



Meeting Summary: George Washington Carver Museum, Cultural, and Genealogy Center 2021 Facility Expansion Phase 1a and 1b

OPEN HOUSE MEETING December 5, 2024

Virtual

6 p.m. – 7:30 p.m.

Meeting Overview:

The Austin Parks and Recreation Department held the Open House Meeting (Virtual) to conduct community engagement activities to capture public input for Phase 1a and Phase 1b as outlined in PARD's June 2021 Council-approved Facility Expansion Plan for The George Washington Carver Museum, Cultural and Genealogy Center (Appendix A1).

The purpose of the Open House Meeting was to learn more about the facility expansion plans including:

- A new multi-purpose area for community-centric programming made possible by relocating administrative offices to a new upper-level area.
- Outdoor spaces and site improvements that may include outside classrooms, community gardens, a new flexible event lawn with a covered pavilion, relocation of the Juneteenth statues, and renovation of the existing public restrooms.

The project team worked to ensure that each stakeholder left the meeting feeling welcomed and appreciated for their time and input into the Expansion process. There were 11 attendees. Attendees included the Carver Ambassadors, ATX Foundation members, and project staff.

Introduction and Presentation:

Shuronda Robinson, CEO of Adisa Communications opened the Carver Ambassadors and ATX Foundation with a welcome, and introduced Marjorie Flanagan, PARD Division Manager Museums and Cultural Programs, who introduced the project team.

Ms. Robinson then explained the purpose of the meeting and turned the presentation over to Anthony "Tony" Hron, PARD Associate Project Manager (SPOC). Mr. Hron began his presentation with an overview of the expansion plan. He reviewed the Timeline and the 2021 Council Approved Facility Plan highlighting that Phase 1a and 1b are the first facility expansion recommendations identified in the 2021 plan. At this point a stakeholder inquired about the origins of the expansion plan, which was clarified by Shuronda Robinson and Marjorie Flanagan. The current expansion is based on a feasibility study conducted in 2000, leading to improvements in 2005. The 2021 revision revisited these plans, updating them to reflect current community needs and input.

Mr. Hron then presented the Proposed Facility Expansion Site Map, ensuring stakeholders understood both the current status of the project and the purpose of the map. He clarified that the map reflects all three phases of the expansion, while emphasizing that today's discussion would focus specifically on Phases 1a and 1b. Mr. Hron then guided stakeholders through the detailed Proposed Site Maps for Phase



1a and 1b improvements, highlighting key elements and planned enhancements within these initial phases.

Next, Ms. Robinson leads the stakeholders through the Community Engagement Overview 2021 Plan. She followed with an explanation of a graph showing which improvements in Phase 1a and 1b PARD is seeking community input for, and which improvements were determined in the existing plan. The indoor multipurpose room, community garden, event lawn with covered pavilion, relocation of Juneteenth Statues and outdoor classroom were topics for community input opportunities. PARD did not seek community input for the administrative suite on the new mezzanine, the new elevator for the administrative suite and updated outdoor restrooms because these improvements were determined in the existing plan.

Ms. Robinson then facilitated the group discussion focusing on the five community input improvements asking four questions for each topic.

Summary of Discussion

1. Relocation of Juneteenth Statues:

- Discussions centered on the Juneteenth statues and their potential relocation within the museum grounds. Questions were raised about the significance of their current location and whether the relocation would enhance the cultural and historical storytelling. Shuronda Robinson encouraged community input on the proposed changes to ensure they align with the historical significance.

2. Outdoor Classrooms:

- There was lively debate on the feasibility and practicality of outdoor classrooms in Austin's hot climate. Stakeholders expressed concerns about the extreme heat, suggesting the need for air conditioning or misting systems. Marjorie Flanagan acknowledged that climate was an issue, with a call for solutions to ensure comfort for all visitors.

3. Community Garden:

- The role of the community garden was explored, with a focus on how it could reflect the African American agricultural legacy and encourage community involvement. A stakeholder expressed interest in hands-on projects, and community members discussed the types of plants and crops that should be included, with an emphasis on educational and sustainable practices.

4. Indoor Multipurpose Room:

- The new indoor multipurpose room was discussed, particularly regarding its use for community events, workshops, and classes. There were suggestions on what features would make the space more functional, such as lighting, seating, and mobility considerations. The group also emphasized the importance of accessibility and the need for features beyond ADA requirements.

5. Staffing Concerns:

- Stakeholders raised concerns about adequate staffing to support the expanded facility and programs. Marjorie Flanagan reassured the group that expanding the facility would



provide opportunities to request additional staff, rather than reducing existing personnel.

