

Rudy, Guy OK memorial, school before riding off

■ Pair announce
funding for 2
Island projects in
final press
conference

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In his farewell press briefing Monday, former Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani stood next to outgoing Borough President Guy V. Molinari to announce funding for two major Staten Island projects — deals both men brokered before leaving office.

The announcement secured plans for a new \$70 million intermediate school in New Springville and a St. George memorial dedicated to the hundreds of Staten Island residents killed in the World Trade Center disaster.

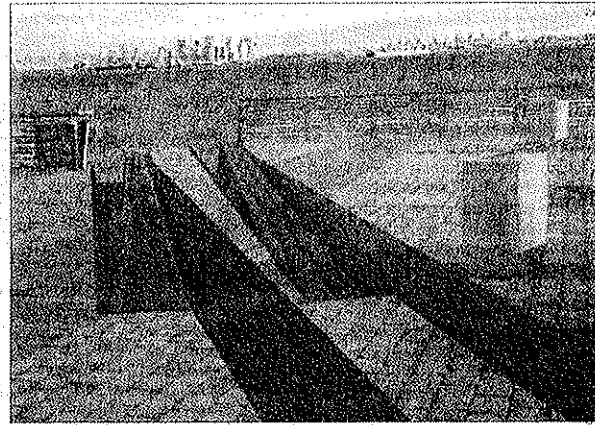
It marked the end of an era for the mayor's close relationship

with the Island, which started when he created the Michael J. Petrides Educational Complex at the beginning of his first term and continued with the elimination of the Staten Island Ferry fare, the closing of the Fresh Kills landfill, and the building of schools, fishing piers and a minor-league baseball stadium in St. George.

The news was the mayor's first order of business at the briefing and seemed to be a high priority for him even as he was continuing a marathon run through his final hours in office.

"I think it's appropriate that, as one of my last acts, we are going to approve a new school to take care of the future of Staten Island and build a memorial which honors the heroic contributions of the people of Staten Island," Giuliani said.

Construction of IS 43, a 900-seat school in the middle of a Mid-Island community plagued by overcrowded middle schools, was put on hold by the Board of Education



An artist rendition depicts the proposed memorial site.

after a clash between Schools Chancellor Harold O. Levy and City Hall over the construction budget.

The board postponed construction of 11 schools, including the one in New Springville, because of a \$2 billion shortfall in funding. There was no word on the fate of the other schools.

"If everything goes well we could see a ground-breaking in about a year and a half and a school opening in four years," said Molinari. "This will do wonders to relieve the overcrowding situation and will give us funding for a school that is desperately needed."

IS 43 will absorb students from Laurie Intermediate School in New Springville and Markham Intermediate School in Graniteville. The schools are at 112 percent and 119 percent capacity, respectively.

The new school will go up on Marsh Avenue next to PS 58, which is currently under construction and scheduled to be completed by December 2002.

"Staten Island needs an enormous amount of relief and we are rightfully getting it," said Jerry Cammarata, the Island's representative on the Board of Education who was also at the press briefing. "It's not being given as a present. It's something that is woefully needed."

The mayor also disclosed plans for a \$2 million memorial for Staten Island Trade Center victims, which he reasoned was necessary because of the extraordinarily high number of borough residents who were killed.

"In terms of numbers, Staten Island had the most people that died, the most number of funerals," he said. "It just makes sense to erect a memorial in the community."

The monument will be built on the waterfront esplanade next to the Richmond County Bank Ballpark, directly across the harbor from where the Twins Towers once stood.

Designs are still preliminary but for now include two black granite wedges, where families will be able to see and touch victims' names etched into the surface, a concept inspired by the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C. The structure will create two dark shadows that mimic the Trade Center towers.

The memorial will include the names of the 264 Staten Island victims that Borough Hall has tallied and another 20 or 30 former residents who have family in the borough and deep ties to the community.

"It's just made for it," Molinari said of the esplanade, which once had a brilliant view of the Trade Center. "It screams out for someone to come forward and do something special with it. Staten Island was impacted so severely, it would only be appropriate to erect a memorial and dedicate it to all the people we lost."

The memorial is being designed by Peter Eisenmann, a famed architect who had also been chosen to design the Discovery Center, the museum that was supposed to be built next to the ferry terminal and operated by the Staten Institute for Arts and Sciences.

Plans for that project fell through after the Trade Center attack because of financial demands elsewhere, but Molinari and Borough President James Molinaro suggested putting the \$48 million earmarked for the museum toward the other two projects.

Molinaro, who worked closely with the mayor and Molinari to negotiate an agreement on the two projects, said he's already had dinner with Mayor Michael Bloomberg and is confident Staten Island will continue to get priority treatment.

"It's a tough act to follow," Molinaro said. "But this gets us off to a good start and I'm confident that [Bloomberg] will be just as good a friend to Staten Island."

More specific information about where in the city budget the money for the projects would come from was not available at the briefing.