



JOSH SKALLER 09

FOR CITY COUNCIL

1

Responses to *New Yorkers For Parks* Questionnaire

community@skaller09.com

www.skaller09.com

2009 Candidate Survey

What do you believe are the top priority park issues that need to be addressed in your district and citywide?

The 39th Council District is responsible for Prospect Park – the most beautifully designed park in New York City and Brooklyn’s Crown Jewel -- as well as some smaller parks. All parks are precious resources for the physical health, mental health and education of the people and, accordingly, should be treated as such. This has not been the case during various municipal administrations. Parks, in general, have been treated as a policy afterthought, a budgetary nuisance, and a political basketball. Politicians support them when convenient and abandon them when fiscal resources are scarce.

My guiding philosophy in approaching “parks” as a concept within New York City is simple:

The future that we envision – the future we need to bring about – is one built upon green economic principles and improvements in our quality of life. A public park is a critical component of our future and must be developed and supported as such.

With this philosophy in mind, I consider the top priority park issues to be the following:

- Include and embed financial support of parks within the municipal budget, at a minimum, and, preferably, within the budgets at all three levels of government. There must be a sensible floor below which public funding of parks cannot go. At the municipal level, we all think of this as “maintenance of effort” funding. The definition of a “sensible floor” must be determined by a community discussion or similar process from which would emerge a clear vision and mission for each park and a strategic plan to fulfill the mission. Incorporated into this strategic planning, of course, would be appropriate staffing levels and other resources essential to the fulfillment of the mission and furtherance of the vision.
- Develop a higher-profile outreach campaign to bring parks into the everyday lives of every Brooklynite. Obviously, this has already taken place to a great extent with regard to Prospect Park, in particular. The Prospect Park Alliance generates information and activities targeting a diverse assortment of communities around Brooklyn, as well as different age groups. This has not been enough, however, to put parks on par with schools in the public consciousness and, more importantly, the Alliance approach has not