

DIX PARK MASTER PLAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Workshop #1: Pluralistic Parkmaking: Engaging the Community

Tuesday, October 18, 2016, 7:00pm-9:00pm

Five Points Center for Active Adults, 2000 Noble Road, Raleigh, NC, 27608

Meeting Notes

At this meeting Dan Howe walked the Committee through an exercise where we individually and in small groups weighed in on a list of potential elements that could be incorporated into a “destination park”. All the items on the list had been actually used in other parks, and had been suggested by citizens for this one. This was a small-scale exercise in engagement among the members of the Committee.

We also used the exercise as a springboard to talk more broadly about engagement and this Committee’s role.

Jay Dawkins and Brad Johnson of Cityzen talked about the objectives of social media and its utility in broadening the scope and relevance of public engagement online.

Important takeaways:

- There is not 100% consensus within the Committee about any “destination park” element we considered as part of the exercise, even playgrounds and picnic areas.
- The elements that had the most support were, in general, the least controversial. They also are the least likely to distinguish this park as unique and special.
- Traditional engagement of the community is likely to result in a similar outcome – we will find broad support for the most common, least controversial elements, and will find more disagreement about things that might be more edgy or unique.
- During the exercise it was more likely that people came to a consensus when they explored the element in small groups.
- This group does not have a pre-determined “charge”. This can be an asset, but it is also confusing.

- The group needs to develop a roadmap of their involvement and a timeline of the process, and they need to think about deliverables – what will be expected of them.
- There are a lot of groups involved in the planning process, with differing levels of power and control. This Committee needs to understand wherein its power resides, and how to most effectively leverage it.
- This Committee does not want to be led around by the design team – they want meaningful involvement as ideas coalesce, and do not simply wish to be reactionary to design team ideas.
- It will be important to generate an over-arching vision – an organizing principle for the park, before individual elements can be considered to be included within it.
- We really don't know each other yet. There is a need to understand each other and the skills and background we bring to the Committee.
- Dan's role is a little unclear. This should be more defined.
- It is also a little opaque how this Committee engages the other 175 people who have volunteered to be on working groups and the broader population as a whole.
- Social media engagement tries to “move the line” on the bell curve of participation, to get to people where they are – in their own social groups and affinity groups online. To get beyond traditional efforts to hold public meetings and put things on static web sites, we must go where people are, both in the online world and in the physical one.