

BUILDING A POSITIVE PARKS CULTURE THROUGH TURMOIL AND GROWTH

INTRODUCTION

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GAHANNA PARKS & RECREATION

Population 35,782

800 acres parkland

2 aquatics facilities

9-hole Golf Course

State Nature Preserve

Dog Park

20 miles of trails

27 parks; 17 playgrounds

3 Athletic Facilities

Senior Center



BEFORE THE
CULTURE STUFF
THE REAL STORIES
OF PARKS AND
REC



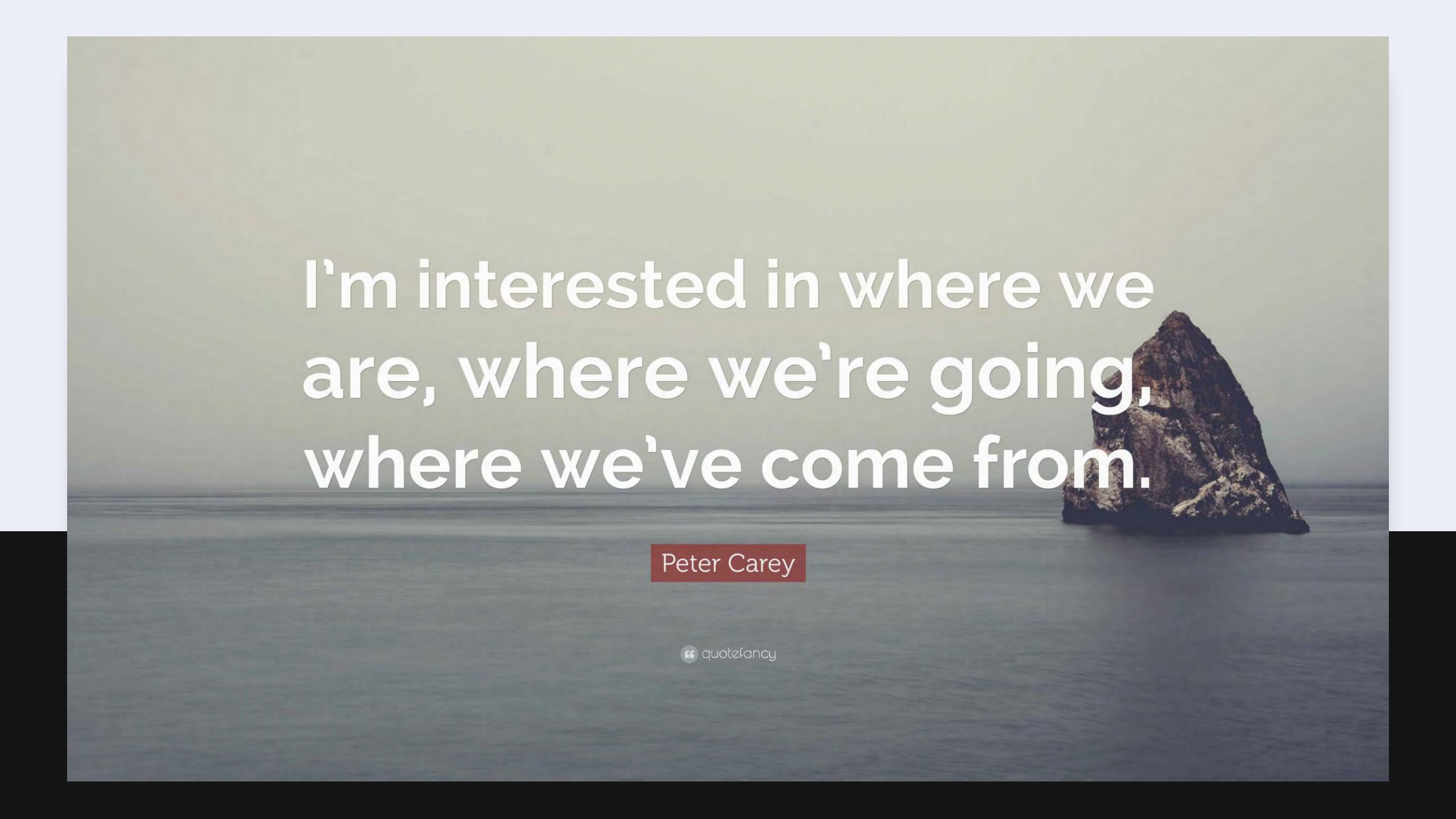
POSITIVE PARKS CULTURE

*Building a culture of growth,
accountability and teamwork.*

Where we were

Rebuilding the culture

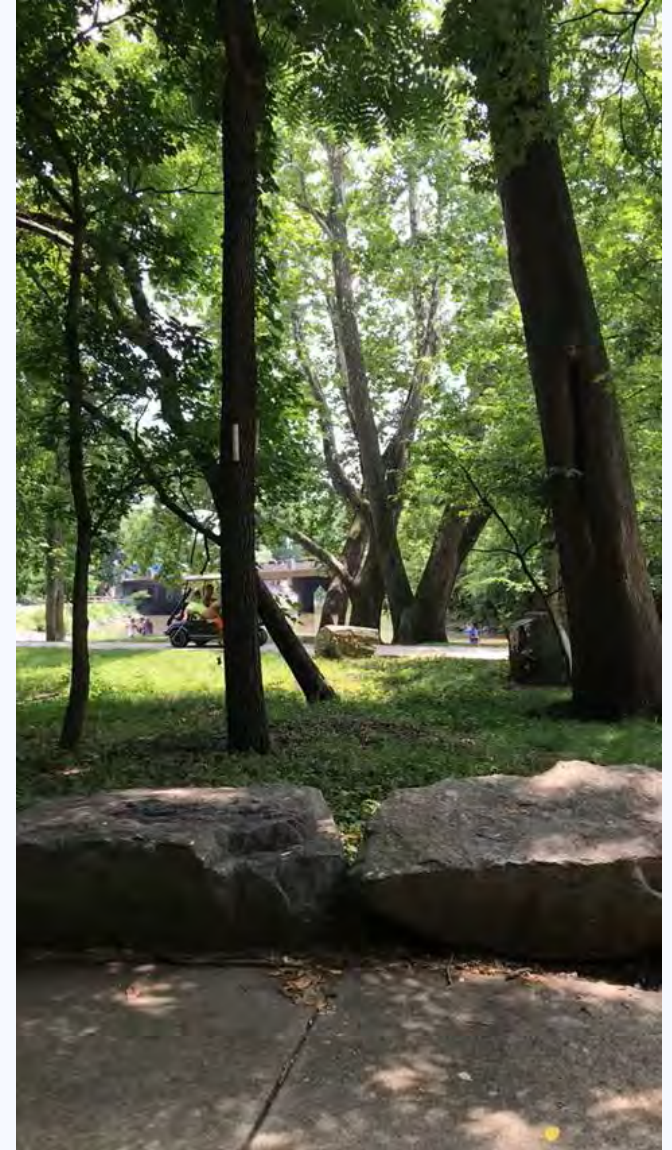
Where we're going



I'm interested in where we
are, where we're going,
where we've come from.

Peter Carey

WHERE WE WERE



YOU CAN CHANGE CULTURE ON A WHIM

FALSE

CULTURE CHANGE TAKES TIME

THE GAHANNA STORY

2013-2016

- 2 failed levies, 1 failed park petition for levy
- 3 director changes
- Budget cuts
- Culture remained positive
 - Strong leadership
 - Resilient Team

2016-2017

- New Mayor & City Administration
- Focus away from Parks & Rec
- More budget cuts & reduced services
- Culture challenged
 - Uncertain future

WHAT WE LEARNED

- Provide Clear Vision
- Positive Mindset
- Encourage creativity and new ideas
- Challenge team to reach for the moon
- TELL YOUR STORY

THE GAHANNA STORY

2018-2019

- Another failed levy
- Parks & Rec future uncertain
- 2.8M proposed budget cuts
- Staffing reductions
- Eliminate Recreation programs, events, close pools and camps
- Culture threatened

2019

- Council and City Administration at Odds
- Levy on ballot due to resident group
- Issue passes 80/20
- Rebuilding with no planning time
- Culture cautiously optimistic

WHAT WE LEARNED

- Broaden your vision
- Keep it real
- When challenged strong teams rally together
- Control what you control
- Do not lose focus on your WHY!
- Learn people and see them for who they are

THE GAHANNA STORY

2020

- New Mayor & City Administration
- New Director
- Funding improving but in flux
- Culture shift in motion

COVID

- Parks Supt. On hold
- Everything on hold
- Separated work crews
- Us vs. Them elevated
- Most of staff reduced or sent home

DRIVING CHANGE



THIS TOO SHALL PASS

*“Success is not something you
chase; it's something you
attract by the person you
become”*

– Jim Rohn

Tom Hanks

On

Moments



offee N'
ulture



REBUILDING THE CULTURE

Culture is developed over time,
nurtured by leaders, carried out
by team, driven by values

