

Dorothea Dix Park

Master Plan Executive Committee

Date: **Wednesday, June 26, 2019**
Time: 8:30am-10:30am
Location: Flower Cottage at Dorothea Dix Park

Meeting Agenda

8:30am: Breakfast & Welcome

8:45am-9:00am: Update on PRCR Director Recruitment

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

- Upcoming Park Programs
- DPC Tulsa Reflections
- Hospitality Tax Recommendations
- City of Raleigh Approved Budget

9:30am-9:45am: Equity Framework Discussion

9:45am-10:00am: Edge Study Discussion

10:00am-10:30am: Phase One Implementation Plan

10:30am: Meeting Close

Kate Pearce, Dix Park Project Supervisor began the meeting. She introduced Parks Recreation and Cultural Resources (PRCR) Interim Director, Scott Payne, who explained the department's search for a new director. The call for a new PRCR director has been shared nationally through professional networks and organizations. Applications are due late summer with a plan to have a new director in place late fall of 2019.

Joey Voska, Dix Park Programs Manager, provided an update on park events. The After-Action Report of Dreamville Music Festival that analyzed its impact was presented to City Council on June 4th. The presentation to Council was an overview of the festival, the three years of planning that went into it, the lessons learned, and the economic impact on Raleigh. Some of the key lessons learned were: Need for more food and drink options on festival grounds, need for improvements on rideshare at the end of the night, improvements on engagement with community neighbors around the festival (see slideshow for more details). The festival brought visitors from all 50 states. Of the 39,000 tickets purchased, 7,800 of those were purchased by Raleigh/Wake County residents. Hotel occupancy increased by 19% that weekend. Dreamville recently made a \$30,000 donation to the Dix Park Conservancy. Scoremore and BWG, who organized Dreamville, were extremely pleased with how the festival went as was J. Cole. Dreamville has not yet made a formal request to the city to do the festival next year.

In other park updates, the sunflowers are struggling to grow with the dry summer we are having. Public Utilities is helping with watering them. The hope is that they will bloom by Destination SunFest on July 13th, but it is possible that they will not.

The park's lease to NCFC will expire in July and will not be renewed. The Dix Park Team is planning thoughts about future interim use of that space.

Pearce explained that the Conservancy held three trips last week for board members and some business owners to A Gathering Place at Tulsa. The park was designed by MVVA and is an amazing example of how to offer a paid experience in a public space for free. The park draws about 10,000 people on week days and 30,000 people on weekends. The incredible playground area is the key feature of the park. An Executive Committee member noted that it is so remarkable that he was at a loss for words when seeing it. The Tulsa Park is of special interest to the Dix Team since a destination playground is in Phase 1 of the Master Plan buildout. From a financial standpoint, A Gathering Place sets a new standard for park design that if replicated at Dix Park could allow the park to be eligible for interlocal funding from the hotel/motel tax. The park only has 600 parking spots and noted that parking is an issue. Many end up using buses, ride share, or parking in surrounding neighborhoods. Busses run from each community center in Tulsa to the park. MVVA was very clear that while A Gathering Place is an amazing park, we will not create a replica of it in Raleigh. We will instead create something that is uniquely Raleigh that reflects our community.

Representatives from the Conservancy suggested that they want to fundraise for design work for the Dix Park Gateway play area. The Conservancy would hire a firm to do the design work, with the city as the client. After the design plans are completed, the Conservancy would look to the city for public funds for the project construction. This would function the same way that the Farmer's Market Master Plan did. The Conservancy paid HH Architecture to create a master plan for the Farmer's Market, but the Department of Agriculture was the client who worked with HH. The Conservancy will also look to renovate the Chapel and the Stone Houses funded by private donations.

Pearce shared updates from the recently approved City budget. A new maintenance technician position was approved, as was money for updates to the Dix Park website and money to help with Dix Park facility and operations needs. At the state level, the Senate identified \$250M to build a new administrative facility potentially in Granville County for the Department of Health and Human Services, that currently occupies the buildings at Dix. Lastly, Tuesday, news of a new soccer stadium near the State Farmer's Market property and the park was announced in the News and Observer. This stadium would be very close to the Lake Wheeler Edge of Dix Park.

The Dix Park Planning team is working on an equity framework for the creation of Dix Park. Pearce noted the importance of the equity plan, explaining that it is key to ensuring the equitable distribution of benefits and costs of creating a great urban park. This plan will look to further refine many of the concerns we heard in the master planning process. The equity framework proposes approaching equity through multiple lenses. These include: Affordability, accessibility, engagement, environment, economic

opportunity, health, programming, and legacy. Examples of how this could play out with accessibility include going above the ADA standards onsite by working with students from the Governor Morehead School for the Visually Impaired to low to no cost transit options to the park. A Conservancy member noted that Ron Mace, a man from Raleigh, started the concept of universal design. Sean Malone, President and CEO of the Dix Park Conservancy, met with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. They were very impressed by caliber of the executive summary of the equity framework. The Dix Park team is thinking through potential scope of work and cost for developing the full equity plan.

Ken Bowers, Director of City Planning for the City of Raleigh, presented on the newly funded Edge Study for the land east of Dix Park. During the master planning process, Council member Kay Crowder requested that this study be done to address how the park will affect the most vulnerable areas surrounding the park. The Edge Study will work to address affordability and study transportation, development form, land use, economic development. The land to the east of Dix Park is primarily residential with some industrial. This area is a lower income population and houses are generally valued at less than \$200,000. There has been a lot of property turnover in the past years but no assemblage of property by developers. Zoning along Lake Wheeler Road is R6, which is low density. Any major land use change would require rezoning the area. Rezoning to encourage higher density is a way potentially be able to incentivize the creation of affordable housing units. A Conservancy member requested that environmental impacts be included as part of the Edge Study work since denser development might increase the impervious surface cover. The Edge Study will include major public outreach and aims to be completed by summer of 2020. The technical work will be frontloaded so that there can be more intentional community engagement workshops and meetings.

Next, Pearce presented about the Phase 1 Implementation Plan. The plan will be presented to City Council in pieces. The first piece will be infrastructure and transportation. The City will kick off meetings with the Department of Transportation in the next week. The next piece will be zoning/planning. There are many limitations with the current way that the park property is zoned. The next piece will be the equity framework, community engagement, and coordination with the edge study. The last piece will be the cost estimate, funding, feasibility for Phase One projects, and the updated Memorandum of Understanding between the City and Dix Park Conservancy. The Dix Park team will go to Council for feedback and recommended prioritization of work.

While there are seven main Phase 1 projects, many of the seven projects have subprojects to them. The seven main projects include: The Creek Restoration, The Gateway Plaza, The Chapel & The Stone Houses, The Cemetery Restoration, The Multi-use Trail connecting Rocky Branch Greenway and Walnut Creek Greenway, The Landbridge and The Utility Work. The Creek Project includes much more than restoring the meander to the creek, digging out the landfill, and widening the floodplain. The Creek Project also includes all the areas around the creek: The prairie, multiuse sports fields, a dog park, paths, parking, roadway changes, bike stations, comfort stations, etc. The Entry Way and Building Project includes road changes, building improvements, bridge improvements and more. The Gateway Plaza includes a garden, play areas, a fountain, cookout zones, upfitting two old houses and more. There is a range of costs associated with each of these complex landscapes. Each of the Phase 1 projects are very

nuanced. An Executive Committee member shared that he would like to start construction on Phase 1 by January 2021.