



CITY OF BOULDER
Landmarks Board

1739 Broadway, Fourth Floor • P.O. Box 791, Boulder, Colorado 80306-0791
phone 303-441-1880 • fax 303-441-3241 • www.boulderhistoricpreservation.net

April 7, 2011

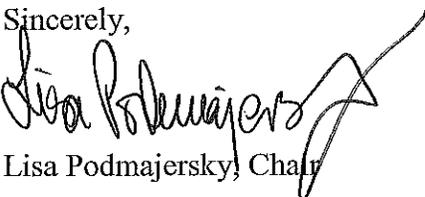
Mayor Osborne
Members of the Boulder City Council
PO Box 791
Boulder, Colorado 80306

Dear Mayor Osborne and Members of the Boulder City Council,

At our April 6, 2011 public meeting, the Landmarks Board reviewed the staff recommendations to Council found in the memo for the upcoming April 12 Study Session on Chautauqua. The memo is an incredibly thorough work product, highlighting for all of us the vast number of competing interests already vying for time and space (and parking!) at our beloved Chautauqua. So much is yet to be understood about how best to manage this precious resource and the staff recommendations to Council shed significant light on the important work ahead in achieving this goal. It is with this hope, for extreme care to be taken throughout this process, that **the Landmarks Board wholeheartedly and unanimously supports Option 1 of the staff recommendations.**

We look forward to our continued communication with Council on Chautauqua and believe that with Option 1, the best hope lies ahead for Chautauqua to be enjoyed well into the future by all.

Sincerely,



Lisa Podmajersky, Chair

Special Landmarks Board Meeting, March 7, 2011

Discussion of Issues Relating to Chautauqua's 2020 Strategic Plan

Purpose:

On March 7, the Landmarks Board held a special meeting to discuss issues relating to the recommendations in the Colorado Chautauqua Association's *2020 Plan* and to provide input to council for its April 12 study session on Chautauqua. The Landmarks Board requested this meeting out of concern about possible repercussions the *Plan* (including the construction of a new 8,000 sq. ft. building) may have on the fabric of the historic district as well as Boulder citizens' use and enjoyment of Chautauqua.

Summary:

The Colorado Chautauqua is a highly significant historic, cultural, and recreational city-owned property, and one of only twenty-one designated National Historic Landmarks in Colorado. Preservation of Chautauqua was and continues to be an outstanding example of the efforts of Boulder's unique and visionary citizenry to plan and protect resources for future generations. Because Chautauqua is a precious and fragile resource, and the role it has played in the cultural life of Boulder for over 100 years, members of the Landmarks Board strongly suggest that, prior to any decisions being made on recommendations in the *2020 Plan*, council ask staff to pursue:

1. A broad-based community discussion about Chautauqua must occur to develop a community vision, with goals and objectives for the future of Chautauqua.
2. Development of a master plan for Chautauqua to clarify and guide future change to its physical, cultural, and historic landscape.
3. Amendment and expansion of design guidelines must be undertaken for the Chautauqua Historic District to reflect the current vision, findings and recommendations of the master plan.

Background:

Over the course of the last 113 years, the Colorado Chautauqua has provided Boulder citizens and visitors alike with extraordinary educational, cultural, and recreational opportunities in a semi-rural, camp-like setting. In 2006, the Chautauqua Park Historic District was designated a National Historic Landmark on the basis that it was an "outstanding representation of America's first truly

mass educational and cultural movement," and the *best preserved* example of the six surviving chautauquas in the nation.

Any alteration to an existing building or structure, additions, new construction, or relocations within the Chautauqua Park requires a landmark alteration certificate. In Chautauqua, the Landmarks Board uses the *Chautauqua Park Historic District Design Guidelines* to help interpret the historic preservation ordinance. Adopted in 1989, the Chautauqua design guidelines have been adequate for most applications to date, but do not contemplate new free-standing construction in the district.

The fact that the guidelines do not address new construction does not necessarily indicate a flaw in the guidelines, but perhaps instead reflects a deliberate omission intended to discourage new construction. In fact, the guidelines are explicit in saying, "There are very few locations where a new building of any kind could be added to Chautauqua without destroying the historic integrity and rural character that has been carefully preserved for nearly a century." Consequently, there is little basis to assess where new construction might be appropriate or what mass, scale, height, and type of design would be appropriate. Likewise, there is no guidance as to whether the relocation of historic buildings or structures would be appropriate in the district.

The Cultural Landscape Assessment, commissioned by the Chautauqua Association, is an extensive document with much good information and the basis upon which a community-wide "vision" for Chautauqua can be developed. However, this document has never been adopted by any city entity.

The Landmarks Board considers that decisions regarding change at Chautauqua should be based upon a comprehensive master plan for this city owned property. It should take into account the following city goals for Chautauqua:

- Historic Preservation
- Safety
- CCA financial sustainability
- Community access
- Conservation
- Contribution to sense of community
- Boulder's economic vitality
- Cultural opportunities
- Recreational opportunities.

The Landmarks Board recommends that the planning process for Chautauqua proceed according to the following:

Vision:

- Landmarks Board considers it essential that a broader "vision" for Chautauqua be developed before change occurs
- The Boulder community, users, and Chautauqua residents must be engaged in development of the vision
- The relevant boards and commissions should be included in development of the vision

Master Plan should:

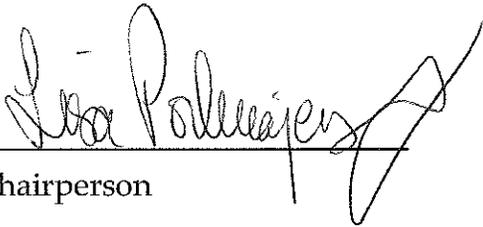
- Not only focus on physical changes but cultural character of Chautauqua in the future as well as other goals listed above
- Establish priorities for Chautauqua now and into the future for historic and cultural preservation, increased recreational activities, access to the public, etc.
- Clarify the roles of the city and Chautauqua as stewards of Chautauqua
- Determine what are appropriate existing and new uses considering the historic mission of Chautauqua
- Focus on the preservation of the built and natural environment and private and public uses
- Address possible locations and types of new construction that might be appropriate including access, circulation, traffic, parking, etc. over the near and long term

Design Guidelines:

- The current design guidelines for Chautauqua are over twenty years old and inadequate. For example, they do not provide a basis upon which to evaluate new buildings in the historic district. Additionally, existing parking recommendations in the guidelines are not applied.
- To be compatible with the vision and master plan, the guidelines should be revised to guide future changes in the Chautauqua Park Historic District in a comprehensive manner
- The revised design guidelines should address coordination between various jurisdictions with ownership and/or lease holds at Chautauqua, e.g. Colorado Chautauqua Association, Parks & Recreation, Open Space and Mountain Parks.

Approved on April 6, 2011

Respectfully submitted,



Chairperson