



GREENWICH VILLAGE SOCIETY FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION

City Backs University Place Hi-Rise and Tower Zoning

GVSHP Pursues Rare Community-Initiated Rezoning

Mayor de Blasio's Department of City Planning has consistently and adamantly refused to change the zoning for the University Place and Broadway corridors, which currently allows 300+ ft. tall towers, encourages hotel and dorm development, and provides no incentives or requirements for affordable housing. As a result, a nearly 300 ft. tall luxury condo tower is planned for the former Bowlmor Lanes site at University Place and 12th Street, and a 230 ft. tall office/condo tower is planned for 809 Broadway (11/12th Streets), the former home of Blatt Billiards.

More than a year ago, GVSHP put forward a rezoning plan with reasonable height limits for new development (80-120 feet), which would eliminate current dorm and hotel incentives and encourage inclusion of affordable housing—a supposed priority of the de Blasio administration. Our plan was enthusiastically endorsed by every local elected official, the community board, and hundreds of neighbors who signed petitions, attended meetings, or wrote letters in support.

But the City refused to consider the plan, consistently putting forward false information about the lack of potential development sites

in the neighborhood, even claiming sites which were currently in the process of being demolished for new construction were unlikely to see new development.

In November, GVSHP was joined by City Councilmember Rosie Mendez, State Senator Brad Hoylman, Community Board #2 Chair Tobi Bergman, and actor/activist/Villager Edward Norton and hundreds of neighbors for a rally and press conference in front of the Bowlmor development site calling for the City to move ahead with our rezoning plan. Under our proposed zoning, that tower would be reduced to 120 feet in height and likely contain 29,000 square feet of affordable housing.

At the press conference, speakers noted the hypocrisy of the administration defending this development plan and zoning that guarantees no new affordable housing in the area and encourages woefully out-of-scale new construction. GVSHP's analysis showed our rezoning plan would result in as much as 200,000 square feet of new affordable housing, while ensuring that all new development remained in scale and context for the neighborhood, unlike the currently planned towers.



(l. to r.) Edward Norton (in hat and glasses), State Senator Brad Hoylman, City Councilmember Rosie Mendez (speaking) and GVSHP Exec. Dir. Andrew Berman protesting the Bowlmor tower and calling upon Mayor de Blasio to support our rezoning proposal.

But even with this information, the Mayor refused to change his position, and with these refusals has allowed the Bowlmor condo tower to move ahead.

In response, GVSHP is pursuing a rare, private rezoning for the area. As the applicant, this requires GVSHP to perform the needed environmental review (typically done by either the City or a developer) at a considerable expense. At the end of the day, the plan still needs to be approved by the City and the City Council. Much support will be needed for the rezoning to be realized and ensure no more towers rise on the more than a dozen potential future development sites in the area. See gvshp.org/univpl for more info.

Rezoning Plans Would Strip Local Protections, Increase Development Citywide

Despite Pushback, Plans Head to City Council

Mayor de Blasio has two citywide rezoning plans with broad and in some ways deeply disturbing implications for our neighborhoods and our city.

'Zoning for Quality and Affordability' (ZQA) would roll back existing neighborhood zoning protections—many of which we and other communities fought years to achieve—and prevent future application of such protections. Particularly hard hit would be “contextual zoning districts” such as those GVSHP fought for and helped secure in the East Village and Far West Village, as well as areas where we are trying to secure such protections, such as the University Place/Broadway corridors and the South Village.

Under ZQA, the height limits for new developments in these neighborhoods would almost uniformly be lifted, by five to twenty-five feet or more. The Mayor claims such increases in height will help make new developments more attractive with

more appealing commercial space in the ground floor, as well as making them more affordable.

Nothing could be further from the truth. GVSHP has led the fight against these plans, exposing with detailed studies and real-life examples how the proposed changes would be unlikely to result in a single additional unit of affordable housing being built, and would certainly not make for better or more attractive new developments.

Not long after GVSHP held a press conference on the steps of City Hall condemning the plan, changes were announced eliminating or reducing some, but not all, of the proposed height limit increases. Many still remain, however.

Hundreds turned out for, and hundreds more were turned away from, a City Planning Commission public hearing on the proposal in December. As we go to press, the Commission is set to vote soon on the plan, with the expectation there will be changes, but approval is likely. The plan's ultimate fate will then be decided by the City Council, which has the last word on all city zoning measures. To help, send letters at gvshp.org/zqa.

