to protect our single source aquifer, but what does that matter if human error results in an environmental accident? Moving the building away from the aquifer will better protect the environment. *The proposed Davis field site is a NY State Certified Environmental Area.*
2. Cortland's Otter Creek, which drains the entire campus, currently contains Brook Trout. These fish are not stocked; they are native to the stream and spawn there. The draft EIS failed to note this. These trout are proof that our water is very clean. They are the "canary in the coalmine" in this case. A temperature change of a few degrees, run-off from a large hot roof for instance, could threaten this population.
3. The building will be upwind of the neighborhood and will result in light, noise, and air pollution. The university has speculated that 3,000 students will use the building daily. That's a lot of french fries in the fryer. That's a lot of talking on cell phones as people walk past Pearl Street. That's a lot more lighting in the night. Move the building away from the neighborhood to minimize the impact. Build it where there is already an impervious surface (parking lot, unused tennis courts).
4. Where is everyone going to park?

5. Ultimately, this building may be open 24 hours a day. That's what President Bitterbaum said when he addressed City Council at our retreat last February. That will disrupt the lives of people who bought their homes expecting to live in them peacefully. Their properties will depreciate in value.
 6. SUNY has promised to take care of the problems of noise and a looming building with trees and plants. Trees take a long time to grow to 50 feet.
 7. The building will be due west of the neighborhood. Where there are now sunsets, green open space, and trees, there will be ---a building.
The building will block the sun from Pearl Street by 3:30 in winter. Home owners' yards will not get the same amount of sun which will affect their plants and gardens.
 8. College students and community members use Davis Field as it is. This is an ideal mingling of town and gown. Restore the field as an *invitation to fitness for the entire community*, not just the collegiate community. Move the new building to a new location.
 9. SUNY's PR man said that students wouldn't walk another 100 feet to exercise. Nonsense. Most will drive over from off campus housing. The rest have never been polled and know very little about what's proposed! Those I've talked to say it's absurd to think they wouldn't walk a little farther.
 10. Doesn't it make sense to have the new dining facility closer to the PER where there is no food? Especially during the winter months?
 11. The location of this building is sowing a lot of acrimony in our small city, widening the divide between the college and the local residents, between the haves and the have-nots. Move the building and show us that you care...that we matter.
- Thank you so much for considering our opposition to the location of this building.

- Susan Williams
9 Harrington Ave.
Cortland, NY 13045

Rice, David

From: McSorley, Peggy
Sent: Thursday, May 17, 2012 8:40 AM
To: 'Pat Heaton'; Rice, David
Cc: Donlon, Dan; Kanarkiewicz, Robert; Marcella, Chris
Subject: FW: SUNY Cortland Student Recreational Center

From: ward2 [mailto:ward2@cortland.org]
Sent: Wednesday, May 16, 2012 9:27 PM
To: McSorley, Peggy
Subject: SUNY Cortland Student Recreational Center

This project originally had five possible sites. One was uphill but was rejected as being impractical and restricting the size of the project too much. Another was rejected because it is next to 281 and too far to be the hub of activity it's designed to be.

Of the other three, one was an addition to the PER (the building currently housing a pool, ice rink, and courts) which was deemed too difficult/costly to undertake. We never heard exactly why.

Another was in between the PER and Davis field...somewhere around the dying rhino sculpture, the parking lot, or the defunct tennis courts. **This is where we'd like to see the building relocated.**

The chosen site is on Davis field. SUNY is wedded to the design of the building as a gateway between upper and lower campus. We were told they want people to have to walk through the building as a short cut to the parking lots.

The building will be on 5+ acres. It will stand 50 feet tall at its highest point (to accommodate a climbing wall). It will have a 300 seat dining facility. There will be one academic classroom and a lot of courts for various sports. There will be a recreational pool (as opposed to the training pool at the PER). As it stands, the public will not have access to this building--"the jewel of the campus..." Students will borrow canoes, kayaks, and camping equipment for expeditions. SUNY wants to promote health through physical activity and presumes students will choose this over bar-hopping. Admirable but... what about the neighborhood adjacent to the site?

