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The letter was also forwarded to The Friends of LSP.**

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The Hudson Reporter
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Dear Editor Caren Matzner,

As I intended to visit Liberty State Park on July 4, I was told that a visit to the calm, tree-rich Grove of Remembrance would be a fitting way to honor those from New Jersey who lost their lives on 9/11/01. I was fortunate to find someone who guided me to it, as there is no sign or indication as to where it is.

I had read of the controversy regarding the site of the state's official 9/11 memorial by the railroad terminal, so I walked over to have a look. A fence now hides the dirt mound that is supposed to form a hill surrounding the monument. I studied the idealized architectural design nearby. May I offer a few thoughts.

The two 30' high and 200' long steel walls, which will form a walk-through with the names of the victims, is neither spiritual nor inspiring, not to mention the obstruction of the view to New York. As I am originally from Jersey City and a frequenter of the park, I found the view across the Hudson unparalleled anywhere. Millions of visitors who visit the park in the coming years would be deprived of that view. There is a more appropriate alternative.

Rather than the busy site near the railroad terminal with its numerous events and displays, and the masses of people heading toward the boat to the Statue of Liberty, the state could contribute to the Grove of Remembrance, amounting to a fraction of the allocated millions that it would cost to pursue its intended course.

Near the corner of Freedom Way and Audrey Zapp Drive, an archway could be erected before the lawn, with a plaque directing people to the Grove ahead. On the western end of the Grove, there is another entrance, where a second arch could be erected. In other words, two arches on either end of the Grove uniting the area as a sacred spot. A boulder with the names of the victims now stands almost hidden in the Grove. That could be placed prominently at either entrance through the archway with a plaque explaining what happened on 9/11. (A plaque by the railroad terminal could inform the visitors where the Grove of Remembrance is, and encourage visits.)

There could be nothing more meaningful to those who lost their lives than living trees and plants that change with the seasons and grow with the passing years, something that was denied them. If the state would put the Grove into the hands of a landscape designer who would creatively augment the area, adding benches for contemplation among natural surroundings, it would make a splendid tribute and living testament to lives cut short.

It is hard to believe that the victims, themselves, would have wanted others to be deprived of their rights, as they were on earth, given the alternative of a beautiful, natural setting in their memory. The site would reflect lives well lived, cut all too short on 9/11, in an attack that changed America forever.

The state's plans for the extravagant cost of the current monument should be scrapped, especially with the more appropriate solution of the already-existing Grove of Remembrance. Steel walls are made by man. "Only God can make a tree." In such a setting, the loss of more than 700 New Jerseyans will be remembered, surrounded by trees and nature, reflecting a higher power.

Sincerely,

Ada Feyerick