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INC**

MEETING MINUTES / 11 PAGES / SHARED ELECTRONICALLY

Project: Dorothea Dix Park Master Plan
Date: Wednesday June 13, 2018; 6:30-8:30PM
Meeting: Community Meeting #3 at Haywood Gymnasium, Dix Campus
Notes prepared by: Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, Inc. (MVVA)

Schedule:

- 6:30 PM (1) Introduction by Mayor Nancy McFarlane, Council Member Kay Crowder (District D), and Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources Director Diane Sauer, City of Raleigh
- (2) Presentation by Matthew Urbanski and Gullivar Shepard (MVVA)
- 7:45 PM Discussions, detailed planning ideas review, and written feedback stations with planning team, City of Raleigh, Dix Park Conservancy, and Master Plan Advisory Committee representatives
- 8:30 PM Meeting close

Meeting Notes:

- (1) Introduction
- a. Mayor Nancy McFarlane:
- i. For many, Raleigh is a great place to live and continues to be recognized for offering a great quality of life through its economy, climate, schools, parks, and greenways. And yet, we know that not everyone currently enjoys this prosperity. Like other fast-growing communities, Raleigh continues to deal with the impacts of growth on things like transportation options, access to food and medical care, housing, and overall affordability.
- ii. So, when we talk about the creation of this great park, we also need to discuss how to take care of our most vulnerable citizens. It is important that Dix Park is not supported at the expense of other city services or

programs and that we are creative in how the park is funded over the next several decades.

b. Council Member Crowder:

- i. The creation of Dix Park in no way limits our ability to also tackle issues such as affordability, housing and transportation access. If anything, this planning process has opened the door to so many new voices all working towards our community becoming a better place for every citizen.
- ii. As the Council Member that represents this District, I am acutely aware that the development of Dix Park will have an impact on surrounding neighborhoods. To be completely transparent, great urban parks have a positive impact on property values. And in some cases, this has led to gentrification and the loss of housing.
- iii. The issue of affordability is not solely about housing but also about jobs and transportation. We cannot stop growth but we can work to ensure we grow in a way that benefits all citizens.
- iv. There is the potential for job creation and workforce training opportunities with the development of the park, such as an apprenticeship program that would hire local citizens and provide construction experience as the park develops. If we are intentional and thoughtful in this project Dix Park can truly be a park for everyone, built by everyone.

c. Director Diane Sauer:

- i. We can work to ensure that Dix Park becomes financially self-sufficient over time. In places like Hermann Park in Houston and Brooklyn Bridge Park in Brooklyn, buildings are used as opportunities to generate revenue that goes directly back to funding park operations. By doing this, we can work to ensure that Dix Park creates value and does not draw resources from other parks and city projects.
- ii. People around the country are taking note: Adrian Benepe with the Trust for Public Land suggested at a recent meeting with park planning committees that the “creation of Dix Park is the most exciting and important urban park project in America today.” This is very exciting but we will only be successful if this entire community comes together in the effort.
- iii. You are here tonight to discuss the future of Dix Park and we appreciate you taking the time to do so. We have always been and will be committed to honesty and transparency that is why we wanted to start with these short introductory comments. Thank you for being here, thank you for caring about the future of our community and Dix Park and thank you for your support in the years to come. Together, we have a once-in-a-generation opportunity to do something transformative for this community.

(2) MVVA principal Matthew Urbanski / The Park and its Partners

- a. Matthew described the overall Master Plan schedule and six organizing themes.
 - i. The final Master Plan, covering all six themes, is to be submitted to the city in February 2019.
 - ii. Regular community meetings, engagement events, and further opportunities for public comment are planned between now and then.
- b. Context for Community Meeting 3
 - i. Of the Master Plan's 6 main themes, Community Meeting 3 focuses on two of them: "The Park and Its Partners" and "The Park and Its Buildings".
 - ii. MVVA grouped these two themes into one community meeting because they both are uniquely suited to address a central challenge of the master plan effort: how to plan for Dix Park to become more and more financially sustainable over time, while creating and maintaining an outstanding public park that is open and welcoming to all.
 - iii. Relevant Questions
 1. After we build the park, who will take care of it?
 2. Where will the money to support the park come from?
 - iv. The master plan must be responsible and account for the park's long term care, so that we don't repeat the mistakes of the past.
 1. Central Park in New York City offers a helpful illustration:
 - a. By the 1970's and 80's, New York City's investment in Central Park had declined; the park was poorly maintained and unsafe.
 - b. The vision and investment of the Central Park Conservancy, a non-profit partner, led to a complete turnaround in the park's operations, maintenance and programming, and ultimately, a renewed importance in the everyday life of the people of NYC.
 - c. We reference Central Park tonight for 2 reasons (neither because we're from New York):
 - i. Everybody agrees that it is one of the great parks in the world and sets a high standard for other parks – safe, clean, active, beautiful.
 1. We have heard over and over again that Raleigh wants a great park.
 - ii. As Dix will be, Central Park is one large park among many smaller and vital neighborhood parks.
 1. A fundamental tenet of this Master Plan is that we will not take away from other parks and city services to support Dix Park.

