

Meeting Minutes

Date: 7.7.2020 **Authored By:** Uttara Ramakrishnan

Meeting Details

Meeting Date: 7.30.2020

Project Name: George Washington Carver Center

Meeting Time: 6.30 PM

Project Number: 215011.000

Meeting Location: Zoom

Attendees:

Civic Leaders:

Fatima Mann, Rachel Winston, Rudy Metayer, Larry Wallace Jr., Kelenne Blake-Fallon, Kenneth Thompson, Terry Mitchell, Chaas Moore, Yasmine Smith, Bobbie Mack

George Washington Carver Center:

Carre Adams

Austin Parks and Recreation Dept:

Gregory Montes, Megan Eckard, Larry Williams, Laura Esparza

Smith & Company Architects:

Terry Smith, Juarez White, Ivonne Canez

Perkins and Will:

Stephen Coulston, Malcom Davis, Uttara Ramakrishnan

Meeting Minutes
 George Washington Carver Center
 Meeting Date: 7.30.2020

Discussion

ITEM NO.	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBILITY	ORGANIZATION
1	<p>Greeting</p> <p>A brief introduction of the project and the purpose of the meeting to seek the help of the participants to define a vision for the future of the Carver Center. Review agenda and uncertainty of timeline.</p>	Carre Adams	George Washington Carver Museum
2	<p>Welcome to Master Plan and Process</p> <p>A briefing of the project initiation and selection of the design team.</p>	Gregory Montes	COA Parks and Recreation Department
3	<p>Design Team Welcome</p> <p>Design Team: S&C + PW consortium, has a long history of working together; and individually on key projects of local and national significance. Both value diversity and inclusion.</p>	Terry Smith	Smith & Company Architects
4	<p>Facilitate Virtual Guests Intros</p> <p>Brief introduction by each participant – who they are, how are they related to the Carver center.</p>	Carre Adams	George Washington Carver Museum
5	<p>Exercise: KEEP TOSS CREATE</p> <p>The Design Team engaged with the participants to understand their relationships with and aspirations for the Carver Center. The aim of this exercise was to garner detailed information regarding programming, expansion needs, infrastructure, transportation, neighborhood connectivity, environmental concerns, and any other relevant issues affecting the development of the identified area.</p> <p>The participants were asked questions: (details below)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) What they enjoy the most at Carver? b) What they least appreciate or dislike about Carver? c) What is missing/ what new programs would they like to see? 	Malcolm Davis & Stephen Coulston	Perkins and Will
6	Q&A	Carre Adams	George Washington Carver Museum
7	Wrap Up	Gregory Montes	COA Parks and Recreation Department

Perkins&Will

Meeting Minutes
George Washington Carver Center
Meeting Date: 7.30.2020

Exercise: Keep, Toss, Create

Meeting Minutes
George Washington Carver Center
Meeting Date: 7.30.2020

KEEP

What do you currently enjoy most at the Carver Center?

love where it is located

managed by black people - curated by community - strong voice

willing to grow, hold space, tell stories and give voice to black community

space for art, education, healing

meeting spaces - range space for every type of event/ meeting

feel the 'blackness' - in the fiber of the Carver's being - IMP to keep - welcoming

symbols, art, people - represent a wide range of blackness

designed for us - purpose to retain history

"IT'S OURS!"

Its a place where we tell our stories - others have told it too often

Space for holding on to the blackness

"It is nice, it is confident to go into a place where we are the ones directing traffic "

One of the last standing landmarks that us as black people have in Atx - imp preservation!

after school hangout - SAFE and Off the streets (things have changed since then)

Safe space for youth

Othe landmarks: Victory Grill, Sams BBQ, Rosewood Projects, - others disappearing quickly

Resource to see artifacts, ppl look like you, event space when no one else would give it to you

A positive and permanent space; a landmark of the community that is resilient and authentic

Carver as bulwark against gentrification - still remains, still home

We are part of the Austin diaspora, yet East Austin/ Carver are part of the fabric of our Black community

Understand the namesake of the museum - G.W Carver

welcoming community space, where we as black people in and around ATX can socialize

We are here and in nos. and while affordability may push, this is where we can feel welcome

Energy and Vibe - Special. There has been market place (black vendors), historic african martial arts (gather in front of

Meeting Minutes

George Washington Carver Center

Meeting Date: 7.30.2020



1. Keep: The participants were asked what they enjoy most at the Carver.

The replies covered multiple concerns:

a) Experience:

- The participants conveyed that they liked the current location of the Carver complex and felt that it was well connected to the main roadways.
- The Carver is managed and curated by black folk and presents a strong voice. The participants conveyed that one can feel the 'blackness' of the space and its welcoming nature.

