

To	David Ellis County Manager
CC	Niki Jones, Assistant City Manager & Stephen C. Bentley, Parks Director
From	Marchell Adams David, City Manager
Department	City Manager's Office
Date	February 10, 2026
Subject	Dix Park Commission: Wake County Board of County Commissioners Appointment

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**Background**

The City and Dix Park Conservancy (DPC) first entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) in 2016, this also included a funding agreement. These served as a guide and outline for our relationship during the master plan process. After the adoption of the master plan in 2019, MOA #2 was executed in 2020 to advance the design of the Gipson Play Plaza. This also included a funding agreement between both parties. In addition to the two MOA(s), the City leases multiple structures on the park for both park concessions and staff offices.

Over the last 10 years, the City of Raleigh and Dix Park Conservancy have aligned passion and resources to work with our community and other partners to advance the vision of making Dix Park an incredible destination for everyone to enjoy. The partnership has brought creative programming and events, world class public art, renovation to various buildings for public benefit and the planning, design and construction of the Gipson Play Plaza which opened in June of 2025.

**Partnership and Success**

2025 was a big year for Dix Park and our partnership. We opened the first major phase of Dix Park, Gipson Play Plaza, which has been an amazing success for all visitors. DHHS has transitioned nearly all their operations off campus to their new headquarters on Blue Ridge Road. This past fall, through the generosity of the Conservancy, 5 trolls created by Thomas Dambo and built by our community were installed in the park and have significantly increase park visitation. Of course, we also hosted another successful Dreamville festival. The Park has incredible energy and momentum with attendance approaching 2 million people annually.

We are approaching nearly a decade of collaborative success together. With the evolving changes and demands for our Parks, partnerships are increasingly more important. This includes but is not limited to more clear roles and responsibilities, increased opportunities for fundraising, streamlining processes and an improved governance structure.

## Dix Park Commission Framework

On January 20, 2026, the City Council authorized the City Manager to execute the third Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the Dix Park Conservancy. Within the terms of the MOA is the recommendation to improve and rename the Dix Park Leadership Committee to a newly constituted “Dix Park Commission”. The composition of the Commission includes:

- (1) Mayor’s appointment
- (2) Council appointees
- (3) Dix Park Conservancy appointees
- (1) Wake County Board of Commissioners appointee**
- (1) NCSU Chancellor OR appointee
- (1) Dept. of Agriculture Commissioner OR appointee
- (1) Parks, Recreation, Greenways Advisory Board appointee
- (1) New consolidated Legacy and Community Committee appointee

**The new composition has one appointment for the Wake County Board of Commissioners.** It is anticipated the Commission will meet at least once a month, have two-year terms with the ability for two renewals (total six-year appointment), it is a public body following the North Carolina opening meeting requirements, a city appointee and Conservancy appointee will serve as Co-Chairs and there will be no elected officials.

The Commission’s future work plan over the next 12 to 18 months may include but not be limited to:

- Review and recommendation of an updated naming rights resolution for Dix Park
- Review and recommendations related to existing and future buildings and infrastructure analysis
- Review and recommendations to the park’s rezoning
- Review and recommendations of the schematic design of Rocky Branch Creek and Greenway
- Review and recommendations related to a future Municipal Service District (MSD)
- Review and comment on projects improving the connection between downtown and Dix Park

These work plan items can help inform the Board’s considerations when making the appointment to the Commission. At the March 17, 2026 City Council meeting city staff will an agenda item under the Report of the City Manager seeking the 3 Council appointees. **The city requests that the Wake County Board of Commissioners consider their appointment at their March 16, Board of Commissioners meeting.** City staff will host the first Dix Park Commission meeting on April 28, 2026 at 9:00 AM at the Chapel at the park.