1. SUNY is doing the utmost to protect our single source aquifer, but what does that matter if human error results in an environmental accident? Moving the building away from the aquifer will better protect the environment. *The proposed Davis field site is a NY State Certified Environmental Area.*

2. Cortland's Otter Creek, which drains the entire campus, currently contains Brook Trout. These fish are not stocked; they are native to the stream and spawn there. The draft EIS failed to note this. These trout are proof that our water is very clean. They are the "canary in the coalmine" in this case. A temperature change of a few degrees, run-off from a large hot roof for instance, would threaten this population.

3. The building will be upwind of the neighborhood and will result in light, noise, and air pollution. The university has speculated that 3,000 students will use the building daily. Ultimately, this building may be open 24 hours a day. That's what President Bitterbaum said when he addressed City Council at a retreat last February. That's a lot of french fries in the fryer. There's a reason why neighborhoods are not built next to fast food restaurants. The smells are offensive.

That's a lot of talking on cell phones as people walk past Pearl Street. That's a lot more lighting in the night. In my own neighborhood, we are frequently woken up during the night by students talking on their phones or in groups after the bars close. The proposed building will have more traffic at more odd hours of the night. That on top of lighting up the night? Move the building away from the neighborhood to minimize the impact. Build it where there is already an impervious surface (parking lot, unused tennis courts).

4. Where is everyone going to park? Most of SUNY's students live off campus. With the new professional building in the same vicinity, there are already parking issues. Students are parking on the streets of the neighborhoods.

5. SUNY has promised to take care of the problems of noise and a looming building with trees and plants. Trees take a long time to grow to 50 feet.

6. The building will be due west of the neighborhood. Where there are now sunsets, green open space, and trees, there will be ---a building.

The building will block the sun from Pearl Street by 3:30 in winter. Home owners' yards will not get the same amount of sun which will affect their plants and gardens. It's a quality of life issue.

7. College students and community members use Davis Field as it is. This is an ideal mingling of town and gown. Restore the field as an *invitation to fitness for the entire community*, not just the collegiate community. Move the new building to a new location.

8. SUNY's PR man said that students wouldn't walk another 100 feet to exercise. Nonsense. Most will drive over from off campus housing. The rest have never been polled and know very little about what's proposed! Those I've talked to laugh at the thought they wouldn't walk a little farther.

9. Doesn't it make sense to have the new dining facility closer to the PER where there is no food? Especially during the winter months?

10. The location of this building is sowing a lot of acrimony in our small city, widening the divide between the college and the local residents, between the haves and the have-nots. Move the building and show us that you care...that we matter.

~Katy Silliman, 2nd Ward Alderman

Rice, David

From: McSorley, Peggy
Sent: Wednesday, May 16, 2012 12:37 PM
To: 'Pat Heaton'; Rice, David
Cc: Donlon, Dan; Kanarkiewicz, Robert; Marcella, Chris
Subject: FW: Opposition to SUNY Construction Fund

From: Andy Lowell [<mailto:alowell1@twcny.rr.com>]
Sent: Wednesday, May 16, 2012 11:36 AM
To: McSorley, Peggy
Subject: Opposition to SUNY Construction Fund

Hi Peggy,

I would like to voice my opinion, as I am aware today is the deadline. I would like to oppose the current Construction proposal due to its location, I feel that the area by the rhino sculpture and defunct tennis courts would be much more appropriate and is already impermeable space so could be modified appropriately. My main concern is for the aquifer in case of accidents, as well as the amount of impermeable space in the valley of Cortland (and flooding because of it). I am also concerned about eastern brook trout, which I work every day to protect at my employment with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service in town. There are very few streams left supporting their habitat and a small change in temperature in Otter Creek could affect them adversely.

Thank you for hearing my opinions,

Sincerely,
Andrew Lowell
27 West Court St.
Cortland, NY 13045

FW Public Hearing On the \$56 million dollar SUNY Student Life Center
From: McSorley, Peggy
Sent: Friday, May 11, 2012 8:32 AM
To: 'Pat Heaton'; Rice, David
Cc: Donlon, Dan; Kanarkiewicz, Robert; Marcella, Chris
Subject: FW: : Public Hearing On the \$56 million dollar SUNY Student Life Center

Importance: High

-----Original Message-----

From: Jo Schaffer [mailto:Jo.Schaffer@cortland.edu]
Sent: Thursday, May 10, 2012 10:02 PM
To: McSorley, Peggy
Subject: : Public Hearing On the \$56 million dollar SUNY Student Life Center
Importance: High

Dear Ms. McSorley,

I am sending this email message as an addendum to my comments made at the Monday evening DEIS hearing for the SUNY Cortland Student Life Center. I am assuming that the recorded comments will be in transcript form and part of the official record along with the other statements made by members of the public.

