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VILLAGE FACTS

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REFERENDUM REGARDING \$3.75 MILLION BOND ISSUANCE TO PAY FOR THE DEMOLITION OF THE ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL MAIN BUILDING AND ELLIS HALL

Background: On March 17, 2011, the Village Board of Trustees adopted by majority vote a Findings Statement providing the Board's rationale for its decision to approve the demolition of the Main Building and Ellis Hall at the St. Paul's property and the conversion of the site to additional recreational open space and to reject the alternatives that have been addressed in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and the Final Environment Impact Statement. The Findings also identify the mitigation measures the Village Board has determined to be required.

Further, the Board adopted a bond resolution authorizing the issuance of bonds not to exceed \$3,750,000 to finance the demolition and conversion of the land to additional recreational open space and voted that the bond resolution be subject to a public referendum to be held April 27, 2011.

About this information: The Board of Trustees has prepared this edition of "Village Facts" to provide historical, financial and other information that may be relevant to your consideration of the bond referendum. As many residents know, there have been numerous proposals regarding the appropriate use of the St Paul's structure, and this document necessarily presents only a summary of the issue. We urge you to refer to, among other things, the documents collected on the Village's website www.gardencityny.net which set out in some detail substantive information regarding the Village's history with the site, including various past proposals for its use and associated costs.

This Village Facts has been prepared in the format of questions and answers. Given space limitations, we have summarized many important ideas, proposals and historical events. Again, we urge you to read the numerous documents available on the Village website and to confer with your friends and neighbors regarding this important issue.

What is the Vote for?

The Village Board of Trustees is asking for a public vote on whether or not the Village should issue bonds, in the principal amount of \$3.75 million, to pay for the demolition of the Main Building and Ellis Hall at the former St. Paul's School.

What is the Vote not about?

Residents are not being asked whether or not to demolish the building. That decision is up to the Board of Trustees. Residents are being asked whether or not they approve the issuance of bonds to pay for any demolition. However, if the bonds are not approved, demolition is unlikely, since the Village will not have funds available to proceed with the removal of the structures. Further, the vote does not address any possible future use of the site other than leaving it as additional recreational open space. Notwithstanding what happens with the Main Building and Ellis Hall, the Fieldhouse and Cluett Hall will continue to stand and be used as they are today.

I thought the Board voted to demolish the buildings, so why is there a referendum?

A little bit of history is required to explain how we have arrived at this point.

Since the Village acquired the St. Paul's site in 1993 there have been numerous ideas and concepts for its use as a public facility, including resituating Village Hall, conversion of the Main Building to an expanded Village Library and Community Center, and even a site for the Garden City High School. Additionally, at least two proposals for a commercial use of the site have been considered: a for-profit assisted living facility, and at no cost to the Village, a substantial refit (with additional structures) as residential housing.

A full review of these proposals is beyond the scope of this Village Facts. However, all of the possible alternatives that have been considered over the years as well as the demolition plans and costs are discussed in comprehensive detail in the Final Environmental Impact Statement. Again, we urge you to read the Final Environmental Impact Statement which is available at Village Hall, at the Library and on the Village website www.gardencityny.net.

By Autumn 2008, the proposed alternatives had been reduced to a single focus: a 146 unit residential development sponsored by AvalonBay, a for-profit real estate development firm. In December 2008, a Village wide poll was taken by two of the Village's Property Owners' Associations to determine if that proposal had popular support. Three possible alternatives for the site were included in the poll; 5,002 residents participated, and the results for each alternative were as follows:

Approve of the Demolition of the Main Building and Ellis Hall - 2,272 votes
Approve of the Mothballing of the Main Building - 1,857 votes
Approve of the Development Agreement with Avalon Bay - 873 votes

The 2008 poll was just that – an unofficial non-binding public opinion poll. That said, The Board of Trustees is fully aware that the proper use of the St. Paul's site has been a topic of first importance for many years and a source of competing opinions and points of view. The Board itself is divided between preservation and demolition, as evidenced by the vote accepting the Findings based on the Final Environmental Impact Statement, which was not a unanimous decision. For this reason, the Board of Trustees decided that given the unique nature of the decision, the Village's long history with the issue of what to do with the site, and the numerous public surveys and polls held over the years, it would be the right thing to do to ask the residents if they approved of the issuance of general obligation bonds to pay for the demolition.

