

Watchung plans 911 memorial with World Trade Center steel

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WATCHUNG – A small piece of steel sitting on the Clerk’s desk will soon become the focal point of the borough’s new 911 memorial.

Last year borough officials applied to the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey to obtain a piece of the remaining World Trade Center steel that is being kept in storage at Hanger 17 at Kennedy Airport. Pieces of steel that were salvaged from the Trade Center’s steel girders have been distributed to fire departments across the country to be used in 911 memorials.



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“Pearl Harbor affected the whole country not just Hawaii and 911 affected the whole country not just New York City,” said Watchung Mayor Jerry Mobus, who appointed a committee to plan a 911 memorial around the steel piece.

The borough already has a tree and two monuments in memory of the two Watchung residents who were killed that day, but the new memorial will be included in a master plan for a memorial area on the Village Green, the grassy area beneath the Watchung Lake falls where the annual Tree of Lights is held. The 911 Committee has been charged with putting together a plan and presenting a rendering to the Borough Council by Sept. 11 this year to coincide with the tenth anniversary of the World Trade Center attack.



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The committee is not pushing to have the actual memorial in place by the tenth anniversary because “we want to do it once and we want to do it right,” Mobus said.

Mobus said he is waiting for a final design plan before coming up with an estimate of what the project will cost. He said it would be funded by a combination of private donations and public funding and the town would ask for donations of equipment and materials from local contractors.

The borough holds a Sept. 11 service each year and Mobus said that over the years he's been asked how long the town will continue to commemorate the anniversary of the Sept. 11 attacks. His answer is, "As long as I'm standing we're going to have our service here" adding, "You can't ever forget that."



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