2. The park's goal of becoming financially sustainable through the generation of revenue responds to two facts:
 - a. Municipal funding to support the park varies from year-to-year. Parks are one of many priorities for a city.
 - b. The cost to maintain a park is known and constant.
- b. The Park and its Partners
- i. Partners = the park needs to develop mutually beneficial relationships with businesses, institutions, and organizations that support and complement the public life of the park.
 1. Both sides – the park and the partner – work together and commit to achieve shared goals.
 2. When needed, there may be contracts that hold partners to these relationships.
 3. There are 3 categories of partners relative to funding:
 - a. Revenue positive (contribute to park funding needs)
 - b. Revenue neutral (have funding in place to support their own work + needs)
 - c. Require funding and volunteers to support
 - ii. Some partners for Dix Park are known because they are neighbors or created just for the park. Examples of this include the Dorothea Dix Park Conservancy, North Carolina State University, Capital Area Greenway System, and the State Farmers Market.
 - iii. However, we can't lay out all the exact partners for Dix Park will be tonight because...
 1. Partners will grow over time with the park
 2. Partners will develop out of the local Raleigh community and therefore be unique to the park
 - iv. To give specific illustrations of the types of partners possible, we'll give examples from a completed project of MVVA's Brooklyn Bridge Park. The partner relationships that have developed there are more amazing than anything MVVA could have predicted during the planning process.
 1. The Brooklyn Bridge Park Conservancy supports sports and arts programming.
 2. Food and drink concessions are found across the park and in unique locations.
 3. The Public Art Fund curates and supports temporary art installations.
 4. St. Ann's Warehouse is a non-profit performing arts space situated in a historic building that has been rehabilitated.
 5. Revenue generating partners such as 1 Hotel Brooklyn Bridge and Condominiums contain restaurants, bars and event spaces.

- a. Through ground leases and other financial commitments, revenue generated from residences and hotel rentals goes back into park maintenance and operations.
 - b. This partner arrangement allows for a robust and secure park budget every year, which in turn helps maintain and program the public spaces open to all.
 6. Some new buildings support the park and partner simultaneously. For example, one building at Brooklyn Bridge Park is used as a rooftop pizzeria/bar while also housing park bathrooms and maintenance rooms.
 7. The Empire Stores Building is an excellent example of the transformation of a historic building in poor condition through the partnership with a developer. Empire Stores today provides museum, retail, dining, and office space to a wide range of building tenants.
- (3) MVVA Principal Gullivar Shepard / The Park and Its Buildings
 - a. MVVA shared 7 guiding principles the planning team has developed to inform the transformation of the buildings on the Dix Park site. The principles have been reviewed and discussed with the Master Plan Advisory and Executive Committees in recent months:
 - i. Transforming a hospital into a park requires a reinvention of how the buildings exist in public space.
 - ii. Honor A.J. Davis’s positioning of the hospital at the top of Dix Hill and its orientation to downtown Raleigh.
 - iii. Understand that “rehabilitation” is the most appropriate treatment of these historic resources given the change of use from a hospital to a park.
 - iv. Recognize that much of the hospital’s history was as a campus that fostered a healing relationship to the land.
 - v. Advocate for buildings and building uses in the park that contribute positively to the life of the park.
 - vi. Pursue a strategy for buildings that supports the financial sustainability of the park.
 - b. Strategy for preservation efforts
 - i. Existing conditions
 1. The MVVA team embarked on a thorough review of both existing buildings and the existing documentation of them (ie, drawings) in summer 2017, to gain first-hand insight and evidence into their historic integrity, their conditions and their reuse potential.
 2. The Dix campus buildings have been subject to over 150 years of growth and change. Many have been renovated multiple times by the state.