6. Event Lawn and Pavilion:

- The potential uses for the event lawn and covered pavilion were discussed. There was a focus on making the space accessible and functional for various community events, with suggestions for lighting, seating, and other accommodations. Community members were encouraged to provide input on what features would enhance the overall event experience.

7. Communication and Meeting Accessibility:

- Stakeholders raised concerns about communication and the lack of awareness regarding upcoming meetings. One stakeholder noted that if she were not an Ambassador, she would not have known about the additional sessions. This prompted a conversation about improving outreach and the timing of meetings, with a suggestion to reschedule additional sessions to ensure more participation.

8. Future Meetings and Outreach:

- There was some confusion about the distribution of the December newsletter, with **PARD Community Engagement** explaining that a programming conference had delayed its release. A stakeholder suggested that future meetings be scheduled to allow more time for outreach.

9. Chat and Notes:


- Attendees also asked whether the chat and other notes from the meeting would be shared, expressing a desire to review the information discussed.

Action Items:

- **PARD Community Engagement** to share the 2021 Facility Expansion Plan and address questions about updates made to the phases of the original plan.
- **Tony Hron** to follow up on specific questions about the updates to phases 2 and 3 of the 2000 plan via email, including responses to community inquiries.
- **PARD** to work on improving communication and outreach for future meetings, addressing concerns raised about the visibility of the meetings.
- Further discussion on the feasibility of outdoor classrooms in the extreme Austin heat, with potential solutions like air conditioning or misters.
- A follow-up discussion regarding staffing needs and how the expansion might address these concerns.

Next Steps

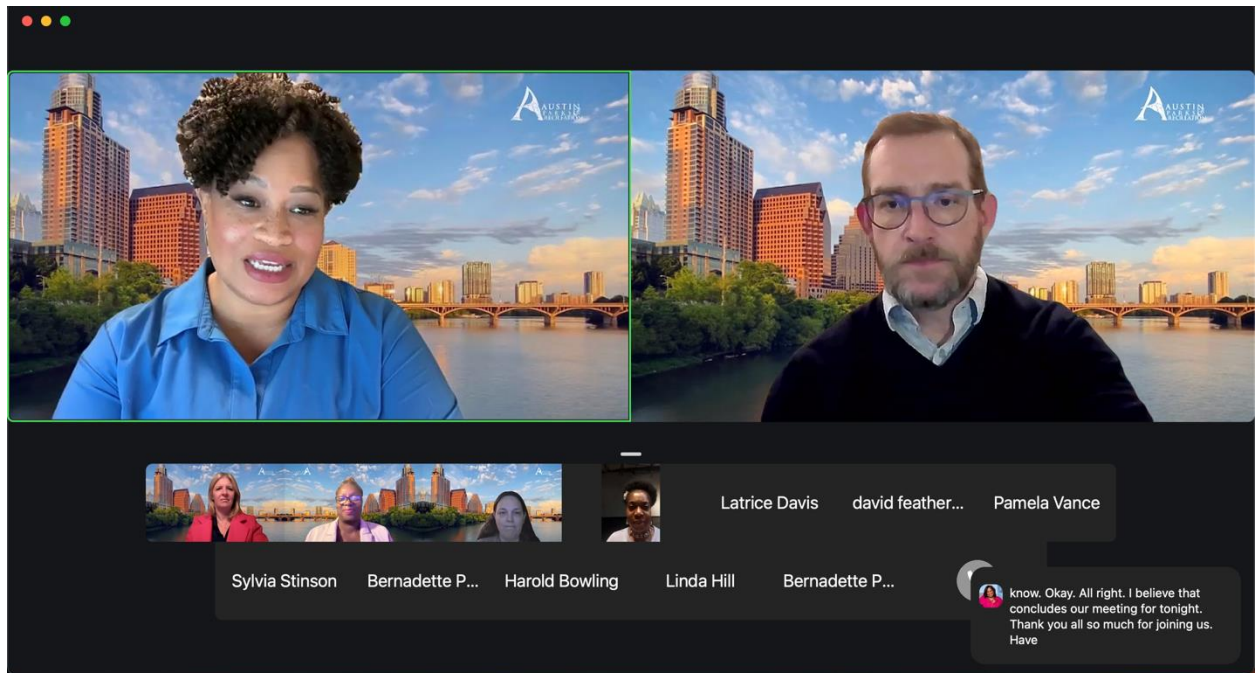
After taking questions from attendees, Shuronda Robinson thanked everyone for attending the Open House Meeting. Attendees were thanked for their time and input into Phase 1a and 1b of the project. Ms. Robinson then provided the dates and time of the remaining community engagement opportunities and offered the website and QR Code as ways to stay informed. The project team briefly talked with attendees to answer final questions and take final comments as the presentation portion of the meeting ended.