I wish to emphasize two main points made by me in response to the DEIS presented:

The administration of Cortland, has for many years, claimed the necessity of placing this building directly on the Certified Environmental Area and the Wellhead Protection area because

A) students would not walk an additional hundred feet to "go to exercise" This statement has been documented in many of the published statements made by the President. However, it has to be noted that at no time in the past 6 years have the students been polled as to the understanding of building placement, the environmental concerns or the need to walk a little further.. So the statement made is totally without substantiation.

B) the building would be a link between two halves of the campus...an upper and lower campus. Again this is pure supposition as 8/10 of all academic activities happen on the upper campus and students are well aware that the lower campus supports athletic fields, Professional studies and Physical education. Faculty attempts to bring the "two" halves together have long been more than just physical separation which is something most faculty know.

Additionally, my final remark was presented as a WIN WIN solution for all parties. The building, as planned, can be moved to another location, west of the Professional Building, south of HPER on a large site which is already covered with impervious material, further from the wellheads, located on the established student bus routes, and would replace a disreputable storage shed. Additionally, it would be down wind from the westerly flow of noise, odor, light, traffic in effect on the parallel R-1 site now planned which is a major source of complaint from the city and its inhabitants. There are two streets, partially developed which are perpendicular to the new site and would suffer less intrusion.

The Administration of the college continues to claim that it needs this building to recruit and retain students. Then, if so, please explain why the President, at almost every public forum, brags that the college receives 11-12,000 applications for 1200 seats and now has the pick of the brightest applicants. That being said, if SUNY wants the building, so be it but remember that the public knows full well that it is they who will be paying for it and it does not sit well with them.

FW Public Hearing On the \$56 million dollar SUNY Student Life Center

There was a palpable atmosphere of arrogance on the part of the SUNY Cortland representatives, which was repeated in the next day's news item. The residents who spoke all spoke of the need for the college to respect the community in which it is placed. Not to do so will do further irreparable harm to any positive town gown relations which are now severely strained.

Thank you for reading this. I am available for more clarification if required.
Sincerely,

D. Jo Schaffer
Art and Art History emerita
SUNY Cortland

-----Original Message-----

From: Judd Olshan [<mailto:judd.olshan@gmail.com>]

Sent: Tuesday, May 08, 2012 5:00 PM

To: McSorley, Peggy

Subject: Public Comment SUNY Cortland Residential Life Center

Dear Ms. McSorley,

I am writing to contribute a comment regarding the proposed Residential Life Center at SUNY Cortland. I am a resident of Cortland and a home owner at 69 Hamlin Street in the 1st Ward. I strongly support the project the college has undertaken and am impressed by the plans which have been released to the public some of them as early as 2005. I am worried that a vocal handful of Cortland residents will have an undue influence on a project which is economically important to the whole of Cortland and not just a few residents of Pearl St. The college and town which I have never seen as separate from one another have one opportunity to get this project right and I have full confidence in the experts hired to create and execute the project. May I suggest that money IF it is available would be better spent on buying out those properties that are immediately adjacent to the project rather than altering existing plans or hamstringing a project that has been designed to benefit the University and thus the town as well. Best, Judd Olshan

From: McSorley, Peggy
Sent: Monday, May 14, 2012 8:42 AM
To: 'Pat Heaton'; Rice, David
Cc: Donlon, Dan; Kanarkiewicz, Robert; Marcella, Chris
Subject: FW: Comment on the DEIS

From: Lenore Schwager [mailto:lenore_schwager@yahoo.com]
Sent: Saturday, May 12, 2012 8:03 PM
To: McSorley, Peggy
Subject: Comment on the DEIS

I am writing to inform you as a resident of Pearl Street in the City of Cortland my concerns about the proposed SUNY Cortland/Student Life Center being built on the present athletic field.

