

## **THE ST. PAUL'S SENTINEL**

### ***Honoring and preserving our community's heritage***

***A publication of the Committee to Save St. Paul's, August 22, 2006***



#### **LAWSUIT SERVED A PURPOSE**

While quite a buzz followed the recent lawsuit challenging the Village's ability to explore the condo option for St. Paul's, the Committee reports that although the judge determined the Village has the ability to explore options, the suit opened up a broader view of the behind the scenes discussion between the Village and its consultant, K. Backus. The discovery stage of the lawsuit revealed plans that were not disclosed to the public (see our website at [www.savestpauls.org](http://www.savestpauls.org)). In addition to giving the Committee facts to share with the community, a beneficial side-effect of the suit was to effectively delay Village action to issue its Request for Proposal to developers, giving the Committee's professionals, Stephen Tilly and Murray Gould, time to tour the historic building and shape a public/private use solution.

#### **OUR PROFESSIONAL CONSULTANTS**

Architect Stephen Tilly's principal focus is on preservation and rehabilitative use of historic buildings. He has engaged in historic structure and landscape studies and prepared drawings and specifications, working with local, state and federal agencies. He is currently guiding restoration of several structures, including Lyndhurst, located in Tarrytown, NY, a Gothic Revival mansion and remarkable example of the Hudson River's grand and historic estates.

Murray Gould provides a wide range of development and advisory services related to adaptive reuse and rehabilitation of historic properties, as well as knowledge of the most creative financing opportunities available.

#### **THE VILLAGE RFP**

Although we are opposed in principle to the idea of private ownership of St. Paul's historic building, the Committee to Save St. Paul's has indicated its intention to respond to the Village's recent Request for Proposals (RFP) for the development of the historic St. Paul's building. The Committee's professionals are currently working on plans with various combinations of public and private usage for the building. The deadline for submission is October 5, and the Village has indicated that it will be designating a developer by December 2006.

#### **WHAT'S CONTAINED IN THE VILLAGE RFP**

The RFP seeks a qualified developer to redevelop the former St. Paul's School. It calls for returning the building to productive use, restoring its historic exterior and other distinguishing features *to the extent possible*, and providing for long-term maintenance *at no cost* to Village taxpayers.

The Save St. Paul's Executive Committee challenges the Village's insistence that the sale of private condos is the only option left because the residents will only accept a solution that involves no cost to the taxpayers! As a matter of fact, in the survey conducted through the Property Owners Associations several years ago, approximately 60% of respondents indicated that they would assume some cost to see St. Paul's preserved for public use.

Unfortunately, many people have read through the lines of the Village RFP and see "demolition." If private development of the site is not feasible, they might say, and public use has been, in the past, deemed not feasible, or worse, not needed...what therefore is left?

#### **CONFLICTING RFP S TIPULATIONS**

The RFP calls for a "base case" scenario, in which development stays within the footprint of the building and Ellis Hall is demolished, providing space for underground parking (for high-end condo residents only). This option also allows developers to replace the total floor area of Ellis Hall with additional on-site, grade parking, putting our athletic fields in danger of being annexed for parking purposes. The RFP also outlines a "modified case" scenario that will provide for retention of the front and sides of the building, but allow infill behind the envelope. This scenario opens up the door for developers to enlarge the structure and infringe on the public nature of the surrounding grounds.

While alluding to "mixed use allowable space," the Village RFP excludes such uses as office, retail, restaurant, or health clubs. The Committee questions: What uses are left?

### **COVETED HOME RULE LEGISLATION**

Two major stumbling blocks to the efforts of the current Board of Trustees are the need for Home Rule legislation and removal of the Parkland designation. The Village RFP requires the developer to “secure or assist the Village in securing several public approvals prior to closing.” Most important of these is Home Rule legislation. Without broad community support for the Village’s future plans, it is unlikely that our State representative, Senator Kemp Hannon, would sponsor home rule in the state legislature.

The Committee urges anyone who wishes to see St. Paul’s remain under public control or developed with public use in mind, to contact or write your Village trustees at Village Hall, 351 Stewart Avenue, Garden City, NY 11530 or Senator Kemp Hannon, 224 Seventh Street, Garden City, NY 11530, 739-1700.

### **OUR ADVANTAGE**

The Committee applied for and received nonprofit status as a “Conservancy” and public charity, which gives the organization nonprofit flexibility in areas of fundraising and, in the event of future development, a myriad of public financing options. The major benefit would be to significantly lower the tax burden on residents. Please support our efforts, which are being funded entirely through the donations of concerned residents, and remember that all donations to “St. Paul’s Conservancy Corp.” are tax deductible.

#### ***The Committee to Save St. Paul’s***

*P.O. 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.*