

New York Islanders In Brooklyn State of Mind

by Anthony Caruso on November 2, 2012

The recent announcement that the New York Islanders will be moving to Brooklyn reminds us that sports is a business, often above all else. The hockey team will leave its home in Nassau County to join the Brooklyn Nets at the Barclays Center in 2015.

The move ends speculation over what would happen to the much-maligned hockey franchise, which has struggled to fill seats and secure wins on the ice in recent years. The team's owner, Charles Wang, has been trying to upgrade or build a new arena for several years. However, Nassau County voters most recently rejected a proposal to spend \$400 million to build a new arena last summer. This decision likely expedited the team's efforts to find another location, although talks have reportedly been in the works for several years.

In announcing the deal, Wang stated that although he wanted to keep the team in Nassau County, another New York location was the second best option. Although the NHL must still approve the terms of the deal, the Islanders have signed a 25-year lease at the Barclays Center. They plan to move into their new home in 2015, after their current lease expires.

For Brooklyn, it can now boast a professional basketball and hockey team. "Not long ago, I think it's fair to say the idea of a big league sports team coming to Brooklyn was considered little more than a pipe dream," Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg said at a news conference. However, the addition of more events at the Barclays Center will likely not ease the concerns of surrounding neighborhoods about traffic congestion, littering, and unruly crowds. Assuming of course, that loyal New York Islanders' fans are willing to follow the team to Brooklyn.

For more information about negotiating sports facility agreements, please contact Anthony Caruso, Chair of Scarinci Hollenbeck's Sports and Entertainment Law Group.