

News Alert

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Former Mayor Richard Berkley says “Time is right for Skywalk Memorial”

Richard Berkley urges Kansas City Parks Board to give a memorial sincere consideration.

Kansas City, MO-Former Kansas City Mayor Richard Berkley says a memorial commemorating the victims of the Hyatt collapse and the rescue workers who responded, will be positive for the community. Berkley, who was mayor the night of the collapse July 17, 1981, addressed the Kansas City Parks Board during a public hearing on the issue of a memorial in Washington Square Park, located just 300 feet to the west of the scene of the accident.

“This can be positive,” said Berkley, who called that period in Kansas City one of the most difficult times of his life. “There have been many changes in the law and there are many positive aspects to this in terms of changes to building codes and emergency response training. The police and firefighters all did a superior job, as well as could be expected. We have a rare and unique opportunity. Give it sincere consideration.”

Berkley was one of a half dozen people who addressed the Parks Board during a public hearing on June 24th, 2008 at which a formal proposal was presented to the Board. Others who spoke included Kansas City attorney Brent Wright whose mother and step-father were killed that night.

“There have been attempts in the past but it was too soon,” said Wright, who is a board member of the Skywalk Memorial Foundation. “The truth is we owe it to the 114 who died, the hundreds who were injured and the many others who responded that night. They deserve it.”

Skywalk Memorial Co-founder and President Frank Freeman provided the Parks Board with letters and emails in support of a memorial. He was injured and lost his significant other in the collapse.

“Back then, Kansas City was beginning its future, everybody was excited,” said Freeman. “Today we are all living that future now. 114 people killed did not get to live their futures. They need to be remembered.”

“The Parks Board is expected to vote on the matter July 8th, 2008. The Board did approve a Korean War Memorial in Washington Square Park, also the requested location for the Skywalk Memorial. Richard Wetzell, AIA, the President of the American Institute of Architects - Kansas

City Chapter and an urban planner, told the Parks Board the two memorials could both easily fit into Washington Square Park.

The Skywalk Memorial Foundation is a not-for-profit corporation committed to honoring and remembering the 114 people who lost their lives and those who were injured by the tragic events of July 17, 1981. Through the planning, design and construction of a permanent memorial, the Foundation also seeks to recognize and honor the emergency/medical personnel, firefighters, police officers, public servants and others who so bravely responded to this unprecedented disaster.

For more information go to www.skywalkmemorial.org