

# Discussion Forum Commentary

Ana  
**Bailão** 

Committed to our community

## COMMUNITY PARKS SUMMIT

Open House and Consultation Forum  
Hosted by Ward 18  
**Councillor Ana Bailão**  
*Dovercourt Boys and Girls Club  
180 Westmoreland Avenue*

**1:00PM  
SATURDAY  
MAY 5<sup>TH</sup>**

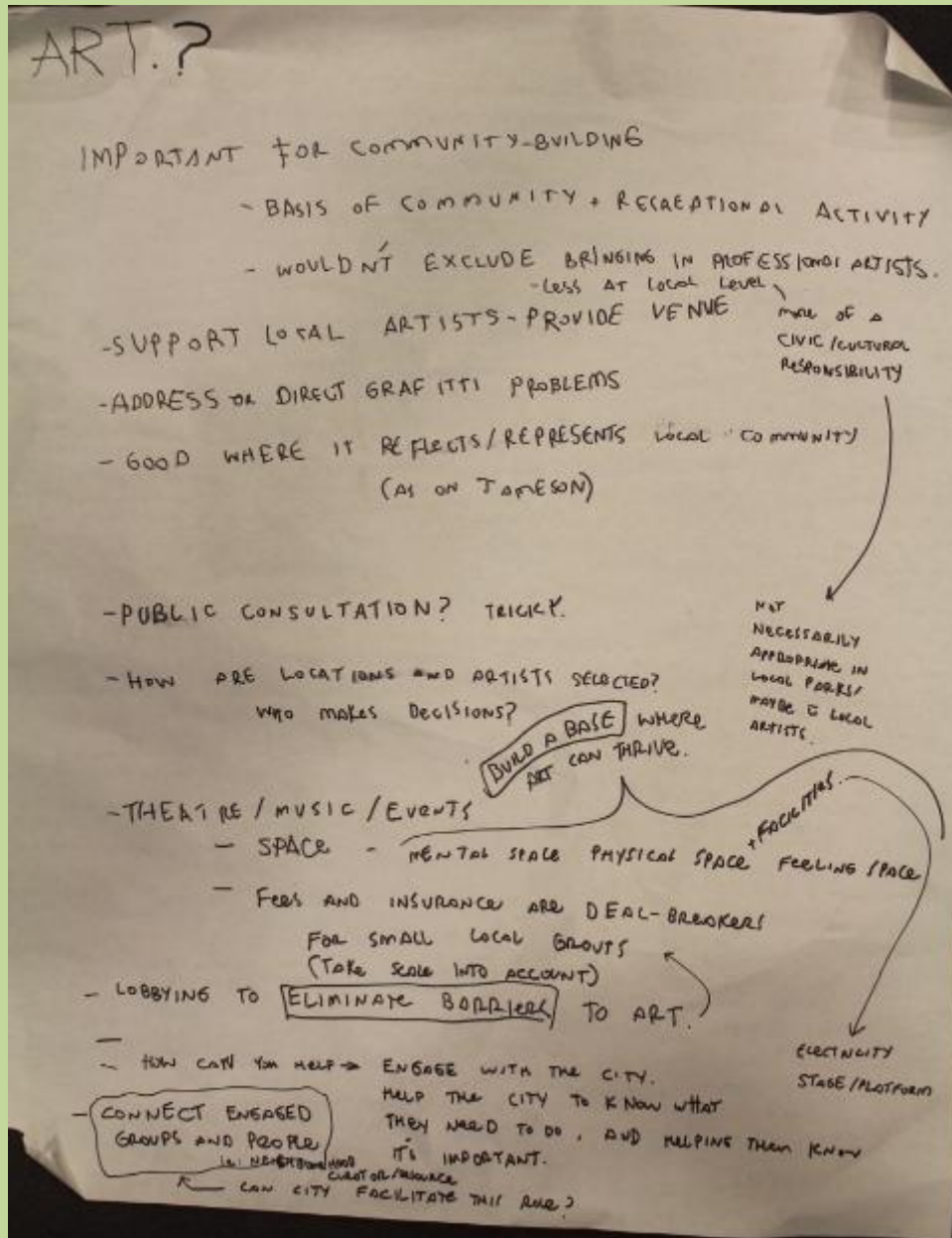


# Discussion Forum Overview

- Parks Summit participants were first addressed by:
  - Ward 18 Toronto City Councillor Ana Bailão
  - City of Toronto Parks, Forestry and Recreation Division
    - Manager, Community Recreation, Toronto East York District, Sue Bartleman
    - Manager, Parks, Toronto East York District, Ray Stukas
  - Centre for Local Research into Public Space and Friend of Dufferin Grove Park, Jutta Mason
  - Park People’s Coordinator, Community Outreach and Neighbourhood Parks, Anna Hill
- After a plenary question and answer session with speakers and audience, Parks Summit participants were introduced to the team of table facilitators and then chose a seat at one of seven discussion roundtables, each focussing on one of the following topic areas: Arts in Parks; Community Engagement; Donations, Sponsorships and Park Levies; Food in Parks; Permits; Sports; Trees and Gardening
- During the ~45minute discussion, facilitators asked thought provoking questions and recorded notes on flip-chart paper
- The discussion forum ended with a facilitator’s report, which summarized each group’s input for the larger audience
- Note sheets were collected by Councillor Bailão’s staff, typed and sent to facilitators for edits and editorializing
- Both original note sheets and typed, edited notes are included on the slides that follow
- We welcome any further comments. Please email [councillor\\_bailao@toronto.ca](mailto:councillor_bailao@toronto.ca) or call 416-392-7012



# Art in Parks



Art-based activities and events in parks, can be important for Community-Building opportunities.

Art can form the basis of Community and Recreational Activities. The above shouldn't exclude bringing in professional artists, to create work in parks or other public spaces, but this would happen less at a local level—it would be more of a civic and cultural responsibility (it's not necessarily appropriate in local parks, except possibly as a venue for local artists).

Park spaces are an opportunity to support local artists, and provide venues for their work.

Art in parks can help to address graffiti problems or direct those energies to appropriate places.

Art in local parks is better where it represents a local community, a good example being the streetscape art on Jameson.

Should there be public consultation? It will be tricky to establish an appropriate level of input.

How are locations and artists selected?

Who makes decisions?

Build a base (in parks) where art can thrive:

Consider Theatre, Music and other art-focused events

