

Duke Park Neighborhood Association
Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, March 8, 2011, 8:00PM
1424 Acadia Street, Durham, NC 27701

Board members:

Present: Dan Read (president), Brian Green (treasurer), Danny Jones (vice president/secretary).
Members-at-large: Barry Ragin (president ex officio), Sara Chase (newsletter editor), Ian Kipp, Jon Strack, Ed Hubbell, Bill Dandridge

Others present: Bill Anderson, Vivian Wang, Brenda Baletti, Chate Boxley, Katherine Gill, Wendy Albano, Maryanne McDonald, Loren Webster, Phillip Bost, Esther Bent

Quorum present: Yes.

Proceedings:

-Meeting called to order at 8:00PM by chair, Dan Read.

Consent Agenda:

1) Bike Workshop

Jon Strack said that the neighborhood bike workshop will take place on Sunday, April 10 from 3-5pm in Duke Park. A short bike tour may follow. An announcement will be printed in the newsletter.

2) July 4 Party

Dan Read reserved the picnic shelter in Duke Park for Monday, July 4 for the annual neighborhood Fourth of July celebration/parade. Everyone agreed that Monday, July 4, rather than Sunday, July 3, should be the date of the celebration.

3) E Markham Ave Remodel/Bike Lanes

Dan Read said that the consensus from neighborhood residents' comments was that it would be a good idea to have bike lanes in the E Markham Ave remodel, but it's not clear at this point how feasible this is.

4) Marry Durham

Dan Read noted that Marry Durham will take place on Saturday, March 19 at 4pm, with festivities centered at Fullsteam Brewery on Rigsbee Ave.

Barry Ragin added that all of the clubs on Rigsbee (Fullsteam, Motorco, Lloyd's, etc.) will be involved in the festivities.

5) Preservation Durham Duke Park Home Tour

Esther Bent proposed that DPNA buy a half-page ad in the Duke Park home tour booklet that will be handed out. Approximately 600 people from outside the neighborhood are likely to participate, so this will be a good way to increase awareness of DPNA and Duke Park. She thought that the DPNA mission statement could be included. The ad would cost \$325, with a submission deadline of April 1.

Barry Ragin was not clear on whether or not DPNA has a mission statement; some research will need to be done.

Bill Anderson seconded the proposal to buy a half-page ad.

Brian Green, DPNA treasurer, noted that we currently have \$2900 in our account.

Dan Read held a vote and the motion to buy a half-page ad passed with a clear majority.

Esther also noted that Preservation Durham would like to have a mailing address list for DPNA members.

Barry Ragin said that we might consider not sharing this information given that DPNA members have not expressly authorized this.

Ian Kipp suggested that we provide them with single-use adhesive address labels, but Dan Read pointed out that this would take a fair amount of work on our part.

Dan Read called for a vote on whether or not to share member information with Preservation Durham. Six voted in favor, and four voted against. The motion passed with a majority. The information will be shared with Preservation Durham with the stipulation that they not share the list and that it may only be used once.

Barry Ragin will contact Preservation Durham about this.

6) Old North Durham Park Proposal

Dan Read shared background information on this issue: In October 2010, Ian Kipp, on behalf of the Friends of Old North Durham Park, gave a presentation about FOND's plans for Old North Durham Park. He asked the DPNA Board to pass a resolution in support of this plan, and the Board approved this. It was later suggested that we voted on this issue prematurely, given that most Board members were unaware of the controversy surrounding this issue. In January 2011, a motion was put forth that the Board withdraw its support of the FOND plan, but the motion did not pass with a vote of 4-4. We would like to discuss this matter and put DPNA's support of FOND up for another vote.

Maryanne McDonald noted that the city intends to hold public meetings to share FOND's plans, which are very much subject to change.

Dan Read wanted to limit speakers to 3 minutes each.

Sara Chase objected to this, saying that this amount of time was insufficient.

Bill Dandridge seconded this objection.

The motion passed with a clear majority, so the time limit was lifted.

Sara Chase sent an e-mail earlier in the afternoon detailing her position on the issue, which most people had now read.

Vivian, Brenda, and Chate from El Kilombo introduced themselves and thanked DPNA for inviting them to this meeting.

Vivian noted that El Kilombo is very much in favor of improving OND Park, but does not support FOND's plan. She gave a history of the plans to improve OND Park, and pointed out that the City of Durham had allocated \$200,000 to improve the park in 2003. The board of the Central Park School, in her view, had acted to obstruct these plans, and attempted in 2007 to gain control of the park via a 10 year lease.

Brenda noted that the city tabled plans to improve OND Park when the Central Park School board got involved. A series of public meetings will be held soon to discuss these plans. El Kilombo's major concerns with the OND Park issue are the influence of private money on public processes, and the racialized process of removing Blacks and Latinos from OND.

