



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Daniel L. Squadron

Senator Squadron Testimony on Equity in Parks Funding

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Senator Highlights Parks Conservancies Are Not Independent Non-Profits, Part of Larger System

NEW YORK – Today, Senator Daniel Squadron submitted testimony at the City Council’s hearing on equity in parks funding. Senator Squadron argued that since parks conservancies are not independent non-profits – they are entities that exist as the result of a contractual relationship with the City – the City has a right and the responsibility to set the terms of a relationship around its broader values and needs.

“The City has an obligation to consider its broader values and goals as it pursues partnerships with conservancies,” said **Senator Daniel Squadron**. “The role of the conservancy in its partner park is an important factor, but must not be the only one the City considers. As this hearing highlights, there is also a glaring equity crisis in our city’s parks. Kids and families who most need great open space are least likely to have it in their neighborhood. Everyone who has a role in City parks, starting with the elected officials and policymakers, but also including conservancies, advocates and philanthropists, must be asked to be part of solving that equity crisis.

Under Squadron’s proposal, conservancies would join the proposed Neighborhood Parks Alliance as “contributing parks” to create more equity across the city’s parks. A contributing park would commit 20 percent of its conservancy’s budget to member parks in need. Parks in need would become members by gathering signatures from local residents, establishing their own conservancy group, and receiving commitments from the Parks Department and local Council members to at least maintain current government funding levels.

Disparities between well-funded, well-maintained parks (which are often heavily financed by private donations), and parks in lower-income neighborhoods, have continued to grow in recent years.

Senator Squadron’s testimony can be found below.