

HNU SAYS (SECRET) DEADLINE HAS PASSED TO FILE PROPOSALS TO SAVE CAMPUS

Posted on April 30, 2023 by Ken Epstein



Despite opposition of the trustees, many community leaders and city officials are moving forward for an educational future for the campus. In a statement released this week, Councilmember-at-Large Rebecca Kaplan reiterated city leaders' commitment to maintaining the HNU campus, including as a Historically Black College or University (HBCU): "The Holy Names University site can, and should, have an educational future to provide jobs, opportunity, train teachers and others for vital community needs, and preserve the intended purpose of the land, and the funding they have received. The post HNU Says (Secret) Deadline Has Passed to File Proposals to Save Campus first appeared on Post News Group.

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[deadline](#), [prospective developers](#), [real estate firm](#), [sell the nearly 60-acre property](#), [site for higher education](#), [students](#), [submitting proposals](#), [Teachers](#), [top dollar](#), [train teachers](#), [true financial information](#), [Vatican](#), [violate the city's general zoning regulations](#), [vital community needs](#), [vital educational institution](#), [white developers](#)





By Ken Epstein

Prospects are looking better for saving the Holy Names University campus as a center for higher education in Oakland.

At one point, it seemed highly likely that HNU's leaders would sell the nearly 60-acre campus to a developer of high-end residential housing when the university closes in May. They clearly stated their goal was to earn top dollar for the property.

The HNU Board of Trustees told the public they had reached out to other post-secondary institutions but found no interest in coming to Oakland. They also said that they were saddled with \$50 million debt, and their creditor was aggressively forcing them into the sale.

Now, however, several educational institutions have come forward with proposals to establish programs at the site; HNU's creditor says it is committed to work with Oakland to help save the property as a home for higher education; and students, faculty, community, and city leaders are mobilizing to save the campus.

Additionally, HNU's plan for exclusive housing in the Oakland Hills has hit a roadblock with the City of Oakland, when city staff recently told the university that the city's general plan allowed for

educational institutions, not residential development at the site, especially considering the fire danger in the hills, the Oakland Post learned this week.

According to a letter from the city, the HNU property is not zoned for residential development.

“Given the ‘Institutional’ General Plan designation, single-family and multifamily housing projects would not be allowed at the Campus Property unless the City Council approved a General Plan Amendment for the Campus Property to remove the ‘Institutional’ designation in favor of a General Plan designation permitting a housing project,” the letter said.

There also appears to be significant interest in developing institutional uses for the site. Several educational institutions have expressed interest in creating “a comprehensive education campus,” at HNU, including:

- Undergraduate programs run by Lincoln University in partnership with HBCUs;
- Graduate and credential programs for teachers run by Alder GSE in partnership with HBCUs;
- Raskob School for neurodiverse students operated by Alameda County Office of Education;
- Yu Ming Charter School, which operates a PK-8, Mandarin bilingual immersion school;
- East Bay Innovation Academy, a project-based middle and secondary charter school.

Creating opportunities for those who want to retain educational opportunities in Oakland, HNU's creditor, Preston Hollow Community Capital (PHCC), says it is strongly committed to exploring ways to preserve the campus rather than foreclosing on the property.

In a letter, dated April 18, 2023, to Vice Mayor Rebecca Kaplan, PHCC, wrote:

“From the outset of HNU's announcement that it would cease operations at the end of the Spring 2023 semester, PHCC has consistently maintained its position that transferring the campus to an educational user represented the ‘highest and best’ recovery scenario for HNU, that PHCC was willing to help facilitate a successful marketing and sales process targeted exclusively at educational users (colleges, universities, charter schools, etc.), and that it is not PHCC's goal to take title to the property through foreclosure unless forced to do so.”

“PHCC has always been willing to temporarily postpone and/or forbear from enforcing its contractual foreclosure remedies with respect to the HNU campus to the extent HNU was able to produce a contract with one or more financially viable educational institutions interested in acquiring the subject property,” the letter said.

Further, the community-wide demand to save HNU is growing stronger and more organized.

A new coalition, “Reclaim Holy Names,” was scheduled to hold an online town hall meeting Thursday evening “to hear from HNU students, faculty alumni, as well as elected leaders about the impact of the school's closure – and what needs to happen to stop the HNU Board or Trustees from doing more harm to the HNU community.”

Those involved in the "reclaim" town hall included SEIU 1021, Oakland Vice Mayor Rebecca Kaplan, City Councilmember Carroll Fife, and members of the HNU community.

There are no comments yet.