OVERCOME TO BUILD
THE FOUNDATION



ESTABLISHING VALUES AND CORE BELIEFS

Trust - Everyone must have trust both ways; if trust is broken there is nothing else

Honesty - With trust, we must be honest to build and retain trust amongst each other

Respect - To get respect earn respect through your actions, words and beliefs

Passion - Find passion in your work with Trust, Honesty, Respect passion will drive a person forward

IMPROVING DEPARTMENT STANDARDS

Direct communication

Clear expectations

Lead by example

Set the standard yourself

Encourage others to speak up when standards are not met

BUILD UNDERSTANDING

- "Cheesy" Discussions during meetings
- Potlucks and department lunches
- Gratitude
- PRADCO
- Growth mindset
- Consistency



DISCIPL

DISCIPLINE



THINGS THAT DID NOT WORK

- Maintenance worker rotation
- Maintenance worker projects
- Hiring misses
- Professional development





Team member development

- Allow people to learn from failure
- Encourage to speak up
- Push outside comfort zone
- Make dedicated time for training
- Cross train

PATH FOR PROMOTION

- Improves work ethic
- Improves Morale
- Adds goals
- Internal hiring reduces turnover



REGULAR COMMUNICATION

Weekly touch base as a group

Less formal

More communication about large scale projects in the City

Better transparency

Taking suggestions and feedback

TAKING ACTION

- Dealing with hard situations
- Addressing problems early
- Direct approach
- Open conversations
- Reinforcing good work



REVIVING THE RELATIONSHIP WITH REC AND OTHER DEPARTMENTS

Lack of mutual respect

New hiring started improvements

More accountability

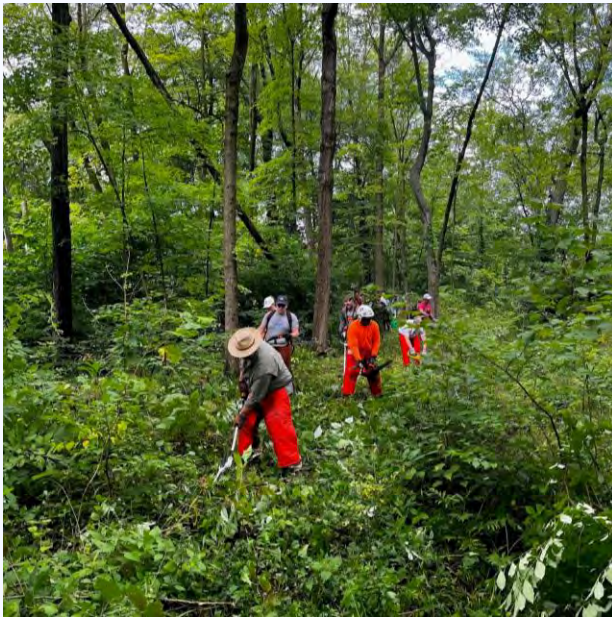
Open minded and self-aware

Understanding our mutual goals

Created collaboration
opportunities



FUN STUFF WE GET TO DO



VOLUNTEER DAY



GOBLIN FEST PREP



LOG JAM CLEARING

MAKE THE LOUSY JOBS FUN



FISH KILL CLEANUP



RIP DEAD DEER



TJ AFTER SNOW BLOWING

ACCOMPLISHMENTS 2021 - 2024

Splash pad

Mountain bike trail

Street tree program

Park improvements

Created safety program

Parks Master Plan

Aquatics Master Plan

Land Management Plan



WHERE WE ARE GOING



HOW DO WE SUSTAIN CULTURE?

- Celebrating each other and supporting each other during tough times
- Team building activities
- All-Staff Retreat
- Out of work activities

OPPORTUNITIES DISCOVERED THROUGH FAILURE

Don't take yourself too seriously

Hiring right people for right
position

Character over skills

FT and PT, don't just hire to fill a
spot



GAHANNA'S GROWTH

2019 to 2025

- Operating Budget
- Equipment investment
 - Forestry, Golf, Park Operations
- Capital investment and projects
 - Park Improvements
 - Large Capital
- Park Division Growth
 - New positions
 - Expanded services





WHAT'S AHEAD

Exploration Center

Academy Park Improvements & New Shelter

Big Walnut Trail Completion

Aquatics Center Concept

System Wide Sign Upgrades

Watershed Improvements

Waterway Kayak Trail

Equipment Upgrades

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Improve department standards; be direct and clear

Build relationships through sincere appreciation

Take chances and Learn from your experiences

Develop your team and Encourage growth

Intentionally Communicate

Take-Action, lead the change

Be authentic

Have fun and have a purpose

QUESTIONS?

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Scan Me!

