

## **Public Leadership Group Meeting Summary Meeting #5 on May 7, 2013**

Materials from the meeting are available for download here: <http://chavisconversation.skeo.com/plg>. A project binder with hardcopies of all documents is located at the Chavis Community Center; please check with the front desk.

### **Overview**

The goals of Meeting #5 were to confirm a working vision statement, review outcomes from the charrette and public input and check-in on the process and schedule.

The meeting began with PLG members providing a summary of the project and process for Councilor Stephenson. David provided an update on the RHDC Study List Opportunity as well as an introduction to the Parks and Recreation System Plan Visioning Sessions. The PLG was encouraged to attend to gain a broader understanding of the community's recreational needs. Members who attended the Chavis Carousel VIP Event and the Dedication Ceremony were given the opportunity to share their reflections with the group. The bulk of the meeting was split between the vision statement and review of the charrette outcomes. Discussion around the charrette outcomes focused on what, if anything was not captured during the charrette.

Meeting Summary #4 was approved.

### **PLG Reflections: April 20 Carousel House Dedication Ceremony and Public Meeting**

- Older folks bringing younger folks to the event.
- The event was bigger than the carousel
- Well-attended with activities and families
- Is the carousel schedule available? Yes, it is posted on the door to the Community Center and on the City's website.
- Mix of people
- Enthusiasm for the park
- Community provided comments on the train and comparison to Pullen Park
- Carousel tickets cross-market amusement rides at both Chavis and Pullen parks
- Complaints about park. What was here yesterday, some want back today.
- VIP even the city staff was engaged with the public but at the Dedication the city was less engaged.
- The Dedication Event lacked a host.
- People were less integrated or mingling (clique)
- "Had a ball". It felt like a reunion especially with elders. Received a lot of good comments.
- Positive experience. Worked my extravert muscles.
- Mailing did not reach South Park.



# Chavis Park

## COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

- The third Saturday between September and May is a bad time to schedule a public meeting due to the meeting of Greek organizations in the African American community.
- There were access challenges. Distance between the parking lot and the stage.
- Limited activities. More children's activities were needed.
- Charrette did not reflect all priorities.
- Need to look at Pullen Park as an example. It is exciting and has a 'Wow' factor.
- Propose a visit/tour of Pullen Park
- Don't want to be a cookie cutter park
- Bring photos of Pullen
- Add photo to upload to website
- What about Barwell Road Park as an example? The Community Center?

### **Visioning Statement Discussion**

The PLG reviewed their refinements to the vision phrases from Meeting #4 as well as the public comments received at the Carousel Dedication. The group took a straw poll vote on their preference for each phrase, original versus the one with their refinements, discussed their concerns and differences and voted on an overall working vision statement. [Black text is the original phrase. PLG refinements are in red.]

- A. A [favorite or rich or diverse or unique] regional destination and community center that celebrates a rich history, arts and culture, and offers wonderful public recreational spaces and programs to support community life;
  - The PLG decided on the following wording: A unique regional destination and community center that celebrates a rich history, arts and culture, and offers wonderful public recreational spaces and programs to support community life. [12 of 12 members were supportive of this phrasing.]
  
- B. A place of pride and profound historic remembrance, celebrating the life and work of John Chavis, and honoring the significance of the park to the African American community [during and following segregation];
  - The PLG decided on the following wording: A place of pride and profound historic remembrance, celebrating the life and work of John Chavis, and honoring the significance of the park to the African American community during and following segregation. [12 of 12 members were supportive of this phrasing.]
  - Points of Discussion
    - Improper grammar. Reconstruct the following, "A place of pride and profound historic remembrance."
    - Only park African Americans could attend – sentiment needs to be there.



# Chavis Park

## COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

- Segregation is significant to include.
  - Include WWII influence
  - Segregation is a fact and needs to be included
- C. Pulsing with [innovative] activity – it is fresh, [interactive] dynamic, alive, [and] fun – [Something is happening all of the time! Or Where you can make something happen];
- The PLG decided on the following wording: Pulsing with innovative activity – it is fresh, interactive, dynamic, alive and fun. [7 of 12 members were supportive of this phrasing.]
- D. Promoting fitness, health and wellness by offering a range of [intergenerational] recreational activities [for kids and people of all ages and abilities];
- The PLG decided on the following wording: Promoting fitness, health and wellness by offering a range of recreational activities for people of all ages and abilities. [7 of 12 members were supportive of this phrasing.]
- E. A safe and welcoming gathering space where family and friends of all cultures come to play, relax, learn, and celebrate the big events and the small, significant moments of life; and
- The PLG agreed to leave this phrase as is but discussed incorporating the following ideas:
    - Event space
    - Economic development
- F. A sustainable, clean, and refreshing green refuge from everyday urban life, with access to the [creek or natural resources] and an expansive view of the downtown Raleigh skyline.
- The PLG decided on the following wording: A sustainable, clean, and refreshing green refuge from everyday urban life, with access to natural resources and an expansive view of the downtown Raleigh skyline. [12 of 12 members were supportive of this phrasing.]
  - In addition to the wording above the PLG discussed incorporating the following ideas within phrase F:
    - Make Downtown more prominent
    - Chavis is Downtown's park
    - Park's meaning to downtown is more than a skyline

The group used the Five-Point Decision Process to vote on the overall Vision Statement. The PLG's first vote was **7** (1, 2 or 3) to **5** (4 or 5) to leave 'during and following



# Chavis Park

## COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

segregation' out of the statement, which allowed for the group to have a meaningful discussion around the term segregation and its importance to the history of John Chavis Memorial Park. After the discussion the PLG approved by consensus inclusion of 'during and following segregation' within the statement.

