



THE ST. PAUL'S SENTINEL

Honoring and preserving our community's heritage

A publication of the Committee to Save St. Paul's/St. Paul's Conservancy Corp., October 8, 2007

The Committee to Save St. Paul's is a grassroots effort by local residents, for local residents, which believes in the possibility of preserving the historic St. Paul's building and creating significant community space. For more than a year-and-a-half now, the Committee has been privileged to have the financial and volunteer support of so many residents who share this vision. Thank you for your continuing support.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES RATIFIES MAUK COMMITTEE'S RECOMMENDATION OF AVALONBAY

At last Thursday night's Board of Trustees meeting, Trustee John Mauk, chairman of the Mayor's Committee on St. Paul's, read a statement announcing his committee's recommendation to designate AvalonBay, on a conditional basis, "as the firm the Village will now focus on and work with exclusively" on the redevelopment of the St. Paul's site. Mr. Mauk stated, "This is not a commitment on the part of the Village to have AvalonBay undertake a specific redevelopment project for St. Paul's," and he indicated that additional steps need to be taken. Mr. Mauk only gave the audience a cursory description of the Avalon proposal.

The Mayor's committee also recommended discontinuation any further consideration of the Canus/Committee to Save St. Paul's proposal, citing its doubts about Canus's ability to successfully complete the project without risk to the Village.

A key element of Mr. Mauk's report was his "Last Best Hope" declaration. He said that:

**If the Avalon project does not work
(for example, Avalon and the Village cannot come to terms, or cannot receive home rule
legislation to relieve the public trust and parkland designations)
the "only clear alternative" is DEMOLITION.**

Following audience response to Mr. Mauk's statement, and his counter-remarks, the full Board of Trustees prepared to take a vote to ratify the Mauk Committee's recommendation. Before the vote, three trustees made their feelings known.

Trustee Tom Lamberti requested that the Board hold off a vote while the board takes the "next steps." Trustee John Watras remarked that the Canus proposal deserves to be shown to the community and called for a public side-by-side comparison. And finally, Trustee Don Brudie said that despite what others are saying, he is "not fearful" of the Canus proposal, and believes the Village should retain the entire building, renovating a floor at a time. Without comment from the remaining members of the Board, the vote was called and the results are as follows:

Ratifying the Mauk Committee's Recommendation: Mayor Peter **Bee** and Trustees John **Mauk**, Gerald **Lundquist**, Robert **Rothschild** and Nicholas **Episcopia**

Against: Trustees Tom **Lamberti**, John **Watras** and Don **Brudi**

Members of the Board of Trustees have expressed reservations about the AvalonBay proposal. Several have raised the suggestion that the Committee to Save St. Paul's contact AvalonBay or work with Avalon to find ways to ameliorate some of the trustees' objections.

We are currently exploring our options. **Please be assured that the Committee to Save St. Paul's has not come this far to abandon the St. Paul's project so easily.** There is still work to be done, and leaders of this Committee are still working. Be assured too, that the Committee to Save St. Paul's is not, at this time, able to accept demolition as the "only clear alternative".

At last Thursday night's meeting, Peter Negri, president of the Committee to Save St. Paul's, addressed the Board of Trustees, saying that the process followed by the Mauk committee, its consultant and the Village was flawed on several counts:

- They had not lived up to pledges of "extensive community input," "community dialogue" and that "residents will have additional opportunity to discuss the alternatives and have their questions answered." On the other hand, the Committee to Save St. Paul's and Canus Corporation conducted open and transparent presentation of their proposal to the full community.
- They summarily dismissed our developer, Canus Corporation, without giving Canus a full opportunity to work to overcome the Mauk committee's concerns. On the other hand, The Committee to Save St. Paul's believes that our proposal, supported by Canus, was a viable solution and provided the best chance to receive relief of the parkland designation and win home rule legislation from the State Legislature.
- They have not worked to garner public support, which jeopardizes the ability to get the needed legislative approvals. On the other hand, the Committee to Save St. Paul's and Canus Corporation has begun that work with over 600 supporters, and more than 1,000 residents' signatures on a petition favoring: no new development on the property, retention of Village control of the property, true historic preservation, significant public space, and a reasonable and affordable cost to the residents.
- By presenting only one proposal to the community, they are not giving residents anything to compare and debate. On the other hand, the Committee to Save St. Paul's and Canus Corporation urged the Village to keep at least 2 proposals on the table: Avalon and CSSP/Canus.

Mr. Negri concluded, "You underestimate your fellow residents by not giving them the opportunity to debate the proposals, as promised. You have not answered many crucial questions, and I'm sure our residents are waiting to ask them."

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Donations accepted to "St. Paul's Conservancy Corp." All donations are tax deductible.*