The Mayor's 'Mandatory Inclusionary

Housing' (MIH) plan would require, as part of future zoning actions, that new residential developments in designated areas include 25-30% affordable housing. The current proposal would only put the framework for this system in place; subsequent zoning actions would be required to apply these requirements to any particular location.

There has been much debate about the amount and affordability of the housing in the MIH proposal. Less focus has been placed upon an issue GVSHP has raised—that the City is saying they will only apply MIH in cases where they very substantially increase the size of allowable development in an area, and that such massive upzonings are the only kinds of rezonings the city will consider in the future.

The implications of such a policy are far-reaching, and disturbing. On the one hand, to get affordable housing, you must accept a massive upzoning which would require vastly out-of-scale construction—destroying not only neighborhood scale and character, but ultimately making neighborhoods less affordable with the flood of market rate (i.e. luxury) housing which would be allowed as a result. On the other hand, neighborhood rezonings which do not massively increase the allowable size of new development, and instead limit the scale of new construction, will no longer be undertaken. We are seeing manifestations of this policy on University Place and at Pier 40/St. John's (see pgs. 1 & 3).

GVSHP is strongly opposed to such an approach. We believe that promoting affordable housing and maintaining neighborhood scale and character are both important priorities, and the City's approach needlessly puts these two goals at cross-purposes. Like ZQA, MIH's fate will be decided at the City Council this spring. More info and how to help at gvshp.org/zqamih.



Under the Mayor's zoning proposal, these three new buildings in contextual zones in the East Village could have been built 25 to 35 feet taller.

City & Developer Propose Huge St. John's Upzoning

Mega-Project Includes Some Affordable Housing, Pier 40 Funding from Air Rights Sales

In late 2015, the City announced agreement with a developer to rezone the St. John's Terminal building, a 3-block site between West and Washington Streets straddling Houston Street. The plan would remove restrictions which currently allow only limited commercial and manufacturing uses. Residences, hotels, and large-scale retail would be permitted, and the size of allowable development would be increased by 70%.

In return, the developer would pay \$100 million towards repair and restoration of Pier 40, located across West Street—a massive, deteriorating structure which provides playing fields for children and sports leagues, and hundreds of parking spaces which generate needed revenue for the Hudson River Park. Twenty-five per cent of the proposed residential development would also be affordable housing, some for seniors.

The development would contain 2 million square feet spread over five buildings—the equivalent of six Trump SoHos, or about three-quarters the size of the Empire State Building. The tallest of the buildings would be 430 feet tall or about the height of the Trump SoHo, and the complex would include 1,600 apartments, a large hotel, event space, and hundreds of thousands of square feet of retail—possibly including a very large big box store underground.

This plan must go through a long public review and approval process, including hearings and votes by the Community Board, Borough President, City Planning Commission, and City Council. Favorable votes by both the Commission and the Council are needed for approval, though approval with modifications is also possible.

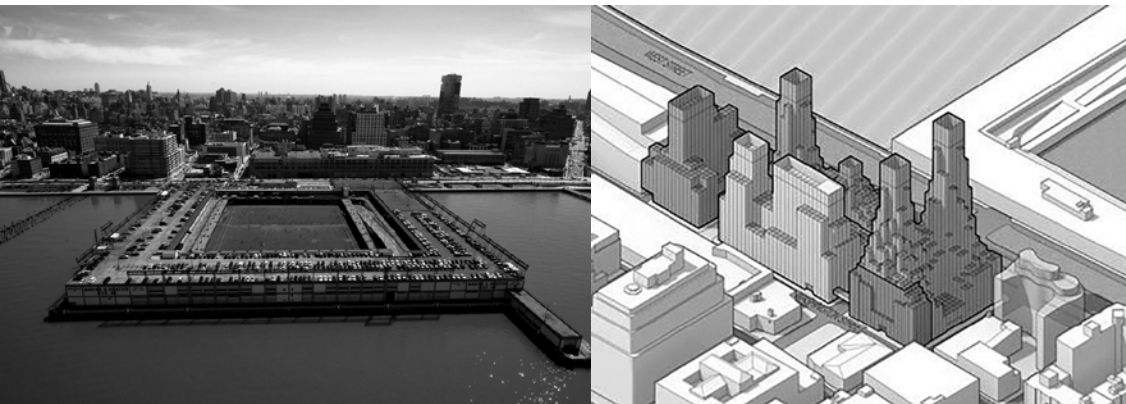
GVSHP recognizes the benefits of generating much-needed funding for Pier 40 and providing affordable housing. And under current zoning, a very large development could and probably would be built here without any such public benefits.

