

YOUR
NEIGHBORHOOD

QUEENS

2M in clean air projects OKd



SUSANA BATES

LANDMARK MOVE Eugene Zeltman, New York Power Authority president, announced that the authority will fund \$2 million in clean air projects at a press conference yesterday.

By **WARREN WOODBERRY Jr.**
DAILY NEWS STAFF WRITER

The New York Power Authority has agreed to fund \$2 million in clean air projects for local communities to reduce their dependency on electricity through efficient energy consumption.

The funding is part of a landmark settlement between the state and environmental groups. It also calls for NYPA to construct a new energy efficient power plant at the Astoria site of the existing Charles Poletti power plant, which is scheduled to be shut down, perhaps as soon as 2008.

In the interim, the clean air projects are designed to help home and business owners lower their electrical needs through alternative energy sources, such as solar energy power.

The program fulfills a commitment Gov. Pataki made to people in northwest Queens.

"Today we take a major step in fulfilling that commitment," said NYPA President and CEO Eugene Zeltman. "Now we're reaching out to those who know best, members of the community."

Announced last fall, the clean air initiative will be coordinated through Clean Air Communities, a program sponsored by the Northeast States Clean Air Foundation and Northeast States for Coordinated Air Use Management.

Clean Air Communities already has implemented several energy efficient projects throughout the city, such as a commercial rooftop solar array in Greenpoint, Brooklyn, and

an emissions reduction project at Battery Park.

"Everybody knows that the air quality in northwest Queens is the worst," said Ken Colburn, executive director of the Northeast States Clean Air Foundation/Clean Air Communities. "We resolved to change that situation."

'A big victory'

Councilman Peter Vallone Jr. (D-Astoria) yesterday applauded the plan to close the Poletti facility, which he called the dirtiest power plant in the city.

"We have one of the highest asthma rates in Queens," said Vallone, a co-founder of C.H.O.K.E. - the Coalition Helping Organize a Kleaner Environment. "This agreement is a big victory for people."

Vallone said that while the new power plant will be much cleaner than the existing one, he reiterated that northwest Queens is oversaturated with energy providers, who supply 60% of New York City's energy.

As part of the agreement, the 26-year-old Poletti plant will reduce its dependency on oil and increase its use of natural gas in the short term. The latest it would be taken off-line is 2010, officials said.

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A Survey Reveals Sentiment For Keeping Shafts of Light

By DAVID W. DUNLAP

Having gingerly and gratefully grown reaccustomed to the nightly sight of two brilliant columns over Lower Manhattan — a compass point on which so many lives have turned — some New Yorkers seem reluctant to lose them again.

Since March 11, 88 searchlights mounted at Battery Park City, just west of the World Trade Center site, have cast parallel shafts into the sky every evening after dusk, as a temporary "Tribute in Light," scheduled to last two more weeks. Sometimes they ascend endlessly. Sometimes they merely tickle the bottom of low clouds.

But they have definitely struck a chord.

"It's a clear path to heaven," said the architect Ralph Mancini of Mancini Duffy, whose office was in the trade center's south tower. "It made me feel as if we were still there. It made me feel connected to a lot of people. It was a way for me to guide them to God. It was magnificent."

"I wish the lights could stay on until the first person moves into the new design of the trade center," he said, "as a symbol we're all together."

Mr. Mancini, it turns out, is not alone.

"At least for the time being — and maybe for all time — New Yorkers want those twin beams of light to soar," said Maurice Carroll, director of the Quinnipiac University Polling Institute. He released a poll yesterday showing that 39 percent of 1,038 registered voters in the city feel the

A temporary tribute strikes a chord. A 'path to heaven,' says one resident.

lights should stay on until a permanent memorial is built and that 36 percent feel the lights themselves should be permanent.

Twenty percent feel the lights should be turned off April 13, as planned. And that is what will happen, said Kent L. Barwick, president of the Municipal Art Society, the chief sponsor of the project, in part because it was approved by various community groups, government agencies and victims' family members as a brief, finite gesture.

"Having made a set of commitments," Mr. Barwick said, "they ought to be honored." There are practical considerations, too. "This was conceived using rented equipment, borrowed materials and temporary structures on land that doesn't belong to us," he said.

The city is deferring to the Municipal Art Society on whether it would be feasible to resume the installation, said Jennifer E. Falk, deputy press secretary to Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg. Only then would there be a fuller discussion and public review of whether it should be continued.

