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EXCLUSIVE: Building Unions Present Concerns to W. 57th St. Tower Shareholders

By Ginger Adams Otis & Reuven Blau



An artist's rendering of JDS Development Group's condo development on W. 57th St. (center). The Laborers' International Union and the Building Construction Trades Council of Greater New York have revealed their concerns about the building to shareholders.

The city's building trade unions are turning up the heat on shareholders of what will be one of the city's tallest towers for using non-organized labor.

The Laborers' International Union and the Building Construction Trades Council of Greater New York plan to present their case directly to shareholders of the proposed 80-story building on W. 57th St. during a meeting at the Warwick Hotel in Midtown Thursday.

"I have many concerns about the building," Gary LaBarbera, president of the trades council, told The News.

The unions contend that the builder, JDS Development, uses contractors with poor construction safety records.

One of those contractors, LaBarbera said, is Park Side Construction, which has a history of safety violations, including one case where a worker was crushed to death by a falling concrete slab at a W. 37th St. hotel last year.



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Gary LaBarbera (left), the president of the Building and Construction Trades Council of New York, says JDS is using contractors with poor construction safety records.

Union leaders said another is NY Insulation, which was found guilty of wage theft and barred from working on public projects in New York City.

“JDS regularly employs union workers and has an excellent safety record, so we’re not really sure why they’re protesting unless they think every single construction job in NYC must be filled by a union member,” a spokesman for the firm said.

JDS CEO Michael Stern plans to build the super-slender tower at 111 W. 57th St. It is expected to rise to 1,421 feet and be one of the most expensive condo towers on the so-called “Billionaires’ Row.”