Space – Mental space (park-setting, welcoming environment and community), Physical Space (important facilities are electricity, possibly a stage or platform-type element), “Feeling Space”

Fees and Insurance are deal-breakers for small local groups (these requirements should take scale into account)

How can you (citizens) help?

Engage with the city

Lobbying to **eliminate barriers** to art (such as fees and insurance for small local groups)

Help the city know what they need to do and help them know it is important

Connecting engaged groups and people to each other and to resources is part of community-building that happens informally but is not presently well-supported by the City.

Can the City facilitate this role? i.e. neighbourhood curator/resource person

# Community Engagement (1 of 3)

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- Decisions are made in parks and neighbours are unaware
- Friends of Groups help community connect w/ councillor... sometimes
- Friends of groups need to be inclusive, have community meetings, be transparent
- Friends of groups need to be transparent
- Transparency in bank accounts
- Clear contact information
- Public meeting minutes
- Need to standardize what qualifies as a "Friends of group" so that conflicting decisions can be resolved publicly + fairly

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Friends of Groups help community connect with councillor... sometimes

Friends of groups need to be inclusive, have community meetings

Friends of groups need to be transparent

Transparency in bank accounts

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Public meeting minutes

Need to standardize what qualifies as a "Friends of Group" so that conflicting decisions can be resolved publicly and fairly

# Community Engagement (2 of 3)

- There need to be guidelines for community groups to communicate with Parks, Forestry + Recreation (Parks Supervisor) and Councillor
- Allow Friends group to do their work but once conflict arises we need a mechanism (Councillor?) to resolve conflict.
- Not fair when Friends of Group is not inclusive of contradictory opinion.
- No barriers to community organizing.
- Not "Friends of Group" if its not open.
- The larger the impact of the Friends of Group, the more important are issues of transparency and inclusivity + governance.

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# Community Engagement (3 of 3)

- When are you moving from community engagement to governance.
- Is a conservancy a way of watering down local participation or is a way of encouraging governance
- Rules for Friends Group. Constitution, bylaws, mission statement.
- People feel unwelcome when Friends groups are not inclusive.
- Not fair to make community members turn to someone for information who is not elected or paid to serve the public.
- Like BIA's, Friends of Groups need a formal definition w/ formal processes that must be followed in order to be "legitimate"

When are you moving from Community Engagement to Governance?