So what did the Board of Trustees recently vote for?

On March 17, 2011, The Village Board of Trustees voted for two things related to the possible demolition:

First, in order to ensure compliance with the New York State Environmental Quality Review Act, the Village initially had to obtain and approve a study regarding the proposed demolition. This study is the Final Environmental Impact Study referred to above. As noted, the environmental study may be viewed at Village Hall, at the Village Library or on the Village website at www.gardencityny.net. This document is very important to you; it contains a very detailed summary of the Village's history with the building, the various proposals during the years, and the impact that demolition will have on the character of the Village.

Second, the Village Board voted to hold the referendum on whether the Village should issue bonds in the principal amount of \$3.75 million to pay for the demolition.

What's Next?

The public vote will be held on April 27, 2011, at the Fieldhouse at St. Paul's School. VOTING WILL BE FROM 12 NOON UNTIL 9 P.M.

Who Can Vote?

All residents eighteen years of age and older will be eligible to vote.

IN ORDER TO VOTE YOU MUST BE A REGISTERED VOTER IN NASSAU COUNTY. IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO VOTE IN PERSON ON APRIL 27TH, YOU MAY APPLY FOR AN ABSENTEE BALLOT BY CONTACTING THE VILLAGE CLERK AT 465-4053 FOR MORE INFORMATION.

What exactly am I being asked?

There will be one question to answer - **FOR** or **AGAINST**:

SHALL the bond resolution of the Village of Garden City, New York, entitled: "Bond Resolution of the Village of Garden City, New York, adopted March 17, 2011, authorizing the issuance of not to exceed \$3,750,000 bonds to finance demolition of the Main Building and Ellis Hall at the former St. Paul's School, located at 295 Stewart Avenue currently owned by the Village, stating the estimated maximum cost thereof is \$3,750,000, and determining that the bond resolution shall be subject to a mandatory referendum to be held on April 27, 2011", BE APPROVED?

What does demolition mean to the site?

The Main Building and Ellis Hall will be removed. The area will be filled, graded and the ground reseeded to provide for open space. It can be used for parking or for additional fields if other funds are available and the residents, the Recreation Department and the Village Board determine to approve such use in the future. It will stay as open land unless some other plan gets proposed in the future and approved. There is no plan to build anything new and no plan to market it for use or sale.

What will happen if I vote against the Bond Issuance?

In the short term, nothing will happen with the buildings. The Village has no plans for the site. The buildings will stand as is.

Does that mean that someone could build houses or apartments on the site?

The entire 48 acre St. Paul's site was declared "parkland" by the Village Board of Trustees in 2004. The land area underlying the St Paul's School and Ellis Hall occupy approximately 7 acres in the southeast quadrant of the 48 acre site. Therefore, it is held in public trust and cannot be converted to non-public use without approval by the State legislature. It is not within the Village's power to change the parkland designation. Its status as parkland would not change, and the Village Board of Trustees has no plan or intention to ask for, or seek, any change in the parkland designation.

How did the Village decide \$3.75 million would cover the costs?

The Village obtained several bids for the demolition project from outside contractors with expertise in this area. These bids were obtained in response to a formal Request for Proposals. The bids received ranged from \$3,105,000 to \$5,346,000. Assuming the low bid was accepted, and building in a reserve for contingencies and costs of the bond issuance, the demolition (and required environmental abatement for things such as lead and asbestos) could be undertaken for the proposed bond amount.

Why can't we just leave the buildings as is? Why vote now?

It is possible to leave the buildings as they are. Some residents like that idea, and voting against the issuance of the bonds will probably result in nothing being done with the buildings for the foreseeable future because money to undertake the demolition will not otherwise be available. Other residents believe that additional recreational open space is the better idea. Each alternative -- whether we do nothing, demolish the buildings, or rehabilitate for public use -- implies costs and considerations that affect all of us who live in Garden City.