

STANDARD AMUSEMENTS RESPONDS TO FALSEHOODS AND MISREPRESENTATIONS PERPETUATED BY COUNTY EXECUTIVE GEORGE LATIMER REGARDING RYE PLAYLAND

Latimer Mismanaged Park and Ignored Public Safety, Refused to Engage in Negotiations, Refused to Meet Since November 2018, Disregarded \$20 Million in Increased Funding, Sought to Silence Public Discussion and Avoid Transparency, and Has Consistently Pursued a Path to Litigation Despite Standard Amusements Repeated Attempts To Avoid It

Despite it All, Standard Amusements Continues to Seek Positive Discussions Regarding the Future of Rye Playland, \$20 Million Increased Offer Still Stands

RYE, NY – Standard Amusements, the company selected as a long-term operator of Rye Playland in 2015 (who has still been prevented from operating and improving the park, despite 9 years of efforts) today responded to fabrications perpetuated by County Executive George Latimer regarding Rye Playland.

Standard Amusements' response comes after George Latimer's Administration issued a wrongful termination notice on the contract late Friday evening, on the eve of legislative hearings where members of the Westchester Board of Legislators will investigate the lack of transparency from the Latimer Administration on the topic.

"Since I was a child, Playland was the center of my life. It was my amusement park, the only beach I knew in the summer, and where I ice skated in the winters. Rye Playland holds a special place in my heart, and I'm stunned by the recent turn of events", said **Nicholas J. Singer, Principal, Standard Amusements**. "After 9 years of our best efforts, we still are not the operator of Rye Playland despite a clear contract that says we should be. We have done everything within our power, and then some, to have a positive dialogue with the Latimer Administration to improve Rye Playland. We identified issues of public concern, committed more money to resolve them, presented a highly detailed plan of our vision, supplied detailed answers to a never-ending list of insincere concerns – but through it all it has become clear that George Latimer seems personally determined that this will all end in expensive litigation – litigation we continue to hope to avoid."

The contract between Westchester County and Standard Amusements was subject to numerous public meetings and Board of legislative hearings. The contract was passed twice with overwhelming bipartisan supermajorities in 2015 and 2016.

Standard Amusements took the opportunity to correct the falsehood and misrepresentations perpetuated by the Latimer Administration in public comments. Including the following:

The Latimer Administration has dismissed numerous safety concerns communicated by Standard Amusements.

- On multiple occasion over the last 16 months, Standard Amusements has raised serious and urgent safety concerns to the Administration. The response was been to either ignore them or attack Standard Amusements for voicing these concerns.
- The safety issues are widespread and cover food handling, environmental, rides, and fire suppression.
- Instead of dealing with these issues, the Latimer Administration has focused on designing a new mascot and other superficial optics.

- **In the Parks' current condition, Standard Amusements would not open certain rides and amenities of Playland to the public, if it was the operator of the Park this year.**

The Latimer Administration expressed concerns regarding \$7.7M in funding spent by Standard Amusements, arguing that the money was not spent on tangible capital improvements.

- Standard Amusements has always complied with both the letter and the spirit of the contract. The contract specifically includes overhead, salaries, etc. to be included in the Manager's Investment.
- Regardless, Standard Amusements offered to remove any costs that concerned the Administration and raise its investment from \$30,000,000 to \$50,000,000 given Playland's continued and significant state of disrepair. The Administration flatly refused any discussion to address the concerns.
- These are not taxpayer funds, as Mr. Latimer has inaccurately suggested. The funds noted are Standard Amusements own investment commitment.

The Latimer Administration has tried to portray the deal as inequitable, saying the County will invest \$125mm and Standard Amusements will only invest \$27.5mm

- The County's original estimates for the repairs were based on the County's own engineering and planning departments, not Standard Amusements.
- The \$125mm is grossly inflated, and in the spirit of partnership, Standard Amusements committed to working with the County to reduce its contractual obligations through efficient project planning and intelligent engineering. Furthermore, Standard Amusements offered to discuss a cap on the County's financial exposure, but once again the Administration flatly refused any discussion.

The Latimer Administration has Insinuated that the December 2017 contract extension letter was improper.

- The extension was properly executed by the then, current Administration and with the Westchester Board of Legislators fully noticed.
- The primary beneficiary was Westchester County, not Standard Amusements, as the County missed the most significant deadline in the contract – the 50% completion of the critical infrastructure / public safety projects.

The Latimer Administration has falsely suggested that Rye Playland will not remain a public park.

- Rye Playland has been and will always be a public park, owned by Westchester County, freely available for the benefit of the community. The agreement that the Latimer Administration is now attempting to wrongfully terminate requires Standard Amusements to be the operator of the public park.
- The County Executive's notion that this is a real estate deal in disguise is preposterous. Anything more than adding restaurants and new rides to the park is not legally permissible.
- Lastly, it was Standard Amusements plan to remove all charges for the beach and pool – something Westchester County has refused to offer the public.

The Latimer Administration has misrepresented that Standard Amusements has not provided a plan.

- Standard Amusements has made its plans clear and presented them to the Administration, including a draft master plan more than 130 pages laying out a broad and complete vision for the park. Initial plans include preserving the historic fabric, restoring amusement and entertainment experiences throughout the park, improving public spaces and gardens, fostering community partnerships at the park, and more.
- Standard Amusements provided a comprehensive marketing & media plan to the Administration in May 2018.
- The Standard Amusements team has some of the best operators in the amusement and food & beverage industries.

Standard Amusements has been eager to discuss its plans with the public, but the Latimer Administration has consistently worked to silence discussion around Playland.

- Standard Amusements presented its plan to the County in a 4-hour meeting with County staff and members of the Administration in August of 2018. The meeting included three architectural firms, one engineering firm and a renowned historic preservationist. Standard Amusements never received any feedback from the Latimer Administration or his Commissioners regarding the draft Master Plan.
- Standard Amusements delivered to the County Administration and the Board of Legislators a 30-page executive summary of a draft master plan on April 11, 2019, in response to requests from individual members of both parties. Afterward the Administration attacked Standard Amusements for complying with the request.
- Standard Amusements has presented the plan to key community groups, Playland advocates and stakeholders including the County appointed Playland Advisory Committee. Initial feedback has been highly positive.

The Latimer Administration has raised concerns regarding audit requests that are blatantly false.

- Standard Amusements has fully complied with every audit request, including requests outside of the scope of what the contract allows. Standard Amusements has requested copies of the County's final audit report on numerous occasions with the County refusing to provide it.

Standard Amusements is the only partner to the Playland Management Agreement with a viable plan. The Latimer Administration has still not delivered a viable plan to ensure the future well-being of Playland, despite concerns raised by elected officials, community groups and concerned citizens. The Park needs significant investment regardless of Mr. Latimer's actions, or motivations. Mr. Latimer has proposed no solution to this problem; instead, he has taken every action to provoke unnecessary litigation with the one partner willing and contractually obligated to invest significantly in the Park. The Latimer Administration reckless actions puts both taxpayers and patrons at significant risk.

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