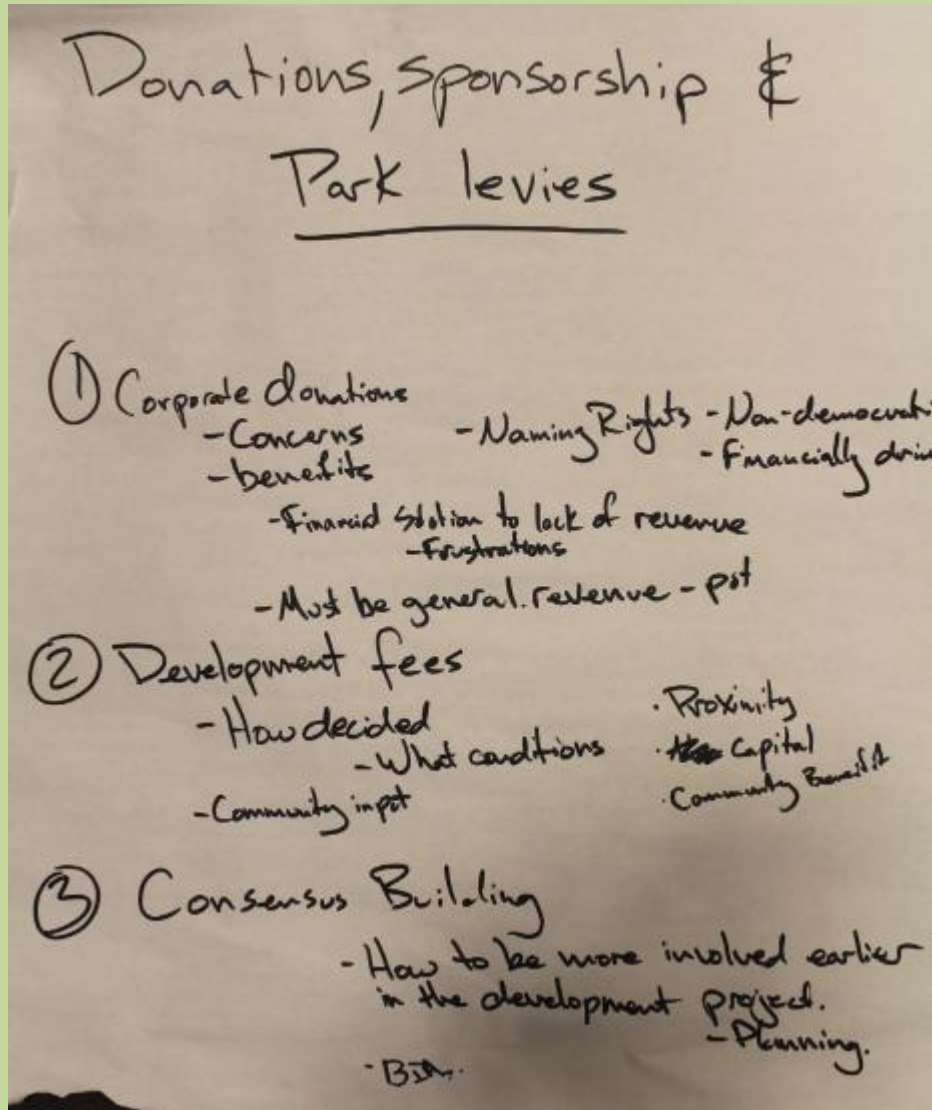
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# Donations, Sponsorship & Park Levies



## 1) Corporate donations

### Concerns

Naming rights

Non-democratic

Financially driven

### Benefits

Financial solution to lack of revenue

Frustrations

Must be general revenue

## 2) Development Fees

How decided

What conditions

Community input

Proximity

Capital

Community benefit

## 3) Consensus Building

How to be more involved, earlier, in the development project

Planning

BIA

# Food In Parks

## FOOD IN PARKS

- Food is crucial for community development. = facilitate gathering of people.
- Dufferin Grove (snack bar, Friday night supper) and Wallace/Dufferin/Campbell rink snack bar are successful examples.
- City should continue providing staff for cooking/food in the park and provide simplified procedures to make it possible.
- campfire } for community use  
} are important
- bake ovens }  
They should be accessible to all.  
Keep fees as low as possible.

Food is crucial for community development = it facilitates gathering of people. Having food in parks encourages neighbourhood liveliness, and it allows families (and everyone) to spend time outside, have active play, and meet their neighbours.

Dufferin Grove (snack bar, Friday night supper) and Wallace/Dufferin/Campbell rink snack bar are successful examples where city staff incorporate food into park programming.

Picnics, barbeques, cooking fires, and other community activities that include food are also key ways that the community can use, enliven, and feel involved in, their local park.

The local stakeholders concerning food in parks are local residents, community groups, schools, and any other park users.

City should continue providing staff for cooking/food in the park and provide simplified procedures to make it possible.

Community kitchens, campfires and bake ovens are important community resources.

They should be accessible to all.

Keep fees as low as possible (or free) and procedures for community access as simple and clear as possible.

