

A fascinating story: Trump's rescue of Wollman Skating Rink

"You can always get the job done through sheer force of will."



By John Eidson | August 14, 2015

By the late 1970s, New York City's beloved Wollman outdoor ice skating rink had fallen into disrepair. In 1980, city officials announced the rink would be closed for repairs, which they estimated would take two years. Six years and \$12 million later, the renovation was still incomplete, with one botched and costly attempt after another having failed.

Residents were upset that the popular Central Park attraction had been closed for so long. The Wollman Rink debacle came to symbolize the incompetence of the city's bloated and complacent bureaucracy. In stepped a flamboyant young developer named Donald J. Trump, who challenged the city to let him take over the renovation, promising he would complete the project in four months at a budget of \$3 million, and that he would do the job as a public service.

"Just give the project to me," he said, "and I'll finish it by Christmas. *This* Christmas. And I'll do it for free ... I have total confidence that we will be able to do it, and I am going on record as saying that I will not be embarrassed."

In a letter to New York's mayor, Ed Koch, Trump wrote, "I know how to build. I'm going to take the approach of leadership. I'm going to get good contractors and push the hell out of them. They've worked for me and they want to continue working for me. They want to prove you can do things in this city. You can always get the job done through sheer force of will."

In June 1986, Koch finally relented, stipulating that the project must be completed by December 15 and that Trump would be responsible for any cost overruns.

The rest is history.

Trump finished his world-class renovation of Wollman Rink two months ahead of schedule and \$750,000 under budget. "This serves as an example of what New York, the wealthiest city in the world, can do in terms of saving money if things are done right," Trump said at the rink's opening. "If we could just plan and execute, it would be billions and billions of [taxpayer] dollars that would be saved."

Yes, GOP presidential candidate Donald Trump can come across as arrogant and politically incorrect. But when he says he will do something, *he actually intends to do it*. His word means something. When he says, "I will build a fence," people believe him. They believe him when he says he loves America and is tired of watching it decline. They believe him when he says he will save their country by fixing its bloated, inefficient, and shamefully indebted federal government. Of course, accomplishing that would be an infinitely greater challenge than rescuing a skating rink. But, if anyone can turn a battleship around in a bathtub, maybe Trump can.

You can always get the job done by sheer force of will.