

# Parks With Purpose Community Task Force Newsletter and Meeting Summary

January 14, 2019 Meeting | Norman and Betty Camp Education Center

**Participants of January Meeting:**, Louie Rivers, Sarah Shefte, Kaberi Kar Gupta, Bill Flournoy, Madhu Katti, Kevin Boyer, Wayne Shore, David Proper, Bill Proper, Claire Cooney, Stacia Turner, Dasia Perkins, Yasmin Fozard, Eric Butler, Stacie Hagwood, Betty Camp, Norman Camp Jr., Kristie Moyer, Frances Carmichael-Jones, Heather Dutra, Claudia Graham, Jemonde Taylor, Christy Perrin, NEC students Elijah and Mikiya, Kofi Boone and College of Design Students (Environmental Justice and Design and Studio classes): Olivia Vilá, Josh Randall, Spencer Stone, Mara Lowry, Alex Walters, Qixma Zhang, Eva Pratt, Xinyi Lin, Frankie Zito, Kelsey Peterson, Karla Bowling, Maggie Allen, Hunter Williams, Xinyu Li, Tina Zhang, Shuang Wu

## Upcoming meetings and events

- Family Fun Day- Saturday, Feb. 16 from 12-3 at St. Ambrose Church. A flier is here: [Go.ncsu.edu/Parkswithpurposeevent](http://Go.ncsu.edu/Parkswithpurposeevent)
- PWP Community Task Force meeting- Mon, Feb. 18 from 5:30- 8:00 at St. Ambrose Church
- PWP Community Task Force meeting- Mon, Mar. 18 from 5:30- 8:00 at Norman and Betty Camp Education Center, Walnut Creek Wetland Park
- Six meetings are expected to take place between Jan and September (project year end)

## Task Force Actions and Decisions

- Decision to hold a community event February 16, that is about fellowship, food, exposing people to the project and letting them know where we're at
- Our grant timeline requires making a decision about which site and overall project we want to implement with grant funds by beginning of April
- We now have a Facebook page:

<https://www.facebook.com/walnutcreekwetlandcommunitypartnership/>

## Meeting Summary

### Outreach and Communication Plan

The group reviewed a draft Outreach and Communication plan that includes outreach strategies for our Parks with Purpose (PWP) project. The draft plan is posted on the Walnut Creek Wetland Community Partners website. To track our outreach efforts and ensure that we aren't repeatedly reaching out to the same people, we've started a spreadsheet to log outreach activities. Grant funds could be used to hire someone from the community to go door-to-door talking to people. Sarah brought our project fact sheet to community centers in the area and created Facebook and Instagram accounts to share photos and other updates from our group.

Feedback was provided about the plan included:

- Jemonde could recommend local churches to reach out to
- Recognize and reach out to residents in diversifying demographics
- Sharing materials in English and Spanish in nearby areas with significant Latino populations, such as Peterson Park Apartments
- Diana Powell recommended as a community organizer
- Inter faith food shuttle could be someone to connect with
- Reach out to State Street Village Homeowner's Association
- The new YMCA could become a new community gathering spot
- Boys and Girls Club (Raleigh Blvd)
- CACs - South, South-Central, and Southeast
- Corey Branch's meeting
- Southgate community center should be added to the list
- Top Green- Director of both centers is Courtney T Johnson
- Gonna get on social media
- Would be good to find out when PTA meetings are and get on their schedule

### **Collaboration with Dr. Kofi Boone's Design Students**

Dr. Kofi Boone, NCSU College of Design, took the floor to introduce the activities that his two graduate classes would be doing, and to discuss ethics of student involvement. The two classes include a Landscape Architecture Studio, and an Environmental Justice and Design Seminar class. The LA Studio (8 students) will create visual plans and sketches of the Task Force Priority sites that interpret what they learn about the sites and the Task Force goals. The EJ and Design class will help with outreach and engagement of the community. Kofi shared that the students are not professionals, but are learning the practice of Landscape Architecture. Their ideas will provide creative visualizations that can help the Task Force consider how their ideas may translate into on-the-ground projects, and ultimately which site to implement first.

