



DOUG BAUMAN JOURNAL PHOTO

THE SITE of the proposed marina at Liberty National Golf Course.

# Marina planned for golf course has FLSP asking studies, tests

By **MELISSA HAYES**  
JOURNAL STAFF WRITER

A proposal for a 22-slip marina at Liberty National Golf Course in Jersey City has the Friends of Liberty State Park up in arms.

"It is too close and will negatively impact safety and maneuverability of the small boats using Liberty State Park's public boat launch, and we are asking for a public hearing, which we feel is essential, and for environmental and water depth studies," said Sam Pesin, president of the Friends of Liberty State Park.

Pesin accused the owners of Liberty National Golf Course of trying to sneak the project through the approval process, and said he only learned the issue was before the Army Corps of Engineers late last month. The public comment period closes Monday.

But W. Nevins McCann, an attorney with Connell Foley, which represents WA Residential Urban Renewal Company LLC and its owner Boston-based Fireman Capital Partners, said the marina was approved by Jersey City in 2002, the same time the golf course and roughly 1,000 condominiums at the site were approved. Only the golf course

portion of the plan was completed because of the economy.

But now the owners are looking to scale back the marina from the original 50-slip plan to 22. The developer also has approval to build 41 luxury residential units, but plans to construct only 30 for now. The issue goes before the Jersey City Planning Board Aug. 17.

McCann said he was "absolutely shocked" by Pesin's suggestion that the project was being secretly pushed through. He said it's just an amended version of the 2002 plan.

"It's not the type of project you just rush through," he said. "It was a very friendly process. We've always been very open about it."

McCann said the proposed marina is 65 feet from the public boat launch, even though only 50 feet are required.

The company recently obtained a waterfront development permit from the state Department of Environmental Protection and is going through the approval process with the Army Corps of Engineers as required by the federal Rivers and Harbors Act of 1899.

McCann notes that it is the state that owns Liberty State Park and the boat launch and

said the state wouldn't have approved the permit if the marina blocked a public boat launch.

But Pesin said he is concerned about disturbances to wildlife, possible contaminants under the riverbed and a need for dredging.

In its public notice, the Army Corps of Engineers said the project is "not likely to affect a federally endangered or threatened species or their critical habitat." But the Army Corps is consulting with federal agencies to determine any potential impact.

McCann said there is no need for dredging, but Pesin said he would like to see a study completed proving that.

Joel Brenner, of Fireman Capital, who is overseeing the project, said the company is sensitive to Liberty State Park and is only looking to improve the waterfront with its development.

He hopes the project will break ground in the next year.

"Everything we've done so far has been a positive improvement and we'll continue to do so," Brenner said.

For more information, visit [www.nan.usace.army.mil](http://www.nan.usace.army.mil) click on "public notices" then "regulatory public notices." The notice was posted in July.