



CITY OF SAINT PAUL  
Mayor Melvin Carter

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## MEETING NOTES

### Indian Mounds Regional Park Cultural Landscape Study and Interpretive Plan Community Engagement Event 3

**MEETING DATE:** January 12, 2019, 1:00 – 4:00 pm  
**LOCATION:** Marian Center of Saint Paul, Parkview Room (200 Earl Street)

**Attendees:**  
Barry Frantum  
Steve Trimble  
Chris Mato Nunpa  
Carol Summers  
Kathie Madvig  
Brett Hussong  
Dan McGuinness  
Jan Harbou  
Gary Brown  
Rebecca Nelson  
Tom LaBlanc  
Laura LaBlanc  
Desmond and Dani Family  
John Chlebeck  
Vic Desotelle  
Bill Komrardy  
Tom Germscheid  
Anne Tiller  
Stephanie Harr  
Marsha Ludwig  
Sheldon Noel  
Maggie Lorenz  
Maggie Kessell  
Alice Messer  
Vicki Baucom

**Project Team Members:**  
Bianca Paz, City of Saint Paul Parks  
Ellen Stewart, City of Saint Paul Parks  
Brenda Williams, Quinn Evans  
Stephanie Austin, Quinn Evans  
Mona Smith, Allies, LLC  
Maura Rockcastle, TenxTen



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National Gold Medal Award

## OPEN HOUSE

- Brenda gave introduction
- Dakota individuals present shared their heritage and why this place is important to them.
  - This is Dakota homeland
  - Origin story is here at the Bdote.
  - Prefer the name “Dakota Mounds”
  - Emphasized truth telling – difference between Euroamerican version of “settled” vs. Dakota version “stole” the land
  - Encouraged having someone who will tell the truth about treaties give a presentation for future events.
  - The 1805 treaty was never officially ratified, which means that most of the twin cities metro area is unseeded territory
  - Need to understand that things are sacred here
  - Don’t say “let’s get on with it” – listen and be patient.
  - Encouraged consultants to refer to Elders and Dakota scholars as resources and listen to them even though they don’t live here.
  - All attendees probably want to see many of the same things at the park.
  - Bdote stories from Dale Childs stress this place is still considered the center of the world, and you will still see evidence of use through tobacco ties and prayer ribbons.
  - There is a lot of history that we don’t learn in school
  - Likes the sound of Dakota Mounds
  - Sacred ground
  - Move slowly on the project to get input
  - Let Dakota people be heard
  - “Dakota in the River Valley” map good to convey connections between Indian Mounds and the overall region/Bdote
  - Important that the money that was allocated for the splash pad be used to make the park better.
  - Part of East Side Community
  - Fights with the community – empathy – can’t back down – Indians still here
  - Importance of listening –respect elders
  - This is home
  - Thanks everyone for letting indigenous folks introduce themselves – have to assimilate in situations like this – want to be self-determining, be proud of who they are
  - Reawakening and clarification of history
  - Beginning of trying to correct wrongs and get on the right ground
  - Mounds have existed here for thousands of years
  - This is where ancestors are buried – even if you don’t know names or where they came from. Spirits are still here even if they have been disturbed
  - Here is their connection to heaven
  - Highlighted connection between below cliff, cliff and above – sacred to all
  - Need to go beyond colors and ethnicity – even though this is very ethno centric place – spiritual connection to all of us
  - Give this place the respect it needs when you are here since it is a cemetery, even though there are not names on the gravesites
  - This is the highest point on the river – spiritual connection
  - Mounds align with the stars at certain times of year
  - It is not just a place, it is an entity
  - “Hopewell culture” – not a real thing– makes it sound like it is not related to living people
  - Cahokia - Where your voice emotes from – connecting down the Mississippi River
  - The mounds have been dug up and bones moved to museums
  - The team needs to research beyond archeological reports
  - Wants to change “settler narrative” – no more taking away our names – gives people an idea of what was there before
  - Highlight the importance of naming things
  - Emphasize truth – is research being done really truthful?
  - Dakota context includes name places – importance of Dakota names
  
- Moved about the things that were said – the people, the spirit, the energy that is here
- Need to hear more stories from the Dakota with everyone listening – rebuild a new story about the old story
- City Hall – murals are offensive to African Americans and Dakota, but it is a “historical painting” – city residents want to be able to share this. Tired of hearing how much white people love the culture, but unwilling to make change
- The Dakota have always been here
- USA born yesterday
- Expressed concern about trash, parties, drug use. This is a sacred place, but indigenous people can’t have time devoted to ceremonies
- Concerned that the city of St Paul won’t deal honestly with Dakota people – track record of not dealing with things that are on their own property

- Concerned about dogs in the park – waste
- Local neighborhood residents know people were buried here, but don't know much else. Neighbors don't like the parties, litter either.
- Grew up not knowing – disconnection is part of history of boarding schools
- St Paul – hostility toward indigenous people who relocated – turned families away from the culture
- Frustrated because she felt like she should know but didn't – it isn't just white people who didn't know
- Her ask is that the community should know it doesn't begin or end here. Everyone in the state should learn indigenous history. It should be embedded in the curriculum.
- Appreciates the conversation – moved and humbled

### Major Take-ways / Highlights from Comments

- Need to respect the sacred site
  - Protect from physical destructions; litter, etc
- Views are very important – to the Mississippi River
- Desire to rename the park
- Opportunities to educate people about history, spirituality

### QUESTION 1. What is a memory that you have of this place?

- Flower Power – Yearly Prayers
- Spiritual
- Experiences looking at Great Mississippi River from Mounds Park Blvd, especially from McLean
- We are on Sacred Ground it deserves respect
- I grew up near this park/place. A beautiful place that is more than a park – it is a spiritual place that needs to be respected as such
- Native 1<sup>st</sup> Inhabitants – indigenous residents picked Dakota Mounds site because of the view/vista of Miss. River and white bluffs and high altitude of site.

### QUESTION 2. Is there a place in the park that is special to you?

- Indian Burial Mounds/ Statue
- Vistas, river views of Great Mississippi River from Mounds Park Blvd. Especially the best at McLean
- Echo place

### QUESTION 3. What is a dream that you have for this place?

- Respectful Dakota History / Interpretive
- To see the river as you walk along the path
- The view at McLean and Mounds remains and is taken care of
- Let people know more about the history
- The name should be changed to the Dakota name
- Can be shut down, free of charge for local Dakota people to use for cultural practices

### QUESTION 4. Do you have any concerns about the park?

- Discovery of Remains; physical destructions, and opposition to charges
- The parties, drug use, disrespect, littering, loitering
- More police patrol is needed

### QUESTION 5. Do you have a connection to the park that you would like to share?

- Dakota – would like connections Indian Burial Mounds, Interactive, Wakan Tipi, and Kaposia
- Bdote tour
- Ancestors