Kofi reiterated concerns that researchers have often come into communities and extracted information for research articles, harming communities more than they help in the process. He thinks it is better to have a discussion about the ethics of projects like this early on in the process so that the community and technical advisors can foster a sense of transparency. To promote this sort of discussion and effort, Dr. Boone brought a consent agreement to cover the Task Force working with the students and asked people to read it.

Kofi shared Ideas about good ways to reach people: events where people talk about their experiences are good for making local connections.



Video is also a powerful way to reach people, such as sharing the Partners for Environmental Justice documentary. Surveys have low participation and paying someone to go door-to-door is expensive. Personal connections are important for getting people to join events. With the objectives of making local connections and spreading the word about our project, Kofi suggested his classes could help hold a couple events between now and March. Someone commented that the Eno River Festival and other community events could be a good place for our group to host a booth and connect with the public. For events such as these, it was agreed that it would be helpful to have a few talking points about the project that everyone can use when someone asks.

### **Small Group Activity**

The meeting then broke into small groups with NCSU Design students facilitating the discussions and taking notes. Community Task Force and Technical advisors were asked to think about the following questions and then discuss them with their table groups before sharing with the whole room. Dr Boone asked everyone to think of community assets that could make a park project possible, barriers that the community experiences to enacting these things, and the ways in which the community (and institutions) could overcome these barriers. Students then provided the following verbal summary of what they heard in the small groups.

#### **What are assets to help connect community with the Walnut Creek wetlands?**

- Task force members
- Partners for Environmental Justice
- Local science classes using the wetland as a resource/teaching opportunity
- Accessibility (people can walk to the Wetland Center)
- Good Park staff
- Youth participation
- People use the Park's Center as event space
- Multigenerational community
- Variety of socioeconomic conditions
- Student groups
- Close proximity to schools and downtown Raleigh
- Walnut Creek Trail and the access it provides to the area
- Great programming and staff at Walnut Creek Wetland Park
- How inviting and nice the Wetland Center is

#### **What are barriers to better connect community with wetlands and Walnut Creek Wetland Park?**

- Negative view of government (who owns the Wetland Center)
- Funding issues
- Negative wetland associations (muddy, insects, always flooded)
- Accessibility
- Difficulty defining the community area and those being served since people come and go
- Lack of awareness of the issues
- Bureaucracy

- Perceived lack of safety
- Lack of awareness of the park
- Lack of recreation options
- Unmet generational and cultural needs

### **How can these barriers be overcome?**

(Original question- how can community overcome barriers- then suggestion was made that the community didn't create the barriers, so it shouldn't be up to the community to overcome them.)

- Community gathering events, such as cookouts, could increase awareness of the park and community issues
- Could eventually hire a semi-permanent outreach person from the community
- More that the city could do to help with the project
- Having more citizens at the meetings instead of having a majority of technical advisors
- Access from other areas to the wetland center (other sides of the park)

### **What is one thing you could do right now to create better connections between wetland Park and community?**

- Build trust, infuse environmental justice into aspects of the Park, uplift youth and how to engage family, consistency such as regular activities. Keep on keeping on.
- Have parties, cook-outs, music.
- Hire an outreach person, have more community events.
- More citizens at meetings.
- An entrance to the park from the south side.

### **Feedback about the Parks with Purpose Community Task Force process**

Participants were asked to share any feedback they may have about the Task Force and process we've been using for the Parks with Purpose project. Post it notes were provided for anonymous posting what is working and what needs to be improved upon a flipchart paper or leaving at tables. One comment was posted:

*Need to be more clear on the big picture. How do all the dots connect? I've heard the questions- what is/who are population to be served by the grant (neighborhoods). How is the work we are doing and information being gathered moving us forward?*

Response- We will work on a short document to summarize what led us to where we are today, what we aim to accomplish. We will also try to begin meetings with a brief summary of what happened last time.

Your continued feedback about this process is welcomed- feel free to leave comments at your table or at the entry table at any meeting- we will pick them up afterwards.