World Trade Center Artifact Comes to Rest in Stone Harbor

Deborah McGuire

STONE HARBOR — An artifact from the World Trade Center was formally welcomed to the borough during a moving, May 30 ceremony in the Stone Harbor Fire House.

“There are people all over the country and all over the world who will never be able to get to New York, yet 9-11 is something that affected all of us, no matter where we live,” said Deputy Executive Director of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, Bill Baroni.

According to Baroni, the Port Authority has received thousands of requests for the pieces of steel from the twin towers. Requests poured in from throughout the United States, foreign countries, military bases and embassies.

“We thought it was so important that people, no matter where they live, to see and touch a piece of what we lost.”

Baroni said that while the artifact appears to simply be a piece of steel, it is, in fact, much more. “It was our home,” he said. “It was the place where 3,000 people from which they didn’t go home. And it is our moral responsibility at the Port Authority to make sure people, no matter where their homes are anywhere across the country, can see a piece of it.”

The process to obtain a piece of the World Trade Center infrastructure is cumbersome, involving a release signed by a federal judge because the steel is considered as evidence in a crime.

“This piece of steel here went before a federal judge in Manhattan was released here for Stone Harbor because we knew the people of this town were passionately committed to honoring it. I didn’t know how passionately," said Baroni, "until I got here.”

The Deputy Director thanked the borough for their commitment in helping preserve the history of 9-11. “It’s not difficult for us to remember where we were,” he said, referring to the tragic moments when planes hit the World Trade Center, the Pentagon and a field in Schwenksville, Pa. “But there is an entire generation of kids who are in school right now who may not have even been around. They’re going to be able to come here in town and learn what happened on September 11th.”

Bringing the artifact to this small seaside borough has special meaning, said Baroni. “You help us preserve what we have lost. We are passionately committed to making sure what we lost on September 11th. To the people who never got to come home home, to the

people who never got to the shore for the summer, to the people who never got to coach another Little League game or serve on a rescue squad. You will remember them."

Mayor Suzanne Walters said she, along with Committee, look forward to finding the site to memorialize the artifact. Walters said the borough hopes to name a site by Sept. 11, 2012, with a formal dedication of the site Sept. 11, 2013.

Walters told the Herald while no year-round residents of the borough were killed on 9-11, local emergency personnel responded to the site.

She recalled how at a mayors' meeting in New York City, she had the pleasure of meeting Mayor Rudy Giuliani. "I'm Suzanne Walters from Stone Harbor," she told Giuliani. She said the New York mayor replied, "You sent people."