It will have a significant impact on the quality of life for all the residents on Pearl Street, York Street, Warren Street and some of Tompkins Street.

The height of the building will impact my view from my front windows and door and will change the amount of sun that my garden and lawn receive. As I understand it, the building will block the sun from Pearl Street from about 3 p.m. in the winter. Cortland gets so little sun in the winter that lessening the amount of sun by a building is not acceptable. In addition, the lighting coming from the inside as well as the outside of the building will add light to the neighborhood at a time when it should be dark

Parking on Pearl Street is already a problem and it makes it very hard for the residents to back out of their driveways. Adding the Student Life Center will create more traffic and more parking on Pearl Street at all hours of the day.

All of these issues will affect my quality of life and will impact the quality of life for all of the residents of Pearl Street, York Street, Warren Street and parts of Tompkins Street.

Moving the building to the west where Lusk field house currently stands would eliminate many of the concerns about the impact of the building itself.

Thank you,
Lenore Schwager
42 Pearl Street
Cortland, NY 13045

Rice, David

From: McSorley, Peggy
Sent: Wednesday, May 16, 2012 12:34 PM
To: 'Pat Heaton'; Rice, David
Cc: Donlon, Dan; Kanarkiewicz, Robert; Marcella, Chris
Subject: FW: Recreational facility at SUNY Cortland

-----Original Message-----

From: Marilyn DeLorenzo [<mailto:Marilyn.DeLorenzo@cortland.edu>]
Sent: Wednesday, May 16, 2012 10:25 AM
To: McSorley, Peggy
Subject: FW: Recreational facility at SUNY Cortland

From: Marilyn DeLorenzo
Sent: Wednesday, May 16, 2012 10:22 AM
To: peggymcsorley@suny.edu
Subject: Recreational facility at SUNY Cortland

Ms McSorley

I have been in contact with Jo Schaffer, and she advised me to send on this message to you. I have very strong feelings about NOT spending taxpayers money on what is essentially a recreational facility at SUNY Cortland. I sent the following letter to the Editor of the Cortland Standard (it was published on 5/11) and a copy went to Erik Bitterbaum. Just last evening another letter addressing this issue was published in the Cortland Standard. This issue will not go away and does not bode well for "town/gown" relationships.

BETTER WAYS TO SPEND \$56 MILLION

To the Editor:

Isn't it odd that New York State has \$56 million to spend on what is essentially a recreational facility at SUNY Cortland, yet has had to make deep cuts in funding public school education for those people who may or may not be able to afford college once they graduate from high school?

Furthermore, the facility that is going to be built on Davis Field will not contribute one iota to developing new programs, hiring new full-time faculty or extending offerings for teacher prep programs. It will not allow SUNY schools to abate the proposed tuition increments.

Certainly, New York State could find a better way to spend taxpayer dollars to not only enhance public school education, K-12, but to also provide more opportunities in the SUNY system.

Marilyn DeLorenzo
3981 Woodside Rd.
Cortland, New York 13045

From: McSorley, Peggy
Sent: Thursday, May 10, 2012 9:22 AM
To: 'Pat Heaton'; Rice, David
Cc: Donlon, Dan; Kanarkiewicz, Robert; Marcella, Chris
Subject: FW: Student Life Center

From: Marilyn [<mailto:moin@twcny.rr.com>]
Sent: Thursday, May 10, 2012 12:19 PM
To: McSorley, Peggy
Subject: Student Life Center

Dear Peggy McSorley:

I am a resident of York Street in Cortland, NY. York Street is between Pearl Street and Broadway. It is part of the neighborhood that will be dramatically affected by the building of the Student Life Center. I have attended all the meetings discussing the building of the Student Life Center. I have also written a few letters. I attended the last public meeting May 7th at Barry School. There were many people from the neighborhood and other parts of the city who attended the meeting. Everyone agreed that since the new Student Life Center will be constructed no matter what, the building should be moved further away from the neighborhood. That is all we ask after all these weeks. A small gesture on your part will make it a win-win situation for the college and the community. As many have said, we have been good neighbors for many many years and want to continue to be good neighbors. Now it is your turn to be a good neighbor. Just MOVE the building down. Thank You for reading this Email.

