Session Number: MON-B08
Date: Monday, November 09, 2015
Time: 10:00 AM – 11:30 AM
Room: E353AB, Level 3
Presentation: Public Parks and Private Partners: United They Stand?
Speaker(s):
Kathy Blaha, Kathy Blaha Consulting, LLC
Candace Damon, HR&A Advisors
Catherine Nagel, City Parks Alliance
Edward K. Uhlir, FAIA, Millennium Park Foundation

Kathy Blaha, President, Kathy Blaha Consulting (panelist)

Drawing on more than 30 years of experience Kathy Blaha’s expertise is in engagement and governance solutions. Kathy Blaha Consulting (KBC) is a national practice that offers services helping private, public sector and not-for-profit organizations implement program initiatives including partnership creation. KBC is dedicated to improving the quality of partnerships and collaborative governance in parks and the public realm. During her 24-year tenure at the Trust for Public Land, as Senior Vice President, Kathy directed research and program development on parks, water quality and land conservation tools for local governments. She currently blogs about public-private partnerships for the City Parks Blog (www.cityparksblog.org).

Candace Damon, Vice Chairman, HR&A Advisors, Inc. (moderator)

Candace has devoted her 25 year career to crafting sustainable urban redevelopment strategies for cities across North America. Her specific areas of expertise include addressing the financial challenges of making commercial and multifamily residential buildings energy efficient, ensuring the long term viability of urban open spaces, supporting master planning efforts for large-scale revitalizations and organizational planning for non-profits and institutions. Candace has engineered successful strategies for downtown and waterfront redevelopment across the country, including public realm and economic development initiatives in Brooklyn, Minneapolis-St. Paul, Greensboro, Charlotte, Memphis, San Diego and Toronto.

Catherine Nagel, Executive Director, City Parks Alliance (panelist)

Catherine has been Executive Director of City Parks Alliance (CPA) since 2004. CPA is the only independent, nationwide membership organization solely dedicated to urban parks. It leads and
serves the community of diverse organizations that encompass the parks world, from neighborhood
groups to government agencies, championing high quality urban parks throughout the nation. She
focuses on federal, state and local advocacy, most recently launching the Mayors for Parks coalition;
has developed community capacity building programs including workshops on public-private
partnerships and international urban parks conferences; and is a co-investigator with the RAND
Corporation in the first national study of neighborhood parks and physical activity. She received a
BA from Bucknell University and an MLA from the University of Pennsylvania.

Ed Uhlir, FAIA, Millennium Park Foundation (panelist)

Ed Uhlir, FAIA has 37 years’ experience designing, programming and maintaining parks. As
Millennium Park Project Director he developed the master plan and directed the design and
construction of the park through its completion. He is now the President of Uhlir Consulting LLC and
the Executive Director of the Millennium Park Foundation with the responsibility of managing the
maintenance and improvement of the public art and gardens of Millennium Park. He is the Co-
Chairman of the City Parks Alliance, a national organization that supports urban parks and he has
lectured all over the world on the subject of parks.

Session Marketing Statement: As public appropriations for parks have decreased, public private
partnerships (P3s) have emerged to meet needs and fill funding gaps. This session will explore and
debate the P3 role in park funding, policy, and operations; how to manage issues of privatization, equity,
and commercialization; and the impact of P3s on park design, development, and management.

Learning Objectives:

• Learn about the evolution of public-private park partnerships of the 1980s through today.
• Understand the decision making process and impact of P3s on park design and development.
• Understand the landscape architect’s role in P3 models.
• Explore the public funding landscape and implications for P3s in the future.

Categories: Urban development, Parks, Planning

Course Outline:

I – Overview of Public-Private Partnerships for Parks – Catherine Nagel

  A. History - Funding context, evolution of conservancy models
  B. Lessons learned

II – Review P3 examples from various cities, showing how they vary by size, formality, composition, and
delivery. Panelists will also discuss the role of landscape architect, how design and ownership decisions
are made, and the nature of stakeholder engagement in each model as well as the impact of private
philanthropy on public design.

  A. Boston Public Garden, Boston, MA: Balancing Public Use and History through Partnership –
     Kathy Blaha
B. Millennium Park, Chicago, IL: Innovative funding model for a park – Ed Uhlir

III – Moderated discussion about public-private partnership models, focusing on their role in urban development, how the public/private balance is managed, and future projections. Topics to include:

A. How is the process for forming a P3 begun, and who leads it? How are they organized and responsive to the park’s constituency?
B. Where are they going? What are the implications of P3s for future park planning, design, development, and investment?
C. Can large scale projects be developed without P3s? What happens when budgets are cut in the midst of large scale projects, and pressure builds to scale back, cut or simplify design? How can private partners help or mitigate the ill effects of “value engineering”?
D. Public debate has been ignited in the last few years around the “privatization” of public parks. Are P3 models promoting the commercialization of public space? How can P3s ensure community engagement and access? And how can landscape architects help relieve the pressure of privatization through flexible park design that allows for commercial/mixed use but still has public access (such as a dual purpose amphitheater/playspace)?
E. How do we ensure equitable provision of parks system-wide, including at the neighborhood scale, using P3s?
F. If the end goal is to build/renovate public open space, who is the most effective client? Grassroots groups or the public?
G. Are P3s a sustainable model or are they inadvertently replacing public funds?
H. Where do P3s work best? Where don’t they work?

IV – Q&A