

Dang, dang, dang goes the trolley

By HUGH SON

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It's truly the end of the line for the Red Hook trolley.

The city is pulling up a two-block stretch of trolley tracks near the Red Hook waterfront, paving over the derailed dreams of Brooklyn's most ardent streetcar enthusiast.

The move brought Bob Diamond — whose life's mission has been to return the clanging cars to Brooklyn — to tears last week as he watched construction workers toil on Conover St.

He lamented that the line he envisioned as stretching from Red Hook to downtown Brooklyn was never completed after the city halted funding two years ago.

"The people running the city have no foresight and vision for the future," said Diamond, 44, who said he spent \$100,000 of his own money on the tracks.

"I would say for the money they spent removing the tracks, they could have just finished it," he added.

Unlike the Red Hook line's slow, fitful and incomplete creation over the past decade, the work to remove tracks and freshly pave over the streets will be swift, promised Matt Monahan, spokesman for the city's Design and Construction Department.

"We'll be cleaning those blocks and removing tracks to make them safe and drivable by January," Monahan said.

The uncompleted tracks, as well as garbage that had collected there, made the streets impassable for cars, he added.

Meanwhile, the last remaining vestiges of Diamond's failed dream — the historic trolley cars themselves — are in jeopardy.

Diamond was served with eviction papers demanding he remove five historic trolley cars stored at the nearby Beard St. pier by the end of this month. But the trolley cars are trapped there, he said, because of an August 2001 barge accident that severed rail lines.

"There's no way to get them out of the building short of cutting them up into little pieces," Diamond said.

The trolley tracks that are being removed once led to a warehouse on the Beard St. pier, where trolley cars would have rolled out to pick up commuters.

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TRACK WRECKER Worker removes rails and ties at Conover St. last week, effectively dashing Bob Diamond's hopes for Red Hook trolley.