

Son of Morris Pesin, The Father of Liberty State Park
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8/11/94

Statement for Public Record - Future of Liberty State Park

We must make sure that LSP, our only urban state park, lives up to its great potential. Liberty State Park's purpose is to serve as a spiritual resource, enriching the lives of urban people and visitors from everywhere.

LSP must be a park for children, for families, for people of all ages and backgrounds. The vast majority of people want a Central Park type park with picnic areas, playground, playing fields, lawns, gardens, and walkways. After my statement I will submit 5300 signatures on petitions for the record. The petitions were signed at a couple of festivals, a couple of fairs, a couple of park concerts and a couple of days at a supermarket. The petitions are just a token symbol of the public consensus against the golf course. Over and over during the last 2 years, I have heard people say the golf plan is ridiculous, outrageous, criminal, madness, and a waste. The wheeler dealers don't give a damn what the public thinks and they don't give a damn that the golf course bonds would probably have to be paid back by the taxpayers. But the DEP and the Governor must decide the park's future according to majority opinion in our democracy.

It is a travesty that people have to fight for a free park next to the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. The golf course is a desecration of this sacred land. We should honor this sacred land with a free and open park. If a golf course is forced in here against the public interest and against the public will, the word "liberty" will have to be removed from LSP. My late and great father Morris Pesin, The Father of LSP strongly opposed the golf course, stating that it would serve only a very small part of the large urban population - who would play golf on state park lands to the exclusion of the majority.

The key word is parklands. LSP is a state park. A golf course is not a park. The privatization of the heart of the park is a confiscation of our land. It is a giveaway of our land. It is a robbery of our space - especially from children and young people who would be looking at the g.c. land from the other side of the fence.

The g.c. would take away 50% of the park's usable open space for 2% of the population. This is not the old math. This is not the new math. This is the math of injustice, the math of discrimination against the majority, ^{and} the math of selfishness. It is anti-family math and anti-urban people math.

When my father visited the Statue of Liberty in 1957, he was ashamed that the background of the Statue was Jersey City's junk strewn waterfront. We don't want to be ashamed again - by an exclusionary land use behind Ms. Liberty.

It's time for the DEP to stop trying its best to hand the park on a silver platter to the Development Corp. The DEP has not seriously explored implementing a plan compatible with the Master Plan. It has not done comprehensive testing for toxic material in the middle of the park. The DEP's Director of Parks voted for the g.c. on the Dev. Corp's rubberstamp Working Committee. The DEP put a giant map with a g.c. on it in the park's Nature (Interpretative) Center, and listed a g.c. as already existing, in its analysis of park acreage.

On purpose, the bureaucrats and politicians kept money away from this park for the 10 years they've wanted the g.c.

It's time to throw the golf plan into the garbage can - once and for all, so this park can be built with Green Acres monies and other public and private sector funds. This park must be freed to carry out its manifest destiny of bringing happiness, fun, relaxation, and inspiration to people in the shadow of the Statue of Liberty.