



Board of Trustees
James A. Pardo, Jr., Chair

November 10, 2015

Dear Chautauqua Corporation Members:

I hope this letter finds you well and enjoying the fall season. It has been a beautiful autumn in Chautauqua, and everyone seems to be busy preparing for the winter ahead.

I am writing to report to you on two pieces of business that arose at the August 8, 2015, annual meeting of the Chautauqua Corporation. Those of you who attended that meeting will remember that the Members approved two motions, one requesting the Board to consider certain governance issues relating to open meetings and increased transparency and the other requesting the Board to consider taking certain action with respect to the proposed Amphitheater project.

The Board at its August 29, 2015, meeting referred the motion concerning Institution governance to its Nominating & Governance Committee for review and recommendation. An interim report from the committee was presented to the Board at its November meeting. The current intent is for the Nominating & Governance Committee to continue its work with a goal of making a recommendation to the full board either in February or, at the latest, in May.

The motion concerning the proposed Amphitheater project requested that the Institution's Board of Trustees, "prior to the final award of a construction contract for the Amphitheater, consider securing a construction contract based on a design developed by a recognized historic preservation architectural firm with full access to necessary structural and engineering specifications." Please know that each member of the Board appreciates the care and thoughtfulness that gave rise to this particular motion. As stewards of our National Historic Landmark District, we place great weight on matters of preservation.

The Board at its August 29, 2015, meeting referred this motion to its Asset Policy Committee for its review and recommendation. The committee considered the request, and it recommended to the Board at our November meeting that the request should be tabled pending further developments with regard to the proposed Amphitheater project. The Board adopted the committee's recommendation.

Considerations. In making this recommendation, the committee and the Board looked at the goals and objectives for the proposed Amphitheater project; the process for arriving at the proposed design (which, since the summer meeting of the Corporation, has been put out to bid); the reports of the Amphitheater Preservation Panel and the structural engineering firm hired to analyze the current Amphitheater; and the status of the currently proposed Amphitheater project.

Reasons. There are two main reasons for the Board's decision at this time not to engage an additional historic preservation architectural firm:

- 1. Goals and Objectives.** Based on all the work done by our Amphitheater Study Group, the project's lead architect and the previously retained preservation architect, it appears impossible to both historically rehabilitate the Amphitheater and achieve all of the strategic goals and objectives for the Amphitheater project.

As a point of reference, the Board has on several occasions affirmed the following goals and objectives as imperatives for any Amphitheater project:

- *Safety and Accessibility* — structurally safe and accessible for those who are differently abled and those with physical limitations;
- *Respect for Artists and Presenters* — appropriate space, both on the stage and in the back of house, that respects artists, presenters, and the work they do;
- *Respect for Audience Members* — a modern-day experience with suitable comfort, access, and sight lines for current and future audiences; and
- *Institutional Sustainability* — structure, design, and technology that will meet the needs of an evolving array of programs, promote audience growth, and last for the next 100 years.

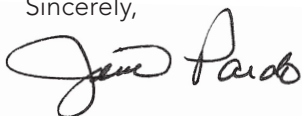
Additionally, this past August, the Amphitheater Preservation Panel — made up of regional preservation experts and architects — expressly and without qualification found that, if the Institution determined that all of its project-related goals must be met in the Amphitheater's current location, then "there may be no way to preserve the historic Amp."

- 2. Structural Issues.** Based on input from numerous preservation experts — the Amphitheater Preservation Panel, the National Park Service and preservation architect Theodore Lownie — any preservation solution to the current Amphitheater would require retaining a significant portion of the existing roof structure. At the suggestion of the National Park Service, the Institution retained Old Structures Engineering, a structural engineering firm that has significant experience with historic buildings, to study and develop an engineering solution to retain the center portion of the current Amphitheater roof structure. A constructibility analysis of its engineering solution revealed that executing this plan would require extensive excavation of the bowl to set the columns in bedrock; replacement of all the columns detailed by the engineers; removal of the flat, perimeter roof section; and the need to remove most of the interior ceiling. Little of the current materials and fabric of the Amp would remain after achieving overall stability for the existing structure. Moreover, the projected incremental costs and additional construction time associated with that approach coupled with concerns over workplace safety drove the conclusion that there simply exists no practical means of retaining the center portion of the current Amphitheater roof structure while achieving rehabilitation status.

Given our project goals and objectives and the structural issues at the Amphitheater, and based on the work of preservation experts and consultants that we previously have received in this area, the Asset Policy Committee and the full Board determined that no workable preservation-driven solution exists for the Amphitheater. As a result, and in light of the status of the currently proposed Amphitheater project, the Board concluded that retaining an historic preservation architectural firm at this time is unnecessary and, therefore, that the request of the Board should appropriately be tabled. The Board, however, continues to remain fully mindful of preservation-related concepts and parameters as the Amphitheater project moves forward.

Best regards to you and your families and friends for the upcoming holiday season and for the balance of the Chautauqua off-season. I look forward to being with you again when Chautauqua 2016 commences in June.

Sincerely,



James A. Pardo, Jr.
Chair