

Maloney's Bill Addresses Health Impacts of 9/11

BY JOHN TOSCANO

Several days before yesterday's observance of the sixth anniversary of the World Trade Center atrocity, Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney announced the introduction of sweeping and comprehensive legislation to address the mounting impacts of that attack.

Maloney, who has persistently sought to help heal those first responders who became seriously ill cleaning up at Ground Zero, declared: "This bill will help thousands of Americans who are suffering as a direct result of an act of war."

She said she would be joined by Congressmembers Jerrold Nadler (D-Manhattan) and Vito Fossella (R-C, Staten Island) in sponsoring "this truly bipartisan legislation".

Describing the bill's provisions, Maloney said that it would "ensure that everyone exposed to the toxins at Ground Zero has a right to be medically monitored and anyone who is sick as a result has a right to treatment".

The legislation, which is strongly supported by the New York state AFL-CIO, would "expand care to the whole community," Maloney explained, "including residents, area workers and students, and to thousands of people who came from across the country to respond to the 9/11 attack."

In addition, she said, "[The bill] would provide compensation for economic damages and losses by reopening the 9/11 Victim's Compensation Fund."

This specific provision drew support from a prominent lawmaker, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, who visited Ground Zero last week.

Pelosi (D-California), whose support is criti-

cally important if the bill is to pass, said she believes the government must do more to assist those who became sick in working on the Ground Zero cleanup.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg also supports the reopening of the fund, as does lawyer Kenneth Feinberg, former special master and administrator of the fund. Both said it would help those whose illnesses didn't become apparent until after the fund expired in 2003.

Maloney said enactment of the bill would build on the expertise of the Centers of Excellence (currently at the New York Fire Department, Mount Sinai Hospital, Bellevue Hospital, Queens College, SUNY Stony Brook and University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey), all of which are providing high quality health care to thousands of responders.

The bill would also require the federal government to collect data about and research the extent and severity of WTC-related illnesses, Maloney said. Specifically, the legislation would establish and fund Coordinating Centers of Excellence to collect and analyze data, coordinate outreach and develop medical monitoring and treatment programs and require the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to conduct or support research about conditions that may be WTC-related and about diagnosing and treating WTC-related conditions.

"It is simply not enough to honor the courage and humanity of the heroes of 9/11 with words," said Nadler. "We must also offer them concrete support in their time of need."

Sadness At Flood Losses Equaled By Board 2 Wrath

BY THOMAS COGAN

The story of George Tomov, one of the speakers at this month's Community Board 2 meeting, did not diminish the other accounts of last month's flood damage in Woodside, but it was unusual and poignant. When a severe rainstorm occurred on the morning of Wednesday, August 8, the resultant flooding of Tomov's house at 66-12 48th Ave. caused the ruin of his collection of Balkan dance costumes, some of which were more than a century old and many of which were used by his company of folk dancers. Tomov said that the clamor for compensation growing out of the August disaster is largely irrelevant to him, because his principal loss, rare clothing items that he had assembled over many years, is irreplaceable.

The worst of the flood damage occurred in the area south of Queens Boulevard, between it and 52nd Road, bounded west and east by 61st and 69th Streets. The Brooklyn-Queens Expressway cuts through this territory. According to the angry area residents gathered at the meeting, the August 8 rainfall would have caused only minor flooding in the neighborhoods on either side of the BQE if the decision had not been made to pump the water that was flooding the highway and send it into the sewer system. The system was strained beyond its capacity and water and sewage ultimately overflowed into many homes, Tomov's among them. Angel Nieves, who several blocks away at 48-27 64th St., described standing in chest-high water in his house at 8 a.m., watching sewage floating by. Another man remembered being told that all measures were being taken to keep the BQE clear of floodwater, the welfare of the adjacent community being of little or no concern. His house was badly damaged, and though he has lived there with his family for 17 years, he believes they'll have to move. A woman declared she'd been in her house 32 years and had never seen flooding of this magnitude. She said that there was damage in the streets too, with several cars being flooded so badly they were, in her word, "totaled".

