

Community Galvanizes to Sponge Away Gross Graffiti

By Craig McGuire

As the weather warms up, an alliance organized by Assemblywoman Eileen Dugan is gathering strength in Carroll Gardens, preparing to launch a campaign to wipe graffiti from the face of the community.

Drawing strength from all quarters of the neighborhood, the collaborative monthly clean-ups will kick-off at the end of May and continue through the autumn.

The effort will forge the strengths of local not-for-profit groups and block associations, the 76th Precinct, Community Board 6, and local elected officials into what is being called a "Community Alliance."

Each entity will draw on its own individual resources to contribute to the campaign.

Local community organizations like the Carroll Gardens Association and the First Place Tri-Block Association will conduct fundraising, mobilize volunteers, and donate materials for monthly clean-ups.

Connie Gibbons, president of Tri-Block, which was recently joined by the Summit Street Block Association, said, "The First Place Tri-Block would like to help in any way we can to get out of this mess. We

hope to do all we can because, like most residents, we are tired of looking at this mess."

meeting, 76th Precinct CPU Officer Carlos Quintana said police are aware of the problem, but encounter re-

action President Buddy Scotto called on the community to support the police in their efforts.

"We have to support the police when it comes to arresting the youths, because if we don't there will be a drop in arrests, and the problem will grow," stated Scotto.

As the community's liaison to local government, Community Board 6 will disseminate information on funding sources, inform the community about clean-up days, and coordinate efforts with city agencies.

CB 6 District Manager Craig Hammerman said, "It is very important to demonstrate to the perpetrators that these types of offenses that lower the quality of living will not be tolerated."

Elected officials, including Congressman Edolphus Towns, State Senator Martin Connor, Assemblywoman Dugan, and City Councilman Stephen DiBrienza, will plan and coordinate monthly clean-ups, coordinate media efforts, seek funding from government and private sources, and sponsor legislation or endorse programs that directly or indirectly combat graffiti.

"What Assemblywoman

Dugan and the other legislators want to accomplish is to start monthly clean-ups," said Matthew Puglisi, a Dugan aide. "The key is getting people together, get materials together, and be persistent, so next year we can launch an expanded program."

However, Puglisi said the assemblywoman understands the limitations involved in coordinating the effort. "We have to learn to

Columbia St. Draws Judge's In

A judge hearing oral arguments in the community's lawsuit against a mental health facility planned for Columbia Street blasted the city's and state's lawyers as "a bunch of megabureaucrats who didn't have any idea what a community is."

Judge Ralph Kramer added, "And that's why the city is in such a mess."

Both sides are now awaiting Kramer's decision on the lawsuit, which alleges that the city skirted the ULURP community review process when it transferred ownership of 169 and 171 Columbia Street to the state.

The state wants to fund construction of a five-story, \$3.2 million, 56-unit apartment building to house the

crawl before we walk, and we have to learn to walk before we run," said Puglisi.

"The assemblywoman and the other legislators want to create a model," said Puglisi, "that other communities can look and use."

Residents interested in participating in the effort should contact Assemblywoman Eileen Dugan's office at 875-2311.

mentally ill homeless, to be supervised by the Postgraduate Center for Mental Health.

The judge may rule on the case or send it to a jury trial, said Richard Sbeglia, a lawyer and Luquer Street resident who is arguing the community's case *pro bono*.

"It was a plan and scheme on the part of the city and the state to buy this project and avoid ULURP," Sbeglia charged.

Assemblywoman Eileen Dugan and State Senator Martin Connor both attended the May 6 hearing. Other parties in the lawsuit include City Councilman Stephen DiBrienza and several community organizations.

--Erik Engquist

Clean-up Events Planned for 1994

Saturday, May 21 at Carroll Park:

Parkhouse and monument will be coated with silicone sealant, benches will be sanded and coated with polyurethane, jungle gyms will be cleaned of graffiti, and curbs will be painted.

Saturday, June 18 at the subway wall on Smith Street:

Graffiti will be removed and the wall coated with a silicone sealant.

Saturday, July 16, Smith and Court streets:

Businesses' roll-down gates will be painted over.

Saturday August 16 along Smith, Henry and Court streets:

General clean-up and graffiti removal effort.

Saturday September 17:

Clean-up of new graffiti in areas already cleaned, or clean new areas.

Saturday October 15:

Clean-up of new graffiti in areas already cleaned.

The 76th Precinct will approach the problem from the perspective of enforcement, which means officers will be enforcing criminal mischief laws and coordinating alternative sentences with the Community Alliance.

At the May Tri-Block

assistance from parents following arrests of graffiti vandals.

However, Quintana added that despite the pressure exerted by parents of offenders, arrests will be made when the crime is witnessed.

Carroll Gardens Associ-