April 12, 2010

Dear President Dwyer and Members of the Board:

We write in response to your request and the request of the community that the Town Board consider the idea of relocating Town Hall to the Jack Abrams Intermediate (JAI) School, thus allowing the Huntington School District to relocate JAI to 100 Main Street.

We are willing to take a close look at this proposal and to move forward with it if it proves feasible. With that in mind, we will be enacting a Resolution at the Town Board meeting on April 13, 2010 to hire an Engineer/Architect to explore what would be involved in converting JAI to office space for the employees presently housed at Town Hall. We want to make it very clear, however, that there are certain hurdles that will have to be overcome for this to become a reality. First, we are going to have to have appraisals prepared for both buildings, since any exchange would have to take into account the Fair Market Value of each building. Secondly, we are going to have to assess the costs of a conversion of JAI, as well as any and all moving costs that would be associated with such an exchange. We have also begun the process of having our attorney research the law with regard to such an exchange and we will be calling on the New York State Comptroller's Office to work with us on what is required and/or allowed when one taxing jurisdiction exchanges property with another taxing jurisdiction that has a different tax base.

Even as we move forward with exploring this proposal, we want to make it very clear to the community that some of these hurdles may not be easy to overcome, and that we must be mindful of the possibility of a taxpayers' lawsuit challenging our use of dollars raised from the whole town to assist one school district within the Town. We will move ahead, but we do not want to raise false expectations that this will be a quick or an easy process. We also want to urge the School Board to consider the former Touro Law School Building School Building as a potential site for the relocation of JAI, since it is already configured as a school building.
We have already begun to assist the School District's Architect, Roger Smith, in his analysis of the feasibility and cost of re-converting Town Hall to a school. We will move forward with this exploration and will assist Mr. Smith in any way possible.

Very truly yours,

FRANK P. PETRONE
Supervisor

MARK CUTHBERTSON
Councilman

SUSAN A. BERLAND
Councilwoman