

# 5 churches get fix-up funds

## State landmark group gives \$65G for restorations

BY PAOLA GUZMAN

paola.guzman@newsday.com

Five churches across Long Island — some built in the 1800s — will receive funding to restore crumbling parts of their buildings.

The New York Landmarks Conservancy awarded \$65,500 in Sacred Sites Grants to the congregations to pay for damage assessments and repairs.

St. Paul's United Methodist

Church in downtown Northport received the largest amount — \$35,000 — to help restore its bell tower. The church, completed in 1873 with the designs of architect B.T. Robbins, is hailed as the oldest existing church in the village.

Greg Polli, chairman of the St. Paul's board of trustees, said the bell tower was falling apart.

"We're going to restore it to its original beauty," he said. The Main Street church is undergoing a \$300,000 restoration.

The conservancy announced other grant recipients:

- Bethel AME Church in Setauket was built in the 19th century to serve a community of African-Americans, Native Americans, and mixed-race fami-

lies. The church received \$3,000 to assist with a conditions survey of the church's former parsonage, constructed in 1917.

- The First Congressional Church of Riverhead received \$4,000 to help fund window restoration. The building was constructed in 1836 by Timothy Aldrich and enlarged and modified in the early 20th century by local architects George H. Skidmore and William Sidney Jones.

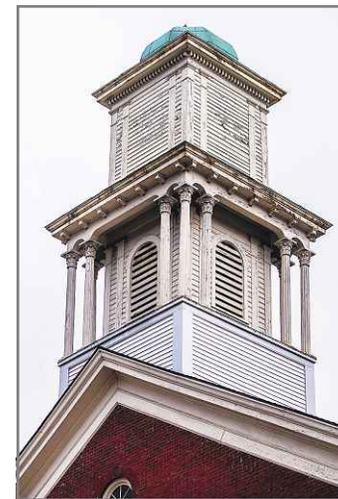
- The First Presbyterian Church of Southold on Main Street received \$3,500 for a tower assessment before a full restoration. The church was built in 1803.

- The United Methodist Church of Patchogue was granted \$20,000 to assist with roof and

masonry restoration. The building was designed by Oscar Teale and finished in 1890.

The New York Landmarks Conservancy is a private non-profit that helps preserve significant state architecture. The conservancy has loaned and granted more than \$50 million over 45 years, according to its website.

The Sacred Site Grant program considers the urgency, technical process, need and significance of the projects, said Anne Friedman, director of the program. Two grant rounds per year have about 20 to 30 applications per round. Friedman said this was the largest number of grants given in one round over the program's 30 years.



Bell tower at St. Paul's Church.

RAYCHEL BRIGHTMAN



STRINGER NEWS SERVICE

## Man dies in house fire in Farmingville

A man died in a Farmingville house fire that began Sunday night, Suffolk County police said.

Officers responded to the scene on Elder Avenue shortly after 11:30 p.m.

The body of the male victim was found inside the home after the fire was extinguished, police said.

Arson detectives believe the fire's cause was noncriminal. The victim's name is being withheld pending notification of family.

The Farmingville, Ronkonkoma, Selden, Holtsville, Medford and North Patchogue fire departments responded to the scene along with the Brookhaven Town Fire Marshal.

— PATRICIA KITCHEN

**Firefighters from six departments battle a blaze that began Sunday night.**

# Riverhead boosts two Opportunity Zones

BY JEAN-PAUL SALAMANCA

jeanpaul.salamanca@newsday.com

Riverhead's push is underway to spur more business and investment in its downtown area and the Enterprise Park at Calverton via a federal program that offers incentives for such investment.

About 90 attendees, including real estate developers, business owners and other potential investors, gathered Wednesday at the Hotel Indigo on Main Street to kick off town efforts to draw potential investors to invest in its

two Opportunity Zone areas. The event was arranged by Riverhead's Community Development Agency and other town agencies.

Downtown Riverhead and the EPCAL property were among more than 500 census tracts that state officials recommended in May to the U.S. Treasury Department for designation as Opportunity Zones, a federal program to boost private investment in underserved urban and rural communities via tax benefits.

Town officials said they began work on marketing the

zones after the federal government approved the program's regulation in November.

"The sky is really the limit in what can be developed in the Opportunity Zones," Supervisor Laura Jens-Smith said Friday, adding that interested parties had begun inquiring about developing in those zones.

For downtown Riverhead, the presentation that town officials gave Dec. 5 highlighted the area's:

- "Strong" tourism — including 400,000 annual visitors to the Long Island Aquarium — and 12

to 15 million to the Tanger Outlets.

- Access to town sewer and public water districts.

- Recent Main Street investments, including the Preston House, a restaurant and boutique hotel; and affordable housing complex Peconic Crossing.

- Quick access to the Long Island Expressway and state routes 25 and 27.

Officials touted the 2,700-acre EPCAL site's:

- "Low-cost" space
- Access to main thoroughfares
- Freight rail access

- 10,000-foot active runway
- Proximity to Northeast markets.

In coming months, Riverhead officials will seek to further market those areas via the town website and other initiatives, said Community Development Administrator Dawn Thomas.

As part of those initiatives, Jens-Smith said the Riverhead Town Board will discuss possible legislation to fast-track permits for proposed projects or developments in either of the designated Opportunity Zone areas.