

February 19, 2025

As promised last week, here is an abbreviated version of some of the significant prior efforts to find a solution for the St. Paul's Main Building. This column is not meant to be comprehensive, and additional details of the different efforts are available on the website or can be searched for upon request. Understanding these significant past efforts is an important part of making a decision on a Village solution for the St. Paul's Main Building.

How it started: Shortly after the Village decided to acquire the St. Paul's property, Mayor Brian Deveney in March 1993 appointed a volunteer committee, the first of many, to find a use for the Historic Main Building. The committee met with more than 35 parties indicating interest in the building for commercial, cultural, educational and/or residential uses. Except for assisted living developers, the committee reported that all declined interest in St. Paul's due to the high costs to retrofit, and this lead to the committee exploring an assisted living development as a solution.

Assisted Living Development – In 1995, the Mayor's Committee reported that for the past 2 ½ years they attempted to determine the best use for the Historic Main Building and Ellis Hall and concluded that a Continuing Care Retirement Facility was the most compatible use as it met many of the objectives which have been deemed to be of vital interest to the Village and residents. Extensive research, deliberation and negotiations led to the Village choosing CareMatrix as the assisted living organization it planned to lease the Main Building to for the development of a Senior Living Facility. This effort was halted when two families sued the Village to prevent the lease. The families prevailed in that lawsuit, and the project did not move forward.

Garden City High School – Extensive and repeated efforts were undertaken to move Garden City High School to the St. Paul's Main Building. Those efforts were met with some opposition, and not much appears in the Village chronology about the proposal after Mr. Thomas Lamberti, counsel for Garden City School District, sent a letter in December 1996 to a proponent of the project stating, the Board of Education has no authority to proceed with its proposal to spend \$35,500,000 to restore St. Paul's as a new high school as it has no power to spend taxpayers' money for historic preservation and that the proposal violates the Commission of Education's regulation since the estimated cost of renovating St. Paul's as a high school exceeds the estimated cost of building a new high school on the same site.

Village Offices – As far back as 1994, relocating Village offices was considered as a possible use for the St. Paul's Main Building. The Mayor's Committee presented a final report in June 1994 which included consultant reports that determined 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. In 2002, the Village again revisited the idea of moving Village Hall to the St. Paul's Main Building, however, after the preparation of more detailed cost estimates, the Board of Trustees abandoned the idea of moving Village Hall to the St. Paul's Main Building.

Garden City Library – In 2003, the Village Board hired a consultant to verify the cost of moving the Garden City Public Library to St. Paul's. A report was received in April 2003 that estimated the cost of relocating the Garden City Public Library into 50,000 square feet of the St. Paul's Main Building at \$26.6 million. It is unclear exactly why this idea was abandoned, but it may have been due to the cost estimate for the construction at St. Paul's, community concern about the impact of potentially selling the Library property on 7th Street, or no longer having a library that was walkable from so many apartments and the local businesses.

Private Development – The Village again sought private developers for the site during 2006 and submitted a

grant application to the Empire State Development Corporation to seek funding for the Historic Main Building at St. Paul's. A Request for Proposal ("RFP") led to discussions with developers and a decision was made to move forward with AvalonBay, a company that had responded to the RFP. The *Garden City News* has extensive coverage on this proposal and the community engagement surrounding it. The AvalonBay proposal was brought to residents for a vote in 2008 and the vote gave residents three options; 5,002 residents voted with only 873 voting for Avalon Bay, 2,272 voting for demolition, and 1,875 voting for mothballing. While this ended the AvalonBay proposal, a subsequent bond vote for demolition failed by a large margin. Demolition of Ellis Hall proceeded, but not the St. Paul's Main Building.

Community Center – In 2011 an adaptive reuse proposal was put forth by the Committee to Save St. Paul's and the Historical Society entitled "A Comprehensive Plan for the Restoration of St. Paul's and Community Center Development." In response to this proposal, the Board of Trustees hired a firm, Erwin, Lobo, Bielinski, to review the plan. The Erwin, Lobo, Bielinski report concluded that the costs were underestimated and unclear, and that the plan did not address significant building code and life safety issues.

Recreation Center – The Village hired consultants beginning in 2017 which led to the development of a concept plan on a RecreationBased Facility at St. Paul's including indoor fields and other amenities. These efforts were in conjunction with a Board of Trustees resolution in January 2019 alerting the public of the intention to seek uses for St. Paul's that would generate some income, attract Village residents, and preserve significant portions of the exterior and interior structures.

I hope some of this history of prior efforts is helpful to residents as we again look to move towards a decision on the St. Paul's Main Building. If you missed last week's column, it summarized the parkland restrictions on the St. Paul's property.

