

May 3, 2023

### **ST. PAUL'S**

As I write this column, we await clarification on the cost estimates recently prepared by Westerman Construction, thereby enabling our progress towards the promised vote on the St. Paul's Main Building. A clear understanding of the history of the Village's efforts to reach a decision on the St. Paul's Main Building is critical to constructive community engagement needed for a successful vote.

I recognize that many of our residents, tired of hearing the arguing, are now experiencing what some have called "St. Paul's Fatigue." I have reproduced below what I see as the most important details from the St. Paul's timeline on our Village website, and I hope you take a few minutes to read. It is my sincere hope that with a firm understanding of past efforts and outcomes, we will be able to move forward to a decision that is respected by all residents. We all know the time for a decision is now.

1991 - The St. Paul's School closes. A resolution is passed by the Joint Conference Committee ("JCC"), a group made up of the presidents of the four property owners associations, supporting preservation of St. Paul's.

1993 - Village acquires the St. Paul's property for the stated goal of acquiring the playing fields, with no long-range plan in place for the Main Building.

1994 - Chairman of Mayor's Committee presents reports from two consultants determining that the St. Paul's Main Building is structurally sound for relocating Village Hall, Fire, Police, Court and community meeting rooms at a rehabilitation cost in excess of \$18 million. Shortly after this presentation, the BOT directed the Mayor's Committee to explore another appropriate use for the Historic Main Building at St. Paul's, and the St. Paul's Committee met with more than 35 parties indicating an interest in the building for commercial, cultural, educational and/or residential uses. Except for assisted living developers, all declined interest in St. Paul's due to the high costs to retrofit. At this time the Mayor's Committee concluded that "market demand-driven" solution is needed for utilization of the Main Building. The Board of Education rejected use of the St. Paul's Main Building stating "based upon information reported as a result of the architectural and engineering study done for the Village regarding this property, The Board of Education does not view the St. Paul's facility as an economically feasible answer to our needs."

1995 - The Mayor's Committee reports that for the past two and a half years they attempted to determine the best use of the Historic Main Building and Ellis Hall and recently concluded that a Continuing Care Retirement Facility is the most compatible use.

1996 - The best use determination is challenged by the JCC, and the school district obtains a feasibility study on moving the GCHS to the St. Paul's Main Building. The Board of Education ended its consideration of St. Paul's due to high costs and because state law prohibited spending education funds when the primary purpose is historic preservation. The Board of Education noted that the building could not properly accommodate the mandated space needed for a departmentalized secondary education curriculum.

1997 - As the assisted living option is pursued, in December of 1997, two families bring a lawsuit to prevent the Village from leasing the Main Building/ten-acre site for a senior assisted living facility. This lawsuit ultimately lead to a court decision restricting the Village from entering into any sale or lease agreement of any portion of the parcel with a private commercial entity without getting approval from Albany.

2001 - The Mayor's Committee is tasked with exploring a use for the History Main Building, and in April 2001 the Mayor's Committee sends out requests for proposals for a conditions survey and program study of the historic Main Building (100,000 square foot area above ground level). In November there is a report

by Einhorn Yafee Prescott (“EYP”) on the Main Building at St. Paul’s.

2002 - EYP recommends preservation of the Main Historic Building and demolition of Ellis Hall and the cottages. It supports the phased development for use of the Historic Main Building which includes relocation of Village Hall functions and an appointment of a “St. Paul’s Conservancy” Committee to promote increased use of interior space by residents. Later in 2002, the BOT abandons the idea of converting the building to a Village Hall after the preparation of more detailed cost estimates of the expenses involved. Focus turns to taking steps to prevent further deterioration of the building. In December 2002, the Mayor appoints a committee to review all ideas relating to the future of the Main Building such as public sector development as a public library/community center, private sector development as multi-family residential or assisted living, and demolition as a final resort.

2003 - Consultants were hired who estimated the cost of moving the Garden City Public Library into 50,000 square feet of the building at \$26.6 million. The following month, the GC Chamber of Commerce urged the Board of Trustees to consider residential use or assisted living to preserve the building and general tax dollars. In May 2003 the Mayor’s Committee submitted a report on three alternatives to the Mayor, and the following September a Request for Information was issued by the BOT to private developers. Presentations on Public and Private Uses at a Public Forum in November and December 2003. In December 2003, the BOT passed a resolution to utilize the St. Paul’s Historic Main Building as a library and community center.

