

Dorothea Dix Park

Master Plan Executive Committee

Date: **Wednesday, April 24, 2019**
Time: 8:30am-10:30am
Location: Flower Cottage at Dorothea Dix Park

Meeting Agenda

8:30am-9:00am: Breakfast & Recognition

9:00am-9:30am: Project Updates

- Dreamville Festival
- Upcoming Park Programs
- University Research Partnerships
- DHHS/DOA
- Early Building Transfer & Next Steps
- MOU II
- MPEC Schedule

9:30am-9:45: Dix Park Conservancy Update

9:45am-10:30am: Phase I Implementation Plan: The Big Picture and Issues Identification

10:30am: Meeting Close

Summary

Pearce opened the meeting with a thank you to Diane Sauer, Director of Parks, Recreation and Cultural Resources for her 33 years of service to the City and for her work leading the Dix Park project. Individual Executive Committee members shared additional appreciations.

Dix Park Planner Grayson Maughan spoke about the team's work on creating a system to best utilize opportunities for working with local universities and colleges. She shared that last week, the team met with UNC professors from many different departments to talk about ways the team can collaborate with professors and students. Maughan also told about her work with Design Blitz, a program with the America Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), the Contemporary Art Museum (CAM), and Wake County High Schools. The Design Blitz used Dix Park for the design prompt as they introduced students to the field of landscape architecture and heard ideas on what high school students would like to see in the future of the park.

Dix Park Project Supervisor Kate Pearce, then provided many updates on the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). DHHS has identified a relocation site for their new headquarters. The new site will remain in Wake County since many of the current DHHS employees live there. It is a 32-acre site

along the Blue Ridge Corridor, across from the North Carolina Museum of Art (NCMA). The plan is for DHHS to first relocate the employees that are on Dix Hill and then to relocate the remainder of DHHS employees that are in other parts of the city. It is expected the State will vacate the buildings at Dix Park by July 2025. An RFQ for the new DHHS headquarters is out and proposals are due April 29th, 2019. Some MPEC members noted that a mixed-use office headquarters with a P3 component would better align with the vision of the Blue Ride Corridor than a single occupancy campus.

Joseph Voska, Program Manager for Dix Park, provided programming updates and reflections on Dreamville. The City is preparing an After-Action Report on Dreamville Music Festival, which occurred April 6th at the Park and attracted 40,000 people. Voska noted that 18% of the ticket sales were to North Carolinians and the remainder of ticket sales were to out of state and country visitors. The After-Action Report will share insight from all city departments that were involved (police, transit, special events, etc.). The document will include an economic impact report. There was no parking allowed at the park during the festival. The shuttle systems, ride share, and alternative transit (Bird Scooters, Lime Scooters, and bikes) worked well for festival transit. DHHS had a positive experience with the festival. The Dix Park Tent became a primary hangout space during the festival and was a good partnership with Dix Park, Parks and Recreation Community Center employees, and the Dix Park Conservancy. Sections of the Big Field were damaged from the music festival, but Dreamville hired a local contractor to restore the field and the grass seed has already begun to sprout. A community member noted that we also need to be mindful of the impact on the tree roots. Committee Member Orage Quarles proposed that if Dreamville will be an annual event, it may be a good idea to invite J. Cole on the Dix Park Conservancy Board.

Other programming updates are that the Athletic Field will be turned into a temporary dog park for the months to come as part of early park improvements. The Spring Jazz Brunch in partnership with NCSU is this weekend. The Sunflowers will be planted in May with plans of them blooming late June/early July. They will be surrounded by a field of wildflowers. Lastly, Destination Dix 2.0 will be June 1st and will celebrate the Master Plan being adopted. It will be a large-scale festival with a Ferris Wheel and other attractions.

Assistant Parks Director Stephen Bentley provided an update on early building transfers. The Chapel, the stone houses, the Richardson Circle, the Buffalo and Benner House, and the Graham building have been transferred to the city. The plan is to work on securing and protecting those buildings from further deterioration and damage. A community member noted that when Western Boulevard was extended, and some cottages were removed, people could buy the cottages for \$1. The City will investigate opportunities for the appropriate disposal of the cottages as they are demolished. Many of those cottages have not been occupied in 20 years and are in various states of disrepair.

Sean Malone, President and CEO of the Dix Park Conservancy, provided a report on the Conservancy's work to date. To date, the Conservancy has spent \$4.6M supporting the park. The funds went to the Master Plan consultant cost, funding the Farmer's Market Master Plan, park programs and community engagement for master planning, and the renovation of the Flower Cottage. The Conservancy will continue to work on fundraising, advocacy, and building community and political will and support. They will have opportunities for the public at large to join the Conservancy as a volunteer, donor, or an

insider who receives early updates. The City and Conservancy are currently working on the next iteration of their Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).

Pearce shared high level Phase 1 Project Timeline. She noted that the timing of design work for Phase 1 will vary for each project within the phase. For example, design work for the Gateway may happen sooner than design work for the creek. Pearce confirmed that we will have to go through a bid process to select a firm for the design work. A committee member noted that he has never seen a city do internal implementation planning. He believes that a firm should be doing that, especially since it requires so much horsepower to do.

The Committee discussed the possibility of the park receiving money from the Hotel Motel Tax. They noted that if the park is going to have large events such as Dreamville that bring many people to Raleigh, the park may qualify for proceeds from the tax. Committee members asked if there is a certain meeting that they need to be sure to attend to present about Dix Park in order to move this conversation forward. Goodmon noted that Russ Jones, a Dix Park Conservancy Board member, is investigating the possibilities.

PRCR Director, Diane Sauer, presented on the City Budget. She explained that it is a tough budget year for the City due to a \$8-\$10M gap in revenue. The City is projected to be in a deficit for the next few years. The Parks Department submitted 11 supplemental requests for funding. The supplemental for Dix Park was prioritized. Pearce noted that the City is working on finding incremental ways to move forward.

The Executive Committee will switch to monthly meetings. A committee member closed by noting that despite challenges going forward, it is important to note how far we have come since the park property was purchased in 2015.