



NYC DOB deputy commissioner keynotes 2022 BOMA NY leadership breakfast

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New York, NY BOMA New York's 2022 Annual Leadership Breakfast was held at Club 101 on Park Ave. with over one hundred commercial real estate professionals.

The event started with a welcoming by BOMA New York executive director Lori Raphael, who then passed the microphone to Peter DiCapua, an industry leader and former BOMA New York president, to announce the incoming officers and board of directors.

Introduced by chairman Matt Duthie, keynote speaker Gus Sirakis, deputy commissioner of NYC Department of Buildings, opened his presentation with thanks to BOMA NY in its role as a partner organization.

Sirakis, who has decades of service at the DOB, said, "Every time we need help on code provisions

or assistance, we've got a long-standing relationship with BOMA for input, feedback and support.”

“This is something that other cities around the country don't necessarily have, the full support from organizations like BOMA.”

Sirakis reported on the convened Adams Commission, and the commission's “Blueprint for a Better Buildings Department.” Sirakis said that he personally approved of the rigid 90-day time limit for the commission's work. “It's a model I quite like,” he said.

Among the 300+ participants on the commission, including governing agencies and advocacy groups alike, Sirakis said that its 13 different subcommittees were making progress on improving permitting and planning, code enforcement, licensing, emergency response, “and, of course, sustainability... without getting into the mandates of Local Law 97.”

Sirakis also addressed the vital issue of post-9/11 construction codes and the city's revised codes for 2023. While cohering with the ICC family of codes and its national standards, New York City has its own building codes. Sirakis asked rhetorically, “Are we meeting national standards? Are we exceeding them? We are a dense urban environment unlike any other city out there. We process 150,000 positive transactions on an annual basis, on a scale that's unheard of. There are a lot of good reasons to have our own local code that is unique to us.”

In 2017 DOB started work on revising city construction codes that had been in effect since 2014. The new set of local construction codes took effect on November 7, 2022, with two exceptions for site safety plans and temporary construction equipment permits that will be transacted under the 2014 codes.

Sirakis said, “On the building owner and manager side, revised codes governing the operation and management of existing buildings include a licensing requirement for elevator agencies and shorter deadlines for reporting elevator inspections, mostly as a result of using digital reporting tools. Boiler inspection reporting requirements were also tightened.”

Newer initiatives also address high rise exterior façade fire prevention and mitigation, and the introduction of engineered lumber products, such as laminated lumber, for high rise building construction. DOB is also requiring more “open” designs for sidewalk sheds to improve the pedestrian experience.

Sirakis told the BOMA NY audience that the DOB is transforming itself from a “Reactive agency to a proactive and preventative, customer service-based model.” Noting that New York is the most business friendly city in the country, Sirakis pointed to the NYC Quick Start program, a concierge service where businesses have a sole point of contact to help navigate City regulations.

According to Sirakis, one of the innovative actions by DOB is the creation of project advocates to advance stalled and delayed projects. Experts are on call at DOB to provide, as Sirakis said, “One consistent point of contact.”

Sirakis urged builders, owners, and managers to contact DOB as far as possible in advance of their project starts, so that the agency could work in partnership with sponsors to identify areas of possible conflict and delays, and avoid them. "Half-finished building is not good for anyone," he said.

"Great work we're doing at the DOB." Sirakis pledged to include BOMA on City government initiatives, while looking forward to future collaboration between BOMA NY and the DOB.

Sirakis said, "It was clear he [mayor Adams] understood the need and importance of a strong Buildings Department and having the premier Buildings Department in the country being represented in the city." Sirakis expected the commission to issue its full report by year-end.

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