Next week my Mayor's column will address bond votes as we have been receiving questions on this topic. It is a topic the Village has gotten legal advice on, and I look forward to sharing it.

AWAITING BACK UP DOCUMENTATION FOR ST. PAUL'S BALLPARK FIGURES

I am continuing to await the back-up documentation relating to the ballpark figures being used in the St. Paul's Survey which was approved by the Board of Trustees. As soon as they are received from Trustee Muldoon I will make sure they are shared on the St. Paul's Page of the Village website.

POTHOLEs

The Village's Highway Department crews work year-round to repair potholes across the 74 miles of roadway within the Village. The period from December through April is considered peak pothole season, with the highest volume of potholes observed during this time. Mobile crews are actively addressing potholes throughout the Village and will prioritize responding to specific concerns raised by residents as quickly as possible. To report a pothole, residents are encouraged to contact the DPW dispatcher at 516-465-4031/32 or complete an electronic form via the following link: <https://www.gardencityny.net/290/Request-for-Service>.

Please note that not all roads within the Village are maintained by the Village itself. For instance, Nassau Boulevard and parts of Stewart Avenue are owned by Nassau County. While we are unable to directly address issues on these roads, the Village will forward any reports to the County and request that repairs be made in a timely manner.

KIDS PICKLEBALL PROGRAM

Recreation and Parks is announcing a Pickleball program for kids from March 4 through May 1. It will be 90 minutes of play on all four courts in the St. Paul's Field House with a basic introduction to the game and rules. We will provide the equipment. The cost is \$100 for eight sessions. We will need a minimum of eight and a

maximum of 24 sign ups to run the program per day.

BLOOD DRIVE FEBRUARY 26

The Garden City Public Library will be holding a blood drive on Wednesday, February 26, 2025, 1:00 – 7:00 p.m. in the Large Meeting room on the lower level of the Library. Appointments are strongly preferred, walkins are welcomed only if capacity permits. Visit the Garden City Public Library website at www.gardencitypl.org, click on this link [https://donate.nybc.org/donor/schedules/drive_schedule/322168] or call 1-800-933-BLOOD to schedule an appointment or for any medical questions concerning blood donations. Thank you for your donation and support during this critical time.

LIBRARY RENOVATIONS

The Board has approved professional architectural and engineering services for miscellaneous interior renovations at the Library, submitted by H2M Architects and Engineers. H2M will define the desired scope of work, provide layouts, generate an opinion of probable cost for the two scope areas, the Meeting Rooms and Computer Lab area, which will be combined into one Lower Level Renovation Project. The work will include architecture and interior design, electrical, mechanical, plumbing, and structural engineering. The proposed cost is \$64,484, which includes a discount of \$3,640 for awarding both the Meeting Room and Computer Lab areas, and a \$4,000 discount for background drawings provided by the Village.

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.

HAPPENING IN GARDEN CITY

- **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21** 10:00 a.m. Baby and Toddler Storytime for ages Birth-2.5 Years at the Library. Must register.
- **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21** 11:00 a.m. Budding Bookworms Storytime for ages 2.5-5 Years at the Library. Must register.
- **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 21** 3:00 p.m. Teen Crafternoon at the Library. Must register.
- **SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23** 9:30 a.m. Pickleball at the St. Paul's Field House. Nominal fee.
- **SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 23** 7:00 a.m. Special discounted rates for tennis players at the Community Park Tennis Center
- **MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24** 10:30 a.m. Toddler Storytime at the Library. Must register.
- **MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24** 1:30 p.m. Movie Matinée: *The Man Who Knew Too Much* at the Library
- **MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24** 7:30 p.m. Men's Basketball in the St. Paul's Field House. Nominal fee.
- **TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25** 6:30 p.m. Architectural Design Review Board Meeting at Village Hall
- **WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26** 12:00 P.M. Chairobics and Strength at the Library. Must register.
- **WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26** 1:00-7:00 p.m. Blood Drive at the Library
- **WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26** 4:00 p.m. STEAM Club for Grades K-2 at the Library.

Must register.

- **WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26** 6:00 p.m. Nighttime Storytime for ages 2-6 Years at the Library. Must register.
- **WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26** 7:00 p.m. Teen Game Night at the Library. Must register.
- **THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27** 11:30 a.m. Tiny Tots Storytime for ages Birth-3 Years at the Library. Must register.
- **THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27** 7:30 p.m. Adult Volleyball and Soccer in the St. Paul's Field House. Nominal fee.
- **FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28** 9:00 a.m. Adult Art Class at Cluett Hall. Register for the class at the Recreation and Parks office.