



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Adriano Espaillat

Sen. Espaillat Hosts Public Forum to Boost Community Involvement in Columbia University's Baker Field Project

ADRIANO ESPAILLAT March 20, 2011

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Councilman Ydanis Rodriguez joined NYS Senator Adriano Espaillat in hosting a public forum regarding Columbia University's Boathouse Marsh/Campbell Sports Center project at Baker Field. The facility will include space for Columbia's athletic department and other student needs including an auditorium. The forum offered local residents an opportunity to express their views and submit their ideas about the project's impact on the local community.

"Any project that is placed in our community must reflect the wishes and concerns of local residents," said Senator Adriano Espaillat. "That's why it's critical that Inwood and Washington Heights residents play a role in the development of this project. The only way to make sure that Columbia University's Boathouse

Marsh/Campbell Sports Center project is truly successful is to include local input.”

Local elected officials like Senator Espaillat, Councilman Rodriguez, and Assemblyman Guillermo Linares accelerated their efforts to include the Inwood/Washington Heights community in the decision making process after the community was seemingly left out of it. As Columbia moves toward including additional community input – outlined partly through a “wish list” issued by local Community Board 12 – the elected officials are now focusing on executing the best deal possible for the local neighborhood.

“Whether it’s adequate security in and around the park or fair access to the waterfront, as required by law, we are fighting to make sure that Inwood/ Washington Heights residents benefit from this project,” said Councilman Ydanis Rodriguez. “And the best way to do so is giving our community an opportunity to speak out and have their ideas incorporated in the project.”

Assemblyman Guillermo Linares said: “We all agree that the Columbia University Baker Field project represents an opportunity for our neighborhood. But we simply cannot move forward without proper consultation from neighbors who will be affected by this project for years to come. I am grateful to all the local residents who are speaking out and making their voices heard. Together, we will help bring forth a project that works for Columbia University and the entire community.”

The public forum, which was also co-sponsored by Congressman Charles B. Rangel and Assemblyman Herman “Denny” Farrell, featured a cross-section of speakers who advocated for the community.

The City Council is slated to vote on the project next month.