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Rudy pushes for memorial

Calls for WTC developer to build elsewhere



AP

WORK GOES ON Mayor Giuliani's proposal for a memorial at the World Trade Center site would provide for air rights to lease holder Larry Silverstein to rebuild in others parts of city.

By FRANK LOMBARDI and GREG GITTRICH
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Mayor Giuliani said yesterday that the dream of building a world class office complex at the World Trade Center site may have to give way to a "beautiful memorial."

The mayor proposed compensating WTC lease holder Larry Silverstein for loss of his development rights by letting him build in other neighborhoods.

"You could transfer air rights to [the far West Side] and you could recreate some of what was at the World Trade center, let's say 20 blocks north," Giuliani said.

The mayor mentioned the far West Side — a stretch from W. 24th to W. 42nd Sts., between Eighth Ave., and the Hudson River — as an option.

Giuliani's comments came a day after he expressed support for a large memorial at the 16-acre site.

"If you do something with that site that draws millions of people here every year to relive, to consider, to ponder, to think about what happened — the way they've done at Normandy. You do that right, and you just think of millions of people coming there, or coming here, that takes care of the economic development."

"The memorial should be put first," he said Tuesday. "Once the decision is made about the appropriate memorial, then after that all the economic development decisions should be made. It should not be done in reverse order. They should make the decision on the memorial first."

Silverstein declined comment yesterday. He continues to make payments on his 99-year lease for the Trade Center property.

While Silverstein has pledged to set aside a portion of the site for a memorial, Giuliani has predicted Silverstein will not be the one making that decision.

The mayor has said the new Lower Manhattan Redevelopment Corp. will determine the size and scope of the memorial after it hears from all the key players, including the victims' families.

One victims' group praised Giuliani's stance yesterday.

"We believe that he is defending the moral right of our members to be able to grieve at the spot where their loved ones vanished," said Stephen Push, a spokesman for the Families of September 11.

The bodies of 2,524 victims have yet to be found.

The state Economic Development Corp. has the power to override local zoning laws if Silverstein's building rights were transferred to another section of the downtown redevelopment zone. If the rights were shifted out of the zone, city planning officials would have to sign off.

Mayor-elect Michael Bloomberg said Wednesday that compensating Silverstein for his development rights "will be a long process to figure out."

But Giuliani said yesterday he was sure city planning officials "will be flexible enough" to permit the transfer.

"The most important thing to us as a people is to dedicate this ground to the memory of the people that we lost. If we do that right, everything else will follow," he said.

with Paul H.B. Shin

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