

Support for Eastern Orthodox Church at Timothy House

I am Phil Skotte, a resident of Smithtown and recently retired U.S. diplomat. I served in Moscow from 2007 to 2011. Those were better times. It was so nice to visit old Russian Orthodox churches with their onion domes and beautiful architecture. Stalin had thousands of these destroyed to make way for his grand boulevards and projects. He even wanted to dynamite St Basil's but thankfully ran into opposition to that plan. My service in Moscow and later in Mainland China gave me an appreciation for those who try to preserve historical structures and who appreciate the past. I commend those here who work to do that.

Now we live on Long Island and I do a lot of volunteer work in the forests and on old properties. I am on the board of the Nissequogue River State Park Foundation. Our parks are full of old abandoned buildings that are boarded up and will

never be put right. There are just too many old buildings.

Examples: Kings Park, Main Street Smithtown, Blydenburgh Millers House and Mill, Commerdinger House, etc.

There is not enough money and the buildings get worse every year. I wish it were not so.



Well, we can dream, hope and wish all day long, but as they say at the Pentagon, "Hope is not a plan and wishes are not a strategy."

It takes resources, money and will to save an old property. The Timothy House is lucky and blessed to have Brothers who have improved the house from its former derelict condition and who have a plan to maintain the property as a public and religious amenity going forward. For their efforts to be viable, they want to build a small and tasteful church on the property. A sensible and realistic approach to historic preservation will embrace their efforts with both arms.



Is the Timothy House in better shape now than it was before these Brothers took ownership? We all know the answer. When an old historic property finds owners like these, the community better support their efforts to make forward preservation possible. We must connect our hopes and dreams to preserve old buildings with reality, resources, money and will.

You are fortunate to have all of that in these Brothers. If you do the sensible thing and let them build the small church, future generations will thank you. Orthodox believers in the area will have a place to worship. I'm not Eastern Orthodox, but I will stop by for the beauty of the place and the sacred worship that will take place inside.

Thanks,

Phil