2004 - In June, a POA sponsored village wide opinion survey tabulated by Adelphi University regarding St. Paul’s was submitted to the Village. In December 2004, St. Paul’s property was dedicated as parkland by vote of the Village Board of Trustees.

2005 – In another Village Board of Trustees vote taken in February, St. Paul’s property was again dedicated as parkland. In December 2005, cost estimates were obtained of \$15 to \$16 million to stabilize St Paul’s Main Building, \$32-\$33 million for minimal public use, and \$5-6 million for demolition.

2006 - The Mayor provided residents with updates on a real estate consultant hired and findings on potential uses of the building, and the following month a Request for Proposals was issued by the Village seeking private developers for the site.

2008 - In February, the Village entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with AvalonBay with regard to the St. Paul’s Property, but a village-wide vote on December 2, 2008 resulted in only 873 votes of the total 5,020 votes in favor of the AvalonBay Development. 2,272 residents voted for demolition and 1,875 residents voted for mothballing. The Village voted to cancel the MOU with AvalonBay.

2009 – The Village sought legal advice on demolition culminating in the acceptance of Final Scoping Document with regard to the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) for the Proposed St. Paul’s School Demolition for Additional Open Space.

2010 – A public hearing was held at Village Hall to accept oral testimony on the DEIS, and Notice of Completion and Draft Environmental Impact Statement and Public Hearing was published in the Nassau Edition of Newsday and the Garden City News. Days later, a Special Board of Trustees Meeting was held at which the Committee to Save St. Paul’s gave a formal presentation of their proposed program regarding the preservation of the Historic Main Building at St. Paul’s.

2011 – The Village accepted the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) with regard to ST. Paul’s School Demolition for Additional Open Space in February, and on 4/27/2011 a Village-wide vote on the St. Paul’s Bond Resolution to finance the demolition of the St. Paul’s Main Building and Ellis Hall did not pass (Vote: Ayes-1,121, Noes-3,290). In July, the Mayor appointed a “Mayor’s Committee to Save St. Paul’s” to review any new proposals received for the use of the St. Paul’s Main Building, including the proposal from the Committee to Save St. Paul’s. In October, the Committee to Save St. Paul’s presented their proposal for

St. Paul's, "A Comprehensive Plan for the Restoration of St. Paul's and Community Center Development" dated 10/6/11. Later in October, President of the St. Paul's Conservancy Corp. (Committee to Save St. Paul's) submitted a letter stating they would be updating their proposal and will resubmit to the Board within 45 days. The following month, Erwin & Bielinski was retained to review proposals by the Committee to Save St. Paul's.

2012 A report of Erwin & Bielinski was accepted December 20, 2012 after a presentation was made, and the BOT voted to reject the plan submitted by the Committee to Save St. Paul's and the Garden City Historical Society dated 6/29/10 and amended 10/6/11 including in its resolution language criticizing the plan.

2014 – BOT approved a bond for the demolition of Ellis Hall on the Campus of the Former St. Paul's School.

2017 – Funding was approved to engage Beyer, Blinder, Belle, Thornton Tomasetti and Eight, Inc. to provide preliminary drawing, roof of concert, construction plan outlines and related materials with respect to developing the former St. Paul's Building, cottages, and surrounding area into a recreation based facility including indoor fields and other amenities.

2018 – Village engaged Beyer, Blinder, Belle for development of concept plan and public presentations. The Sports Facilities Advisory Company was engaged to assist with gathering public input, preparing use and programming information and financial projections, potential retention of architects and structural engineers and construction management professionals, as well as other matters related to continued development of the previously announced related St. Paul's Concept Plan for creating a cultural and recreational based facility at the former St. Paul's School.

2019 – Board Resolution seeking a viable use of the St. Paul's buildings and to preserve significant portions of the exterior and interior structures. Sports Facilities Advisory conducts public meetings to gather information for a Concept Plan for St. Paul's. Village retains construction manager for stabilization and planning related to development of a potential St. Paul's Concert Plan and approved erection of a temporary construction fence at St. Paul's. MIR Appraisal Services retained to appraise the nine stained-glass windows in the St. Paul's School Chapel.