- a. For more specifics on the A. J. Davis hospital bldg. – see Community Meeting #1 information on the Park & its Buildings.
- 3. The integrity (ie, the degree to which historically significant bldg. elements remain and have not been altered). The condition of many of the existing bldgs is fair to poor. Some require investment in their utility systems (electrical + mechanical, for example) and in making them safe and accessible (ramps and elevators instead of stairs) before they can be used by the public.
- 4. The state spends \$14 million every year to operate the buildings and maintain the landscape currently
- ii. Proposed building preservation and removal strategy
 - 1. Buildings have been evaluated for retention and rehabilitation versus removal based on 4 criteria:
 - a. their historic significance
 - b. if they are fit for the park or future campus (or not)
 - c. if they are fit for reuse by contemporary programs (or not)
 - d. if they have potential to be revenue positive versus require investment to use
 - 2. *Figure 1 - MVVA proposes to remove a footprint of approximately 8 acres of buildings from the site. Display board excerpt:*

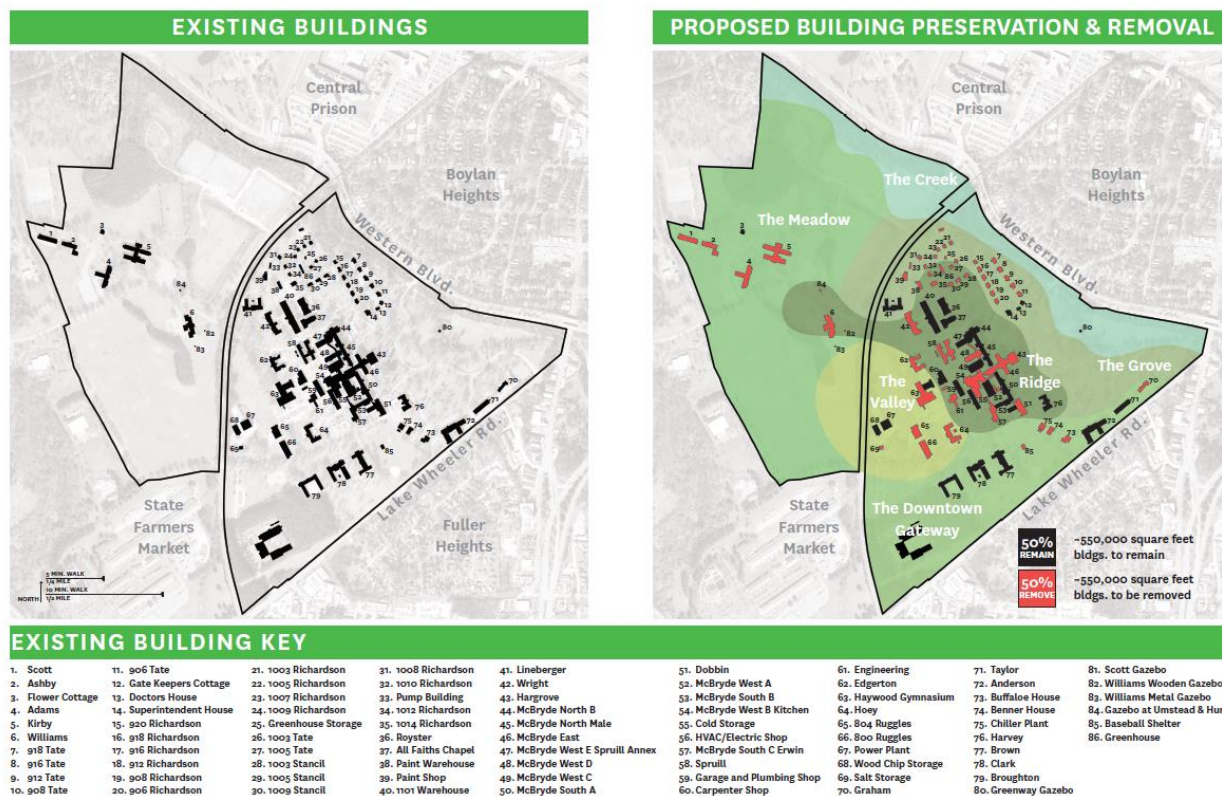
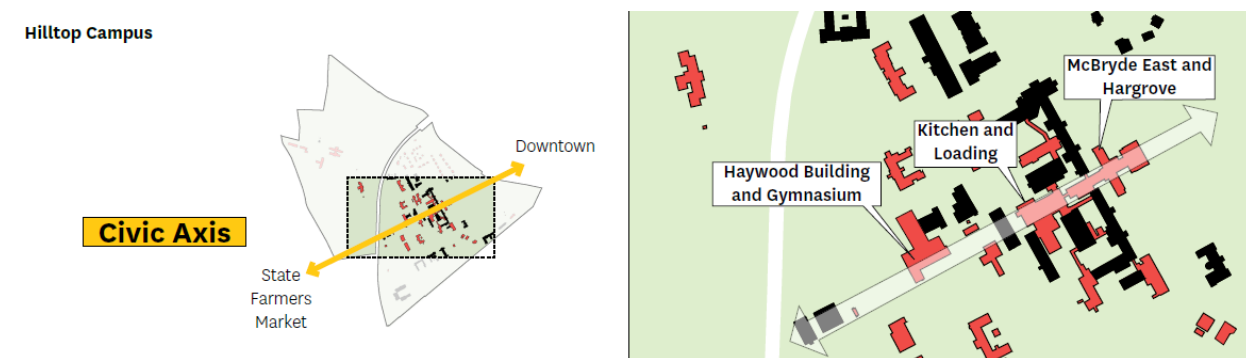
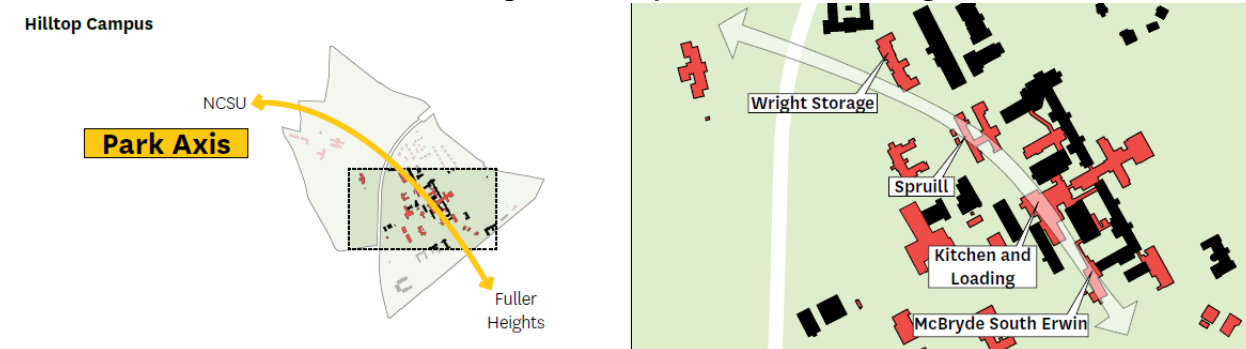