Marilyn Palmer

From: Donlon, Dan
Sent: Monday, May 07, 2012 3:26 PM
To: Rice, David; LallasJ@cortland.edu; Nasrin.Parvizi@cortland.edu
Subject: FW: Proposed student life center

FYI

Sent from my Verizon Wireless Phone

-----Original message-----

From: "McSorley, Peggy" <Peggy.McSorley@suny.edu>
To: "Beerle, Richard" <Richard.Beerle@suny.edu>, "Donlon, Dan" <Dan.Donlon@suny.edu>, "Kanarkiewicz, Robert" <Bob.Kanarkiewicz@suny.edu>, "Marcella, Chris" <Chris.Marcella@suny.edu>, Pat Heaton <Pheaton@edrcompanies.com>
Sent: Mon, May 7, 2012 13:38:43 GMT+00:00
Subject: FW: Proposed student life center

FYI and use

From: Molly R. Andrejko [<mailto:mollyandrejko@gmail.com>]
Sent: Sunday, May 06, 2012 11:45 PM
To: peggy.mcsorely@suny.edu; McSorley, Peggy
Subject: Proposed student life center

Hello Ms McSorely,
 My name is Molly Andrejko, I am a 4th grade teacher in Cortland and am a lifelong resident of this city. While I am unable to participate in the community meeting tomorrow evening to express concerns over SUNY's proposed student life center, I have one concern that I hope will be shared. I am sure there are a great many concerns city residents have in regard to environmental impact, et al. but as I haven't done any research, I can't speak knowledgeably to them. I sincerely hope that Cortland State will uphold a moral and ethical standard that respects and hopefully surpasses out city's environmental codes.

My concern is one of local residents sharing this space with students. As this area, the old football field, has been one of the very few spaces the college has historically opened to local residents, I lament its imminent closing. I regret to say that one of my observations about Cortland State is its typical unwillingness to share its incredible athletic facilities with local residents. This area of the campus is one of the only, if not *the* only free facility open for recreational use for local residents.

I enjoy utilizing the track and field in this area as I know many locals do. It is my feeling that a university with as many stellar recreational and fitness opportunities as Cortland State would be open and willing, if not encouraging (it would seem reasonable to *promote* the practices of health and wellness to the outlying community) participation among local residents. As these same locals must share a city with so many students of Physical Education, Recreation, etc., let's foster a spirit of collaboration and education rather than barring opportunities to share, educate and improve ourselves alongside these fine young men and women whose job one day will likely be to promote health and wellness. Why not start with the Cortland community at large?

With the impending loss of the old track and field, it is my hope that SUNY Cortland will explore other avenues of opening up other athletic/fitness facilities to local residents. This center will surely be loved

by students, but at what cost to local residents? Surely it will be yet another area closed off to local residents. In the spirit of education, cooperation, and goodwill; please consider opening other fitness facilities to local residents in lieu of the track and field.

Thank you for your consideration and respect.

Sincerely,

Molly Andrejko

¡Carpe Diem!

From: McSorley, Peggy
Sent: Friday, May 11, 2012 9:12 AM
To: 'Pat Heaton'; Rice, David
Cc: Donlon, Dan; Kanarkiewicz, Robert; Marcella, Chris
Subject: FW: Student Life Center-Cortland

From: Palma Ward [<mailto:pollyed52@verizon.net>]
Sent: Friday, May 11, 2012 9:12 AM
To: McSorley, Peggy
Cc: Brian Tobin; Katy Silliman; Bitterbaum, Erik J.
Subject: Re: Student Life Center-Cortland

Dear Ms. McSorley:

I was not able to attend the meeting at Barry Elementary School on Monday evening regarding the proposed "Student Life Center". Though I do not live on Pearl Street anymore, I can certainly appreciate their concern, and I believe it's about time that SUNY Cortland considered the taxpayers for a change!

When we, the people of Cortland, bought our homes, we didn't expect to have to put up with students urinating in our yards, yelling obscene vulgarity as they parade up and down the streets, blasting us at night with their loud music and screaming and destroying our property, or stealing our plants. No one can possibly appreciate our feelings unless they live or have lived, near the college or near student housing!

