

# Develop— don't destroy.

BROOKLYN

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September 28, 2004

Honorable Borough President Markowitz:

I understand that you have invited a selected group of “community organizations and elected officials” to meet with you on September 29, 2004, to share ideas about the coming development of the Atlantic Yards complex. Your invitation states:

“As Borough President I am committed to finding solutions to community concerns about this project that work for your neighborhoods and for all of Brooklyn. At this meeting, I would like to discuss the Atlantic Yards development in general, talk about the project time line and look at the process as the project moves through state review.”

I'm writing on behalf of Develop Don't Destroy Brooklyn (DDDb) to officially protest the random manner in which you are attempting to engage the community regarding this project.

There are rumors in the community that over the past few months you have been engaging with BUILD and ACORN in closed door meetings to help broker a 'Community Benefits Agreement' (CBA) between them and FCR. (Incidentally, despite repeated requests by members of the community, this CBA being negotiated, purportedly for the community, has not been made available to the public.) Regardless of the veracity of these rumors, now you are gathering another select group of organizations to represent the community. DDDb protests the illegitimate methods you are engaging to involve the community.

For example, it is irrefutable DDDb is a community organization that is in a leadership position when it comes to any discussion on the proposed Atlantic Yards development. Furthermore, DDDb represents a large portion of the affected neighborhoods, and we are the only community organization directly representing the people who will be most immediately affected by the proposed development—those homeowners, business owners, and tenants who would be displaced by the project.

Yet, we have been informed in no uncertain terms, by Mr. John Benguiat from your office, that this meeting, supposedly for “community organizations”, is not open to us. We highlight this point, not because we feel that the community voice would be more effectively represented via our organization, but rather to emphasize that the process you are using for community input is erratic, illegitimate, and lacking in checks and balances.

Mr. Markowitz, on August 2, DDDb and 14 community organizations urged our political representatives to do all they could to ensure that the proposed Ratner Arena Highrise project be kept within ULURP, (<http://dddb.net/letters/ULURP.pdf>). On August 19, this position was reiterated by Fort Greene Association ([http://www.dddb.net/letters/FGA\\_letter.pdf](http://www.dddb.net/letters/FGA_letter.pdf)). On September 9, all three of our community boards re-iterated that the only effective way to engage the community and ensure our input into the process is via ULURP.

Yet, rather than ensure that every member of the community has an equal voice in public hearings, you continue to attempt to have the community represented via closed meetings with selected organizations.

DDDb would like to formally register its protest at the illegitimacy of the process you are using to ensure community involvement in the decision-making surrounding the development of the Atlantic Yards.

On a separate note, your letter states that the proposed project is will be moving under state review. We would like to know why you are saying this. We are not aware that such an agreement has been signed between the City and the State and request that you inform your constituency as to when this decision was made, and provide us with the appropriate documentation.

Sincerely,

Daniel Goldstein  
**Develop--Don't Destroy (BROOKLYN)**  
Steering Committee Member  
Spokesperson

CC:  
Senator Velmanette Montgomery  
Councilmember Letitia James

Shirley McRae, Community Board 2  
Craig Hammerman, Community Board 6  
Robert Matthews, Community Board 8  
Michelle de la Huez, The Fifth Avenue Committee  
Gene Russianoff, NYPIRG/Straphangers  
Brad Lander, Pratt Institute Center for Community and Environmental Development  
Deborah Howard, Pratt Area Community Council  
Sandy Balboza, Atlantic Avenue Betterment Association  
Gib Veconi, Prospect Heights Neighborhood Development Council  
Paul Palazzo, Fort Greene Association  
Jim Vogel, Brooklyn Vision  
Phillip Truscott, Brooklyn Vision  
Tom Angotti, Professor of Urban Planning and Affairs- Hunter College  
Jon Crow, Brooklyn Bear's Community Gardens Inc.  
Marlene Donnelly, Friends and Residents of Greater Gowanus (FROGG)  
Scott Turner, Fans For Fair Play  
Irene Van Slye

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*DEVELOP DON'T DESTROY BROOKLYN leads a broad-based community coalition fighting for development that will unite our communities instead of dividing and destroying them.*  
[www.developdontdestroy.org](http://www.developdontdestroy.org)