

February 12, 2025

RESTRICTIONS ON USE OF ST. PAUL'S MAIN BUILDING

Understanding the restriction on uses of the St. Paul's Main Building is important in navigating a path to a St. Paul's solution for the Village.

The efforts I was supporting to find a St. Paul's solution focused on uses that are allowed under the present restrictions, with a Community Center being researched by the Mayor's Advisory Committee. A Community Center was also the use being proposed by the preservationist groups, and the idea of building a Community Center is not new to the Village and an idea that could have widespread support. As Mayor, I have not been a proponent of attempting to undo the restrictions on the property.

Why the Restrictions?

The Village of Garden City has owned the 50-acre St. Paul's campus, including all structures, since 1992. The property was acquired in a negotiated condemnation proceeding.

An early proposed use of the remaining ten acres surrounding the building was to convert the principal building into an assisted senior care facility. That private use was contested in a lawsuit brought by Village residents in 1998 (Kenny v Board of Trustees of Incorporated Village of Garden City). The Village argued that this didn't result in a park designation. The court found "although the instruments of conveyance do not contain ... restrictive language ... the property was utilized for recreational purposes" and therefore "was impressed with a public trust" and that "a privately owned assisted living facility for seniors was inconsistent with the public purposes for which the property was acquired" and a "public trust" was created. The court concluded that the proposed use was for a private, profit-making purpose, not for "public or recreational use" and accordingly was prohibited without prior legislative approval. That lower court decision was upheld by the Appellate Division in 2002. Legislative approval was never granted, though discussions took place with at least one state representative. The company proposing the Senior Assisted Living facility, Care Matrix, entered bankruptcy six months thereafter.

The Board of Trustees subsequently designated the St. Paul's property "Parkland" in 2005 to ensure the protection and preservation of the St. Paul's Campus for future Village residents. The Parkland designation restricts potential uses of the buildings, and details of those restrictions are on the website. [<https://www.gardencityny.net/493/3887/Restrictions-on-St-Pauls-Property-and-Hi?activeLiveTab=widgets>]

Non-Parkland use of the St. Paul's buildings and campus requires NYS legislative approval after a Home Rule request by the Village Board AND likely would require the acquisition of new, additional parkland to replenish the parkland lost to Non-Parkland use.

Part of the reason I have not supported alienation of the Parkland designation is due to the history of prior Village efforts to find uses for the building that were ultimately determined to be too costly or not supported by the community.

In next week's column I plan to share some of the history regarding prior efforts to find uses for the St Paul's Main Building and what we know about why they were not successful, including efforts to move the GCHS to the St Paul's Building, and efforts to move the GC Library and other Village offices into the St. Paul's Main Building.

SMART CONTROLLER REBATE PROGRAM

The Board has approved a Smart Controller Rebate Program for residents replacing their standard automatic irrigation system clock timers with EPA WaterSense labeled smart irrigation controllers. This would result in a one-time rebate of \$100 on their water bill. Customers requesting the rebate will be responsible for submitting a receipt for the purchase and installation of a smart irrigation controller to the Village Water Department, which may be subject to inspection and verification by Water Department personnel. This rebate only applies to controllers purchased after the adoption of this resolution on February 6, 2025. This program will run for two years, beginning April 1, 2025 through March 31, 2027.

PUBLIC HEARING - VILLAGE CODE REGARDING SWIMMING POOLS

The Board of Trustees will hold a public hearing on Thursday, March 6 at 7:30 p.m. to discuss a proposed amendment to the Village Code relating to swimming pools.

PUBLIC HEARING - VILLAGE CODE REGARDING OUTDOOR DINING

The Board of Trustees will hold a public hearing on Thursday, March 6, 2025 at 7:30 p.m. to discuss a proposed amendment to the Village Code related to outdoor dining.

MORE PARK DESIGNATIONS

The Board of Trustees designated six additional pieces of Village property as parkland: Plattsdale Park, Commercial Park, Lefferts Park, Plaza East, Plaza Park and Nassau Blvd. Park. These locations join more than a dozen others the Board has designated over the past year. It has been wonderful being part of such a positive action in our Village government as we have been able to add an extra layer of protection to the beautiful parks across the Village. This step will help to ensure that these areas will continue to be enjoyed by future generations. While some parks were fairly straightforward because the park had been deeded to the Village in one action, many were not, which required the studying of maps at Village Hall and at the County office. The designations would not have happened without the work of prior and present Village Trustees who supported this initiative and assistance of Village Historian Bill Bellmer and Village Counsel. I also would like to thank the passionate residents who contributed their ideas and pressed to see action to protect our parks and open spaces.

