

HISTORIC BOYLAN HEIGHTS

Raleigh, North Carolina

June 26, 2012

Governor Bev Perdue
Office of the Governor
20301 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, NC 27699-0301

Dear Governor Perdue:

On behalf of Raleigh's Boylan Heights Neighborhood Association, I would like to encourage you to move forward with declaring the remaining Dorothea Dix Hospital property a park district. As neighbors of Dorothea Dix, the future of this property is a high concern for our Associations' members and we support the vision of preserving the Dorothea Dix Campus, in its entirety, for a world class destination park.

In many ways, the Dorothea Dix property already feels like a park to us. It is a destination for our neighbors to ride bikes on the greenway (I taught my daughter how to ride her first bike there), have a picnic in the grassy areas, and take advantage of an occasional winter snow to sled down the rolling hills of the campus. As much as we appreciate the skyline to the east of us and access to nearby restaurants and retailers, it is the natural beauty and landscape of the Dix property to the south of us that helps define our neighborhood and maintain its appeal. Allowing additional government or new commercial development in this space would destroy this open space that has significant potential as a central park for Raleigh and the state. Designating the full 300+ acres as a park district will be key to its future reputation as a destination park.

We appreciate this is a long process and do not want to cause immediate hardship for the state, any remaining patients, or the existing employees that are still working in the buildings on this property. However, we believe it is important to designate the long term intent of this property to establish the vision and avoid future commercial development other than improvements relevant to park use.

Since 2005, the Boylan Heights Association has maintained support for the future of Dorothea Dix Campus through the coalition of organizations who are fighting to preserve the property as a park (Dix 306, the Friends of Dix Park, Dix Visionaries). We look forward to continuing to be involved in the evolution of this great space.

Sincerely,



Steve Bryan
President, Boylan Heights Neighborhood Association
406 Kinsey Street, Raleigh, NC 27603
919-961-4399 · president@boylanheights.org

CC:

Representative Deborah Ross, NC House of Representatives (District 38)

Representative Rosa Gill, NC House of Representatives (District 33)

Representative Thom Tillis, NC House of Representatives (House Speaker)

Senator Josh Stein, NC Senate (District 16)

Senator Dan Blue, NC Senate (District 14)

Senator Phil Berger, NC Senate (President Pro Tempore)

Mayor Nancy McFarlane, Raleigh City Council

Mayor Pro Tem Russ Stephenson, Raleigh City Council

Councilmember Thomas Crowder, Raleigh City Council (District D)

Councilmember Mary Ann Baldwin, Raleigh City Council (At Large)



STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
20301 MAIL SERVICE CENTER • RALEIGH, NC 27699-0301

BEVERLY EAVES PERDUE
GOVERNOR

August 13, 2012

Mr. Tom Luther
Member, Boylan Heights Neighborhood Association
411 Cutler Street
Raleigh, North Carolina 27603

Dear Mr. Luther:

Thank you for your letter sharing suggestions about the future use of the Dorothea Dix Hospital property. I appreciate hearing from North Carolina's engaged citizens about issues that are important to all of us. I will keep your ideas in mind as we work to improve the quality of life in North Carolina.

Thank you for caring enough to write. Our state is at a turning point, one where we will have difficult decisions to make that will keep us moving forward and well-positioned for the future. My priorities, I believe, are North Carolina's priorities – to create jobs and grow businesses, to educate all of our children equally and to make state government work better for our citizens. Working together we can bring a better day for North Carolina.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Beverly Eaves Perdue".

Beverly Eaves Perdue

sg



views-159
1194972

Governor Perdue:

In opposition to Raleigh's Boylan Heights Neighborhood Association, I would like to discourage you from declaring the Dorothea Dix Hospital property a park district. As a neighbor of Dorothea Dix, the future of this property is a high concern for our Association's members. There are legitimate differences of opinion within the neighborhood over the many options available for this state land. Such differences are best settled by legislative means, not by the governors power.

I encourage you to sell the Dorothea Dix property outright. Land in Boylan Heights is taxed at about a million bucks an acre. The Dix property is even more desirable. Imagine the impact a third of a billion dollars would make on the state treasury. And on the City of Raleigh tax rolls. I appreciate that this will be a long process. I have no desire to impose hardship on 4 million state citizens for a much disputed benefit for the few. That is why I am opposed to any summary declaration dictating the use of this property, especially in the absence of citizen and legislative participation.

In many ways, the Dorothea Dix property already feels like a park... a poorly maintained one. Human waste on the greenway, toilet paper hanging from low shrubs along the creek, tents in the woods for bums, a steady flow of trash from the Cameron Village parking lots that drain into Rocky Branch, empty buildings rotting. It took almost a decade after Hurricane Fran to clean up the tree debris city and state government dumped in Dix and forgot to remove.

As much as I appreciate living downtown, the neglect and decrepit condition of this state office complex define the neighborhood, diminishing property values and stifling development in adjoining neighborhoods. More so than the state prison complex, if you can imagine.

Raleigh is already a destination: for lobbyists, for criminals awaiting trial, for sheriffs, for lawyers, for prisoners, for taxes, for legislators, even an occasional governor, and for all the money and power that comes with being a capital in the empire. But the White Elephant Convention Center's vacant schedule is proof positive that no one really wants to come here, even for free. They come for government money. Another museum or park won't transform it into a destination. Perhaps I am wrong and we must have a destination park. Why not Pullen Park?

Pullen Park could be extended across Western along the abandoned road that goes to Centennial, even connecting with Centennial Lake. Larger structures such as the hospital could be converted to condominiums. There is room for a variety of single and multi-family residences, retail space, a downtown grocery store, office space, recreational fields... Fully developed, this area could be an anchor to the end of Glewood South, providing jobs, entertainment, food, restaurants, services, charter schools, housing for thousands with an ultimate property value close to a billion dollars, and taxes to the city of millions of dollars per year. The property already has access to water, sewer, a high voltage power, an interstate entrance at Lake Wheeler Road and access to the rest of the city via Western Boulevard, Centennial Parkway, and the greenway system for pedestrian and bicycle traffic, plus 2 creeks and a lake. Why in the name of the gods of smart-growth would we ignore all the benefits of development, ignore the costs of park development, ignore the state debt, just to placate a select few politically savvy players (many of whom don't live near Dorothea Dix, like yourself) and have no skin in the game?

Since 2005, I have opposed the Boylan Heights Neighborhood Association tendency to reserve such prime land solely as a park, while ignoring an expansion of Pullen Park. This is especially galling after the recently completed renovations and grand reopening. I look forward with more than a little fear as Dorothea Dix staggers into its second century. I'm sure the mentally ill gain great use from the Lonnie Poole Golf course. Or RedHat. Or the NCSU President's house. It is a failed legacy, a reminder not to give money, power, or land to government.

It took decades to recover from the last government fad, the Fayetteville Street Mall. And who remembers the destruction of urban renewal? I'm not sure the city can afford to buy more friends like the convention center or hockey arena. End the political tug of war and the neglect of government ownership. Sell, go, get out, stay out, and never come back. The state and the city will both benefit.

Tom Luther
Member, Boylan Heights Neighborhood Association
411 Cutler Street
Raleigh, NC 27603