

November 18, 2008

Dear Editor,

As someone who was involved with the development of Liberty State Park from its inception and worked with Morris Pesin, the father of the Park, I feel obligated to comment on the “Empty Sky” Memorial and its placement on the shoreline. The sense of urgency to place the Memorial at this spot should not negate the many years of dedicated resolve to clear the shore of rotting maritime and industrial debris which obliterated the vistas of the Hudson from the George Washington Bridge to the Verrazano. Once opened to public view the Plaza area, as we now call it, was a focal point for the many visitors to the Park.

When the terrible events of September 11th happened this area of the Park became a haven for those escaping lower Manhattan. There is no joy in challenging the issue of the “Empty Sky” site. There is however a sense of responsibility in bringing to the public’s attention what this monuments placement will do. It will hide the magnificent sweeping vista of the Hudson from public view and deny future generations the thrill of its beauty.

There exists today a real threat to the publics access and view to the waterfront along the Hudson from the private sector but now, ironically, from the public sector as well. Once constructed at the Plaza site two 30 foot high steel walls 200 feet in length buttressed by a ten foot hill on either side will significantly lessen the ability to view the New York skyline. Liberty State Park is vast and there are several sites within its boundaries that can be used.

We, the public, have never been given the opportunity to voice our opinion at a public hearing concerning this matter and if it had been done the case to relocate “Empty Sky” could have been made. To learn more about this issue visit the Friends of Liberty State Park website at www.folsp.org and go to the “Preservation Issues” column.

Charles Balcer