Figure 1: Building Preservation and Removal Display Board

- a. Of the 308 acres of Dix Park, 16 acres are existing buildings and 292 acres are green space (including pavement).
- b. MVVA proposed to reserve 8 acres for new building development along Lake Wheeler Road.
- 3. Lake Wheeler Road is right location for new buildings because
 - a. It's a connector between the beltline, Dix Park, and downtown.
 - b. Fuller Heights and other areas across Lake Wheeler Road have been slated for zoning changes and increased density, based upon the City's 2017 Southern Gateway Corridor Study.
 - c. New buildings along Lake Wheeler Road may be designed to have good views to downtown Raleigh without blocking views from other areas within the park.
- iii. MVVA presented a rationale for building removal and reuse for the main hospital complex.
 - 1. Civic Axis: restores a crucial connection from downtown to the State Farmers Market via Dix Park, which is today blocked by buildings. MVVA suggests removing a portion of the Haywood Building, Hospital Kitchen and Loading buildings, McBryde East, and Hargrove. See *Figure 3* slide:



- 2. Park Axis: strategic building removals allow visitors to flow seamlessly via proposed paths and plazas from Lake Wheeler/Fuller Heights, into the Hilltop Park area and further on to NC State Spring Hill beyond. Suggested removals include Wright Storage, Spruill, Kitchen and Loading buildings, and McBryde South Erwin. See *Figure 4* slide:



- 3. The intersection of the Civic Axis and Park Axis creates a new, central nexus for public space and program opportunities. The removals claim the top of the hill for public use and enjoyment and restore great views in many directions.

- iv. MVVA shared 4 specific building case studies as to how the team evaluated and ultimately suggested whether a building was removed or preserved:
 - 1. All Faiths Chapel – recommend to preserve; original use was as a chapel and as a venue to replace services that had been held in the central pavilion; potential use for rehabilitation and reuse as an event center/lecture space (meetings, lectures, weddings)
 - 2. Hargrove/Surgery and Administration Bldg – recommend to remove; brick skin and precast concrete, original use was as a surgery building in 1975, occupies the high point of Dix Hill and obscures views that the historic A.J. Davis design was intended to celebrate
 - 3. McBryde Wings, Historic A.J. Davis Design – recommend to preserve: lower level retains limited original building fabric from the 1850's (ie, compromised integrity) and upper floors have been extensively renovated, long building facade aligns with natural hilltop to face downtown
 - 4. Dobbin – recommend preserve the open space portion only and remove later building additions; open-span structure with slate roof; originally used as an infirmary; located near Fuller Heights park edge and proposed future play area