Though one man praised the work of the Department of Sanitation in addressing the post-disaster situation in the neighborhood, other city agencies such as the Fire Department and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) were described with contempt. One woman and property damage victim put it passionately: "The city can take all your money in taxes, but when you ask for help you get nothing." Another neighborhood resident, who had also suffered damage, said that when he and other victims approached the agencies in the wake of the disaster, they "turned their backs on us". As a result, "we lost all our faith in the DEP", the agency that had originally made the decision to pump rainwater from the BQE into the local sewer system. Though the DEP has proposed in the aftermath to send its engineers to look at the situation, the man demanded that an independent engineering body do the job. Board 2 Chairman Joseph Conley agreed. Another local woman recalled suffering flood damage in 1995 and receiving nothing in compensation in the years since, despite a good deal of application for it by herself and her neighbors.

This mood of dissatisfaction, or distrust, was directed also at the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which announced at the end of August that funds would be available

for the disaster victims. Dennis Meehan, representing Congressman Joseph Crowley, who had campaigned for FEMA funds, told the meeting that concerned persons must apply for them, and he had an abundant supply of application forms in the back of the room at the Sunnyside Community Center. Apparently there were rumors that the funds would be in the form of loans, and that was unacceptable to the attendees. The disaster was mainly the city's fault, they contended, and they are demanding grants. Conley said a loan would amount to another mortgage—a particularly sensitive word these days—so compensation must be granted outright.

Present once again to catch the flak (she had borne complaints two nights earlier at the Community Board 4 meeting in Corona) was Jennifer Manley of the mayor's Community Assistance Unit. Repeating Meehan's message, she urged her listeners to apply for funds. When asked about funding caps, she said she knew of none, and that payments would be based on the quality of the applications. Carol Terrano, a board

The worst of the flood damage occurred in the area south of Queens Boulevard, between it and 52nd Road, bounded west and east by 61st and 69th Streets. The Brooklyn-Queens Expressway cuts through this territory. According to the angry area residents gathered at the meeting, the August 8 rainfall would have caused only minor flooding in the neighborhoods on either side of the BQE if the decision had not been made to pump the water that was flooding the highway and send it into the sewer system.

member and resident of the stricken neighborhood, said the infrastructure of a widespread area around the neighborhood needs to be improved immediately, and certainly before plans for more high-rise buildings along Queens Boulevard are carried out. She brought up old business too, demanding sound barriers, promised but not delivered, for the south side of the BQE bordering the neighborhood. There are times in the day, she reminded the meeting, when conversation at a civil level of volume is impossible there, because of the roaring noise made by passing traffic on the highway.

Mandy Ikert delivered a report from the Department of City Planning, speaking about the amendment made to the text concerning zoning of Sunnyside Gardens, which City Planning had designated a Special Planned Community Preservation District in 1974. Now that the Landmarks Preservation Commission has voted to designate Sunnyside Gardens a historic district, City Planning wants to align its language with that of the LPC. Ikert said that since June 26, the date of the LPC vote of approval (which was unanimous), Sunnyside has had "L" or tentative landmark status, with City Council approval needed to make the designation complete. The near certainty of such approval has moved City Planning into action. Conley said that another public hearing on the zoning text amendment should be held. Lisa Deller, head of the Board 2 Land Use Committee, said she is trying to arrange for a meeting to be held Monday, October 8.

Great Dental Care You Can Smile About

- **Emergencies** Seen Promptly.
- **Dental Implants** the Affordable Solution to Loose Partial and Dentures.
- **One Day Dentures** Construct or Repair Full or Partial. On-Site Lab.
- **Cosmetic Dentistry** Crowns, Laminates, Bonding & Bleaching.
- **General Dentistry** For The Entire Family.

Ultra Modern Dentistry. State Of The Art Equipment, Techniques & Sterilization.

* Free Dental Examination

Mention this ad and receive a complimentary Dental Consultation including X-Ray and Private Exam with our Dentists. One per family. Not to be combined with insurance. By appointment only. Offer Good Until 12/31/07 Worth Over \$150. New patients only.

**Most Insurance & Dental Plans Accepted
Flexible Payment Plans Accepted**

Convenient Day, Evening & Weekend Appointments

**Astoria
Dental Group**

1-800-SMILE DR

32-17 BROADWAY, ASTORIA

Dr. Clifford E. Degel, DDS Dr. Carmen Every-Degel, DDS

www.smiledr.com • 278-1123

Now Available

- ★ **Invisalign**
(Invisible Braces)
- ★ **Brite Smile**
(1 Hour Bleaching)
- ★ **Cosmetic Imaging**



**SEE WHAT YOUR SMILE
COULD LOOK LIKE**

Mon.-Thurs. 11-8
Fri. 9:30-5; Sat. 9-3