However, the scale of the proposed development and its potential impact is alarming. Based upon economic analysis of other recent nearby developments, the proposed rezoning would more than triple the value of the site for this developer, who seemingly stands to benefit much more than the public by this proposed zoning change.

Disturbingly, the plan also includes the sale of "air rights" from Pier 40 and the Hudson River Park (as made possible by an act of the State Legislature in 2013), permitting the proposed development to grow larger. Incredibly, the Hudson River Park Trust has still not revealed the quantity of air rights on Pier 40 or elsewhere in the park that could be used in the future, which should be a prerequisite for even considering any plan. And the Trust and city and state officials still refuse to consider alternatives for funding the park offered by GVSHP and dozens of other community groups—alternatives which would not increase the size of allowable development in our neighborhoods.

Perhaps most disturbingly, even as the City has embraced and advanced this developer's proposal, they have refused to act upon long-standing requests for zoning and landmark protections for unprotected areas of the nearby South Village.

GVSHP is working hard to ensure that no plan is approved without protections for nearby areas and a full accounting of air rights in the park and a plan to limit their use in the future. And we intend to ensure there are no lopsided giveaways to developers at the expense of the affected community. Read more and help at gvshp.org/pier40stjohn.



(l.) Pier 40 (center) with the St. John's Terminal directly behind, and Trump SoHo behind on right; (r.) the proposed new 5-building, 2 mil. sq. ft. development.

Gansevoort Proposal Faces Mass Opposition at Landmarks

Large-Scale Demolition and Construction Would Transform Meatpacking District

In November, GVSHP, fellow community and preservation groups, local elected officials and the Community Board showed up en masse at a Landmarks Preservation Commission (LPC) public hearing to oppose a proposal for demolition of two buildings on Gansevoort Street, construction of two new ones, and large-scale additions to a third. Though the street currently consists exclusively of one-to-two story historic meat market buildings, one of the new buildings would reach 120 feet in height, while the additions to another would nearly triple its height. The plan requires landmarks approval because in 2003 GVSHP proposed and secured landmark status for this street and much of the Meatpacking District.



The proposed new construction on Gansevoort Street would replace 1-2 story historic market buildings.

Changes are allowed in historic districts, including additions, demolition, and new construction. But they must be found to be “appropriate” by the LPC, cannot result in the loss of important historic characteristics, and can’t add new features that would detract from the district’s history or character.

But as GVSHP pointed out at the LPC hearing, this proposal is not change; it is obliteration. The proposed new buildings and additions would utterly overwhelm the street and the district, fundamentally destroying its character. The buildings to be demolished and built on top of make important contributions to the district, and should not be compromised in this manner.



The standing room-only crowd at the Landmarks hearing on the proposal.

would ruin its irreplaceable sense of place.

Because the huge volume of testimony in opposition went so long, the Commissioners closed the hearing very late in the day without any comment on the proposal. The next step will be a public meeting at which the proposal will be discussed by the Commissioners with the applicant, expected later this winter. At this meeting the public can attend and listen but not speak. Meanwhile, the developers have nearly emptied the building of all tenants, and we have received multiple reports of their conducting a “push poll” by phone of area residents, asking if they would prefer the buildings remain dilapidated or are “restored to their 19th century appearance,” by which they actually mean razed and replaced with larger buildings or with oversized additions added.

GVSHP continues to urge the LPC to return this proposal to the drawing board. For more information, see gvshp.org/gansevoortstreet.

GVSHP Oral Histories & Image Archives Expanded

*First-Person Accounts,
Vintage Photos and Drawings,
Now Available On-Line*

GVSHP provides a variety of resources to the public about the history, culture, and architecture of Greenwich Village, the East Village, and NoHo. Oral histories with important artists, business owners, preservationists, cultural pioneers and community leaders are one of the most important ways in which we do that. Maintaining and expanding an archive of historic images of our neighborhood, documenting both continuity and change, is another.