Besides design, financing and engineering, such a review would have to account for the impact of searchlights on neighbors and on the birds that fly around them.

The New York City Audubon Society is strongly opposed to prolonging the installation, said a board member, Peter Rhoades Mott. Observers have not found any dead or injured birds around the site since March 11, he said, but have noticed that most change their flight patterns.

"Extending the 'Tribute' would substantially increase the likelihood of catastrophe for migrants," Mr. Mott said. Based on a five-year tally around the World Trade Center, some species most at risk would be the American woodcock, hermit thrush, gray catbird and black-throated blue warbler.

The project has won over some who were initially opposed. Anne Pasternak, executive director of Creative Time, a public arts group involved in coordinating the "Tribute in Light," said she had heard praise from someone who once feared the lights would make ground zero look like a used-car lot.

But Ms. Pasternak says she expects a debate if there is a move to make the memorial permanent, perhaps along the lines of whether twin light towers commemorate American economic dominance rather than lost lives.

Even some of the project's earliest supporters question how well it would work permanently.

"Everyone I know felt the thing that made it so strong was its impermanence," said Agnes Gund, president of the Museum of Modern Art. She said the beacons are "very spiritual now, but after a while it would feel like either they should be substantial or not be there."

For some New Yorkers, however, losing even a spectral representation of the trade center might be painful.

"As comforted as people are by seeing this anchor, they are very unsettled by the fact that it's temporary," said Gustavo Bonevardi, who worked on the design with John Bennett, Julian LaVerdiere, Paul Myoda, Richard Nash Gould and Paul Marantz.

"Everyone is questioning why it has to go," Mr. Bonevardi said. "Now that it's done, we feel that it belongs to the city. If that's what the people want to do, we're excited, willing and eager to help in having them come back."

It is clear that even an ephemeral "Tribute in Light" has left an indelible mark.

Richard A. Kahan, co-founder of Take the Field, a nonprofit group devoted to rebuilding athletic fields at public high schools, was on the US Airways shuttle from Washington the night after the lights were first turned on.

"The pilot was announcing it to everyone 50 miles away from New York: 'Those of you on the left side of the plane in 10 minutes will have a spectacular view of the memorial lights,'" Mr. Kahan said. "All of a sudden it struck me that for the pilot, this was part of the American landscape in the same way as other great national monuments."

CITY

Talk of Ground Zero Tribute, as West Street Reopens

By DIANE CARDWELL

The twin beams of light forming a nocturnal memorial to World Trade Center victims will go dark in mid-April as planned, but may be incorporated into a permanent memorial, Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg said yesterday.

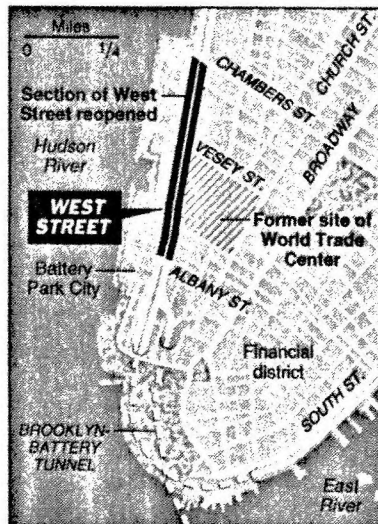
"When we first did it, a lot of the families of those we lost were against it, because they felt it would become the permanent memorial and they wanted something they thought was more fitting," Mr. Bloomberg said on his weekly call-in radio program, which took no calls yesterday.

"I think we should consider lights as part of the permanent memorial," he added, although he cautioned against the expense.

The temporary memorial, Tribute in Light, costs hundreds of thousands of dollars a month to maintain, Mr. Bloomberg said, adding that the agreement with the residents of Battery Park City limits its glow to about a month.

Several developments involving the World Trade Center site were announced yesterday, from reopened roadways to a new family viewing area to the fate of a tent nicknamed the Taj Mahal by ground zero workers.

Last night, officials reopened six lanes of West Street between Chambers and Albany Streets that had



Six lanes of West Street near ground zero reopened last night.

been closed to traffic since Sept. 11.

In addition, the Brooklyn-Battery Tunnel, the last major crossing still shut down after the terror attack, reopened last night, and will be subject to traffic restrictions similar to those governing other crossings beginning on Monday, officials said. Cars carrying fewer than two occupants into Manhattan will not be permitted between 6 a.m. and 10 a.m., and there is a new lane open only to

cars using E-ZPass and carrying a minimum of three people. The rule also applies to buses and emergency vehicles during those hours. That lane will run from the Verrazano-Narrows Bridge across the Gowanus Expressway to the tunnel, Mr. Bloomberg said.