Meeting Minutes

George Washington Carver Center

Meeting Date: 7.30.2020

- The Carver museum gives space and a strong voice to the Black community in Austin and is a space for art, education, and healing.
- There are very few landmarks related to Black history/culture that are still in existence today – Victory grill, Marhsall's barber shop, Black's Bbq. "So many landmarks of the black community have been erased." The Carver is one of the last landmarks left for the Black community in Austin. Gentrification and changing land policies are erasing the community that must be preserved and celebrated. It is a bulwark against gentrification – changes may happen but you can't erase the Carver.
- "The Carver is a place for us to tell our stories in our own words. Others have told it for far too long now."
- "It is nice, it feels confident to go into a place where we are the ones directing traffic."
- "I look to the Carver being like the Malcom X Lounge on campus at UT it can be that hub."
- Resource to see artifacts, people look like you, event space when no one else would give it to you
- The Carver is a space where "people look like you, speak like you and you don't have to change your language around them." The participants felt that it is an important event space for the community which lacks a good event space.
- The participants urged the team to understand the ethos of GW Carver.
- Carver is a resilient and authentic landmark.
-

b) Programs:

- The space has always been 'after school hangout' for kids. It has helped to keep a lot of the children out of the streets. Things may have changed since then, but children/youth still hang out here. It is their safe place.
- "Practicing martial arts in front of the Carver feels perfect. It's almost as if the ancestors like it that we are practicing our African martial arts here."

c) Spaces in and around the building:

- The spaces in the building such as the dance studio, conference rooms, theater "answers back to our energy."

Meeting Minutes
George Washington Carver Center
Meeting Date: 7.30.2020

TOSS *What do you least appreciate or dislike?*



2. Toss: The participants were asked what they appreciate the least or dislike the most about the Carver?

The replies elaborated on various issues:

d) Image/Branding:

- Austin is a world-famous tech-hub and the Carver museum must reflect that.
- The Carver is a beacon for the community and should reflect that.
- Highlight the uniqueness of the community.
- Additional funds to the Carver must enhance the optics as well. People will not throng to the Carver if its not on par with the other places in the country.
- The Carver complex must e a place of pride for the community and must be developed as such. It must not be torn down. It has been neglected for years.
- At present, Black experience in Austin has been focusing on the things that the community lacks. The Carver can change this. It must celebrate the community.

e) Way finding:

- Auditorium seating is inaccessible for persons on wheelchair.

Meeting Minutes

George Washington Carver Center

Meeting Date: 7.30.2020

f) Maintenance:

- The green area at the back is ridden with weeds and should be improved.
- Parking lot needs improvements – lighting, accessibility.
- Maintenance of dance studio, theater, and other spaces in the building need improvement.
- The Carver has a really good collection of historical archives r but the public doesn't have access to all these resources. It should be easier to find documentation at the Carver.
- Avoid stale exhibits.

g) Design and utilization:

- The Carver could be expanded to make it comparable to similar facilities in the country. There is not enough space to do much here.
- The pool is defunct. Needs improvements.
- Does not have enough supportive technology
- Not enough space to do more.
- Limited access to collection for the public.

Meeting Minutes
George Washington Carver Center
Meeting Date: 7.30.2020

CREATE

What is missing/ what new programs would you like to see ?

We need better tech. integraton/ innovation forcommunity to engage in 'new models'	AUSTIN URBAN LEAGUE interested to contribute to upgrade of sound system	Need to pump \$\$ into a place of unity for African Americans	Really needs to tell the story of the people, commuity, hisotry and context	A reading room for people access things not on display, rather in collection	Needs to be a place for more permanent exhibition and lighting that features our story	Need more than a mural on a wall to reflect the story of who we are.
Should be a 'gathering space/ place' where exchange of ideas/experiences occur	collaboration bt elders & young folks	More event spaces for black people - Carver is that spot - needs upgrades	First Saturdays event (Brooklyn museums and spaces)	Carver as a space to bridge and build communities	Safe space for black queer folk, women, youth	Highlighting changemarkers within Atx Metropolitan area - may increase foot traffic
Space to go see exhibits - space to tarry	"Where the youth meet the older generation and walk side by side to be better, more informed, and aligned allies"	Green space at the center - for people to gather	reflection room' - spaces that exhibit the trigger and trauma, but also the richness and progress	envison a combo of Thinkery & Blanton -	facilitate tours, education sessions. Continue to make it a STAPLE in peoples lives in stead of a 5min rotation thru	Program to tie to youth
Carver as the nucleus for black cultural hisotry	Record history, archive	intergenerational approach to capture oral histories	back room, auditorium (seats 125 approx) - expand to seat more people	Hosuing exhibits that come into the city - Eg. Civil rights in the 60's,etc go thru Blanton (even when speaking	Rotate exhibits, making it known to public!	Exhibition spaces would have to quadruple (to accommodate large scale exhibits) - Rotating space