In late 2015 GVSHP made a great leap forward with both of these projects, greatly expanding our cache of oral histories, and for the first time making our historic image archive available on-line, with a mapping tool to maximize the collection's utility.

GVSHP added about twenty new oral histories to our collection, all of which are available on-line to listen to or read. This most recent round of oral histories focused on the East Village and South Village, but also included an interview

with Ingrid Bernhard. Bernhard and her husband Sven lived in an historic farmhouse on the Upper East Side sometimes known as "Cobble Court" or "the Goodnight Moon House," as writer Margaret Wise Brown wrote the beloved children's book while living there. In 1967, when the house faced demolition, the Bernhards moved it to 121 Charles Street at Greenwich Street, creating a cherished local landmark that remains to this day.

Just some of the other subjects of new oral histories include Jonas Mekas, founder of Anthology Film Archives; Matt Umanov, owner of Umanov Guitars on Bleecker Street; acclaimed painter Wolf Kahn; celebrated composer and musician David Amram; Frances Goldin, co-founder of the Met Council on Housing and the Cooper Square Committee, and leader against Robert Moses' East Village urban renewal plans; Raffetto's Pasta owners Romana and Andrew Raffetto; Tom Birchard, owner of Veselka; and Maria Kenney, daughter of the owners of Kenny's Castaways and The Bitter End, among many others. Each has incredible stories to tell about the neighborhood's artistic, literary, musical, culinary, cultural, and ethnic history and experience.

These latest oral histories join our long-standing collections focused on Village 'Preservation Pioneers' and the origins of the Westbeth Artists complex. The former include interviews with Jane Jacobs



75 ½ Bedford Street, from GVSHP's Historic Image Archive.

and Margot Gayle, while the latter includes histories from Merce Cunningham and Richard Meier, among many others. Access all the oral histories at gvshp.org/oralhistory.

With a grant from the NY Preservation Archive Project, GVSHP was also able to make our historic archive of over 300 images available on-line, including photos, drawings, etchings, and paintings. The collection contains everything from images of the 9th Avenue Elevated when it was up to the Sixth Avenue El when it came down; old Department Stores, churches, and hotels; pear trees and prisons; markets and mews; libraries and La Grange Terrace; and New Yorkers as varied as Peter Cooper and Montgomery Clift. We also have a particularly large collection of images of Washington Square and the Washington Square Art Show over the years. Additionally, all images have been placed on an easily usable map, so you can search by geographic area of interest. View the archive at gvshp.org/historicimages.



Jonas Mekas (l.) and Jan Jacobs are just two of dozens of figures who have done oral histories for GVSHP, available on our website.

GVSHP Bulletin Board *Keep Up With the Latest From GVSHP*

- Join our e-mail list for alerts on critical preservation and development issues—gvshp.org/email.



- Save the Date: GVSHP' Annual Benefit House Tour** is Sunday, May 1—gvshp.org/housetour.

- Help the cause by volunteering—go to gvshp.org/volunteer.

- Buy the Book! Greenwich Village Stories** is a love letter to Greenwich Village and the East Village featuring works of sixty-six artists, writers, and neighborhood icons, with beautiful photos and artwork. All proceeds support GVSHP. See gvshp.org/gvstories.



- Visit GVSHP's blog *Off the Grid* for fun and fascinating glimpses into our neighborhoods' hidden history, eye-catching architecture, and colorful characters—see gvshp.org/blog.



- No Kidding:** In Spring our **Children's Education Program** kicks into high gear, teaching over a thousand elementary and middle school students from across New York City how history can be found and preserved in the cityscapes and built environment around them, using the Village as an example. The three-session program starts in the classroom, takes a field trip to the Village, and concludes with an in-classroom craft project reinforcing what has been seen and learned. Immigration history, evolving technology's impact upon buildings and people's lives, and our city's transformation from farmland to dense urban environment are all on the agenda. See gvshp.org/kidsed.

- Planned Giving**—make a legacy gift to GVSHP. Call 212/475-9585 x39.

- Get with the Program!** Upcoming lectures, book talks, walking tours, and panel discussions are listed at gvshp.org/programs. Missed a program? Past program videos are at gvshp.org/pastprograms.

- Want to know about landmarks applications in your neighborhood?** See proposed changes to landmarked building in the Village, East Village,

Meatpacking District or NoHo, when hearings and votes will take place, how you can testify or affect the outcome, and sign up for alerts about the status of the application—go to gvshp.org/lpc.