(4) Framework Concepts for Occupying the Park Hilltop

- a. MVVA presented specific building removal and program ideas for the hospital complex at the top of Dix Hill.
 - i. With images from a physical model + site plan diagrams, MVVA recreated the sequence of logic of removing buildings into order to privilege the Civic and Park Axis.
 - ii. Proposed outdoor civic spaces at the hilltop, in the voids of removed buildings, offer new options for public park visitors:
 - 1. Water play / fountain
 - 2. Cook-out Area
 - 3. Shaded Grove
 - 4. Contemplative Glade
 - 5. Covered Sports Courts / Event Hall
 - a. Reference for McBryde South A - “The Cage” Court and the “Ice Factory” Rink at the American Tobacco Campus in Durham, NC
 - 6. Gardens
 - 7. Restaurant Arcade with outdoor seating
 - iii. The removal of selected buildings results in two urban-scale spaces about 40,000 square feet each.
 - iv. Proposed indoor/building programs
 - 1. A range and variety of indoor/building uses is essential for the top of the hill to offer something for everyone and to ensure that no one building use predominates.
 - 2. It is also essential that groundfloor uses be predominantly public or public friendly (such as restaurants, exhibit spaces, bathrooms, lobbies and seating areas, etc).

3. Suggested ideas included:
 - a. Reuse of the North A. J. Davis hospital wing with existing small rooms into hotel. Potential to reconfigure the corridor to accommodate contemporary needs for scale.
 - i. Precedent: Liberty Hotel in Boston, Massachusetts is a former prison transformed into a hotel
 - b. Reuse of the North A. J. Davis hospital wing (McBryde South A) into office, artist and-maker space on the upper floors; public cafes and restaurants on the lower floor(s)
 - i. Precedents: Jamaica Plain Brewery – Small Business Complex in Boston, Massachusetts and BXL Business Incubator at the Banknote Bldg in Bronx, New York

- v. Other ideas for new program at the Hilltop Campus rely upon both indoor and outdoor spaces in combination:
 1. An activity hub for family reunions
 - a. cookout spaces
 - b. wedding and event venue
 - c. dormitory-style housing
 2. An area for annual fairs and festivals
 - a. craft demonstrations
 - b. music performances
 - c. ride, games and playgrounds
 3. A culinary expo event
 - a. Space for food vendors near outdoor tables for eating
 - b. Lecture hall area for presentations
 - c. Kitchen for classes and demonstrations

- b. The Park and its Buildings and the Loop
 - i. The proposal for a pedestrian/bike loop that unites the park over the railroad and at a consistent elevation was revisited (first introduced in meeting #1, November 2017)
 1. The loop approaches close to the Hilltop Campus to provide pedestrian/bike access to civic spaces
 2. Necessary vehicular access (for drop-off for those who need it, deliveries, emergencies) is accommodated at the 2 ends of the Hilltop Campus/across the loop as shown

- c. Historic Portico
 - i. MVVA proposes to reconstruct a reference to the historic A.J. Davis portico (which was demolished in the 1950's). The reconstruction would be in its original location and proportions atop the Hilltop Campus, but would be more simply a frame (no roof) and lit at night so as to be seen from afar through the trees of the Grove. The portico celebrates and marks the physical threshold between the front door/historic Grove landscape of the park and the newly conceived spaces beyond.

ii. MVVA presented conceptual renderings of what the portico might look like:

The Portico
Proposed
Reconstruction



For the second portion of the evening, attendees were invited to continue the conversation outside, where the existing conditions site model and presentations boards were arranged. The MVVA team prepared 2 or 3 options for future programs/uses for each of the proposed building to be reused and rehabilitated. Attendees were invited to select an option they preferred, or provide their own via sticky notes.

Attendees were also invited to provide more detailed feedback on specific partners for the park that they would like to see.

Design team members present to respond to individual questions included representatives from MVVA, Perry Street Studio, VHB, Utile, and JKOA. Representatives from the City of Raleigh, Dix Park Conservancy, and Dix Park Master Plan Advisory Committee were also present to respond to questions and comments.

Photos from the Event:



An existing conditions model put the scale and the scope of the park & its buildings challenge back into context.



Meeting participants from the community respond to specific bldg. reuse suggestions via written cards

End of Meeting Notes