



Time To Spruce Up The Common

By Bill Fine, WCVB-TV President and General Manager – September 23, 2010



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BOSTON -- Boston Common is the oldest park in the country ... and showing its age. It needs a serious freshening up, something to make it more of a destination instead of a cut through to some place more interesting. Imagine a cafe drawing the lunch and dinner crowd, an outdoor reading room with WI-FI and food stands, a carousel, summer movie nights or the return of a concert series. Add comfortable seating areas scattered around the park even clean and safe bathrooms.

It sounds very much like New York's Bryant Park, a public space reclaimed from drug dealers decades ago and turned into an urban jewel with the help of private-sector sponsors.

Now the man behind that effort, Daniel Biederman, is looking to do the same with the Common, working with the advocacy group Friends of the Public Garden and its president Henry Lee.

Of course, there are critics, who fear the Common will become clogged with corporate logos. But we think city officials should pursue this partnership. It can be done tastefully, enlivening a park that has so much unrealized potential. And the result will be more activity in Downtown Crossing and the Theatre District, raising much needed revenue for the city and state. We know it's an uncommon approach in this traditional city, but it's the right one.

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