Meeting Minutes
George Washington Carver Center
Meeting Date: 7.30.2020



3. Create: The participants were asked what programs or upgrades they would like to see here.

The replies can be categorized as follows:

h) Ideas:

- The Carver is a place of "our history". The Black experience has been all about 'hidden-figures', with lack of documentation. The Carver is a place that stands for all 'our history.' It must be the leader when it comes to all aspects of the black life.

Meeting Minutes

George Washington Carver Center

Meeting Date: 7.30.2020

- Better tech integration in all aspects of the Carver museum.
- The City must pump money into a place of unity for African Americans. This effort shouldn't be a one off and efforts must be made for constant maintenance.
- Convey the story of the community, history, and context.
- Carver as a 'living memorial'.
- Carver as a space to 'bridge and build communities.'
- Highlighting the changemakers within the Austin metropolitan area may help increase foot traffic.
- Space for intergenerational collaboration.
- Tell the story of the community. history and culture.
- The Carver is a safe space for black women, queer folk, youth, etc.
- "Where the youth meet the older generation and walk side by side to be better, more informed, and aligned allies"
- The Carver could be envisioned as a combination of the Thinkery and Blanton.
- Carver as a magnet for discourses and discussions.

i) **Programming:**

- More than a mural on a wall to reflect the community's story.
- Balance of permanent and rotating exhibits.
- Virtual/interactive archival system to aid equitable access.
- Needs more events like – First Saturday Party (Brooklyn Museum).
- Facilitate tours, education sessions, The Carver should be a staple in people's lives where they come regularly. At present, the exhibits aren't rotated regularly, and people just walk around for 5mins and then go to the next thing.
- Needs more programming directed at the youth.
- Build better connections to local universities, institutions, and school districts.
- Adopt an intergenerational approach to capture oral histories.
- Carver should actively host travelling exhibits. Important exhibits related to the African-American diaspora usually find place in the Blanton. The Carver needs to have first rights to host these exhibits and more place for the exhibits. The exhibition space would have to be quadrupled to accommodate more exhibits.
- Any new exhibits in the Carver must be publicized well.
- Theater to be open for longer time.

Meeting Minutes
George Washington Carver Center
Meeting Date: 7.30.2020

j) **Design:**

- The Carver should be designed as a gathering space where exchange of ideas occurs. Needs lot of spaces for people to get together. Carver provides dedicated spaces for black folk to gather and these spaces need upgrades.
- Make the outdoor space usable and well designed.
- Space to go see exhibits.
- Spaces to linger around.
- What about a green space at the center for people to gather?
- Introduce a 'reflection room' to exhibit the trauma of the community but also the richness and progress made thereafter.
- Theater must be the space for all black performers in the country. It needs to be expanded.
- Accessible outdoor space even when the facility is closed.

k) **Building Management System:**

- Austin Urban League is interested in contributing towards the upkeep of the sound system.
- Lighting improvements

Meeting Minutes

George Washington Carver Center

Meeting Date: 7.30.2020

Photos/Screenshots of the meeting:

The screenshot displays a Zoom meeting interface. At the top left, there is a 'Recording' indicator. The top right corner shows 'Speaker View' and a window icon. The main area is divided into two sections: a meeting agenda on the left and a grid of participants on the right.

Meeting Agenda:

- 1. **Greeting** by Carre Adams: Parks & Recreation Carver Team Lead
- 2. **Welcome to Planning Process** by Gregory Montes: Parks & Recreation Project Manager
- 3. **Design Team Welcome** by Terry Smith: Smith & Company Architects Project Principal
- 4. **Facilitate Virtual Guests Intros** by Carre Adams: Parks & Recreation Carver Team Lead
- 5. **Exercise** by Malcolm Davis & Stephen Coulston: Perkins & Will Planning Team
 - Topic 1: KEEP
 - Topic 2: TOSS
 - Topic 3: CREATE
- 6. **Q&A** by Carre Adams: Parks & Recreation Carver Team Lead
- 7. **Wrap up** by Gregory Montes: Parks & Recreation Project Manager

Participants:

The participant grid includes the following individuals (from top-left to bottom-right):

- Carre Adams
- Uttara
- Juarez White
- Larry
- esparzal
- Terry Smith
- MontesG
- Megan Eckard...
- davisma
- Kenneth Luker
- Fatima Mann
- Rachel E Wins...
- Ivonne Canez
- Mayor Larry ...
- Kelennie Blake...
- Stephen Coulston (highlighted)
- Councilmemb...

