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By The Jersey Journal

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AP photo

Lewis Hamilton of McLaren Mercedes Formula One drives in the 2009 Malaysia Grand Prix in Kuala Lumpur. Will he get to drive in Jersey City? He was the winner of the last U.S. Formula One race in Indiana in 2007.

Jersey City Mayor Jerramiah Healy now says he does not want Formula One racing in the state park within his city's borders. Does this mean the issue is dead? When there is very big money involved, maybe and maybe not.

At this point, it is up to the state Department of Parks that will make the decision.

News that there may be Formula One racing in Liberty State Park, Jersey City, is making world news.

Among the European newspapers that published **reports about the Jersey City proposal is The Guardian in Great Britain** with a link to www.Autosport.com, a favorite of motor racing fans. Great Britain is considered the mecca of Formula One racing.

Bernard Ecclestone, president and CEO of Formula One Management and Formula One Administration, is the man who brings the world's most popular motor sports to different global venues. He is behind the Jersey City effort.

Back in the 1960s, there were unsuccessful attempts to hold Formula One in New York's Central Park. The Formula One racing came to Sebring, Fla., in 1959, Riverside, Calif., in the 1960s, and for 19 years in Watkins Glen, New York, until its last race in 1980.

According to Formula One experts and those who cover the sport for years, Ecclestone has been desperate to get Formula One back in the United States having last held the race in Indianapolis in 2007. He is not eager to return to Indiana.

First, understand that people do not make money on the race itself. Ecclestone and Formula One have gone to deep-pockets locations such as Dubai, Singapore and China. Worldwide major corporations descend on the week of these races, notoriety builds the reputation of the host cities, and there is an injection of many millions of dollars in the regions during the week or two leading to the races.

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There are now higher expectations of host cities and countries. There must be better hotels and housing for dignitaries, more modern facilities for the world press, and the tracks have to be state-of-the-art. The bar has been raised so high that Ecclestone threatened to take Formula One racing away from Great Britain until they upgraded facilities and their entire approach to the race. The racing mecca is now trying to comply.

New York City, or anything near it, is Ecclestone's target race venue -- or mother lode. The Big Apple does not need Formula One racing. It has the prestige and notoriety. Formula One needs the Big Apple, or in this case, Jersey City's Liberty State Park. Fox that he is Ecclestone will make it sound as if Jersey City needs this race -- for five years. There are some who say that Ecclestone may look for partners, and it would not be a surprise if someone like the Dolan brothers of Madison Square Garden fame get involved, although there is not much to support this collaboration, yet.

So, is the Liberty State Park Grand Prix dead before it starts? For Ecclestone, if anything, it is probably still all points west.

Those who cover Formula One said that when there are articles about a proposed new race venue and there is even a map available of the track, you can bet things are much further along than the "talking stages."

Otherwise, should the park site crash, Bayonne has an interesting waterfront and teardrop monument which a worldwide television audience can get to know as they watch Formula One cars zoom by on their screens.

Jersey City's southern neighbor is close enough to New York City to take the checkered flag Healy is rejecting.

Light rail, buses and ferries is available to the general public. Even the private exclusive golf course could accommodate some of those billionaire capitalists and royal figures who attend these races.

Formula One is considered a bit more high class than NASCAR and gives Bayonne the chance to become the Mecca of United States motor sports, if only for five years.

The Peninsula City may not mind an infusion of millions of dollars and it doesn't have to share it with the state. And then there is the city municipal budget ...

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