- Did you know?** Every day GVSHP monitors all 6,500 buildings in our neighborhoods for new building, alteration, or demolition permits, and all 3,000 landmarked structures for any proposed major changes.

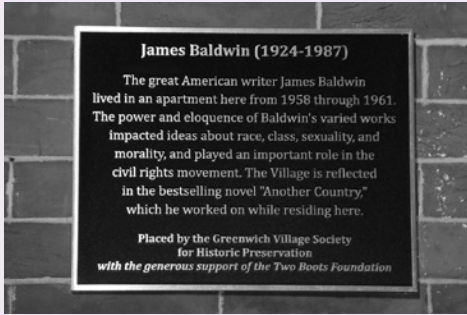
- Keeping It Real:** In the Spring and Fall, **GVSHP's Continuing Education for Real Estate Professionals** explores the history and architecture of the Village and New York. Course topics are presented through classroom instruction, field visits to museums, walking tours, and private tours, led by luminaries in the field. The course satisfies New York State requirements for continuing education for real estate professionals. Space allowing, the general public is also welcome. See gvshp.org/conted.



Webster Hall (l.) and Westbeth; two of the 1,100 buildings GVSHP helped get landmarked.

- Learn about 1,100 buildings GVSHP has helped get landmarked since 2003—see gvshp.org/10.

BARRY MUNGER



Plaques Mark the Spot

In 2015, as part of our historic plaque program in partnership with Two Boots, GVSHP placed historic markers on the site of dance pioneer Martha Graham's former studio at 66 Fifth Avenue (13th Street) and the former home of literary and civil rights giant James Baldwin at 81 Horatio Street.

Each year, we add two new plaques throughout the Village, East Village, and NoHo. Past plaques have included the site of the former Fillmore East, beat mecca the San Remo Café, and the home of poet Frank O'Hara. Find out more and watch footage of plaque unveilings at gvshp.org/plaque.



(l. to r.) 57 Sullivan Street, 2 Oliver Street, 138 Second Avenue, and 801 Broadway.

REBNY Report Refuted

The Real Estate Board of NY constantly tries to paint landmarking as harmful to everything from economic development to ethnic diversity. This past fall, they made the mistake of taking data an unaffiliated researcher had compiled and claimed it showed landmarking led to decreased affordable housing. GVSHP swiftly teamed up with the researcher to publicly refute the real estate lobby's false and misleading claims.

This followed the release of our report showing how REBNY has consistently stymied affordable housing efforts in New York, thus undermining any credibility they have on the affordability issue. Read more at gvshp.org/rebny.

Second Chance for Last Chance Landmarks

Last year GVSHP and fellow preservationists successfully lobbied to get the City to drop a plan to remove nearly 100 sites under consideration for more than five years from its list of potential landmarks, and to instead give

each a final public hearing and vote. Some had been under consideration for nearly 50 years.

This fall, GVSHP testified in favor of and called for landmarking of the four sites in our area from this list—federal-era houses at 57 Sullivan Street (1816-17), 2 Oliver Street (1821), and 138 Second Avenue (1832), and 801 Broadway/67 East 11th Street (1868). A decision from the City is expected this spring. See gvshp.org/lastchance.



Opposing “Do-or-Die Deadline” Bill

GVSHP helped lead opposition to City Council Intro. 775, which would make landmarking much harder and demolition much easier by imposing “do-or-die” deadlines for considering landmark designations. If deadlines were unmet, sites would become ineligible for landmark designation for five years, and open to demolition. Had the law been in effect over the past fifty years, nearly

half our city's landmarks would not have been designated, including Grand Central Station, the Woolworth Building, and the Greenwich Village Historic District.

After a huge turnout against the bill at the Council public hearing and more than 70,000 letters in opposition generated by GVSHP, several Councilmembers dropped support for the bill, the authors promised to amend it, and it's currently on hold. As an alternative, GVSHP has suggested ways to address legitimate concerns about landmarks delays

without gutting the system. See gvshp.org/775.

One If By Land

GVSHP was outraged when the venerable historic archway over the entrance to Village eatery “One If By Land, Two If By Sea” at 17 Barrow Street was removed from the landmarked 1834 house. The change was unpermitted and sparked an impassioned public outcry.