At the bottom of the screen, there is a control bar with the following options: Unmute, Stop Video, Participants (17), Chat, Share Screen, Record, Reactions, and a red 'Leave' button.

Meeting Minutes George Washington Carver Center Meeting Date: 7.30.2020

The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting interface. At the top, it says "Zoom Meeting" and "You are viewing Terry Smith's screen". A "Recording" indicator is visible in the top left. The main content area displays a "Meeting Agenda" slide with the following items:

- 1. Greeting** by Carre Adams: Parks & Recreation Carver Team Lead
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- 3. Design Team Welcome** by Terry Smith: Smith & Company Architects Project Principal
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 - Topic 1 **KEEP**
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- 7. Wrap up** by Gregory Montes: Parks & Recreation Project Manager

On the right side, there is a grid of participant video thumbnails. Visible names include: Kenneth Thomps..., Uttara, Mayor Larry Wall..., Terry Smith, MontesG, Megan Eckard..., davisma, Kenneth Luker, Carre Adams, Rachel E Wins..., Stephen Coulston, and esparzal. The bottom of the screen shows the Zoom control bar with icons for Unmute, Stop Video, Participants (18), Chat, Share Screen, Record, Reactions, and a red Leave button.

Meeting Minutes
George Washington Carver Center
Meeting Date: 7.30.2020


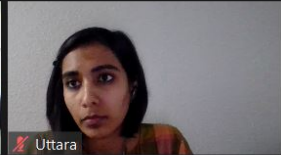






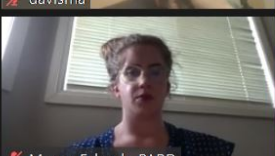



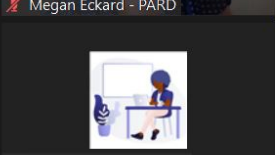

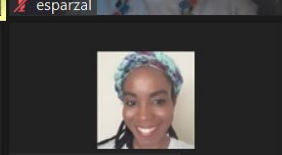
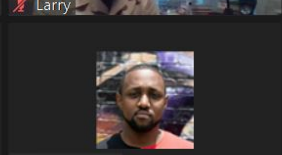
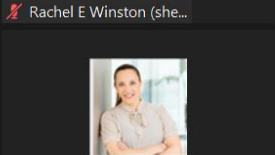
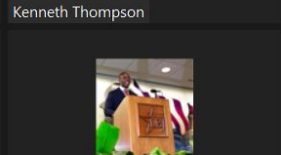

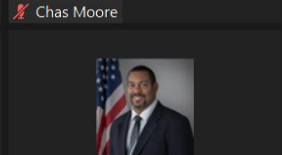
The screenshot shows a Zoom meeting interface. The main content is a presentation slide from Adobe Acrobat Pro DC. The slide title is "#CarverMuseumATX PLANNING PROCESS" and the subtitle is "THE GEORGE WASHINGTON CARVER MUSEUM, CULTURAL & GENEALOGY CENTER". The slide text reads: "Join us on this journey to help design a new facility expansion plan for the Carver Museum". Below this, it says "First Virtual Community Meeting" with the date "August 8th, 2020" and time "1:00 pm - 3:00 pm". At the bottom, it provides the URL "austintexas.gov/CarverATXplanning".

The Zoom interface includes a top bar with "Recording..." and "Speaker View" options. A grid of 12 participants is visible on the right side, with names such as Kenneth Thoms..., Uttara, Terry Smith, MontesG, davisma, Kenneth Luker, Stephen Coulston, Terry Mitchell, Megan Eckard..., Carre Adams, esparzal, and Rachel E Wins... The bottom toolbar contains icons for Unmute, Start Video, Security, Participants (20), Chat (40), Share Screen, Pause/Stop Recording, Reactions, and a red "Leave" button.

Meeting Minutes
George Washington Carver Center
Meeting Date: 7.30.2020

Zoom Meeting

Recording... Speaker View

 Juarez White	 Uttara	 Terry Smith	 MontesG
 davisma	 Kenneth Luker	 Stephen Coulston	 Terry Mitchell
 Megan Eckard - PARD	 Carre Adams	 esparzal	 Larry
 Rachel E Winston (she...)	 Kenneth Thompson	 Kelenne Blake-Fallon	 Chas Moore
 Ivonne Canez	 Councilmember Rudy...	 Yasmine Smith	 Mayor Larry Wallace J...

Unmute Stop Video Security Participants 20 Chat Share Screen Pause/Stop Recording Reactions Leave