Improvements for Ward 18 parks that would allow the community to best enjoy food in parks:

Drinking fountains that work

Washrooms that are open

Simplify procedures for including food in community special events, or for holding picnics or barbeques in parks. The city's regulations and staff should be supportive of community initiatives such as these. The insurance requirement for some permits, along with high fees, are obstacles that block park users from accessing public facilities and parks, and limit their ability to contribute to enlivening their local parks.

Increase the number of community gardens, edible trees and plants in parks, and connect them with ways of providing food in parks (snack bars, pizza days, cooking fires, etc).



# Permits

## PERMITS

- Have to do it by fax! - should be able to use email
- Need a lot of info for a simple permit
  - ↳ very cumbersome for groups
- When do you need a permit? → why?
- How do we find out who has permits for what and when?
  - need access to this info so we know when we can use it?
    - ↳ there should be drop in times listed
  - a sign, online, point of contact
    - ↳ frontline person (do they know?)
- the rinks are listed why can't the parks be the same?
- coordination btwn central & frontline ppl
- How are permits handled for small parks?
  - ↳ one size fits all?
- Online one stop <sup>shop</sup> for permitting
- Block off times for drop in to allow more use
- Permit process isn't working - seems like a cash grab & too bureaucratic / Need a new system - Participatory Democracy

Have to do it by fax! (should be able to use email)

Need a lot of info for a simple permit

Very cumbersome for groups (particularly small or less formalized ones)

When do you need a permit? Why?

How do we find out who has permits for what and when?

Need to access this info so we know when we can use it

There should be drop in times listed

People should be able to find this information through a sign at the park, online, point of contact, front line person

Does the frontline person have a list of the permits? If so, they need to be able to share it

The rinks are listed online, why can't parks be the same?

Need better coordination between central permitting office and frontline people

How are permits handled for small parks? One size fits all?

Would be great to have online one stop shop to submit permit applications and view a schedule of permitted events and drop in times

Block off times for drop-in that can not be permitted to allow more community use

Permit process isn't working

Cash grab? Or does it cost more to run the permit process than it brings in?

Too bureaucratic

Why do we have permits? If it is solely to manage the needs/interests of those who want to use the space, it isn't very effective and is probably not necessary in most parks where usage is low.

Need a system which is more participatory/democratic

# Sports

## SPORTS

- How can we engage youths (10-16 yrs. old)
- How to bridge inside staff (Rec Centre) with outside space?
- Lend equipment (i.e. sign out a soccer ball, etc.)
- Park is totally disconnected from Rec Centre (McCormick)
- How to get input from kids (web, rebelling)

- \* - Equipment: opportunities to use loose equipment (shovels, garden tools)
  - soccer balls
  - ball hockey
  - lawn chairs
  - juggling balls
  - hula-hoops
  - benches
  - picnic blanket
  - volleyball, frisbees
- store in a box

- \* - Kids need ownership (may trash it) - older kids will use if no younger kids
- \* - hangout equipment
- using schoolyards after hours

How can we engage youths (10-16 yrs old)?

How to bridge inside staff (rec centre) with outside space?

Lend equipment (i.e. sign out soccer ball, etc.)

Park is totally disconnected from Rec Centre (McCormick)

How to get input from kids (web, rebelling)

Equipment = there should be opportunities to borrow or sign out loose equipment (shovels, garden tools); store in a box

Soccer balls

Juggling balls

Picnic blanket

Ball hockey

Hula-hoops

Volleyball, frisbees

Ball hockey

Lawn chairs

Benches

Older kids need ownership (even though they may trash it)

Older kids will use if no younger kids are around, they want to feel independent

Hangout equipment – A different type of playground is needed for teens (not primarily school-type play equipment). Skateparks and BMX parks are good, but not all teens do these activities. Could integrate some skate park elements with other seating

Using schoolyards after hours

# Trees + Gardens in Parks

## Trees + gardens

- yes to community gardens in public spaces but need way to access the space / more welcoming for others to get involved. \* more ~~signage~~ communication (signage) + Fruit trees. diff level of involvement.

- tree stewardship - care by org<sup>dep</sup>/person that plants the tree.

- Fruit trees, NFFTT, BIAs, local Res: healing plants, education / signage.

- local residents, BIAs, Friends of groups yards, orgs.

- beautification

- improvement - communication b/w users + groups. education, signage.

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More communication (signage) + fruit trees

Diff level of involvement

Tree stewardship – care by organization/department/person that plants the tree

Fruit trees, NFFTT, BIAs, local residents

Healing plants, education, signage

Local residents, BIAs, friends groups, youths, orgs

Beautification

Improvement – communication between users + groups

Education, signage