Also yesterday, the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey announced that the Holland Tunnel is to reopen three Manhattan-bound lanes for cash-paying drivers at 7 a.m. today. The three center lanes will be for E-ZPass users, while three lanes on the far left will remain closed to allow the demolition of the Jersey City warehouse that caught fire last week.

As part of the alterations near ground zero, the Lower Manhattan Development Corporation is setting up a new location, a room next to its offices on the 20th floor of 1 Liberty Plaza, where families can view the site where their loved ones perished. The room, which will include an area for children, will be open weekdays from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. and on weekends and holidays from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., beginning April 8.

Officials said that the room was set up in response to the families' requests for greater privacy and because the view of the site has been obstructed as recovery work has moved underground.

"What the families will have here

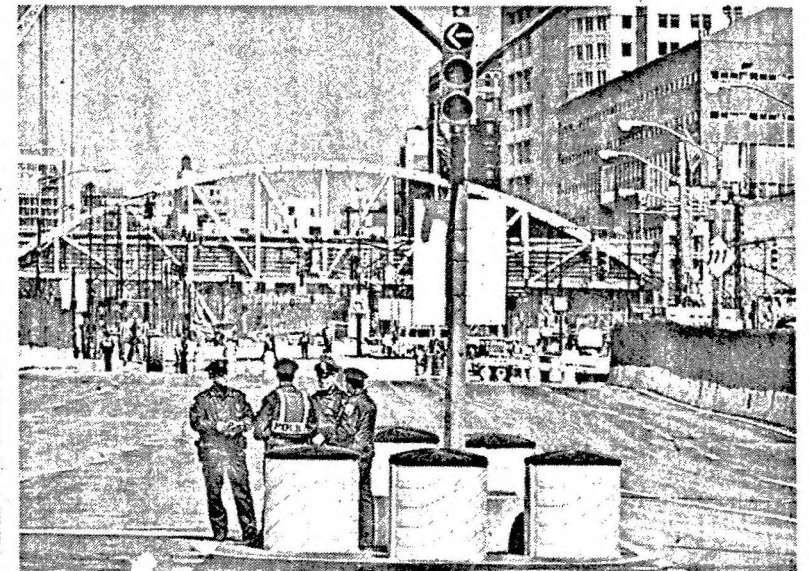
is their own room where they can sit and reflect and not be disturbed by anybody else," Mr. Bloomberg said. "It has always been contentious as to who really could get on to the platform. This will solve that problem."

Some of those family members, present at the news conference announcing the roadway openings, said they were pleased about the new center, as well as a decision announced by Gov. George E. Pataki that city officials had agreed that a tent where ground zero workers can eat and shower would remain open for at least the next few weeks, and perhaps for a month, if necessary.

That decision, Mr. Pataki said, would ensure "that those rescue workers who are down here still 24 hours a day have an appropriate place where they can sit and eat and bathe and just go about the activities they have to when they're not down at ground zero itself."

Officials said earlier this week that the tent would have to be taken down so that the Battery Park City Authority could use the area as a parking lot for businesses that are reopening, but family groups were adamant that it remain open.

After the news conference, Mr. Bloomberg, who had said that it would be "more than appropriate" to have a ceremony honoring the workers when the recovery operation came to a close, was beseeched by



Nicole Bengiveno/The New York Times

Police officers in the middle of West Street, before it reopened to traffic yesterday evening. A stretch of the road had been closed since Sept. 11.

two women who lost relatives in the attack to promise to keep the tent up until the end of the recovery operation.

Mr. Bloomberg sought to reassure them by repeating, "I hear you," and reminding them that Mr. Pataki had said the tent would stay up as long as necessary, but he stopped short of the full commitment they sought.

Martha Butler, who lost her husband, Tom, a firefighter from Squad 1 in Park Slope, Brooklyn, said that she thought the mayor understood her position, but suggested that she

wanted his reassurance in the presence of the news media and witnesses to ensure that officials would not change their decision.

She said she and other relatives of victims and workers could take great comfort in knowing that the workers had a place to go for coffee and emotional support. Speaking of the residents of Battery Park City, she said, "They want their park, their area back, but I want my husband back, and that's what I need to bring some kind of comfort to my family."