

## THE ST. PAUL'S SENTINEL

*Honoring and preserving our community's heritage*

*A publication of the Committee to Save St. Paul's, September 26, 2006*



### PUBLIC HEARING THIS WEEK

On Thursday, September 28, at 7 p.m. at Village Hall, the Board of Trustees will hold a public hearing on the Village's recent application for a State grant for St. Paul's. Grant funding is being made available to municipalities under the Empire State Development Corporation's "Restore NY" program. The public hearing is required in the application process. The Committee to Save St. Paul's has asked our consultant, Murray Gould, to attend. Please make every effort to attend, too, and express your opinions to the trustees.

### SOME BACKGROUND

In preparation for the Committee's response to the Village RFP for development of St. Paul's, our consultant has been scouring for grant funding and tax credit opportunities. In August, he learned about this funding possibility when it was announced by Governor Pataki. The window to apply was extremely short, with the application deadline September 15. Since grants are expected to be announced by mid to late October, time was of the essence, but the Village was apparently unaware of this opportunity.

The Board was notified of the existence of this funding and encouraged to apply for this grant via prodding from our Committee. Notwithstanding the initial hesitation and doubt expressed by a few trustees, an application was filed. Although the application is skimpy on details, it is a big first step, since the Village indicates at the opening of the application that it is not currently seeking any other NYS assistance and that it has never applied for or received prior NYS funding.

### WHAT DOES THE APPLICATION REQUEST

In seeking a grant for St. Paul's Main Building, the Village sought funding for rehabilitation purposes, citing exterior roof replacement, brick repointing and cleaning, masonry cleaning, replacement of leaders and gutters; interior work called for mechanical, electrical and plumbing; replacement of trusses damaged by water, replacement of rotted joists, and conformity with building code to allow occupancy.

The application correctly identifies St. Paul's as on the New York State and National Registers of Historic Places, and listed as one of the State Preservation League's "Seven to Save."

It is expected that initial "Restore NY" grants to any one municipality will be capped at \$5 million, with additional funds available in the future. Under the Village's current plans, reconstruction is solely for high-end condos. The Committee to Save St. Paul's believes that residents deserve a portion of the historic building for public use and that a much more reasonable and affordable preservation plan can be developed. *Grant funding like this can be a first step toward that solution.*

### **WHY YOU SHOULD ATTEND THE PUBLIC HEARING**

- Remember the taxpayer. As a resident, you expect your Village officials to be seeking ways to protect your checkbook. If grant funding is available and our project fits the criteria (vacant, in disrepair, planned for redevelopment), our officials have the responsibility to apply for such funding on our behalf.
- High Priority. Seeking funds for rehabilitative work at St. Paul's is a protective measure for an edifice that is a centerpiece of our community and the legacy of our Village founders. Selling it out from under us is not in our best interests.
- A strong showing. Although the agency calls for reports of negative comments at the public hearing, support for grant funds for preservation and relief for taxpayers will underscore for our trustees and Senator Kemp Hannon that we do wish to keep St. Paul's viable and to see public use as part of the final solution.
- Historic significance. The State Historic Preservation Office may have an opportunity to review this application, if it passes the first hurdle, review by the Empire State Development Corporation. If it is to be viewed favorably by the SHPO, the building's historic significance must be apparent.

### **DON'T BE DISCOURAGED**

The state has set aside \$300 million for the Empire State Development Corporation's "Restore NY" initiative. If the Village is not successful in this first round, there will be additional opportunities to reapply. It is our understanding that further funding is expected to be granted in late winter and late spring 2007. But remember: ***THIS IS THE FIRST STEP. IF WE CAN ENCOURAGE THE PROCESS, PERHAPS WE CAN REACH THE SECOND STEP!***

If you feel as strongly about the St. Paul's issue as the Committee to Save St. Paul's, consider writing a Letter to the Editor of the *Garden City News* to express your views.

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

***The Committee to Save St. Paul's*, P.O. Box 7642, Garden City, NY 11530, [www.savestpauls.org](http://www.savestpauls.org)  
Donations accepted to "St. Paul's Conservancy Corp." All donations are tax deductible.**