

120 Willow Ave. Condo Association
120 Willow Ave.
Hoboken NJ 07030

August 11, 2003

Hoboken Reporter
Hoboken NJ 07030

Dear Editor,

City living is always accompanied by sounds of fire trucks, police cars, and ambulances. Statistically it is in our favor that we will not be the person who is in desperate need of emergency services. For those who are in need, the quality of the professionals responding to the emergency, and helping with the aftermath, makes a world of difference.

The residents of 120 Willow Ave. became part of the unfavorable statistics when our eight unit building caught fire last January. While we were immediately thankful that no one was injured, being displaced from our homes was devastating. Six months later, as we continue to rebuild our lives and begin to reflect on our experience, we would like to extend a thanks to numerous hard-working professionals in Hoboken who have helped us through our crisis.

Our first thanks belongs with the Hoboken Fire Department. If it were not for their quick response and containment of the fire we might not have salvaged contents and the fire could have spread to the adjoining buildings. The Fire Department was courteous and comforting in our time of need. We also appreciated when the Red Cross provided us with coffee, food, and the promise of shelter. A special thanks goes to Robert Romano of Hawks Construction, who went to Home Depot after the firemen left and spent half the night boarding up and securing our building.

City officials Mayor Dave Roberts and Councilperson Theresa Castellano also reached out to us. Mayor Roberts arrived as the firemen finished extinguishing the fire. We welcomed a calm voice telling us what the next concrete steps should be. At our request, Mayor Roberts also assigned a police officer to monitor our building until we were able to fully secure the broken windows and doors. Castellano met with us on numerous occasions and assisted us in hiring local professionals to begin the process of reconstruction. We owe thanks to Minervini-Vandermark architects and lawyer Matthew Bernhard for the highly competent service they have provided us.

In the days that followed the fire we met with our insurance agents at the building and attempted to salvage the contents of our apartments. It was below freezing every day, and all services to the building had been disconnected. The Antique Bakery opened up their store to us as a place to periodically warm up throughout the day. This act of kindness made it possible to salvage our apartments more efficiently and safely.

While we are hopeful that reconstruction will begin shortly, we remain displaced from our homes. Yet we know that we are lucky. The help of Hoboken professionals made the difference between a manageable and a paralyzing crisis.

Sincerely,

120 Willow Condo Association

Cc:

Hoboken Fire Department
Red Cross
Robert Romano
Mayor Roberts
Theresa Castellano
Minervini-Vandermark Architects
Matthew Bernhard
Antique Bakery