The project team will combine the approved phrases into a draft narrative that reflects the PLG's decisions and discussion around the Vision Phrases.

### **Charrette Outcomes and Next Steps**

#### **Honoring the Past**

- Former Carousel House – retain but can we upgrade so it can have other uses.
  - For example: Consider the dirt floor and accessibility
- In the handout 'Stone Steps' represent Amphitheatre and Stone Steps. This is unclear. Update documents to reflect this.

#### **Park Features**

- Remove Dog Park and Four Wheel Area as possibilities from the Major New Improvements list
- Can Playground move up the priority list? Include within Amusements/Wow Factor
- Move 'Amusements' to Major New Improvements
- Add Public Art under Parkwide Considerations and add to potential areas for more discussion

#### **Next Steps and Additional Information**

- One idea for expanding the vision of what can be at Chavis is through a slideshow of ideas at future meetings. The slideshow can run at the beginning of meetings. PLG can add images to Pinterest or provide images for Emily to scan.
- What facilities, programs and amenities are available in the surrounding community? Have someone from Parks and Recreation share this information with the group.
- Consider scheduling an additional park tour including Pullen Park and Barwell Road Community Center
- Need to understand what else is going on within the park and throughout the area as well as ongoing/planned ideas.
- Keep in mind community involvement and summer schedules. Artsposure (May), Sparkcon (September), African American Cultural Festival (Labor Day weekend), Hopscotch (September), IBMA's World of Bluegrass Festival (September)
- Timeline for city budget process
- Need for more public knowledge about the park and its activities. Public relations.
- Celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of John Chavis Memorial Park. Celebrate in early fall.
- Involve the Downtown Living Advocates
- The PLG requested additional information on the National Trust for Historic Preservation and Cultural Landscapes. Irvin Henderson with Skeo Solutions and Board Member for the National Trust will be able to address questions related to the National Trust for Historic Preservation at Meeting #6. Mary Ruffin Hanbury and Jeffrey Harris, consultants for RHDC, should be able to address questions pertaining to Cultural Landscapes at their presentation and discussion on July 16 at 6:00pm. Kofi Boone's schedule prevent him from attending Meeting #6 but staff hopes he'll



# Chavis Park COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

be able to join us at an upcoming meeting to answer additional or remaining questions about Cultural Landscapes.

## Announcements

- May 10 is the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the opening of John Chavis Memorial Park.
- Fifteen Visioning Sessions will be held the week of May 13-17 for the Park and Recreation Department’s System Plan at the Raleigh Convention Center. Free parking is available in the Performing Arts parking deck on South Street.

## Meeting Evaluation Feedback

- The PLG believes that the public’s interests are incorporated within the Vision Statement.
- It was beneficial to reflect as a group on the Carousel Dedication event prior to discussing the Vision Statement.
- The meeting allowed more time for PLG members questions to be answered and for discussion to happen.
- The group valued the opportunity for an involved and productive discussion around difficult issues that moved the group forward.
- Discussing the vision statement as a full group was a good way to reach consensus.
- The PLG is comfortable with the approaches, priorities and goals determined during the charrette for all three Focus Areas.
- Consider covering the following topics at PLG Meeting #6:
  - How to keep looking forward
  - More explanation on how the National Trust for Historic Places works
  - How will keeping the physical locations of historic park amenities impact the park’s potential as a future destination?
- The following items are missing from the charrette outcomes:
  - WWII Influence
  - Public Art
  - Event space
  - Downtown park
  - Economic development
  - Areas for relaxing
- What is the most valuable way to discuss Pullen Park’s energy and amenities in relation to Chavis Park?

## Attendance

**PLG Members Present:** Richard Bostic, Gretchel Carter-Hinton, Jacqueline Howell, Lorenzo Jackson, Vivian Lee, Hallie Mittleman, James E. Williams, F. Lonnette Williams, Cecilia Zuvic, Jonathun Muldrow, Angela Jackson-Mann, Margo White,

**PLG Members Absent:** Bennie A. Mack, Jr., Jaquan Bennett, Seddrick Hill, Eyvonne Dailey, Joseph Ellerbee, Rhonda Muhammad, Rob Wylie, Geraldine Williams, Virginia Stanley Tally

**Staff & Guests:** Councilor Russ Stephenson, Vernice Miller-Travis, Alisa Hefner, Sarah Little, Denise Saunders, David Shouse, Emily Ander, Morgan Jackson-Mann