

A board meeting of the Board of Commissioners (the "Board") of the New Orleans City Park Improvement Association (the "NOCPIA") was called to order Tuesday, April 23, 2024, at 4 p.m. The meeting was held in person at the Arbor Room.

PRESENT: Commissioners Adams, Arata, Dale, King, Laborde, Leger, Sherman, Sterbcow, and Turner

ABSENT: Commissioners Coaxum, Giarrusso, Green, Hardie, Keller, Murray, Robin

STAFF: Cara Lambright, Randy Odinet, Keith Hemel, Casie Duplechain, Rebecca Dietz, Keith Claverie, Chris Maitre, and Denise Joubert

GUESTS: Liz Sloss, Tania Hahn, Karen DeBlieux, Richard Cahn, Adam Massey, Drew Remson, Reece Vincent, Alex Morris, Lisa and Ed Shedlock, Max Mackewrick, Justin Kray, Annette Hollowell, Nikki Thanos, Marsha Ferguson, Billy Patout, Wayne Curtis, and Lane Trippe

Vice-Chair Paul Sterbcow called the meeting to order and thanked everyone for coming.

A quorum was present and voting throughout the meeting.

A motion was made to accept the minutes from the February 27, 2024, meeting, as circulated via email. The motion was seconded, voted on, and approved unanimously.

MANAGEMENT REPORT

In the Management Report, Cara Lambright, President and Chief Executive Officer, reported:

- We received two responses to the RFP on researching the history of segregation in City Park. Interviews are scheduled for next week.
- We started the recruitment process for the Ideas Youth Committee; if you know any schools or youth organizations interested in joining, direct them to our website for further details.

Lambright stated that we are recommending an extension to our master planning process and are postponing the May public meeting. The cornerstones for this decision are:

- Some of the concepts that have been presented do not seem to be resonating.
- We have not heard from enough people and groups to move forward.
- The State has been clear that its investment in the South golf course is very recent and should remain untouched.
- We are excited about the opportunities for the park in terms of stormwater management and alleviating some of the burden on the drainage system in surrounding neighborhoods.

- We want to spend more time developing the concepts that have resonated with the public.
 - Additional playgrounds, particularly at entrances and neighborhood access points
 - Safer and more direct access from adjacent neighborhoods
 - Educating visitors about the Park's history
 - More trails
 - Reducing the number of roads (when and where it makes sense to) and making those roads safer.
 - Rehabilitating existing assets, such as Tad Gormley and our sports fields
 - Restoring the park's ecological health

I want to focus on two of these components.

Engagement and Feedback:

- We received a tremendous amount of feedback from the community and their passion and support for Grow Dat
- Since the last public meeting, we held three successful meetings with Grow Dat leadership.
- On May 7, they will meet with the design team to discuss some design alternatives.

Highlights from our master plan Outreach Efforts:

- Multiple e-blasts to more than 128,000 individuals with an open rate of 42%
- Multiple social media posts which reached approximately 235,000 individuals
- An online survey had more than 5,000 participants, which was extended for our team to gather more input with onsite paper surveys.
- Held three public meetings with more than 750 attendees including students from Warren Easton High School and Dillard University.
- Reached out to hundreds of neighborhood leaders, including an upcoming 'coffee talk' in May, dozens of elected officials, religious leaders, neighbors, and others for one-on-one conversations.

We have started recruiting for our Ideas Youth Committee. We have already heard in our current outreach that kids don't have enough to do.

Opportunities with stormwater and park resiliency.

As everyone knows, the park is large and complex. It is critical to spend most of the first part of our process studying the land and water systems to understand what programming it can support and where.

We already know that much of our programming is not set up for success in current conditions. An essential part of the plan is getting everything to a place where it can be successful and resilient.

We know that more significant climate challenges are ahead – continued stress on our shade trees, more rain events with quickly rising water, subsidence, and more extreme heat and cold. We must create a resilient park for future generations.

Research to date shows that the health of our waterways is very concerning. The park suffers from a significant lack of biodiversity. We learned that the park only supports about 10% of the nonmigratory and migratory bird populations. We also need to replant more diverse forests and bring back our native coastal prairie systems.

