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Office of the Mayor

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**Martin Announces Agreement for City to Purchase Historic
Downtown Property at 200 Strawberry Hill Avenue**

STAMFORD, CT – Mayor David Martin, joined by several local elected officials, announced that the City of Stamford and Sisters of St. Joseph of Chambery have reached an agreement in principle for the purchase of 200 Strawberry Hill Avenue. Additional details of the agreement will be released as soon as the final paperwork has been reviewed by Corporation Counsel and signed.

The property is the former site of Sacred Heart Academy, which closed in 2006, and is currently home to the Stamford Campus for The Stanwich School. The 10.8 acre campus includes several buildings and in 2012 was assessed at \$10.27 million, which represents 70% of the estimated market value.

The campus also includes the C.J. Starr Barn and Carriage House, which was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1979. In the application submitted by the Sisters to the National Park Service, they stated the structure is “the sole remaining structure of its kind in the city” and that it “provides the residents of Stamford with a link to a previous era.”

“This is a once in a generation opportunity for the City of Stamford to preserve part of Stamford’s history and character. It is a critical and a strategic investment in Stamford’s future and will be an enormous asset to our residents. I am proud of the City’s negotiating team and the diligent work of both parties in coming to this landmark agreement,” said Mayor Martin.

The agreement drew bipartisan and widespread support and local officials lauded the news, citing the many benefits and tremendous value of the purchase.

“This is the most significant real estate acquisition since the city’s purchase of the Government Center building nearly 30 years ago. It is a truly historic purchase. I applaud the Mayor and the city for pursuing this property and believe it will benefit our residents for many years to come,” said Randy Skigen, President of the Board of Representatives.

“It is very fitting that the city purchase this site, which has been host to thousands of Stamford students over the years and contributed greatly to our success as a city. As

the Board of Education looks to solve elementary school overcrowding and address future enrollment growth, the Strawberry Hill site is a noteworthy option for the city and our elected boards to consider,” said Geoff Alswanger, President of the Board of Education.

“I first became involved with Stamford government in 1991. Since that time, I believe this is the most positive announcement in regard to the future of Stamford. It is an example not only of our history and culture, but of our growth and success as a city,” said John Leydon, Jr., Assistant Secretary of the Board of Education.

“This is an outstanding acquisition and a very prudent investment to make in a growing, vibrant city like Stamford. Whether the city chooses to continue the site’s use as a school or adapt it for an alternative public use, this will be a great resource,” said Jay Fountain, Chairman of the Board of Representatives Fiscal Committee.

The purchase & sale agreement, once finalized, will be presented before the Planning Board, Board of Finance and Board of Representatives for consideration and approval. The purchase of the property will be funded through municipal bonds, the same method used for other capital expenditures.

Following board approval of the purchase, the Mayor and boards will evaluate specific proposals for use of the site. The Board of Education plans to assemble a proposal for consideration, which will include the pursuit of state funding.

At the announcement, the Mayor voiced support for the site’s use as a public school, citing the city’s historical and projected growth and current overcrowding challenges. Stamford recently grew to become the third largest city in Connecticut, and population projections indicate that Stamford will become the second largest city by 2017. The Mayor recognized, however, that any final determination would be made only after the Board of Education presents a specific proposal to the city and its boards for consideration.

“The site may become a critical option for the school district as it works to alleviate overcrowding and continue providing a quality public education to our students. I believe the property is best used as a public school, but am leaving all options on the table as we await specific proposals. Regardless, the site’s location, size, and other benefits make it a low risk investment for the city to make at this time,” said Mayor Martin.

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