ST. PAUL'S ROOF REPAIR

The St. Paul's Main Building roof patch took approximately five hours to complete last week. The work closed an approximate 4 foot by 8 foot wide hole. The roof is now secure and weather tight, according to Building Superintendent Giuseppe Giovanniello, who oversaw the work.

SAFETY TIPS, RULES & REGULATIONS DURING A SNOW STORM - HELP US HELP YOU

The following suggestions are offered in an effort to reduce inconvenience to residents and to assist the Village in serving your needs during a snowstorm:

- ✓ If possible, excessive shoveling of your driveway apron can be avoided by waiting until the plow operation is complete.
- ✓ Please be considerate of how and where snow is piled when shoveling or using a snow blower. Always shovel snow or aim a snow blower chute back onto your property. Please DO NOT blow or shovel snow from driveways or sidewalks into the street. It is a hazard to all vehicles.
- ✓ When you hear that a storm is expected, move your car off the street into your driveway. This will speed up the plowing operation and make the streets safer for travel.
- ✓ Park your car, or cars, as close to the end of the driveway as is safely possible (not over the sidewalk or driveway apron). This eliminates the need for shoveling the entire driveway to free your car when the storm has ended and the roads are safe to travel.
- ✓ When snow removal equipment is at work with lights flashing, stay clear. This equipment

moves slowly.

✓ If you are unable to shovel snow or are going to be away, make arrangements to have the snow cleared from your sidewalk. Please remember that you are responsible to shovel your sidewalks within 24 hours after the storm. This will be enforced by the Police Department. This is also applicable to the business community.

✓ Please clear snow away from all hydrants so that the Fire Department can reach them without delay. Also, make sure that the snow is not blocking the address number to your house.

✓ Be aware that snow shoveling is a strenuous activity made worse by extremely cold temperatures. Stay hydrated. Older residents and those in ill health should not shovel. Prior to a snow storm, make arrangements with someone to shovel for you.

SANITATION COLLECTION DURING A SNOW EVENT

To facilitate safe garbage collections, a clear path should be made from the sidewalk to where the garbage is kept. If this is not possible, it is suggested that the garbage be carried to the curb for pickup and returned promptly after the collection is completed.

PRESIDENTS WEEK SANITATION COLLECTION

Residents are reminded that there will be no garbage pickup on Monday, February 17, 2025. The Holiday Week Collection Schedule will be as follows:

GARBAGE

Western Half of Village - Tuesday and Thursday

Eastern Half of Village - Wednesday and Friday

RUBBISH

Entire Village - Wednesday, February 26th

RECYCLING

Residents scheduled for recycling on Monday, February 17 are asked to put their recyclables out on Presidents Day.

HAPPENING IN GARDEN CITY

- **SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 16** 9:30 a.m. Pickleball at the St. Paul's Field House. Nominal fee.
- **SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 16** 7:00 a.m. Special discounted rates for tennis players at the Community Park Tennis Center
- **MONDAY, FEBRUARY 17** 7:30 p.m. Men's Basketball in the St. Paul's Field House. Nominal fee.
- **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18** 11:00 a.m. Movie: *Quest for Camelot* at the Library for Grades K-5
- **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18-21** 12:00 p.m. Open gym for Garden City residents at the St. Paul's Field House
- **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18** 5:30 - 9:30 p.m. Grievance Day at Village Hall
- **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 18** 7:30 p.m. Board of Trustees meeting at Village Hall and via Zoom
- **WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19** 12:00 P.M. Chairobics and Strength at the Library. Must register.
- **WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19** 7:00 p.m. Teen Game Night at the Library. Must register.

- **THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20** 7:30 p.m. Adult Volleyball and Soccer in the St. Paul's Field House. Nominal fee.
- **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21** 9:00 a.m. Adult Art Class at Cluett Hall. Register for the class at the Recreation and Parks office.
- **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21** 10:00 a.m. Chess4Community Play & Learn at the Library. All levels and ages welcome.
- **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21** 10:00 a.m. Baby and Toddler Storytime at the Library. Must register.
- **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21** 11:00 a.m. Budding Bookworms Storytime at the Library. Must register.
- **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21** 3:00 p.m. Teen Crafternoon: Perler Bead Art at the Library for Tweens and Teens in Grades 6-12
- **MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24** 10:30 a.m. Toddler Storytime at the Library. Must register.