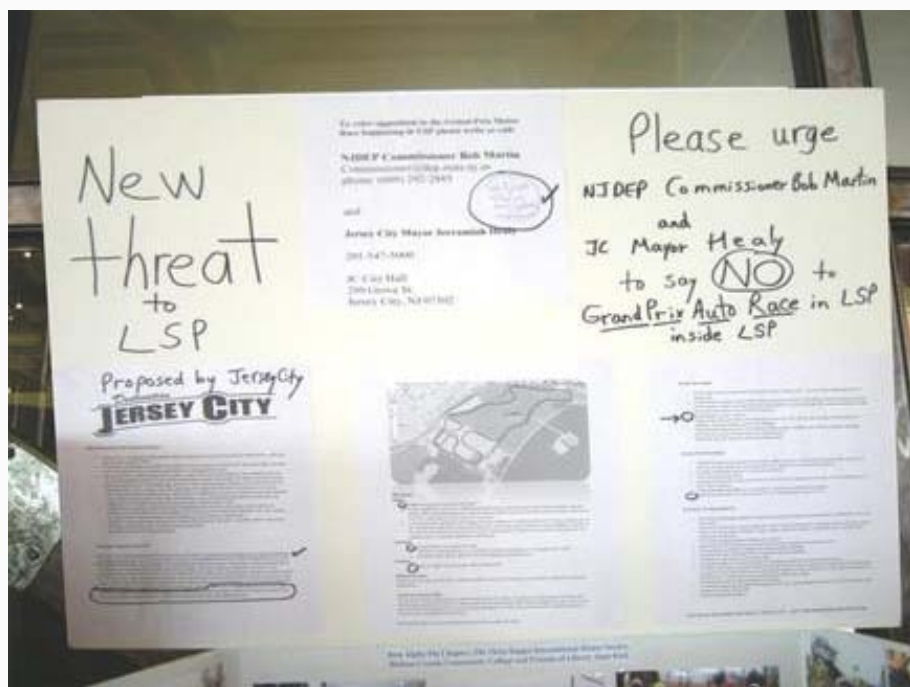




## Jersey City mayor calls for withdrawal of Grand Prix proposal

By Melissa Hayes/The Jersey Journal

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The Friends of Liberty State Park displayed a sign opposing having a Formula One Grand Prix at the park during its annual luncheon at Liberty House in Jersey City Sunday.

Jersey City Mayor **Jerramiah T. Healy** has asked the city's Tourism Office to withdraw a proposal to **Formula One** that could bring a Grand Prix race to Liberty State Park.

"After a review of the draft proposal prepared by the City's Tourism Office, I have come to the same conclusion as **Sam Pesin** and the **Friends of Liberty State Park** that this type of event is not suited for Liberty State Park," Healy said in a statement today.

Pesin called Healy's request a "great relief."

But that doesn't mean the issue is entirely settled.

Liberty State Park is owned by the state and all events must be approved by the state Department of Environmental Protection.

Jersey City was trying to entice Formula One to hold the event at the park, but still would have needed state approval. Healy said yesterday that the proposal came at the request of Formula One who has expressed interest in the site.

"Each year Liberty State Park receives numerous requests for events to be held at this park," DEP spokesman Larry Ragonese said. "Each event is considered based on benefit to park users and its impacts on the natural and historic resources on the site."

While the city's tourism official forwarded a copy of the draft proposal, that calls for the creation of a 3.6-mile track at the park, to the park's superintendent who is a DEP employee, Ragonese said no formal application was made to the state.

"At this point I can only say we have not reviewed this proposal. If this proposal comes to us like any other proposal we'll look at it and consider it," he said. "They would have to get state approval to do this."

Pesin, president of the board of The Friends of Liberty State Park and son of the park's founding father Morris Pesin, was elated by the mayor's statement.

"Mayor Healy did reach out to me yesterday and we had a very constructive conversation," he said. "I'm very grateful that his further review of the proposal by the city's Tourism official and also his heart and family values led him to this decision."

Pesin added, "Instead of a negative wasteful controversy, we can all focus on working together on positive efforts to benefit Jersey City and Liberty State Park."

Pesin noted yesterday that state and federal grants are funding a \$32 million ecological restoration project at the park, which includes creating a 40-acre salt marsh, over 100 acres of forest and a network of nature trails.

Healy added, "While we work to attract national and international events to our city, we must ensure that they are appropriate and will have the least impact upon the quality of life of our residents and our community."

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