



## **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., February 14, 2007*

### **USE IT OR LOSE IT ... SEE THE COMMITTEE'S RESPONSE**

The Committee to Save St. Paul's reply to News 12's editorial, "Use It Or Lose It," regarding preservation and adaptive reuse of Long Island's landmark buildings is now posted on the News 12 website Editorial Page. To view the Editorial and our Response online, use this News12 link: [http://www.cablevisioneditorials.com/content/LI/2007/LI\\_2007-02-06.html](http://www.cablevisioneditorials.com/content/LI/2007/LI_2007-02-06.html)

### **INSIDE OUR LATEST REPORT**

On February 2, the Committee to Save St. Paul's and our developer, Paul Rabinovitch of Canus Corporation, delivered a new, 95-page report to the Village, which responded to all of the questions posed by the Trustees' Subcommittee during our December interview and further supplemented and enhanced our original proposal. It's a very comprehensive document, which includes a full construction budget, shows the financial feasibility of the project, and gives a detailed outline of benefits to the Village and its residents of all ages.

Here are the highlights:

### **THE DIFFERENCES...**

- Modifies slightly the residential plan to strengthen the project financially: We are proposing 67 (rather than 62) apartment units for seniors (age 55 and above), consisting of a greater number of one bedrooms and reduced number of 3 bedrooms, the conversion of ground floor (basement) space in the West wing into 5 additional garden apartments, and the reduction of footage in 4 units that extended to the fourth floor due to building code issues.
- Continues public space in prime areas of the building while converting some West wing basement space to apartment units: This senior/community space continues to include the West wing and the former dining room on the first floor, and the chapel on the second floor (almost 14,000 square feet of public space or 16% of the total useable square footage of the building). Residents will access this public space through the front entranceway, and enjoy a restored lobby that is dominated by the wide, main staircase topped by a magnificent skylight.
- Adds a representative of the Village (to be determined) as a member of the St. Paul's Conservancy Board: Under our proposal the CSSP/St. Paul's Conservancy Corp. is a member of the future LLC that will participate in the St. Paul's project. By having a position on the Conservancy Board, the Village can partner with the LLC in gathering community support, gaining home rule legislation, and building Albany acceptance for the parkland alienation process, and at the same time, the Village can maintain a strong voice in controlling the future of St. Paul's. The desire to preserve control of St. Paul's by the Village and its residents has been a cornerstone of the Committee's mission since the beginning.

### **...AND DISTINCTIONS OF OUR PROPOSAL**

- Continues to meet the prime objectives of the Village RFP by staying within the footprint and preserving both internal and external historic features of the building, not just the façade.

- Lowers construction costs because of the repair-rather-than-replace approach that allows for devotion to historic detail.
- Consolidates and more than doubles the current space available in town for senior citizen activities. There is ample space for community activities as well.
- Avoids the huge cost the Village and its residents will bear to replace parkland if St. Paul's is sold to a developer for private use.
- Demonstrates the financial solidity of our plan. While our proposal is on solid ground without outside grants, it outlines several granting sources from which we feel St. Paul's will qualify for funding dollars, making it even more affordable.
- Includes a firm offer from an equity investor based on our project's receipt of generous historic preservation tax credits. Historic preservation tax credits represent, in effect, a discount to the Village of more than 20% of the cost of construction. It's our belief that no other proposal can take advantage of these tax credits.
- Maintains our estimate that the cost to taxpayers can be extremely affordable and remain in the \$100 range.

### **COMMUNITY BENEFITS**

Our February 2 report embodies a new vision for the Village. St. Paul's can become the nucleus of the Village's commitment to community life and family needs, as it is currently reflected in the services and activities at Community Park, the St. Paul's fields, Cluett Hall and the Field House. Aside from senior center and administration/support space, our proposal carves out more than 8,200 square feet for meeting and gathering rooms and community activities.

At the same time, it accommodates shifting demographics through enhanced services and activities for a growing senior population (currently 22% and expected to grow to 25% within 10 years). We recommend ways to offset senior program costs through a volunteer "Friends" group, grants, and reaching out to local college and university social work and gerontology programs.

### **A THANK YOU TO THE TRUSTEES AND THE VILLAGE**

At the February 8 Board of Trustees meeting, the Committee to Save St. Paul's openly thanked the Trustees and the Village for their courtesy in extending to us additional time to respond to the St. Paul's Subcommittee. We feel that the additional time gave us the chance to deliver an even stronger plan. We are certain that our proposal's combination of true historic preservation, significant public space and retention of Village control of the property—and its partnership of public and private interests—make this the most viable and affordable solution, and one that can support the necessary home rule legislation and parkland alienation needed to proceed with saving St. Paul's for our residents.

At the same meeting, Trustee John Mauk explained that while the Subcommittee extended certain responders additional time to correct deficiencies and improve their proposals, in some cases, they discouraged responders from doing so because their proposals were not "in the ballpark." He indicated that with the members' schedules and the Presidents' Week holiday, the Subcommittee does not expect to reconvene until early March. [The next regular BOT meeting is Tuesday, February 20, 8 p.m., Village Hall.]

**Let's get the chatter rolling again: please consider writing Letters to the Editor of *The Garden City News* expressing your views about St. Paul's.**

**To read previous issues of *The St. Paul's Sentinel*, log onto our website "News" page.**

*The Committee to Save St. Paul's*, PO Box 7642, Garden City, New York 11530,

[www.savestpauls.org](http://www.savestpauls.org)

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