
State DEP rules out race track for Liberty Park so plan for Formula One Grand Prix is dead

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State officials have put up a big stop sign when it comes to any thoughts of holding a Formula One Grand Prix race at Liberty State Park in Jersey City.

In an e-mail sent to Sam Pesin, president of the Friends of Liberty State Park, Amy Cradic, a deputy commissioner at the state Department of Environmental Protection, stated the agency is "not supporting the race track."

Pesin, whose volunteer group is dedicated to preserving and improving the 600-acre park, was overjoyed.

"Hopefully this fast squashing of a very unpopular plan will send a clear message to pushers of harebrained commercial plans that our treasured family park is off limits," Pesin said.

Earlier the month, The Jersey Journal reported that the director of tourism for Destination Jersey City, a nonprofit run by the Jersey City Economic Development Corporation to promote the city, had compiled a proposal to entice Formula One to hold a Grand Prix race at the park in 2012.

The proposal included the construction of 3.6-mile track at the park.

After the story ran, Jersey City Mayor Jerramiah T. Healy called for Destination Jersey City to withdraw the proposal.

But since the state operates and maintains the park, Pesin and others were concerned the state might give Formula One the green light to hold the race.

Pesin sent DEP Commissioner Bob Martin and Gov. Chris Christie a letter on behalf of the Friends urging the state to reject any proposals for a race track at the park.

He received the e-mail from Cradic after he sent his communication.

"It's great news that the governor and DEP Commissioner (Bob) Martin have the same immediate opinion as Mayor (Jerramiah) Healy that this foolhardy race track plan was totally wrong for Liberty State Park," Pesin said.

Asked for a comment, DEP spokesman Larry Ragonese said the agency hasn't taken a position since no formal application was ever made.

"Unless they (Formula One) put in an application, we're not going to approve it or deny it," Ragonese said.

Formula One officials could not be reached to comment.