

Citizens for Buildings (Department) Reform

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Queens Civic Congress



June 10, 2008



Dear New Yorker,

Queens Civic Congress, Four Borough Neighborhood Preservation Alliance, Historic Districts Council and other concerned community organizations throughout the City of New York invite you to join concerned citizens who seek to reform the NYC Department of Buildings by including community input and consultation. We convene **Thursday, June 12, 12:00 noon on the steps of City Hall** to focus the Mayor and City Council on the need incorporate community concerns in construction safety and apply the same vigor to the building issues that plague neighborhoods throughout the city. No reason exists to perpetuate illegal and unsafe development ANYWHERE in our town.

City Hall acted fast after the most recent crane disaster, including a closed-door meeting with construction industry insiders. The result: a watered-down version of proposals from 2007 and 2008 embodied in legislation by Assembly Member James Brennan. The closed-door meeting suggests that the Mayor is more concerned with crisis management than real reform. By working with the community, we have a chance to pro-actively address systematic DOB flaws. The most pressing reforms include:

- Reinspect hazardous Stop Work Order sites. DOB fails to re-inspect a construction sites after every hazardous violation and fails to verify compliance. Some offenders simply pay a fine.
- *End Self-Certification (a.k.a. "Professional Certification")*. The crane disasters represent bigger problems with oversight of the construction industry. City Hall needs to stand for safety all around New York, not just at high rise crane sites.
- *Work with the community*. City Hall needs to harness the expertise of community groups.

These crane crashes and allegations of corruption make clear: Accountability must rule. We may face fewer or less tall cranes but our neighborhoods still face builders, developers and owners who flout, ignore or just do not know the rules. City Hall has only taken action when high profile deaths come to the Mayor's neighborhood. The forgotten construction deaths and accidents will continue until the City Hall addresses the larger issues.

Please RSVP to Corey Bearak at Bearak@aol.com or (718) 343-6779, Raul Rothblatt at rrothblatt@gmail.com or (718) 857-3150, or Simeon Bankoff at sbankoff@hdc.org or (212) 614-9107.