performance space, you would ensure that there's ramps, there's sidewalks for you know, like a sidewalk that is not cracky for people who may be

45 (48 of 60)

Para Agboga	Christine Pas...
Latrice Davis	david feather...
Pamela Vance	Sylvia Stinson
Bernadette P...	Harold Bowling
Donise Robin...	Linda Hill



Sylvia Stinson	Bernadette P...	Harold Bowling	Linda Hill	Bernadette P...
Latrice Davis	david feather...	Pamela Vance		

know. Okay. All right. I believe that concludes our meeting for tonight. Thank you all so much for joining us. Have



ATTENDEES

- Harold Bowling
- Para Agboga
- Bernadette Phifer
- Linda Hill
- Imani Aanu
- Latrice Davis
- David Featherson
- Pamela Vance
- Syliva Stinson
- Donise Robinson

TRANSCRIPTS

00:42:23 Imani Aanu: Good evening Everyone

00:43:20 Shuronda Robinson, Moderator: Replying to "Good evening Everyone..."

Good evening!

00:44:04 Shuronda Robinson, Moderator: Thanks for joining tonight's meeting! We are just getting started. We appreciate your presence.

00:44:04 PARD Community Engagement: Welcome everyone! We are so grateful you and here and appreciate your time.

00:49:32 Imani Aanu: Hello again, quick question -- Can this slide deck be shared with us?

00:50:00 Imani Aanu: Thank you so much!!

00:51:10 Shuronda Robinson, Moderator: Replying to "Thank you so much!!"

Yes mam!

00:52:11 Imani Aanu: ??? -- in the prior slide did I see that this expansion is from a study in the year 2000?

00:52:58 Shuronda Robinson, Moderator: The Facility Expansion plan we are talking about tonight was approved by City Council in 2021.

00:54:07 Marjorie Flanagan: The study done in 2000 led to the current building.

00:54:35 Imani Aanu: Thank you. And also I'm trying to understand if its "origin" a study from the year 2000?

00:59:20 PARD Community Engagement: There was what was called a Feasibility Study in 2000 that guided the improvements that were completed in 2005. Once many years had passed, the remaining improvements 2000 Feasibility Study had outlined but that had not been completed needed to be updated. The 2021 Facility Expansion Plan revisited the remaining undeveloped improvements and incorporated current needs with the community's input before being approved by council.

00:59:59 Imani Aanu: Thank you Tony. Can you also speak to the extent of the updates to the phases that were made during that 2021 phase revision?

01:04:34 Para Agboga: Statues

01:05:12 Para Agboga: So, would we not need to determine exactly where the statues go before other solid plans are made?



01:05:16 Tony Hron: Imani, I'm happy to follow up with an explanation of those updates via email following our meeting today. I will copy all ambassadors. For clarity, are you asking what was added to phases 2 and 3 of the 2000 plan in the 2021 plan?

01:09:20 Shuronda Robinson, Moderator: Replying to "Thank you. And also ..."

JUNETEENTH STATUES

Is there a significance to the current location of the Juneteenth statues that might discourage relocation?

How do you feel about relocating the statues to a different area within the museum grounds?

Which of the suggested locations would best honor their cultural and historical significance?

How can the new placement of the statues enhance the overall experience for visitors, especially those learning about Austin's African American history and culture?

01:10:31 Sylvia Stinson: A facility expansion sounds wonderful. Is there also a plan/commitment for additional and sufficient funding for staffing to support current and additional Carver programs? My fear is the 'facility' will increase while staffing and programming is reduced.

01:16:10 david featherston: Replying to "Good evening Everyon..."

Does moving the statues include moving the walk up display (with the bell)?

01:16:35 Marjorie Flanagan: HI Sylvia, your fear is valid, but it's actually the opposite.

Expanding a facility is one of the main ways programs, sites and divisions can ask for additional staff.

01:22:05 PARD Community Engagement: Putting in the parking lot for further follow-up, I am hearing there is more discussion to be had regarding current staffing.

01:23:12 Marjorie Flanagan: Replying to "Good evening Everyon..."

Yes.

01:25:06 Para Agboga: Lol, what is an "outdoor classrooms"?

01:28:38 Shuronda Robinson, Moderator: OUTDOOR CLASSROOMS

What type of classes, presentations, and workshops would best be served by outdoor classrooms? Are there existing Carver programs that could benefit?

2. How could the outdoor classrooms serve different age groups or community interests (e.g. youth, elders, families, school groups)?

3. What would make an outdoor classroom space most effective for learning and engagement at the museum?

4. How can we ensure that these spaces actively support collective learning, cultural exchange, and opportunities for underrepresented voices to be heard and valued?

