

# ALEX ZABLOCKI

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## FOR PUBLIC ADVOCATE

May 25, 2009

Sheelah A. Feinberg  
Government & Community Relations  
New Yorkers for Parks  
355 Lexington Ave, 14<sup>th</sup> Floor  
New York, NY 10022

**Re: 2009 Candidate Survey**

**Sent via email: sfeinberg@ny4p.org**

Dear Ms. Feinberg:

Thank you for having me at the New Yorkers for Parks forum last week. Attached are my answers to the 2009 candidate survey.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me. I look forward to working with you in the future.

Sincerely,



Alex T. Zablocki  
Candidate  
NYC Public Advocate

**Survey Answers:****Securing Adequate Funding/Maintenance for Parks**

- a. Yes
- i. I would be in favor of tax increment financing (TIF) if the money used properly and accounted for, however, this method could take money about from schools and other uses. I believe the best method to secure more money for parks are through public/private partnerships, which as Public Advocate I would look to expand across the five boroughs.
- b. Yes.
- i. Yes and no. For example, of a minor concession wants to do business in a park, I don't think approval should be held up by a borough review. I am in favor of giving more control to local Parks offices over their own concessions and I would be in favor of revising the Major Concessions Rules if "significant private uses" was clearly defined.
- c. Yes, the best way to manage any government agency effectively is to break it down to see what works and what doesn't.
- d. Yes, grants, private money, allocations from City Council members and Borough Presidents and State/ Federal sources
- e. As Public Advocate I would work with the Mayor's office to create a new independent rating system of all park facilities called "ParkStat". This program would also work closely with the NYPD to determine levels of crime in parks.
- i. Yes, in most cases.
- f. Yes, through volunteering and community partnerships.
- i. Use more community based volunteers.
  - ii. Cut costs on all projects. Examine capital projects for cost overruns and ways to make park improvements cheaper by involving the private sector.
  - iii. Through the allocation of Federal money, economic development projects with a business component to help pay for improvements
- g. Yes, it is important to breakdown the ratings into manageable pieces.
- h. Yes – this should be done already.

**Protecting Parkland**

- a. Yes, if it changes a park or harms a park in anyway, including the parks' unique experience.
- i. They have an obligation to assist in maintaining and operating public parks near their facilities and should have been part of the redevelopment deals of both the Mets and Yankees stadiums. Since these deals have already been structured, as Public Advocate I would reach out to both teams to ask them to help support parks near their stadiums. I would also submit legislation requiring any major sports team that receives taxpayer dollars to build a stadium to place money in a fund to help support parks near their stadiums. (ie: any new development or redevelopment of Madison Square Garden, Atlantic Yards, West Side Stadium for use by a sports team)
- b. Yes. Parks should be used for PARKS purposes.

- i. Expand the role of the ULURP (Uniform Land Use Review Process) to require a ULURP and EIS be filed before any parkland alienation legislation if filed by a municipality.
- c. Yes.
  - i. Before any loss of parkland, property must be identified to "swap" with. I strongly support mitigation for taking of parkland. I believe property should be acre for acre, square foot for square foot and should be identified within a set region before parkland is lost.
- d. If teams use public facilities, they should be open to the public without cost. I would support strict rules in the permit process by parks to prevent "pay to play".
- e. Yes, and I would take it a step further through the creation of ParkStat.
- f. Yes, and create a new tracking program called ParkStat.

### Expanding Park Use

- a. Yes, I believe each borough should have a significant role in this planning.
  - i. More waterfront recreation, ballfields and soccer fields, links to bike lane networks, moving projects like Fresh Kills Park and Governors Island forward, more skateboard parks and innovative ways to create more parks facilities in the inner-city, such as tennis courts on roof tops. Any plan would have to have significant input from parks partners, such as corporations and organizations like New Yorkers for Parks.
  - ii. As Public Advocate, I would work with the Mayor's office, Borough Presidents, local City Council members, the Parks Department, City Planning, representatives from parks advocacy groups and representatives from the Community Board. Once again, I believe the plans should come from each borough, as the local community knows the needs of their community best.
- b. Yes, as Community Gardens are a great way of getting people involved in parks.
- c. As Public Advocate, I would reach out to schools, youth groups, such as the Boy Scouts of America and major sports teams for sponsorship. I would advocate for more public and private partnerships.
- d. We need inter-agency coordination, otherwise many of the ideas we have for our parks will never work. Coordination between agencies saves money. As Public Advocate I would urge the Mayor to ensure all of the agencies under his control are speaking with each other and coordinating when it comes to major projects.
- e. Through zoning regulations. As Public Advocate I would appoint a City Planning Commissioner that would require areas open to the public through deed and zoning restriction and special declarations. I would look to partner with the City Council to submit legislation to ensure that these regulations are strictly adhered to.
  - i. No, if the land is private, it should not be mapped as parkland. I would be in favor of creating a new classification similar to parkland that it could be mapped as.

### National and Regional Parks

- a. We must all be stakeholders and all levels of government should be involved in these new parks and have input on their future. As Public Advocate, I would bring all the stakeholders together and focus on making sure that these parks are not just "studied" or "planned" but actually go from the drawing board to reality.

b. As Public Advocate, I would make sure that the Department of Transportation and the MTA were involved when it comes to equal access. This could be the expansion of roads, ferry lines, more parking facilities and bike lane extension and coordination. It is vital that any new park be open to all citizens and we allow everyone in our city to have access to these new parks.

c. As Public Advocate I would like to bring national attractions to our National Parks. These include new monuments, exhibitions on the history of a certain park, art shows, etc. In 2008, I proposed a shuttle from the Staten Island Rapid Transit line to the beach at Great Kills Park in Gateway National Recreation Area. The City and Federal government should increase access to our national parks in this manner. An innovative ad campaign should also be created throughout the city, promoting our beaches as clean and close to home: "Our beaches are just as good as New Jersey, if not better!"