

The Baseball Component of the Coliseum Project

New Baseball Stadium To Be Built If Approved



Look way down the list and you'll find it. That's the list of what people in Nassau County on Long Island are discussing in relation to the Nassau Coliseum Project (officially the "Economic Development and Job Creation Plan"). There's new jobs, a current tax obligation, a new upgraded Coliseum, construction jobs, need for more hotel nights and other products and services that go along with extra visitors, increased tax revenue for the county, and a new baseball stadium.

The Project includes a plan to build a baseball stadium suitable for a professional team on land adjacent to the Coliseum. The land was deeded from the U.S. Department of the Interior to the County, which currently has a half-size multipurpose field at the site. County representatives say that in addition to jobs, the ball field will be "a great recreational component to the County", according to Chief Deputy County Executive Rob Walker.

This week, Walker shared his take on 'The Project' with Brandon Kurz of BPM, focusing in on the baseball component.

BPM: So basically, you've done all the research, the zoning, all this has already been done?

Walker: Mitchell Park is right next door to the Coliseum property. Right now we currently have a small Butler building, a half-size multipurpose field that's right there, so we've done our due diligence. It went back about a year ago that we started looking at this process, outside the scope of the Coliseum, and did some research to see who was interested in it, and moved forward with some engineers that had some plans already for the area. We believe it's a great fit to coincide with The Hub, having the Coliseum right next door to the ballfield.

BPM: You said it's going to create revenue for the County. What type of revenue?

Walker: We're in contract negotiations now. The County Executive formed a committee.... A request for proposals went out to those that were interested in bringing a professional team to the area. The owner of the Ducks, Frank Boulton, bid... and the New York Mets, by the Blumenfeld Development Group, so we were excited about both proposals. At the end, after the process, the committee selected Frank Boulton and the Atlantic League. They have an approved team. So now we're into contract negotiations.



Artist's rendering of the new Nassau Coliseum.

BPM: You said the stadium is going to sit 6000, and is going to provide jobs.

Walker: Which is the main component of what we're doing here in Nassau. Everyone knows the unemployment record. Everyone knows where people are having trouble making ends meet. So one thing is certain, if we can grow the economy it's going to effectuate real growth in Nassau County, in terms of property values going up, in terms of people being able to move here and live here. So you have jobs that are going to be developed here, jobs are going to be developed at the Coliseum. It's just one component of our economic development piece... We had an independent review done by Camoin, who is a leader in terms of economic development, and they looked at that over 3000 jobs will be generated, both on site at the Nassau Coliseum and the ballpark, and off site from surrounding neighboring businesses that might be here now, and more importantly some that will now wanna move here. Hotel industries that now wanna come in. You're talking about 1,500 hotel nights that were never booked in here Nassau County that will now be booked. You're talking about real dollars, real economic sense to the county.

BPM: Now, how much parking is going to be over there?

Walker: We roughly right now we have 1,000 to 1,200 spots right directly on site, and then right across the street we have Museum Row which you talk about is another attraction. Now you can come and enjoy a great opportunity to see some baseball played, or participate in one of our camps or clinics, and then be able to walk right across the street to Museum Row. And we have ample parking there. And across the street adjacent is Nassau Community College. We really do have a lot of opportunities here for parking, and really to have shared use. We want people to come here and stay here...

BPM: You yourself are a baseball fan? You played baseball?

Walker: Yes. I am a baseball fan. I played baseball until I kept getting hit in the head by the ball. My eyes were so poor. So I went to lacrosse. I went to a sport with a helmet.

BPM: Is there anything coming up for lacrosse around here?

Walker: We're going to look. This is going to be multidimensional. There's no reason why you can't play lacrosse in the outfield, you can't have camps and clinics. We have our staff, led by Mike Caulfield, working on that. He's been a leader in terms of bringing recreational opportunities, especially with baseball and softball to the area. But now we're expanding into other avenues. From lacrosse to soccer, this being one of the feeding frenzies. The ballfield will be a feeding frenzy, the grandeur of the park, but there'll be so many other opportunities that it will bring.

All registered voters of Nassau County can cast their vote on the "Economic Development and

Job Creation Plan” at their regular voting places on Monday, August 1, 2011 from 6:00am until 9:00pm