

Rudy Dives in to Help Flooded CG Residents

By Craig McGuire

In the aftermath of the water main break that poured tens of thousands of gallons of water onto the streets and into the basements of Carroll Gardens residents, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani came to Brooklyn to help residents wade through the difficult recovery ahead.

Giuliani, joined by Brooklyn Borough President Howard Golden, City Councilman Steve DiBrienza, and a host of municipal agency representatives, held an open forum at Stranahan Middle School, 610 Henry Street,



Mary Stewart was one of the many Carroll Gardens residents who stepped up to the microphone to ask the mayor questions.

where they answered questions ranging from loans to liability.

At 1:43 a.m. on Friday, January 21, residents were awakened by a loud explosion from beneath Clinton Street between Third and Fourth places. A 135-year-old water main had broken, flooding dozens of homes and cutting off utilities for hundreds of Carroll Gardens residents.

At 8:45 a.m., the section of roadway outside of 514 Clinton Street, the epicenter of the break, collapsed.

The hemorrhaging 30-inch cast-iron pipe spewed water through Carroll Gardens for nine hours while workers battled severe winter temperatures searching for the cut-off valves along Clinton Street.

After the toll plaza froze, the Brooklyn Battery Tunnel was closed and traffic spilled over into the surrounding area until the tunnel reopened at 2 p.m.

Addressing residents at the middle school, Giuliani said, "There is no way to completely restore what was damaged. What we are here to do is to help."

At the forum, Golden

announced an allocation from his office of \$250,000 in capital budget funds for a city-sponsored home improvement loan program for the area.

Homeowners who meet income-eligibility requirements can borrow up to \$20,000 from participating banks at low interest rates. "My office, along with the Department of Housing Preservation and Development, Citibank, and the Carroll Gardens Association, will work together to make these funds available to eligible homeowners through the Home Improvement Program," said Golden.

DiBrienza announced that his office (858-5110) would be utilized as a command center for residents seeking assistance and information.

"As a community, we have, we are, and we continue to come together to seek and secure action," said DiBrienza.

Damage claim forms, to be submitted by residents to the city, were made available by municipal representatives at the meeting.

"Even if private in-



Brooklyn Borough President Howard Golden (center) and Councilmember Stephen DiBrienza (left) co-sponsored an emergency town hall meeting yesterday between Mayor Rudolph Giuliani (right) and the victims of the Carroll Gardens water main break.

ance covers your damage, you should still file," advised Giuliani, adding that residents have 90 days to do so.

Celia Cacace, a longtime neighborhood resident and member of Community Board 6, asked Giuliani, "Is the city really going to be

honest with us?"

"We have no interest here but to help you collect private insurance," said

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