

The Friends of Liberty State Park
P.O. Box 3407 Jersey City, NJ 07302
201-792-1993 pesinliberty@earthlink.net

Dear NJDEP Commissioner Bradley Campbell,
2005

July 4,

Friends of Liberty State Park asks that you say an immediate “No” to developers’ plans to privatize 42 acres of NJDEP public water along LSP’s Southern End, behind Lady Liberty. The developer requested “DEP guidance” in a 11/2/04 letter on their shameful request to lease Block 1497, Lots 3N and 3R2, which starts at the developers’ 8 water acres(next to their 3 luxury Condo Towers/Golf Course) near LSP’s Public Boat Launch; extends all along LSP’s S. End, includes 2 of the 3 open space jetties which have been allowed to deteriorate; goes past the popular Picnic Area and S. Overlook Lawn to LSP’s SE corner.The developers’ (WA Residential Urban Renewal Co.) obvious goal is an incrementally built yacht marina adjacent to LSP’s S.End.

As you know, the tremendous private Liberty Landing Marina exists at LSP’s N. End with 550 slips and a pump out station; its 99 year lease allows a dry rack storage facility for 288 boats.

Though we look to the DEP to say “No” now and uphold the DEP’s positive post-Development Corp reputation, we realize that “connected” developers in a pay-to-play system, may force the DEP to put this major privatization plan on the table for Public Hearings. We formally request 2 Fall public hearings, 1 on a Sat. and 1 midweek; a month public comment period; and that this major decision be made under the new Governor. With LSP behind Lady Liberty, the highest standards of public participation must be implemented. Former DEP Commissioner Scott Weiner stated in the early 1990’s, that “any proposal for LSP will depend on a broad public consensus”.

You wisely said, in a The Star Ledger story on Sept. 11, 2002, **“The events of Sept. 11, 2001, further consecrate the value of Liberty State Park to the state and reinforce our commitment to making sure those values are honored.”** As LSP’s steward for future generations, the **DEP’s saying “No” to a “Millionaires’ Marina**

in the People's Park" will be seen by New Jerseyans as an easy values decision. Jersey City, Hudson County and NJ residents have overwhelmingly opposed LSP privatization. Behind Lady Liberty, LSP is sacred land and water, with its urban open spaces and harbor views. LSP, New Jersey's 1976 Bicentennial gift to the nation, is a powerful symbol of our democracy and America's values, and is a spiritually uplifting oasis. Its true purposes, expressed by New Jerseyans for 29 years, must be honored.

The People's Common Heritage and the Public Trust of the public water and the vital, dramatic, spectacular harbor viewshed/view scape, must be protected forever. The mostly lower income urban people who regularly relax, picnic, play and fish at the South End, middle income people who do the same and who use the Public Boat Launch, and all visitors have the right to enjoy open, unblocked South End harbor views. Another key issue of course is unfettered/uncluttered access by users of Public Boat Launch. The Public Good must be chosen over private interests.

When our officers met to get information-due to our respect for Frank Gallagher, you, and Dir. Jose Fernandez-with developers' agents, they suggested throwing a tiny bone of a kayak rental business, but LSP should take bids for bike & kayak rental vendors, to provide useful amenities. Also, DEP should have gotten a much better "mitigation" deal for the commuter/golf course ferry than \$600,000 for the athletic field (\$500,000) & bulkhead study(\$100,000). The ath. field, which we've been told of a few times, was formally unveiled at the first Public Advisory Committee Meeting, and was raised at developers' agent meeting. Without disclosing exact ath field location, I had the OK to tell FOLSP Spring meeting about it. Our legislators could have gotten ath. field funding.

We trust that you will do the right thing for the park and the public. Please notify the Friends about the latest status of any application or approved application amendment to the DEP, in relation to the developers' Nov. 2, 2004 letter to DEP official Al Payne.

Sincerely,
Sam Pesin, president