

Sam Pesin, pres. of The Friends of LSP 201-341-7895 at Mayor Fulop's lawsuit press event

I first want to express gratitude to Mayor Fulop for his decisive leadership by initiating this crucial lawsuit because he knew the public's access to, use and enjoyment of Liberty Park are at stake. We are here in a spirit of solidarity to fight **for** social justice **and against** arrogant greed. We're fighting for families and for true American values. We're fighting against this Governor's destructive giveaway of the park's non-commercial, urban family, peaceful Southside.

Mayor Fulop fought fiercely on the front lines a couple of years ago with the Friends and our great 25 year ally, the NY/NJ Baykeeper with deputy director Greg Remaud and our steadfast Coalition allies and statewide leaders, The Hackensack Riverkeeper Capt Bill Sheehan, NJ Sierra Club Director Jeff Tittel and NJ Audubon president Eric Stiles, and the support of other Hudson County elected officials especially Council President Rolando Lavarro and the entire City Council, Sen Sandra Cunningham, Asm Raj Mukherji and Asw Angela McKnight, and Freeholder Bill O'Dea and the Freeholder board), We have a determined solidarity to represent the 41-year broad public consensus against exclusionary uses and in support of an inclusive park for people of all colors, religions and cultures to enjoy together in peace.

The Mayor sees this plan for what it is – an attack on the urban people - and as a progressive leader, he cares about the quality of life of the majority and not the quality of life of millionaires. The Suntex plan would obliterate the Southside as a sanctuary in this crowded and concrete city and would ruin the park as a recreational, mental health, and spiritual public resource where people, picnic, barbeque, relax, play, exercise, fish and explore nature.

This plan would destroy the park's true purpose and spirit as a free park for a free people behind the world's greatest symbol of freedom. The Southside is our nation's most sacred public space.

Liberty Park was once a desolate waterfront wasteland and was transformed with taxpayers' money, into a beautiful park that honors Lady Liberty and is a local, state and national treasure.

Lady Liberty's torch must continue to be an inspiring beacon of human rights and not a beacon to help mega-yacht owners find their way back to their docks, This shameless backroom assault to sign a lease before any public hearings - desecrates democracy, dishonors Lady Liberty and casts aside the vision of a peaceful, waterfront park.

I want to thank the Riker and Danzig attorneys Jon Vuotto and Josh Jacobs for their dedication in preparing this case with their expertise to prevent the DEP from signing this lease. I also want to thank the JC Corporation Counsel Jeremy Farrell for his active involvement.

In my lawsuit Certification I emphasized that the plan confiscates precious open space including 3 historic jetties and a 4 acre lawn, obstructs tranquil, open harbor vistas, takes away 228 essential parking spaces – one of the two free parking lots which are jampacked on summer Sundays, and would damage the area's urban wildlife habitat.

So again, I thank Mayor Fulop for setting a strong example for our nation of elected officials being on the frontlines of grassroots battles for the Public Good and working to save this park of, by and for the People.