

Citizens for Buildings (Department) Reform

PO Box 238, Flushing, NY 11363
phone (718) 343-6779
fax: (718) 225-3366



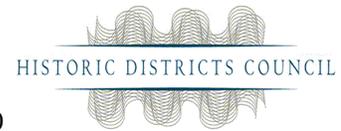
Queens Civic Congress



For Immediate Release: Wednesday, June 11, 2008

Contact:

Corey Bearak, Queens Civic Congress (718) 343-6779
Simeon Bankoff, Historic Districts Council, (212) 614-9107
Raul Rothblatt, Four Borough Neighborhood Preservation Alliance (718) 857-3150



Community Groups Demand DOB Reform

Bloomberg reforms a watered-down version of previous proposals

Queens Civic Congress, Four Borough Neighborhood Preservation Alliance, Historic Districts Council and other concerned community organizations throughout the City of New York convene **Thursday, June 12, 12:00 noon on the steps of City Hall** with other concerned citizens who seek to reform the NYC Department of Buildings by including community input and consultation in construction safety and apply the same vigor to the building issues that plague neighborhoods throughout the city.

City Hall acted quickly after the most recent crane disaster, but action was limited to a closed-door meeting with construction industry insiders. The only result: a watered-down version of proposals from 2007 and 2008 embodied in legislation by Assembly Member James Brennan. The closed-door meeting suggests a City Hall more concerned with crisis management than with real reform. With construction deaths at an all-time high, New Yorkers are not placated by crisis management. There is no excuse for perpetuating illegal and unsafe construction ANYWHERE in our town.

The threat of accident and death has turned citizens into construction experts. It is time for the City to use this expertise.

The most pressing reforms include:

- *Re-inspect hazardous Stop Work Order sites.* The Department of Buildings fails to re-inspect 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 a more serious lack of 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.

The recent crane crashes and allegations of corruption make one thing clear: Accountability is imperative. City Hall's actions following record construction deaths is inadequate; the result of City Hall's reforms may be fewer or shorter cranes, but it does not affect the vast majority of our neighborhoods which still face builders, developers and owners who flout, ignore or don't bother to learn the rules. These avoidable construction accidents – and deaths – will continue until City Hall addresses the larger issues.

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

WHO: Queens Civic Congress, Four Borough Neighborhood Preservation Alliance, Historic Districts Council and other concerned community organizations

WHAT: New Conference to reform the NYC Department of Buildings by including community input and consultation in construction safety and apply the same vigor to the building issues that plague neighborhoods throughout the city

WHEN: Thursday, June 12, 12:00 noon

WHERE: on the steps of City Hall