*in
brief*

The restaurant owner claimed emergency repairs required the removal, but there was no record of such an order from the Buildings Department. The owner also claimed the arch was added in 1969, but GVSHP research showed it was at least 75 years old, possibly older. The Landmarks Preservation Commission is considering whether to require the arch be restored or to allow a different entryway that reveals some older historic materials which were underneath the arch. GVSHP supports the former; a decision is forthcoming. See gvshp.org/17barrow.

Business of the Month

Promoting, celebrating, and protecting small, local, independent businesses remains a high priority for GVSHP. Our ‘Business of the Month’ program is one way we do that.

Soliciting nominations from the public, each month we select one business to highlight and



The beloved archway at One If By Land.

promote on our website and blog, via social media, and through our e-newsletter, reaching tens of thousands of people. Increased patronage, support, and appreciation of these businesses’ unique virtues and services are the goal. Mercer Books, Ray’s Candy Store, La Bonbonniere, Tea & Sympathy, B & H Dairy, and Greenwich Locksmiths have been just some of the recipients. Spread the word or nominate a favorite at gvshp.org/BoM.



neighborhood. GVHP is carefully watching all.

11-19 Jane Street, a parking garage, was

sold for \$26 mil. for development in 2014. While zoning might allow a tower, the site is within a historic (landmark) district, and thus only a much more modest scale of development would likely be approved. Any proposal must go through the landmarks hearing and review process, where the public can weigh in on what should or should not be approved. No plans have been filed, but GVSHP will notify when that process begins.

85-93 Jane Street were sold for \$32 mil. in 2012, but no development plans have yet been filed. Also located in a historic (landmark) district, unlike 11-19 Jane, these buildings have some historic significance, with parts dating to the 19th century. GVSHP has shared our research on the buildings with the Landmarks Preservation Commission in the hopes that, though somewhat altered, outright demolition would not be approved here (non-historic buildings in historic districts can be demolished). Here too GVSHP will notify the public if and when an application is filed and the landmarks review and hearing process begins.

134-140 Jane Street, at West Street, is a parking lot recently shuttered, possibly for development. While not landmarked, in 2005 GVSHP was able to get the site rezoned to impose height limits for new development. While not as strict as we would have liked, the new zoning allows a maximum height of 120 ft. for new development, or the same as adjacent 495 West Street, whereas the old zoning had no height limits. A development here requires no public hearing or review, but no plans have yet been filed. GVSHP will monitor for such filings.

For more info or to sign up for alerts on these sites, go to gvshp.org/janestreet.

From the Director

The state of affairs in our city in 2016 brings feelings of both optimism and alarm here at GVSHP.

On the one hand, the organization is stronger than ever, with greater public support and participation than any time in our history. Residents of the Village, East Village, and NoHo have been generously contributing their time, talent, and resources to the organization like never before—writing letters and checks, showing up at public hearings, attending events and rallies.

More real estate professionals than ever are signing up for our continuing education classes to learn the value of historic preservation. More members of the public are viewing our on-line videos of lectures and panel discussions about landmarking and neighborhood history. And more people are exploring our oral histories with neighborhood leaders, cultural icons, preservationists and long-time local business-owners, showing that the appreciation for preservation and history is growing.

But at the same time, we're seeing an unyielding resistance on the part of the City to consider neighborhood preservation measures, and aggressive promotion of policies that would strip away recent progress and encourage increasingly out-of-scale development. We're seeing an administration adopt the Alice-in-Wonderland logic promoted by the real estate industry that vastly increasing market-rate development will make our city more affordable and livable. And we're seeing a City Council consider hindering a landmarking process which needs strengthening, not further impediments.

If proposed changes go through, we could see the undoing of years of progress towards preserving a healthy scale, balance, and sense of place in our neighborhoods. And while rules and regulations may change, the demolition and new construction they result in are almost always permanent—even if the pendulum swings back in the future, once historic buildings have been destroyed and replaced with out-of-scale new ones, we are not likely to ever regain what has been lost.

That is why it is so important to meet these challenges head on now, and win. Fortunately GVSHP is in a better position to do so than ever. The future of our city and our neighborhoods hangs in the balance, and GVSHP is very much in the fight. I hope you'll join us.



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**GREENWICH VILLAGE SOCIETY
FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION**

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