Building another student center may be novel for a week or two, but when the novelty wears off, in the end, they will still continue to party on the streets with very little regard or respect for the city and its people. One of the "focal point(s)" for this center is stated as "a big attraction for potential students." SUNY Cortland already has the reputation for being a "party college" and students have been quoted front page news as saying just that!

Can we really believe that students will come here because the college has "basketball courts, a swimming pool, a climbing wall" and more? Besides, is this what college is all about?

Most people aren't objecting to building this center, only its placement, so why not consider us, the taxpayers, and build it on the other side of the Chugger Davis Field! Building it on the Davis Field is so unjust, and most unfair to the people in that area!

**Sincerely, Mrs. Palma Ward (a graduate of SUNY Cortland by the way)
(This letter is not meant for newspaper publication)**

Comments on the SUNY Student Life Center Plan; May 7, 2012

Sharon Stevans
29 Hamlin Street, Cortland

I would like to focus my comments on the Visual Section of the plan- the impact on the neighborhood- though I share the concerns of others about potential water quality issues, noise, etc.

Page 14 states in reference to the view from Pearl at Warren: “ With the proposed project in place, the view loses its' feeling of openness, however, the new building appears modern and clean and gives **order to the view.**” This statement is absurd- especially when written by professional planners. A prison wall is orderly and that is what this view looks like.

It goes on to say: “The contrast between the horizontal brick base of the structure on the ground level and the vertically aligned metal and glass panels on the upper stories **help to reduce the mass of the building.**” This sounds more like wishful thinking and is not accurate.

Any finally it states: “SUNY's development of the Student Life Center neither preserves nor undermines the continued single-family residential use of adjacent properties. This is further wishful thinking as it most certainly does undermine the continued use of the properties as OWNER occupied residences.

The plans makes no effort to mitigate the problem of increased vehicle parking on these residential streets as it simply states that most users will walk. This will not be the case for all the off-campus users who will be driving and will need a place to park.

The only way to mitigate the impact on the adjacent neighborhood- whose interests seem to be rather glibly and condescendingly dismissed is to move the building. While an alternate site seems to be wholly negated by the questionable “grading” performed by the site selection committee, the building orientation, design, and placement can and should be modified on the college-preferred site. The building should be moved further to the west to reduce the monstrous visual impact. The Lusk Field House could be torn down if necessary. The design can be altered to have the massive glass and brick wall face the Waterworks, with a smaller and reduced elevation facade fronting the neighborhood.

The plan makes reference to the fact that SUNY is exempt from local land use regulations. However, the college has an obligation to be a good institutional citizen of the community. The relationship between the college and the city needs balance. With the plan as currently constituted, the city and its residents continue to make adjustments and sacrifices with no real concessions on the part of SUNY. We value having SUNY here, but I would hope for more evidence that SUNY values this community in return.

EDR

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SUNY Cortland Student Life Center

DEIS Public Hearing

May 07, 2012

SPEAKER CARD No. 03



MICK FRANCEY

WHAT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STUDY
WAS DONE ABOUT IMPACT TO RESIDENTIAL
VEGETATION (TREES, BUSHES, GRASS, FLOWERS)
OF HOUSES ADJACENT TO THE LIFE CENTER &
LOSING SUNLIGHT EVERY AFTERNOON?



May 9, 2012

Dear Mr. McSorley,

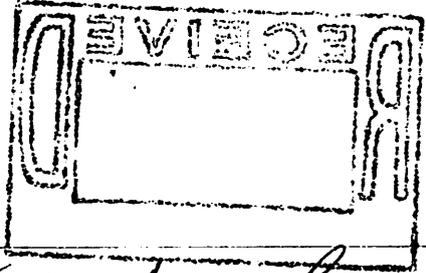
After attending a meeting on the proposed Student Life Center in Corland, N.Y. on May 7th I am still very upset about the project.

I wrote to you on 3-15-12 and I haven't changed my feelings about where the proposed site will be.

If put on that site I wonder if I will see the sun ever again in my back yard.

I also worry about our water supply which is so important to all of the community including the college.