We can improve water quality, stormwater management, and habitat through the dredging of our lagoon system, expanding the lagoon shelves, and restoring existing wetlands with the park. With improvements, we could hold back more stormwater that is currently flowing into Pump Station 7 during significant events.

The health of the park and water management is the very bedrock of our plan. If the planning process is done right, and we intend to do it right, it will involve a lot of openness to criticism, it will have resets, and when needed, it will pause. That is where we are now, needing to add more time to our process to get it right.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Anyone wishing to comment on any item on the agenda must sign the sign-in sheet and indicate the item they wish to comment on.

Public comment was then invited.

Adam Massey – Jesuit rugby coach mentioned the significant investments made to the rugby field and their willingness to relocate, if necessary, as well as offering assistance and support for the Master Plan.

Drew Ramson – representative of the New Orleans Rowing Club, said that the club has been rowing on the waterways around the park since the 1800s. As the youth programs continue to grow, he discussed the need for storage space and access to waterways. He supports the Master Plan and hopes to be a part of it.

Reece Vincent – representing the rugby community spoke in support of the Master Plan.

Alex Morris – President of New Orleans Women's Rugby Club is excited about the changes and offered help and support for the Master Plan.

Justin Kray – The President of City Park for Everyone coalition stated that the format of the past two master plan meetings was very difficult to understand. He recommended that more discussions with vested tenants are necessary to understand the potential modifications.

Annette Hollowell – a Friend of Grow Dat is pleased with the extension of the planning process and the study of the park's history of segregation. Utilizing the park's existing resources and attributes should be a component of the planning process. She is excited to hear that the park

is organizing a Youth Ideas Committee. Grow Dat has been operating in the park for thirteen years. While many groups are willing to relocate, Grow Dat is unable to relocate the farm, transport the soil and the years of labor that have been invested.

Nikki Thanos – a local attorney and Friend of Grow Dat is pleased with the extension of the planning process and for the meetings that were held with Grow Dat. She expressed concern regarding the negative remarks that were made following the last public meeting. She recommended that going forward we should consider the potential for public engagement and opportunities for public comments. She stated that Grow Dat is seeking a long-term 15-year minimum lease on the land.

Marsha Ferguson – a member of the New Orleans Rowing Club highlighted her passion for rowing and access to waterways, as well as ideas for engaging the community in their use.

Billy Patout - expressed appreciation and excitement for the master plan. He spoke about the need to repair infrastructure, improve road drainage, and water management.

Wayne Curtis – spoke in support of the Master Plan and the decision to extend the process. He suggested changing the process and conducting more formal meetings.

Lane Trippe – a supporter of Grow Dat expressed her excitement for researching the racial history of the parkland and offered her assistance.

OPERATIONS

Chris Maitre, Chief Operating Officer, reported that we are focusing on OSHA compliance and employee training to ensure that they are adhering to best practices.

FINANCE

Keith Hemel, Chief Financial Officer, reviewed the consolidated dashboard and reported:

- CPC Restricted funds - \$6 million year to date (includes \$2.5M related to endowments)

Government Funding

- State Slot - \$1.67M year to date – 4th quarter reimbursement still due
- Millage - \$900,000 for March
- TIF The City has not communicated the quarterly amount

The Amusement Park, which reopened on March 1, had a successful month financially.

DEVELOPMENT

Casie Duplechain, Chief Philanthropy and Engagement Officer reported:

Notable Events:

- Earth Day of Service was very successful
- Heart of the Park Hat Luncheon – April 24
- Swing in the Oaks April 24
- Give NOLA Day May 7
- Toast in the Oaks May 21

Master Plan

- Capital Campaign Consultant – Changing Our World

MEMBERSHIP

Memberships as of April 23 2024

Members - 4,450

- New Members - 55
- Monthly Renewal Rate – 69%
- Cumulative Renewal Rate – 81%

City Bark

- Dog Park membership has rolled into the development department.

Sterbcow thanked everyone for coming and for their input.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 p.m.

