



**8th Annual Parks Advocacy Day
May 20, 2010
Breakout Session Notes**

Parks Advocacy Day (PAD) is an annual event that brings diverse advocates from all over New York City together on behalf of parks, playgrounds, beaches, community gardens, and natural areas. The event convenes advocates with their City Council Members and provides the singular opportunity for them to advocate, share local knowledge, and strengthen partnerships. This fosters a citywide coalition united in ensuring that all New Yorkers enjoy a world-class parks system.

The 8th annual PAD was held on May 20th at New York University's Kimmel Center. This year, attendees split up into breakout groups focused on three topics, which were determined by coalition feedback: PlaNYC, concessions, and public-private partnerships. The goal of the breakout sessions was to create the foundation for our work agenda for the coming year around specific citywide issues. Led by community facilitators, participants discussed and mapped their concerns on a local basis, identified citywide themes, and determined some possible next steps. Below are the notes from the breakout session.

PlaNYC Breakout Session

**Facilitated by Mel Wymore, Manhattan Community Board 7 Chair
Notes taken by Cheryl Huber, Deputy Director, NY4P**

I. Concerns/Suggestions:

- We need an umbrella non-profit that can support smaller parks in concession revenues.
- Where is the accounting for the money raised by concessions?
- Why are concessions existent on public land? And why doesn't the City run them? This is for private profit.
- There's a need for more transparency in the finances. How much goes into the park where the concession operates?
- What can be done about concessions vs. private display/use/sale of art that is protected by 1st Amendment
- Is it unconstitutional to regulate "expressive vendors"?
- What counts as "art" under the 1st Amendment? –nonfunctional items?
- Would new regulations curtail/locate/limit these artist vendors? It seems that the NYC administration has a philosophy to "contain"
- Equality of access- such as the rec center in St. James Park, which the colleges can use, non profits get limited use, and the rest of the community is frozen out.
- Concessions should be brought in because they are good for the community, not merely because they bring in money
- How to reconcile the conflicting activities of park users (active vs passive)
- What is the responsibility of the concessionaire for the removal of garbage and distribution of receptacles near concessions?

- Will the parks budget be cut if additional revenue from concessions is received?
- Are concessions defined as being permanent?
- Can concessions be used to preserve the history of parks and monuments (Washington Market Park)
- It's important to allow CSA's to continue to distribute in parks, as the CSA is not a concession, it's vulnerable
- Concessions partnering with non profits (Such as OSA in Williamsburg) allows money to stay in the park, which is good
- Paying for park space (such as Calvin Klein renting the Highline)- How are prices set?
- The Parks Department should seek the public's voice and respond to suggestions
- How to navigate the tension between tourists and locals difference of use of parks concessions?
- Balance is needed between open space and "privatized" land used by concessions (especially in western Queens)
- How are concessions chosen?
- Why did concessions run by NYC lose money, but concessions run by private concessionaires make money?
- Large events such as Summer Stage- are they good or bad for the parks?
- How to balance the need of both small/independent vendors and large vendors such as Danny Meyer?
- How to deal with the larger amounts of garbage and crowding brought in by a concession?
- There needs to be more exploration of local food/crafts/art for diverse food options and local economic development
- Parks need to raise revenue- what is the role of concessions as revenue producers for parks?
- What is the RFP process? Can it be more transparent?
- Can there be more transparency on vendors and concessions overall?
- There's a need for an umbrella non-profit that can support smaller parks.
- There's a need for more transparency in the finances.
- Revenue sharing and equality of distribution
- The conflict of directing concession funds to the general fund as opposed to the parks

II. **Common Themes:**

- What is the reasoning behind choosing concessions?
- Directing revenue from concessions
- Diversity, accessibility and social justice of concessions
- Transparency of policy (for everything parks related)

III. **Next steps**

- A minimum dedicated percentage of concession revenue for parks
- A more diverse oversight of concessions, as Parks Department point of view is just one way of looking at it.
- Ensuring that hearings result in the City changing policies