



From: Michael E. Olsen meolsen@yahoo.com
Subject: Amended proposal Res 1175-2015 - Ban on hobbyists in county parks
Date: May 20, 2015 at 6:17 AM
To: brendan.chamberlain@suffolkcountyny.gov
Cc: Tom.Muratore@suffolkcountyny.gov, PresidingOfficer.Legislature@suffolkcountyny.gov, william.spencer@suffolkcountyny.gov

Brendan Chamberlain

Legislative Aide

Suffolk County Legislator Tom Muratore, 4th L.D.

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Mr. Chamberlain,

I understand that you are proposing to amend the draft legislation to prohibit the use of radio controlled hobby aircraft under 500' over parks in the summer, and at any other time without a permit. I write to you because I saw that you had contacted others about this proposed amendment. I urge you to reconsider it and lodge this as opposition.

I wrote an earlier note to legislator Muratore and the Presiding Officer about concerns over this proposal. As I noted there, hobbyists fly over the parks to avoid being discourteous to people, and because the open spaces make for nice photography. This proposal would make those spaces (arguably) inaccessible.

It is hard to understand, in the current draft, what the proposal is intended to accomplish. It seems, given the proliferation of camera phones, small cameras, hidden video cameras, etc, that this measure is not likely to protect privacy of people at parks or beaches, since hobby aircraft are much more conspicuous "photography" tools than any of these others. It also appears that the issue is not safety related, as flying over a park or beach — generally open space, even in summer — is preferred to flying over buildings and roads, which are expressly not prohibited. Moreover, forcing hobby aircraft up — above 500' — while a perfectly legal area for flight, does run counter to the FAA's guidelines on best practices for flying unmanned aircraft, as the FAA recommends flight under 400'. The only way to comply with this proposed prohibition is to fly above recommended guidelines in traversing parks or beaches, which doesn't seem good practice.

I appreciate that the County takes its "responsibility for protecting the safety and welfare of its 1.5 million residents" seriously, but I urge you to consider whether this measure furthers that goal, or just targets a small but active group of hobbyists and commercial flyers who, in my experience are very conscientious about safety, privacy, and courtesy, in the absence of such laws.

Thank you for your consideration,

Michael Olsen
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CC: Legislator Tom Muratore, Presiding Officer Gregory, Legislator Spencer (Huntington, District 18).