

# CITY OF JERSEY CITY

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## **Stuyvesant Statue Begins Latest Leg of the Journey Home** *Statue Will Be Stored at The Beacon for Restoration* *Before Returning to Bergen Square*

**JERSEY CITY** –at **11:00 a.m.** on **Friday August 12, 2011** the statute of Peter Stuyvesant by famed sculptor J. Massey Rhind will begin the next leg of its journey home to Bergen Square.

Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy, John Hallanan of the Landmarks Conservancy, George Filopolous of The Beacon, Bob Leach Director of the Jersey City Historical Project, and Maryanne Kelleher, Director of Cultural Affairs and Cliff Perkins, Special Events Coordinator of Cultural Affairs will be on site to witness delivery and sign the Bill of Lading, acknowledging safe arrival.

The Peter Stuyvesant statue will be moved from Burns Brothers on Tonnelle Avenue and will be stored in an old ambulance garage at the former Jersey City Medical Center, now called *The Beacon*. Generously offered by George Filopolous, this space will be the temporary home for the statue during restoration and until a new base can be constructed to accommodate the nearly ten-foot likeness of the last Governor-General of Bergen Village which eventually became Jersey City.

In January 2010, the statue was removed from its original location, on Bergen Avenue in front of School No. 11 in Jersey City, to become the centerpiece of a new park outside the original village walls of Bergen, however, in response to the massive public outcry blasting the move, Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy vowed to return the statue to its rightful place in Jersey City, the original location within Bergen Square.

“The statue of Peter Stuyvesant is an important part of Jersey City’s history and pride,” said **Mayor Healy**. “Restoring the statue and returning it to its original location is vital to preserving our history. It is also my hope that, together with the efforts of my administration, the Jersey City Landmarks Conservancy, the Jersey City Board of Education and Hudson County Community College, we can accomplish this.”

Mayor Healy assigned the Jersey City Division of Cultural Affairs and the Jersey City Historical Project to the task of bringing this beloved historically significant public sculpture home to its significant location. These agencies are working in concert with the Jersey City Landmarks Conservancy, Burns Brothers and the Beacon to coordinate the move, restoration and re-placement.

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(2)

On January 12, 2011, the Jersey City Municipal Council adopted Resolution 11-009, Authorizing a Bailment Agreement with Beacon Commerce Urban Renewal Company LLC, to store and Preserve the State of Peter Stuyvesant. Among other insurance and delivery incidentals, the resolution recaps the significant dedication of the Stuyvesant monument to the City of Jersey City and states “Whereas, in February of 2010 the statue of Peter Stuyvesant was ordered to be removed from the site by the Jersey City Board of Education and/or the Hudson County Community College without the knowledge or consent of the City of Jersey City.” The Resolution was passed unanimously by the Council.

Fundraising to restore the statue and base are already underway and will continue. The Jersey City Landmarks Conservancy has already raised in excess of \$9,000 towards this restoration effort.

Mayor Healy and Councilwoman Nydia Lopez solicited financial support from Hudson County Community College and the Jersey City Board of Education to fund this proper re-location and needed restoration.

“The statute of Peter Stuyvesant belongs in Bergen Square” said **John Hallanan**, President of the Jersey City Landmarks Conservancy. “Bergen Square was the very heart of the Dutch community of Bergen, the first permanent settlement in New Jersey. That is why the statue was placed in Bergen Square in 1913 and why it should be returned there. I want to thank Mayor Healy for keeping his promise, and for all the members of his administration who worked so hard to make that promise a reality.”

### **About Peter Stuyvesant**

Peter Stuyvesant governed the Dutch-held, 17th-century colony of New Netherland from 1647 to 1664. In 1910, a monument was conceived in his honor.

Following on the success of the 250th Anniversary of Bergen Celebration in 1910, a Monument Committee was established to create a lasting memorial to the Dutch colonial village whose walls stood in the heart of today’s Jersey City.

The sculptor, J. Massey Rhind, one of the most respected portrait sculptors of the early twentieth century, captured the spirit of Jersey City’s founding father, Peter Stuyvesant and immortalized him

On October 18<sup>th</sup>, 1913, the statue was unveiled in front of nearly 6,000 people, dozens of whom were direct descendants of the founding Dutch families, and placed in Bergen Square. Acting on behalf of the committee, the Reverend Cornelius Brett, long-serving pastor of the Bergen Reformed Church, presented the Bergen Monument to Jersey City Commissioner A. Harry Moore, saying “I highly appreciate the honor and distinction conferred on me by my colleagues of the Monument Committee, in making me the mouthpiece in presenting to you, and through you, to the corporation, citizens, and people of Jersey City this magnificent monument.”

Acting on behalf of Mayor Fagan, who was unable to attend, Moore replied, “to my lot falls the honor and duty of receiving, on behalf of our citizens, this monument...”

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### **About Bergen Square**

Jersey City's beloved statue of Peter Stuyvesant which was recently removed from its almost 100 years-long post at Bergen Square, or simply *The Square*, a plaza closely associated with Stuyvesant himself, might be called "the cornerstone of Jersey City," since it marks the antecedent foundation of our metropolis in 1660.

In 1910, as it turned 250 years old, Bergen Square was largely the same pristine Dutch village that had been fortified with spiked wooden walls in 1660 at Stuyvesant's insistence. On that seminal anniversary, Dutch descendants were found to be residing in the same sloped and gambrel roof homestead houses erected by their forebears, directly in the encroaching shadow of a skyscraper-rising Journal Square. The Dutch language and cultural traditions carried over from Holland in the mid-17th century could still be heard, still witnessed. The Dutch vernacular church and burial grounds were persistently there. Rudimentary village streets, laid out so many centuries before by Surveyor General Jacques Cortelyou, bore their pioneer names. In 1910, the dominion of the Dutch was undying. Their noble names, living language and timeless architecture were stupendous sources of pride.

But the descendant families, headed by historian Daniel Van Winkle, desired something even more forceful, more direct and dominant: a majestic, eye-popping effigy, a central figural fount that would capture, in shaped metal and incised stone, the mystical essence of their lineal village. The bronze statue of Peter Stuyvesant was commissioned and Bergen Square bore more prominence and prestige, as Stuyvesant being its primeval planner, stood there reflecting the pride and rich history of Jersey City.

**All media inquiries should be directed to Jennifer Morrill, Press Secretary to Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy at 201-547-4836 or 201-376-0699.///**