

Condemning LSP Task Force because it was established by the Paul Fireman lobbyist-written non-protection LSP law and its membership has many of his surrogates on it.

The new LSP task force, which first meets on Tuesday, 11//28 is a shameful travesty created by the 2022 “Billionaire Paul Fireman LSP Law” written and lobbied for by his well-connected lobbyist. This Fireman-dominated task force has a bunch of his surrogates on it, including his two well-funded front groups, the heads of contributed-to non-profits including one run by a Hudson County Commissioner, and includes others who supported Fireman’s destructive LSP Sports and Entertainment Complex plans.

The 7/623 [Jersey Journal editorial](#) highlighted the “gobs of money” which his second front group and a few Hudson politicians got in 2021 alone. The Liberty National Golf Course owner Fireman, who still wants to privatize LSP’s Caven Point Natural Area for golf holes, brazenly pushed through his task force law to shape LSP’s future by giving his surrogates this official platform to inevitably push for wrong-headed plans.

A stacked task force established by a billionaire is an obscene international symbol of the subversion of democracy right behind Lady Liberty by the collusion between an oligarch, front groups and politicians. It’s like the tobacco industry creating a lung cancer prevention task force.

The Fireman law replaced the LSP Protection Act after three years of his funded surrogates’ lies and smear attacks and Fireman’s legislative contributions and lobbying. The Act was essential after decades of grassroots opposition to privatization and commercialization and was supported by 33,000 petition signers, 111 Coalition groups, and Hudson County Commission and Jersey City Council Resolutions.

The front groups still cynically and laughably pretend that they are park “champions” despite DEP Commissioner Shawn LaTourette having wisely rejected their destructive Sports and Entertainment Complex plans. **The 5/30 [Jersey Journal’s editorial](#)** describing that “latest battle for the soul of LSP”, stated that Fireman’s representatives used “fear-mongering and misinformation in an ugly, divisive campaign” and that a “most disturbing element has been the increasing personal attacks on park advocates by people and organizations financially supported by Fireman”.

There’s reason for optimism though as the Commissioner has the final say because the two-year task force is advisory and he can reject any harmful recommendations, despite whatever Fireman’s front groups spend on lobbying and public relations companies.

It’s also very positive that the Commissioner broke ground for the Interior remediation and nature habitats and trails, and pledged to seek public input for its consultants’ “Revitalization” proposals, including for 61 acres of free active recreation. The recent Open House and Public Comment period on LSP’s north side options are the start of this democratic “Revitalization” process.

It’s crucial that park supporters continue the 47 years of inspiring grassroots advocacy throughout this Revitalization process and are vigilant about Fireman surrogates’ attempts

to unjustly hijack the “Revitalization” process based on private interests and lack of caring about LSP as a free and priceless urban and American public space.

Commissioner LaTourette showed his commitment to LSP’s true purpose when he stated his “unbreakable” philosophy of protecting “precious public lands “and that “privatization of a public asset by no one because it belongs to everyone is not a thing period, full stop.”

This DEP agrees with the iconic 2003 **Star Ledger** editorial which stated, “Parks are not supposed to make money. They are supposed to provide green oases, particularly in densely packed urban areas like Hudson County. That is why parks, as a common public good, are supported by taxes”.

The Tuesday, Nov. 28th first task force meeting is open to the public on zoom by registering, and in-person registration is voluntary but recommended. There won’t be public speaking at this meeting. The registration link is

https://www.zoomgov.com/meeting/register/vJIsceurqTopHmn9yQY7so_VPCwhwFILSmU#/registration