2021 – Mayor announces formation of St. Paul's Committee.

2022 – Funding approved for St. Paul's Committee social media campaign. Funding approved for clean-up services for portions of the interior of the St. Paul's Main Building. Town Hall Meetings held and Westerman Construction Co. engaged to provide cost estimates and a comparative analysis on adaptive reuse, facadism and demolition.

The present Board of Trustees has worked together to compile a list of questions we have presented to Westerman Construction to clarify what we know now about options the Village has, and what they will cost. You will hear more shortly about the next steps on this important issue.

### **TEMPORARY SPEED HUMPS**

Temporary speed humps have been delivered to the Village and are ready for installation on Fourth Street. The proposed location on Fourth Street, between Hilton and Franklin avenues, was subject to approval at this week's Traffic Commission meeting. The humps are for experimental use throughout the Village in order to test implementation of recommendations in the Traffic Studies performed by Creighton Manning.

### **SEVENTH STREET CROSSWALK IMPROVEMENT**

Design plans are completed and the Village Engineering Department has created a bid package for the Seventh Street Crosswalk Improvement Project. The project will be put out to bid as soon as possible, according to Public Works Superintendent John Borroni. The speed hump will run south from Dunkin' Donuts (approximately 25 feet wide) with bump outs of the adjoining curbs to meet the speed hump and extend east at a reasonable distance. The crosswalk and its entrances will be designed to be handicapped

accessible. This recommendation was presented in Creighton Manning's Traffic Study on Numbered Streets. The Village engaged Nelson and Pope Engineering, Architecture and Land Surveying, PLLC, of Melville, to provide design development and the construction documents needed to bid, construct and execute the improvement.

### **FRIDAY NIGHT PROMENADES**

Friday Night Promenades kick off Friday, June 9 and continue June 23, July 7, July 21, August 4, August 18, September 1 and September 15, 2023. Seventh Street will close between Franklin and Hilton avenues from 6:00 to 11:00 p.m. The 2023 promenade themes are as follows:

- June 9: Belmont Stakes Promenade (Rain date 6/16)
- June 23: TBD
- July 7: Red, White and Blue
- July 21: Christmas in July
- August 4: Summer Breeze
- August 18: TBD
- September 1: TBD
- September 15: The BIG Pineapple Circus

### **HAPPENING THIS WEEK IN GARDEN CITY**

Here are some events and meetings taking place this week in Garden City:

- **TUESDAY-THURSDAY, MAY 9-11** 10:00 a.m. [Senior Exercise with Felicia](#) at the Garden City Senior Center. Call 516-385-8006 for schedule
- **TUESDAY-FRIDAY MAY 9-12** [Pickleball](#) hours (Tuesday through Friday 9:30 a.m. to Noon; Thursdays 3 to 5:30 p.m.; and Fridays 5 to 8:30 p.m.) at the Field House
- **THROUGH MAY 31** Enter your artwork into the Garden City Historical Society's [Children's Art Show](#)
- **SATURDAY, MAY 6** 11:00 a.m. [Teen Advisory Board](#)'s Friends of the Garden City Public Library [bake sale](#) at the Garden City Public Library
- **SATURDAY-SUNDAY, MAY 6-7** 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (Saturday) and 1-3 p.m. (Sunday) Friends of the Garden City Public Library [semi-annual book sale](#) at the Library
- **MONDAY, MAY 8** 1:30 p.m. [Monday Movie Matinee, Top Gun Maverick](#) at the Library
- **MONDAY, MAY 8** 7:30 p.m. [Library Board of Trustees Meeting](#) at the Library
- **TUESDAY, MAY 9** 1:00 p.m. [History Lecture with James Coll](#) at the Garden City Public Library
- **SATURDAY, MAY 13** 10:00 a.m. [Defensive Driving Course](#) at the Garden City Library
- **MONDAY, MAY 15** 11:00 a.m. [3rd Annual A.T. Stewart Golf Classic](#) at the Cherry Valley Club