01:30:00 Para Agboga: So, I like outdoor activities. How many are we talking about? Half the year it's over 100 degrees outside.

01:31:09 Imani Aanu: Are there already any examples of this in Austin facilities? It is SO HOT here, I wonder whether this best serves our community???

01:31:30 Marjorie Flanagan: It's like a fancy back porch ;)

01:31:39 Imani Aanu: Not just shade...we need

A/C in Austin, lol!

01:31:47 Para Agboga: So, misters?? Outdoor air conditions?

01:38:41 PARD Community Engagement: For everyone's reference, I am sharing a link to the 2021 Facility Expansion Plan. 0-CarverPlanSummary_06_28_21 condensed.pdf

01:39:57 Shuronda Robinson, Moderator: EVENT LAWN

What types of events or gatherings do you envision happening on the event lawn with the covered pavilion?



This space will be designed to be accessible. Please define and prioritize any special accommodations (lighting, seating, mobility, etc.)

What features would make the covered pavilion more functional for outdoor events?

- 4. How important is accessibility in this event space? Are there particular considerations for people with mobility needs or other accommodations?

01:41:42 PARD Community Engagement: One thing to note from the plan, is a desire from the community to connect the building to the outdoors and, on page 43, there was specific requests from community to feel more connected to the Kealing campus which drove discussion for including outdoor classrooms and community gardens.

01:41:54 Para Agboga: Lol, I've talked enough!

01:42:28 Marjorie Flanagan: Can we go back to the site plan that shows general location of these items?

01:44:39 Imani Aanu: I agree with the recent comment - an event / performance space has a different connotation than a classroom.

01:46:11 Imani Aanu: Exactly my thought.... accessibility requirements would be dictated by ADA laws and other relevant regulations.

01:46:57 Tony Hron: Yes, the facility will be designed to code, including ADA. We are asking if there are any special accommodations required.

01:47:00 Para Agboga: Right

01:47:19 Tony Hron: . . . above and beyond what ADA requires.

01:49:42 Shuronda Robinson, Moderator: COMMUNITY GARDEN

What role do you envision the community garden playing in the expanded museum space?

How can the community garden reflect the cultural heritage and history of Austin's African American community and the agricultural legacy of George Washington Carver?

What types of plants, crops, or features would you like to see in the garden to make it both educational and sustainable?

- 4. Should the garden focus on hands-on community involvement or primarily showcase local plants and agricultural practices? What would participation look like?

01:49:53 PARD Community Engagement: The image Tony is sharing is on page 45 of the 2021 Expansion Plan, FYI.

01:52:03 Latrice Davis: Latrice Davis would like to see hands on projects

01:54:48 Shuronda Robinson, Moderator: INDOOR MULTIPURPOSE ROOM

What types and sizes of community events, classes, or workshops would you like to see hosted in the new multi-purpose room?

How do you envision the new multi-purpose room being used by different age groups or community members?

What features or amenities would you prioritize in the design of the new space to ensure it meets your needs for events and activities?

This space will be designed to be accessible. Please define and prioritize any special accommodations (lighting, seating, mobility, etc.).

02:02:13 Sylvia Stinson: Is there enough gallery space in the new expansion plan?

02:04:13 PARD Community Engagement: Gallery & education addition part of Phase 2b

02:07:39 Sylvia Stinson: Artist Support Space



02:08:54 Imani Aanu: I love Miss Bernadette's point re artist support space. And BTW - I thought I heard that the Carver's Artist residency program has recently been cut due to lack of sufficient funding to keep it going.

02:10:34 Imani Aanu: Where is the Dec 7 & the Dec 10 meeting advertised? I was just on Eventbrite for Carver and saw neither..

02:12:27 PARD Community Engagement: George Washington Carver Museum - Facility Expansion Phase 1 | AustinTexas.gov

02:12:33 Imani Aanu: Dec newsletter didn't go out yet... (Staffing/funding issue?)

02:13:30 Sylvia Stinson: Will go out?

02:13:55 PARD Community Engagement: Replying to "Dec newsletter didn'..."

There was a programming conference this week. I believe that contributed. I will confirm it will go out.

02:14:00 Marjorie Flanagan: I'm almost positive it went out this week.

02:14:07 Sylvia Stinson: Maybe we should reschedule additional meetings to allow for adequate time to get the word out.

02:14:12 Imani Aanu: My concern is that if I were not an Ambassador (or if I had a conflict tonight), I would not know about these additional sessions.

02:14:55 Sylvia Stinson: These meetings are coming across as a secret.

02:15:32 Imani Aanu: Will chats be kept? Shared? I didn't get a chance to copy some items.