

MARINE PARK- “A Place For Everyone”

It appears that there is a gross misconception about what our proposal entails and we’d like to clear the air. The first thing to keep in mind is that our proposal is merely that, a proposal. Should our proposal be selected, which we would be honored to have happen, we would be sitting down with council and residents to discuss any changes they would like to see to our plan. The second thing to keep in mind is that we responded to an RFP set forth by the Parks and Rec Committee, to which there were guidelines clearly laid out. Comparing our proposal to any large theme park such as Coney Island or Seaside is both illogical and irresponsible. We are offering small recreational activities for families, not building rollercoasters and ferris wheels. We are extending the existing promenade, not constructing a boardwalk.

Our proposal is far from “10 pounds of potatoes in a 5 pound bag.” We are talking about roughly 36,000sf of which only 7,500sf will be small buildings and the rest will be left as open space. When used as a tennis court this area was completely walled off from public use with a 12 foot high fence covered in black mesh and only accessible to a handful of residents who could afford to be members. This was not a family friendly space to spend the day. Our plan is far and away the most respectful of green acres, the community, and the environment overall.

We’d like to clarify some confusion surrounding a few of the services we would offer:

-Increased access to the waterfront will be FREE for kayaks, canoes, paddle boards, and pedal boats. Those that wish to enjoy the water but do not own a watercraft would be able to rent one.

-We are not talking about a cheesy mini-golf course with obnoxious attractions. Any obstacles will be done strictly with landscaping and vegetation specifically aimed at attracting local bird species. Any assumption that there will be windmills or other tacky items is wholly false.

-There are several parks throughout the country that have had great success with outdoor synthetic ice-rinks. The Armory only has open skate for 4 hours a week and the river is not skateable sans a few weeks each year, and even then conditions are not ideal. The ice is very dangerous to skate on and is usually covered with snow and it is not a smooth surface. Our rink can also be repurposed for other uses such as soccer, field hockey, lacrosse, bocce, or shuffleboard among others.

-There will be many picnic tables and benches for those that wish to simply enjoy the waterfront cost free.

-Bathroom facilities will be provided for public use and maintained by us as we know this has been an issue at Count Basie Field and Riverside Gardens Park. In addition there will be 24 hour security constantly patrolling to ensure safety.

The reality is that the town loses people to the beaches in the summer as some residents in Red Bank and surrounding towns belong to beach clubs where you can spend your days basking in the sun. But what about those who do not? Our proposal will offer discounts for them to enjoy activities they may not otherwise have access to and it will be FREE for borough residents 65 and older and under 4. If you ask around, it becomes clear that the young demographic in town is overwhelmingly in support of what we are offering. They are excited to finally have a place where they can go and congregate with their friends and family to participate in activities together. We want to build this for them as they are the future of this town and want them to have a reason to grow here.

To state that Marine Park should not be a welcome place for visitors to our town would be to completely ignore the history of Red Bank. The borough was founded on the red banks of the Navesink River and the former tennis court site was originally a tomato canning factory employing many residents and subsequently was turned into a community theatre. There is also constant chatter about Broad Street turning into a food court and this is an effort to create diversity as Marine Park sits at the foot of the commercial district. Visitors support the downtown, which funds the municipal budget and keeps property taxes lower. There is also a large economic benefit that will go directly to the town.

We have studied the Red Bank Master Redevelopment Plans from 1981 to present extensively and they played a large part in our creative process. All of them specifically state that Marine Park is grossly underutilized and should be a focal point of the commercial district and the town as a whole. They list many suggested uses and compare the park to famous locations from around the world. The 2006 Red Bank Waterfront Plan perfectly states on page 59 the point that is common across all of the master development plans; “Although there is an anecdotal sense of historic qualities and nostalgic attachment to the tennis courts in Marine Park, this is not an appropriate waterfront use. Tennis courts are only used in a limited capacity, and the few people who benefit from them do not justify the amount of valuable water frontage they consume.”

It is very apparent that a good portion of the most vocal critics of our proposal are members of the special interest groups that are competing with us. This is not an accurate representation of the community as a whole and we find it extremely unfortunate that is has come to casting derogatory remarks and skewing perception, instead of everyone making an effort to work together. Contrary to certain public opinion we truly are trying to better the community and create a place for everyone. Yes “Broad to the River” would be great, but we don’t feel a view of a large tennis facility would complement our river at all. Our design specifically kept in mind what the view would look like from the intersection of Front St. and Broad should “Broad to the River” ever happen. Having family that has worked and lived in Red Bank for three generations and currently having an office just a block away from Marine Park, we have the joy of overlooking and visiting it every day. It is upsetting to see how underused the park is and we look forward to potentially creating a place for everyone to enjoy.

Sincerely,

The Jetsuns

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| **Municipal Projected Revenue** | |
| Leasing Revenue | **2,734,445** |
| Parking Revenue | **3,022,200** |
| Boat Slip Revenue | **371,250** |
| Capital Improvements | **3,501,212** |
| **Total Benefit to Municipality** | **9,629,432** |