

## **Public Leadership Group Meeting Summary Meeting #6 on June 11, 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.

### **Major Outcomes & Decisions**

1. The group's decisions from each meeting should be at the forefront of the Meeting Summary so it is easy for absent members to understand what decisions were made.
2. Consensus was reached on the body of the Vision Statement but clarity on the use of the term sustainability was requested.

If you were absent and do not support the consensus vote, meaning you are a 4 or a 5 on the decision-making scale, you must make that known to the PLG and/or Project Team prior to the July 9 meeting. See page 3 of the Charter under *Attending Meetings* for more information.

### **Overview**

The goals of Meeting #6 were to brainstorm ideas for remaining and removed park features and to review the draft narrative vision statement.

Vernice began the meeting with a summary of Meeting #5. David provided an update on the RHDC Study List application and Emily laid out a process for handling public comment. The bulk of the meeting was spent brainstorming ideas for the original carousel house, the former amusements (plane and train) and the former Grandstand/Stadium and then hearing a panel of experts' thoughts on those ideas. The group reviewed the narrative vision statement and discussed the use of the term sustainability.

Meeting Summary #5 was approved with the following change: The eighth bullet point under *Next Steps and Additional Information Plan* should read - Celebrate the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of John Chavis Memorial Park. Plan to celebrate in early fall.

### **RHDC Update**

The Raleigh Historic Development Commission has hired Hanbury Preservation, Inc. to conduct a Study List application for John Chavis Memorial Park, which will include five oral histories. Mary Ruffin Hanbury will attend the July 9 PLG meeting and will introduce herself and the project. The following week on July 16 at 6 p.m. at John Chavis Community Center Ms. Hanbury and her colleague Jeffrey Harris will give a presentation on the Study List application process and timeframe and will be available for questions. The PLG is encouraged to attend the presentation.

The Study List application offers a parallel track for historic designation to the PLG's master planning efforts, which will continue to include a focus on historic preservation, particularly how to honor the past through interpretation and public art.

### **Group Discussion Summary**

- The PLG decided to receive public comment as follows: Public comment can be provided to PLG members or the Project Team, verbally or in writing. Comments received will be shared at the beginning of the next PLG meeting during the Housekeeping portion of the agenda. Comments will then be incorporated into the meeting summary. The PLG should consider all of these comments as they make decisions on behalf of the community
  - At the May Central CAC meeting the following comments were heard:
    - Reopen the Worth Street entrance to the park to vehicles.
    - Consider hosting the Downtown Farmer's Market at Chavis occasionally
  - Seddrick Hill was able to obtain some history on the relationship between Chavis Park and Shaw University as it relates to football. This information is located in the Appendix of this summary and was part of the materials the PLG received tonight.
- Do we have to have a quorum to move forward?
  - No, according to the PLG Charter the members present make the decisions. It is the responsibility of absent members to voice to the full PLG their concern with decisions that were made in their absence.
  - Staff will add a section to the top of future meeting summaries for *Meeting Decisions and Outcomes*.
- Economic Development
  - How can the park be used to generate commerce? While also maintain its character?
  - Consider what is happening/missing/needed downtown. How can Chavis fill that need?
- Fundraising
  - The level of the community's engagement in the project/process will allow the PLG to find and obtain funding, particularly grant funding.
  - Grants are either about job creation or highlighting/honoring culture/history.
  - Consider corporate partnerships and individual donors. Ex. Julia Daniels (N&O)
  - When do we start applying for grants?
    - Not yet. Must have support of municipality. You have to be in step with the plans that are in place. Wait until you have an adopted plan.
- How do we create cohesion throughout the park (think of the Amusement Center at Pullen Park and how the architecture, color scheme, plantings, etc. are the same)?



# Chavis Park

## COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

- Need critical mass to support any of these items. Need thousands of people to regularly attend in order to support particular features. What features will bring people to the park?
- Consider reading the 'Soul of the Community' study which says that people don't move because of jobs but because of an area's character/sense of place.