Chate, the head of the El Kilombo youth assembly, explained the importance of having a full size soccer field for the children. FOND's plans for the park do not include a full size field, which many neighborhood children feel would be a detriment to the park. A letter was read from a member of the youth assembly.

Bill Anderson asked whom had been displaced from the neighborhood – were there particular residents to whom El Kilombo was referring?

Brenda explained that the residents of the gray apartment complexes on Geer had been forced out.

Katherine Gill said that she had been hired by the Central Park School board to develop a plan for the park, and recommended that a nonprofit organization be founded so that it could engage the local community to raise money for improving the park. She noted that, if the renovation moves forward, it must be the work of a large community; the FOND plan is made with the best of intentions and is only a schematic that is intended to generate a conversation. She asked how we might best enact this.

Esther Bent asked what happened to the \$200,000 allocated to OND Park by the city. Wendy Albano said the money went elsewhere.

Danny Jones asked that we focus our discussion on the narrower issue at hand, which is whether or not DPNA should be supporting FOND's plans for the park.

Sara Chase added that DPNA did not have enough information when it voted in October.

Wendy Albano explained that the plan is not set in stone, and that a survey was sent out in Spanish and English to neighborhood residents, which had a very high 19% response rate. Public meetings were held, to which El Kilombo was invited, for the purpose of getting input from the community. The plan put forth was based on survey responses that were received. Wendy also pointed out that public-private partnerships are an effective way of raising funds and for ensuring that the funds can only be used for OND Park.

Barry Ragin noted that the park belongs to the entire city, not just the neighborhood, and that the ultimate responsibility for deciding what happens with OND Park lies with the city.

Vivian said that Parks & Recreation did have a plan with money allocated, but that the Central Park School board worked against the interest of OND residents. Brenda added that these comments are only in reference to a few particular Central Park School board members.

Bill Dandridge expressed his concern that the park should not be privatized in any way, and Wendy Albano responded that privatization is not on the table.

Phil Bost noted that it has been very difficult for him to find information on FOND as he was researching this issue, but that there is an abundance of information available about El Kilombo. He wondered why this was the case.

Ian Kipp responded that FOND has never been incorporated; it does not have a board. He also wanted to call everyone's attention to three upcoming public meetings: March 16, 27, and April 2, all at the library.

Danny Jones said that, given the lack of a clear plan from FOND – in fact, they have specifically noted that their plan is very flexible and is only a schematic – it makes no sense for the DPNA board to commit to supporting such a nebulous plan.

Dan Read expressed his support for the FOND plan and noted that division among neighbors killed fixing the Duke Park pool, and he did not want to see this happen with OND Park.

Barry Ragin noted that the Board voted in October to support a specific plan, but it now sounds like that plan is subject to change. Danny Jones agreed with this assessment. Katherine Gill explained that the FOND plan is focused on expanding community areas and improving the park, adding access points and water features, etc. Public meetings will be held to get specific input from the community, so the plan is subject to change; it is a schematic that highlights the major elements of the planned improvements. Jon Strack added that the DPNA board voted to support an overall master plan.

Danny Jones moved to withdraw DPNA's support of the FOND plan, given that the plan itself seems to be a work in progress and it's not clear what, precisely, DPNA would be endorsing.

Barry Ragin was uncomfortable withdrawing our support and proposed an amendment in which we would note that we support the general concept of improving OND Park and the process by which FOND is going about doing this. The amendment was not seconded.

Ed Hubbell seconded Danny's motion.

Bill Dandridge proposed an amendment in which we would add that, while we withdraw our support, we do support improving the park. The amendment was not seconded.

Dan Read held a vote on the motion to withdraw DPNA's support, and noted that only DPNA members should vote.

Six voted in favor of the motion, and seven voted against, so the motion did not pass. DPNA still supports FOND's plan for renovating OND Park.

Barry Ragin moved that DPNA express its support of the process of bringing all parties together in developing a renovation plan for OND Park, and that DPNA remains open to further community input that would result in changes to the proposed renovation plans.

Phil Bost seconded this motion.

Dan Read held a vote; the motion passed unanimously.

Sara Chase asked if this meant that we would modify the letter that DPNA sent to the city in support of FOND.

Dan Read said that Barry and Danny would work on writing this up and would send it to DPNA for approval.

Dan thanked everyone for participating and said that, while there are strong feelings about this issue, it was good to hear all sides.

7) Coffee with Council – Monday, March 14, 6pm

Bill Anderson will ask for an additional \$450,000 for the Duke Park bathhouse renovation at the upcoming Coffee with Council meeting. He stressed that it is important for people to turn out for the meeting.

Barry Ragin plans to speak to the landlord registry idea, but may not be able to attend.

Dan will attend in his place if necessary.

Adjournment:

-Meeting adjourned at 9:40PM.

-Minutes taken by secretary, Danny Jones.