



Chavis Park

COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

Public Leadership Group Meeting Summary Meeting #1 on December 11, 2012

Overview

The focus of Meeting #1 was honoring the past. We spent most of the meeting developing a shared understanding of the history and significance of Chavis Park through a series of presentations looking at the physical and experiential history of the park. Followed by an open discussion about what experiences of the past are most important to honor and keep in mind as we plan for the future. Additionally we introduced the idea of forming working groups of the PLG to dig deeper on important topics.

Group Discussion Summary

What experiences of the past are important to honor?

- WWII military history
- John Chavis
- Community leaders by name (Jessie Copeland, Bennie Mack, Jr.)
- Designate the park as an historic district/site
- Memorials
- The story of segregation in Raleigh vs. the South

What is most important about the past to keep in mind as we plan for the future?

- Energy / attendance / excitement
- Cultural richness (through park programming – education, job training)
- Relationship with Shaw University and St. Augustine's College
- Community gathering space (through park events – sports, picnics, reunions, music)
- Tell the story – yesterday, today, tomorrow – in an interactive way that current generations can relate to

Other Comments

- Fearful that Chavis will lose priority due to attention on the long term lease of the Dorothea Dix property.
- Stream buffer changes the experience of the park by separating it into two sides
- James Autry provided photos for SPERNA Knowledge Maps
- Chavis Community Legacy Awards
 - Nominations December 2012 – January 7, 2013
 - February 21 Awards
 - History of John Chavis production - February 22
- Community has experienced planning fatigue
- Chavis provided the opportunity for job training and skills building. E.g. Lifeguard training and certification, and swimming.
- Most of the surrounding educational institutions used Chavis' fields for games – Shaw University, St. Augustine's College, Ligon High School, Washington High School.
- Designating Chavis Park as historic would provide an additional way to market the park to the broader public.



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Additional Information Requests

Question: When and why were features removed from the park? Plane? Train? Pool?

Plane Response: The City does not have anything in writing regarding the planes at Chavis or Pullen Parks; however, 1959 aerial photos show that airplanes were located at both parks in the center of the miniature train tracks. According to an interview with Pecolia Jones, Former Supervisor of Special Activities for the City of Raleigh, the plane was initially located across from the original pool site but was later moved to the center of the miniature train tracks.

Both planes were removed before 1971, as planes do not appear in the 1971 aerials for either park. Staff assumes the planes were removed for safety reasons. Planes of this era were painted with lead based paints.

Train Response: A spring 1971 report to City Council by Parks Maintenance staff states, "the train will no longer be operating due to poor condition". The train had reached the end of its life expectancy.

Pool Response: The original pool was filled in and converted to a playground in the early 1970s because the shell had reached the end of its life expectancy. It would have been more expensive to repair than to rebuild. The new pool was constructed in 1974 using the neighborhood pool model. It was the first neighborhood pool to be built. The current pool is nearing the end of its life expectancy.

Question: What is the process for historic designation?

Response: To be discussed at PLG Meeting #2 on January 8, 2013.

Question: Why is the flow in the stream so low? Is it being blocked?

Response: The Stormwater Division is not aware of any blockages and it is unlikely that would be a cause as flow would eventually find its way around a blockage or build up to a point that the ponded water would become obvious. Somebody withdrawing water might be a possibility but Stormwater is not aware of any such withdraws. Higher levels of imperviousness (areas like parking lots, sidewalks, driveways, and compacted soils that water cannot penetrate) in a watershed over time have been attributed with reducing infiltration (the rate at which soil can absorb water) and reduced base flows (day-to-day amount of surface water in a stream) in streams but Stormwater has not seen anything definitive on this theory.

Question: Where was the park maintenance building?

Response: According to Ms. Pecolia Jones' interview, one of the three barracks, originally used to house Negro troops in 1941-1942, was converted into the Parks and Recreation headquarters for Chavis Park. In 1953 the barracks were demolished and the Parks and Recreation office moved in to a local house for a short time and then in to offices in the completed grandstand (1954).

Question: When did the park become a 'community park'?

Response: The Raleigh Parks and Recreation park classification system was developed, adopted, and implemented in 1970 with the "Raleigh, the Park with a City In It: A Park, Recreation and Open Space Plan for 1970-1980." (This type of plan is now called the Parks



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and Recreation System Plan). Chavis Park was classified as a community park within this plan.

Working Group Updates

Working Groups and potential topics were introduced. Initial working group members are listed below.

Riparian Corridor

Vivian Lee
Geraldine Williams
Rob Wylie

Public Art

Jonathun Muldrow
Gretchel Hinton-Carter
Virginia Stanley Talley

Programming

Cecilia Zuvic
Rhonda Muhammad
Eyvonne Dailey
Lonnnette Williams

Historic Preservation

Joseph Ellerbee
Lonnnette Williams
Gretchel Hinton-Carter
Virginia Stanley Talley

Amenities

Lonnnette Williams
Jacqueline Howell
Bennie Mack

Safety

Communications & Marketing

Jacqueline Howell

Others?

Next Steps

- Add a PLG Tab to the Community Conversation Website with PLG member names and contact information. THIS HAS BEEN COMPLETED.
- Add 1970 NCSU Chavis Park Study to project website. THIS HAS BEEN COMPLETED.

Attendance

PLG Members Present: Richard Bostic, Gretchel Carter-Hinton, Eyvonne Dailey, Joseph Ellerbee, Bishop Victor Glover, Jacqueline Howell, Lorenzo Jackson, Vivian Lee, Hallie Mittleman, Rhonda Muhammad, Jonathun Muldrow, Virginia Stanley Tally, Margo White, Geraldine Williams, James E. Williams, F. Lonnnette Williams, Rob Wylie, Cecilia Zuvic

PLG Members Absent: Seddrick Hill, Angela Jackson-Mann, Jaquan Bennett, Bennie A. Mack, Jr.

Staff & Guests: Vernice Miller-Travis, Alisa Hefner, Sarah Little, Christy Perrin, Kermit Bailey, Matt Keough, Dick Bailey, Denise Saunders, Al Byrd, Ivan Dickey, David Shouse, Emily Ander