

Greenwich Village Block Associations

20 Bank Street, New York, NY 10014

Bedford, Barrow &
Commerce
Bedford Downing
Bleecker Area Merchants &
Residents
Carmine Street
Central Village
(Cornelia, Barrow, Jones)
Charlton Street
Christopher Street Block &
Merchants
Christopher Street East
East 10th Street
East 11th Street
East 12th/13th Street
Far West Bank Street
Far West 10th Street
Grove Street
Horatio Street
Jane Street
MacDougal Alley Assoc.
MacDougal Street North
Mercer Street
Minetta
Morton Street
Mulry Angle/W. 11th Street
Perry Street
St. Luke's
Upper West 13th Street
Washington Place
Washington Sq./
Lower 5th Ave
Waverly
Waverly-Bank 11 Neighbors
West Houston Street
West 8th Street
West 9th Street
West 10th Street
West 13th Street - 100 Block

March 16, 2008
Mr. Henry Amoroso
President
St. Vincent Hospital
170 West 12th Street
New York, NY 10011
Dear Mr. Amoroso,

Thank you very much for your prompt reply to our letter of February 25. If you had not included a copy of it with your response, however, I would conclude that the letter you read was not the one I had written. So let me try again.

The reason for the GVBA letter was to voice concern that St. Vincent Hospital/Rudin's public relations effort attempts to negatively color the attitudes and intentions of its Village neighbors. Everything else in the letter was written to buttress that contention.

- From the inception of the SVH Working Group, its participants were so cooperative that we may have compromised community interests and overlooked important points, including the significance of several buildings of the SVH campus. We wanted the project to move forward with minimal disharmony and trusted that the results would balance SVH interests with those of the community. They have not done so.
- The public members of the Community Board 2 St. Vincent Hospital Omnibus Committee agreed to serve with complete understanding of the Committee's purpose. I'm not sure why you thought it necessary to instruct us in the matter. GVBA will undoubtedly weigh in on other aspects as the process moves along, but since we are in the Landmarks phase, it makes sense to focus on this area at this time.
- The audience on February 25 **did** support the idea of a modernized St. Vincent Hospital, again underlining the community's goodwill. This should not be construed as writing SVH/Rudin a blank check to do as it pleases in an effort to build a glamorous hospital tower financed by a massive luxury residential complex.
- Since the purpose of the February 25 meeting was to consider preservation issues, the testimony of those speaking to the issue may merit more consideration than those who did not. While the personal stories related by the SVH supporters were sometimes heartwarming, none considered the Greenwich Village Historic District and the proposal's impact on it. SVH understands the importance of expertise. SVH did not hire a dentist to design the new hospital or a plumber to do your job. All opinions are not equal, but I did not intend to imply that we should not consider each of them. The Committee listened to everything that was said.
- We understand that notes were passed to the proposal's supporters instructing them to withhold applause when its opponents spoke. Evidently, the arguments against the proposal were so well considered and so well delivered that one's natural reaction would be approval even by SVH supporters. It suggests that many SVH supporters attended as a clique and fosters speculation concerning the Hospital's attitude towards its neighbors.
- GVBA trusts that participants in the public meetings will increase their awareness about the dilemma facing the Village and sympathize with our predicament. We hope the hostility displayed by a few of the plan's supporters will decrease. No one has the right to call a community selfish when it objects to self-destruction.

- Many of those who signed on to your endorsement list may re-examine exactly what SVH interprets their endorsements to mean. Some of them may believe that they are merely endorsing an updated medical facility, as we all do. The information that SVH has put forth in its solicitation package fails to explain the considerations and ramifications of the current design from the neighbors' point of view.
- Your assertion that SVH serves a wider community reinforces the closing statement of the GVBA letter. Supporters of the SVH/Rudin proposal, who come from outside the Village, show little awareness of the critical importance of the Greenwich Village Historic District. Since they do not oppose the size and configuration of the SVH/Rudin proposal, it is a problem-solving conclusion that they may welcome St. Vincent's relocation close to them.
- GVBA hopes SVH can rebuild itself harmoniously within the Historic District, but all avenues should be explored. SVH should consider selling its valuable Greenwich Village property and rebuilding elsewhere. Villagers should not selfishly try to keep SVH here if this negatively impacts the quality of the care SVH can offer. Conversely, SVH should not insist upon staying if this would mean serious detriment to the community's integrity.
- The SVH mission is, indeed, a benevolent one. The caregivers of SVH deserve immeasurable appreciation, affection and loyalty. That is not precisely the same thing as the institution of SVH: the caregivers and the corporate entity should not be confused or conflated. The administration of SVH — not the doctors, nurses and staff — made faulty decisions causing the Hospital's fiscal difficulties and putting it into bankruptcy. The institution of SVH has often been a slovenly, arrogant and inconsiderate neighbor.

Thank you for the copy of the SVH response to the *New York Sun's* editorial. It is puzzling, in view of the issue's importance and SVH/Rudin's considerable clout, that the *Sun* opted not to run it. It is surprising, too, that none of your team suggested sending it to our local newspaper, *The Villager*. The letter's public dissemination would have gone a long way in soothing hurt feelings.

When you assumed your position as the new CEO of SVH, you undertook a daunting task and you are understandably dedicated to seeing that the plans for a new facility come to fruition. GVBA concerns are yet more complex. We must consider the long-term welfare of the Hospital and its role in the community. GVBA wishes that the proposal for a new SVH were less controversial and contentious, but it is unlikely that it will become so unless SVH reviews its commitments and consents to do the hard work of thinking creatively to achieve its stated goal: the building of a state of the art medical facility.

In the meantime, GVBA will do its best to steer this discussion and its conclusion in a way that benefits St. Vincent Hospital, the wider community it serves and its neighbors who will, after all, endure both the construction phase of the project and its results.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Marilyn Dorato
Executive Director

Cc: Hon. Michael Bloomberg
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Members GVBA

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