### **Honoring the Past Exercise**

#### **Original Carousel Building**

##### Group 1:

- Themed restaurant or concession stand from a specific time period, retro music and feel, photographs and memorabilia from the past, rental space when park events aren't happening, restrooms
- Skating ring and/or skateboarding around building exterior\*
- Historic marker to John Chavis school\*
- Historic interpretation in concrete circle with radiating sidewalks (John Baker)
- Outdoor seating\*

##### Group 2:

- Meeting space, events, reception, restrooms, exhibits on walls (current but honoring use of park)\*
- Reflect history with the building, such as panels and cases for objects
- Create a kitchen space accessible to catered events
- Enlarge building to increase useable space
- How can economic development opportunities be incorporated (sell tax credits for revenue)?\*
- Walls that move up and down to create an open pavilion for flexible space
- Distinct meeting space from what is available at Community Center

##### Group 3:

- Rentable full kitchen space
- Happy Days "50's" themed restaurant/food service (leased)
- John Chavis museum and souvenirs\*
- Indoor movie house, current films and slideshows of the park's history
- Flexible rentable space for events and parties\*
- External restrooms
- Indoor playground / play space\*

\*indicates priorities

### **Amusements**

#### Group 1:

##### Train

- Replace with a unique interactive feature for youth, explore non-mechanical options, capture spirit of train but respects site constraints
- Memorialize with new interactive feature or public art
- Create additional draw to park (in addition to carousel)
- Experience full extent of park, such as trolley, rickshaw or tram
- Integrate new features in a way that honors and integrates into natural environment



# Chavis Park

## COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

### Airplane

- Highlight advancement over time (plane to space travel)
- WWII themed playground that includes a plane with a slide
- Folk art, moving sculptures in the landscape

### Group 2:

#### Train

- Replace with vintage era train or newer train with a larger, longer route. Include panels with park timeline on train and/or routes
- Memorialize train with a scaled model train on display in other area of park, such as original carousel building
- Memorialize with interactive structure
- Roller coaster

#### Airplane

- Statue of plane
- Replica of plane

### Group 3:

#### Train

- Covered train that runs year-round on extended track that encircles features
- Wow factor amusements to attract youth – ride that includes train and plane cars, skateboarding, skating ring, rock climbing wall, arcade.

#### Airplane

- Replica of red tail plane to honor WWII soldiers
- Interactive and educational feature
- WWII significance integrated throughout the park, especially near the original carousel building

## **Stadium/Grandstand**

### Group 1:

#### Activities

- Dancing in the Park
- Cross-fit
- Multipurpose activities since field is not regulation size

#### Features (in order of priority):

1. Parking
  - Need more parking. The baseball field along MLK Blvd is “wasted space” and could be used for parking.
2. Multipurpose field
  - Softball, soccer, football
3. Bleachers
  - Sturdy
  - To accent park
  - Stone/terraced
4. Concession
  - Built-in
  - Dedicated space



# Chavis Park

## COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

### Group 2:

#### Activities

- Maintain track
- Music festivals
- Movies in the park
- Food truck rodeo
- Dancing in the park
- Kid's sports

#### Features (in order of priority):

1. Restrooms
2. Electrical hook-ups to accommodate for flexible use of space
3. Seating
  - Terraced (stonework like the War Mother's bench)
  - Accentuate hill to create levels places for picnic blankets
4. Utilize space behind Community Center
  - Commercial vehicle access
  - Restrooms
  - Screen for movie night
  - Access to Community Center
  - Concessions
5. Commercial vehicle access

### Group 3:

#### Activities

- Dancing in the park
- Band concerts
- Pee Wee football
- Movie night, like a drive-in
- Karaoke night (temporary staging)
- Concerts
- Graduation ceremonies

#### Features (in order of priority):

1. Maintain track
2. Terraced seating
  - Permanent
  - With a canopy like the seating at Biltmore Park and Holly Springs Baseball
3. Restrooms
4. Electrical stations (electrical hook-ups)
5. Lighting
  - Good at the track, but dark going toward Lenoir Street
  - Parking lot is dark
6. Food truck space

### **Reaction from Historic Preservation Panel**

- Consider whether you want to replicate what was here or if you want to honor the spirit of the park
- The original Carousel House represents motion and activity.



