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# The RIVERDALE PRESS

## Going, going — to Delafield auction

By Adam Wisnieski

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Will there be a happy end to the tragic tale of the Delafield Estates?

That depends on the highest bidder.

At noon on Wednesday, Nov. 7, the long-awaited auction for the 22 vacant lots of the Delafield Estates will take place at Conservative Synagogue Adath Israel of Riverdale, located at 475 W. 250th St.

More than 30 years ago, developers planned to build 33 luxury homes on a large tract of land between West 246th Street and Douglas Avenue, behind the Riverdale Temple. Eleven houses were constructed, but developer after developer failed to complete the grandiose project, which included restoring the original Delafield mansion and splitting it into three separate homes.

The estate's most recent owner, Abraham Zion, filed for bankruptcy and after years of courtroom finagling, Salvatore LaMonica was appointed a trustee in 2010 by a bankruptcy court.

In late 2011, two vacant homes, one unfinished, sold at public auction.

Because of a declaration made by the City Planning Commission in 1980, no development can take place until historical and natural elements of the estate are restored. The land has erosion problems, a neglected pond and issues with invasive plant species. Community Board 8 intervened, helping to add a performance bond to the development project. The 22 vacant lots are being sold together and the winning developer will be required to post whichever is higher between a \$500,000 performance bond or 125 percent of the total restoration work, to ensure that the buyer builds on the land.

A developer that backs out and doesn't build will lose that money and it will instead go to the Delafield Homeowners Association, Inc., made up of families living in the estate, to put toward the restoration.

**“This is the largest, undeveloped parcel believed to be available in Riverdale and is a great opportunity for a developer,” Tobias Schapiro of Brown Harris Stevens Residential Sales, LLC, which is representing the trustee.**

**For bidding procedures and other information, call Mr. Schapiro at 212-317-7746 or Ann Schapiro at 212-317-7787.**