

Dorothea Dix Park

Master Plan Executive Committee

Date: Wednesday, August 29, 2018
Time: 8:30am –11:00am
Location: Flower Cottage, Dix Park

Meeting Agenda

8:30am: Breakfast

8:45am: Welcome & Updates

9:00am: Presentations & Discussions

- Overview of City of Raleigh PRCR Process
 - Bond/CIP
 - Fee Structure
 - Park Maintenance Standards & Costs
 - Cost/Revenue Examples
- Chapel Program & Development Discussion
- Schedules
 - 10-Yr & 3-Yr Dix Park Master Schedule
 - MPEC Meeting Topics

11:00am: Meeting Close

Kate Pearce introduced the meeting. She explained that many department directors would present to give the Master Plan Executive Committee (MPEC) a better understanding of Raleigh's Park System, especially from a financial standpoint. Parks Recreation and Cultural Resources (PRCR) directors presenting included: Stephen Bentley, PRCR Assistant Director of Planning Development and Communications, Scott Payne, PRCR Assistant Director of Resources, Helene McCullough, PRCR Finance Administrator, Sally Thigpen, PRCR Assistant Director of Parks, and Sarah Powers, Executive Director of Office of Raleigh Arts.

Stephen Bentley presented first on park planning and park bonds. He explained the history of Raleigh Parks planning, from the Christmas Plan of 1792 to the System Plan of 2014. Bentley highlighted the Strategic Plan for the City of Raleigh where top priorities were identified for the city. Additionally, he explained the citywide Comprehensive Plan that sets a vision for the city until 2030. Both plans highlight needs and gaps that Dorothea Dix Park may be able to help fill.

The PRCR System plan was then explained. It is especially pertinent for Dix Park because it identifies citizen priorities, as well as guiding principles and vision for the Park System. To create the plan, city staff created an extensive public engagement process. One that the Dix Park team has looked to as a guide for their outreach. The System Plan led to a set of 7 Guiding Principles, which were used to help create a prioritization process for projects and needs identified through the plan. A prioritization process was crucial given that around \$500M worth of projects were identified. This process can serve as a guide when determining phases of Dix Park's master plan. Lastly, Bentley briefly explained how and when

PRCR has used bonds for projects. This process is pertinent given that bonds are a potential funding source for the Dix Park project. The next bond is in 2020.

Sally Thigpen, PRCR Assistant Director of Parks, presented on park maintenance and levels of service to put into perspective the potential future cost of operations and maintenance (O & M) for Dix Park. Thigpen explained that the city's parks are broken down into levels of maintenance from level one to level six. Pullen Park is level one maintenance, meaning it requires daily maintenance, while natural parkland like the woods of Annie Louise Wilkerson Nature Park are level six, requiring very infrequent maintenance. Dix Park, with its proposed varying landscapes, could have sections that require differing levels of service, but would likely require an overall high level of maintenance.

Thigpen broke down the maintenance cost of comparable parks to Dix in Raleigh's park system. Pullen Park's 60 acres costs \$24,000/acre per year to maintain and Millbrook, a Level 2 maintenance park, costs \$13,000/acre per year for the 70 acres. On the national scale, parks considered downtown gems can cost \$1M/acre per year to maintain and operate (according to HR&A Advisors).

Helene McCullough, PRCR Finance Administrator, broke down the revenue and expenditures for Raleigh Parks to help the Dix Park MPEC understand the cost break down of attractions from arts centers to pools to amphitheatres. The committee asked how O & M works when leasing property at Dix Park. Any third-party operators would be responsible for O & M of their land, decreasing the amount that the city would need to manage.

Scott Payne, PRCR Assistant Director of Resources, presented on the user fee policy for attractions and services in city parks. The city's philosophy is that services with a community wide benefit (i.e. playgrounds) are mainly taxpayer funded, while services that provide mostly an individual benefit (i.e. tennis lessons) are user fee funded. The types of services in our parks system are broken into a five-tier fee pyramid. The city also has a financial assistance program to make services more accessible to all.

Lastly, Sarah Powers, Executive Director of Office of Raleigh Arts, presented on potential visions for the future of the All Faiths Chapel. The goals presented were to make a welcome center/gathering space, honor the legacy, build connections to the future park, and allow flexibility for creative programming. The Chapel will transfer off the State's lease and into full City ownership in November.

The committee agreed that ideally, there will soon be a welcome center that can be staffed seven days a week, share information about the park, and display the latest on the future park designs. The Dix Park City Staff and Conservancy Staff will ideally move offices to the park in the near future. The City will receive the Brenner and Buffalo houses from the State in February 2019. Both will require extensive renovation. The Graham building will also transfer off the State's lease to the city in 2019. It is in operation currently, so would need the least amount of renovation.

At the next meeting, the committee will meet with MVVA to discuss what the program will be, potential phasing, and early wins for the park.