# Chavis Park

## COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

- Even if the original carousel house becomes restrooms, murals that represent the past can still be painted on the wall.
- It may not be possible to bring a miniature train back into the park but instead honor the movement and activity it brought to the park. Think about what other unique element or feature could be added to the park that would attract people here. Consider skateboarding as an example. There could be a path that moves throughout the park.
- Do you want to celebrate the plane and what it represents or bring it back? Consider folk art which has a strong tradition in North Carolina.
- Aim high but prioritize what is feasible. Consider a tiered approach.
- John Chavis Memorial Park is a cultural landscape. It is not an edifice.
- The spirit of the park is what we hear when you speak about the park.
- Consider Chavis Park as a National Treasure. There are currently about 100 spread across the country.
- How will current folk be drawn to the park?
- Need to have a Plan A and a Plan B and consider fundraising as well as code standards.
- John Chavis Memorial Park could be one massive piece of public art interpreting and recognizing the history of the park.
- Perhaps train tracks or Red Tails that run throughout the park linking medallions or interpretive signage along the way. Consider using QR codes to communicate place, people, and moments in time.
- Economic development and long-term sustainability approaches can leverage the following assets: connection to downtown, corporate sponsorships, fundraising, compelling story and strong, positive group cohesion (PLG) and famous people connected to park.
- The park's master plan can be cohesive by focusing on the story of the park and differentiation (wow factor and what makes Chavis unique).

### **Narrative Vision Statement Discussion**

The PLG reviewed the draft narrative vision statement that the Project Team created based upon the PLG decisions at its May meeting. The only point of discussion was on the meaning and use of sustainability. The way it is used in the vision statement is not reflective of its three components, equity, environment and economy. After an open discussion about the meaning and use of the term sustainability the group came to consensus that they were comfortable with the body of the statement but clarity on the use of the term 'sustainability' was requested. The Project Team will provide a suggestion at the July meeting for how to address sustainability.

### **Additional Information Requests**

**Question:** Are people visiting the Chavis Conversation website? What is the visitation rate? Unique hits vs. Return visitors?

**Response:** Yes. Since August 2012, there have been 645 visits to the site, 39% (251 visits) are unique visitors and 61% are returning visitors (394 visits).



# Chavis Park

## COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

### **Announcements**

- Free carousel rides are available on July 4 from 10 a.m. - 9 p.m. in honor of the carousel's 76<sup>th</sup> birthday and to celebrate the Fourth of July. The Allan Herschell Carousel has called John Chavis Memorial Park home since July 4, 1937.
- The schematic design for the expansion of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial Gardens will be reviewed on Thursday, June 13 at 6:00pm at the Walnut Creek Wetland Center, 905 Peterson Road, Raleigh, 27610.
- The Parks and Recreation Department will present, for public comment and Parks Recreation and Greenway Advisory Board review, the draft schematic design for the Southeast Raleigh Tennis Center at Barwell Road Park the June meeting of the Parks Recreation and Greenway Advisory Board on Thursday, June 20 at 5:30pm at the Jaycee Park Module (2405 Wade Avenue).
- Review your summer plans against our upcoming meeting schedule and let Emily know if you have any conflicts.
- Irvin Henderson will share Tania Bowers, Diversity Coordinator for National Trust for Historic Preservation, contact information with the group. She can act as a concierge for the project.

### **Meeting Evaluation Feedback**

- One of the best meetings to date.
- There was good participation.
- The PLG continues to enjoy working in small groups.
- PLG members appreciated the panel and felt that the feedback provided by the panelists in response to the PLG's top ideas for the original carousel house, amusements, and stadium/grandstand helped put the PLG's ideas into perspective.
- The panelists did a good job of answering all of the PLG's questions.
- Consider asking experts for their ideas for park elements that honor the past, are functional, and feasible recognizing codes and funding.
- Working through the Vision Statement as a group was a good way to reach consensus.
- PLG members who are absent from a meeting should read the packet information or call PLG members who attended to get caught up.

### **Attendance**

**PLG Members Present:** Jacqueline Howell, Lorenzo Jackson, Vivian Lee, Hallie Mittleman, F. Lonnette Williams, Jonathun Muldrow, Eyvonne Dailey, Joseph Ellerbee, Rhonda Muhammad, Rob Wylie

**PLG Members Absent:** Bennie A. Mack, Jr., Jaquan Bennett, Seddrick Hill, Geraldine Williams, Virginia Stanley Tally, Richard Bostic, Gretchel Carter-Hinton, James E. Williams, Cecilia Zuvic, Angela Jackson-Mann, Margo White,

**Staff & Guests:** Vernice Miller-Travis, Alisa Hefner, Sarah Little, Denise Saunders, David Shouse, Emily Ander, Martha Lauer, Irvin Henderson, Fred Belledin, Kim Curry-Evans, Diane Sauer, Dick Bailey, Christy Perrin, Jannette Coleridge-Taylor