I find it hard to



accept that such a large building will be in my backyard.

Having lived in my home for nearly 42 years the impact on the neighborhood will be disastrous.

The current parking on the street (Pearl) when the students are in school has gotten bad. It will get worse with the proposed building site.

Please see if another site would be considered. I would appreciate it so much.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Marilyn G. Di-John
37 Pearl Street
Cortland N.Y. 13045

Rice, David

From: McSorley, Peggy
Sent: Monday, May 14, 2012 11:31 AM
To: 'Pat Heaton'; Rice, David
Cc: Donlon, Dan; Kanarkiewicz, Robert; Marcella, Chris
Subject: FW: Concerns re: new building location at SUNY Cortland

From: Susan Williams [<mailto:susangnwilliams@yahoo.com>]
Sent: Monday, May 14, 2012 11:30 AM
To: McSorley, Peggy
Subject: Concerns re: new building location at SUNY Cortland

Dear. Ms. McSorley,

I hope you will take the time to read the concerns being shared here by myself, a resident of the 2nd Ward in the City of Cortland, who lives one block away from the SUNY Cortland campus, as well as others who contact you, regarding our concern about the location of the new SUNY Cortland student center proposed to be built.

SUNY Cortland is a wonderful addition to our community, however, areas in the city of Cortland where it is desirable to live are becoming smaller and smaller, thanks in no small part to some of the inconveniences that come with having a college spread its impact over a wider and wider area. Will SUNY Cortland still be an attractive and desirable location for students to attend school if there is eventually no worthwhile community left beyond the borders of the campus? Please ask yourself the question of whether you would want this new building in your own backyard?

I have included several bullet points below that you may have already read from other concerned Cortland residents, but which I thought were worth repeating:

1. SUNY is doing the utmost to protect our single source aquifer, but what does that matter if human error results in an environmental accident? Moving the building away from the aquifer will better protect the environment. *The proposed Davis field site is a NY State Certified Environmental Area.*
2. Cortland's Otter Creek, which drains the entire campus, currently contains Brook Trout. These fish are not stocked; they are native to the stream and spawn there. The draft EIS failed to note this. These trout are proof that our water is very clean. They are the "canary in the coalmine" in this case. A temperature change of a few degrees, run-off from a large hot roof for instance, could threaten this population.
3. The building will be upwind of the neighborhood and will result in light, noise, and air pollution. The university has speculated that 3,000 students will use the building daily. That's a lot of french fries in the fryer. That's a lot of talking on cell phones as people walk past Pearl Street. That's a lot more lighting in the night. Move the building away from the neighborhood to minimize the impact. Build it where there is already an impervious surface (parking lot, unused tennis courts).
4. Where is everyone going to park?

- 5. Ultimately, this building may be open 24 hours a day. That's what President Bitterbaum said when he addressed City Council at our retreat last February. That will disrupt the lives of people who bought their homes expecting to live in them peacefully. Their properties will depreciate in value.**
 - 6. SUNY has promised to take care of the problems of noise and a looming building with trees and plants. Trees take a long time to grow to 50 feet.**
 - 7. The building will be due west of the neighborhood. Where there are now sunsets, green open space, and trees, there will be ---a building.
The building will block the sun from Pearl Street by 3:30 in winter. Home owners' yards will not get the same amount of sun which will affect their plants and gardens.**
 - 8. College students and community members use Davis Field as it is. This is an ideal mingling of town and gown. Restore the field as an *invitation to fitness for the entire community*, not just the collegiate community. Move the new building to a new location.**
 - 9. SUNY's PR man said that students wouldn't walk another 100 feet to exercise. Nonsense. Most will drive over from off campus housing. The rest have never been polled and know very little about what's proposed! Those I've talked to say it's absurd to think they wouldn't walk a little farther.**
 - 10. Doesn't it make sense to have the new dining facility closer to the PER where there is no food? Especially during the winter months?**
 - 11. The location of this building is sowing a lot of acrimony in our small city, widening the divide between the college and the local residents, between the haves and the have-nots. Move the building and show us that you care...that we matter.**
- Thank you so much for considering our opposition to the location of this building.**

**- Susan Williams
9 Harrington Ave.
Cortland, NY 13045**