

Notice many of the news stories depicted Upper East Side residents lamenting the impacts of overdeveloping. We may face less cranes but our nabes still face builders, developers and owners who either flout, ignore or just do not know the rules.

Memo to City Hall: If the industry does not get it right and DOB can stop the cranes, why the inability to stop these unscrupulous builders who tear down sound homes, abuse self-certification in a zeal for dollars beyond the pale of reason?

http://www.nypost.com/seven/06012008/news/regionalnews/1_more_and_we_shut_city_down_13481.htm

NEW YORK POST

'1 MORE AND WE SHUT CITY DOWN'

By BRAD HAMILTON, BRUCE GOLDING and MATTHEW NESTEL

June 1, 2008 -- In an emotional two-hour meeting yesterday, the city's acting buildings commissioner warned the construction industry that "if there's any more crane accidents, he's shutting the whole city down," sources at the emergency summit said.

"He was cracking the whip," one source said.

Acting Department of Buildings boss Robert LiMandri told the closed-door confab at the agency's downtown headquarters that officials were also considering a new commission to regulate crane operations, the sources said.

The city is also weighing third-party inspections of crane equipment before it's set up at sites, said the sources.

Yesterday's meeting, attended by about 80 developers, construction managers and union leaders, came as new revelations emerged about the shockingly poor condition of the giant crane that suddenly snapped Friday and killed two workers.

* Paper appeared to have been stuffed into the turntable atop the crane's tower, shown in photos taken after the crash, and may have contributed to the deadly disaster, experts said.

* Several industry and political leaders attacked the city for its inexperienced and depleted team of crane inspectors.

* Others claimed inspectors should have been able to detect loose bolts that gave way and led to the crane cab's plummet.

Photos showing paper appearing to have been drenched with grease, shot 22 minutes after the deadly disaster at East 91st Street and First Avenue, are a sign that the giant machine's turntable was leaking, said an industry insider.

"Grease should not be pouring out of it," he said. "They drip, but if it's constantly pouring out, obviously there's an issue, and the crane should be put out of service immediately."

A veteran crane operator said the paper, if combined with grease and water, would have been sticky enough to seize the turntable mechanism. The force of the crane's powerful motor could then shear off the top of the crane.

One of the photos was shot by Nader Al Aawah, manager of the Blue Moon Deli near the crash scene.

Al Aawah was showing investigators the photos on his laptop computer Friday when he overheard two men - one a construction worker, the other from the Department of Buildings - discussing the greasy papers.

The construction worker said the firm had put the paper inside the ring "to keep the grease in," Al Aawah said.

A DOB source confirmed that the department is looking into the papers and the cracked swivel ring as a cause of the deadly collapse.

Other images reveal a series of holes where bolts once held the turntable to the tower, said Greg Teslia of Crane Safety & Inspections, in Coral Springs, Fla.

Teslia said experienced eyes would have spotted loose bolts.

He also said that failed welds were visible as shiny stretches along the edges of the steel ring atop the tower.

"This f- - -ing crane - it should have been in the junkyard," said master rigger Ali Bacchus, 48, who oversaw the day-to-day operation of the Kodiak 300 crane.

After yesterday's safety summit, the DOB announced it had halted the use of eight other Kodiak cranes at five sites in Manhattan.

LiMandri said outside experts would be brought in to review evidence from the collapse.

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