



THE RUTH ANN OVERBECK  
CAPITOL HILL HISTORY PROJECT

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**Interview with Scott Kratz**

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**DEUTSCH:** This is Stephanie Deutsch. I'm with Scott Kratz on February 7, 2017. And, Scott, where did you grow up?

**KRATZ:** I was born in Northern California, Berkeley. I'm a fourth generation Californian. When I was young, when I was in second grade, my dad got a new job back east. So my formative years were growing up in Connecticut, from second grade through high school.

**DEUTSCH:** What was he doing?

**KRATZ:** He worked for IBM, and then worked for another software company. Computers has been sort of his life. And then I went to school in Southern California. So ...

**DEUTSCH:** Wait a minute, wait a minute.

**KRATZ:** Sorry, jumping ahead.

**DEUTSCH:** So, you moved to Connecticut.

**KRATZ:** Yep.

**DEUTSCH:** And where in Connecticut?

**KRATZ:** Fairfield County. Wilton.

**DEUTSCH:** Was that traumatic? How old were you when you moved there?

**KRATZ:** I was in second grade. I like to think—at least, my wife says—it's been a good balance of having the Yankee sensibility but the west coast laid back. I don't know if that's true or not, but ...

**DEUTSCH:** But you have both.

**KRATZ:** A little from column A, a little from column B.

**DEUTSCH:** Okay. So, you went all the way through school in Connecticut?

**KRATZ:** Yep.

**DEUTSCH:** And, did you have any particular activities?

**KRATZ:** I was in student government. I ended up being the president of the student body.

**DEUTSCH:** Was this a public high school?

**KRATZ:** It was a private school. Daycroft was its name.

**DEUTSCH:** Daycroft. So, not a boarding school.

**KRATZ:** It was a boarding school.

**DEUTSCH:** It was a boarding school.

**KRATZ:** Yeah. My mom actually worked at the school. My mom was the admissions officer at the school. So it wouldn't have looked good to have the admissions officer's children not go to the school! I kind of had the best of both worlds, where I could go home any time I wanted to, and I went home on the weekends. But I would be there Sunday night through Friday.

**DEUTSCH:** Mm-hmm. So, all of high school?

**KRATZ:** All of high school. From, yes, eighth grade, actually, all the way to senior high.

**DEUTSCH:** So, you were kind of a leader?

**KRATZ:** Ended up sort of being a leader, yeah. In the end doing sports and academics and a little bit of everything.

**DEUTSCH:** What were your sports?

**KRATZ:** I played soccer. I was the goalie. I did cross country running. I was in drama, so I was in a lot of plays.

**DEUTSCH:** Do you have a favorite role?

**KRATZ:** I was Fagin in Oliver Twist. That was a lot of fun.

**DEUTSCH:** Oh. That's a great role. [Laughs]

**KRATZ:** That was a lot of fun.

**DEUTSCH:** You got to channel your inner beast.

**KRATZ:** I did. Yeah, there's something really quite wonderful about Fagin. There's something sort of vulnerable about Fagin, even though he's so manipulative himself. But that was a long time ago.

**DEUTSCH:** Yeah.

**KRATZ:** And had the privilege of having some really wonderful teachers, in particular history teachers that inspired from an early age a real love and passion of history.

**DEUTSCH:** Any particular piece of history that you were ...

**KRATZ:** It was sort of all over the place. I remember in eighth grade for Mrs. Baxter I wrote one of my first term papers on the Crusades. I did a term paper on the Children's Crusade.

**DEUTSCH:** I think I did a term paper on the Crusades in eighth grade. [Laughs]

**KRATZ:** Did you really?

**DEUTSCH:** Children's Crusade.

**KRATZ:** Which was a really sort of bleak history. Basically, all of these children were told that they were going to go down and do God's work, and most of them were sold into slavery when they hit the Mediterranean. It was a rather bleak sort of history. But seeing how history continues to influence every moment in present-day life and the future ... I think it took a hold from there. And, again, [I] had several just really passionate and inspiring teachers, so that in turn inspired me. And my dad continues to have a real love of history and trivia.

**DEUTSCH:** [Laughs] Both.

**KRATZ:** Yes. Never play against my dad in Trivial Pursuit!

**DEUTSCH:** He will always ...

**KRATZ:** Not only will he win, but then he will also sort of go on. "It's a little known fact that that George Washington's dog had blah, blah ..." "Dad, just answer the question. This is just a race for second at this point."

**DEUTSCH:** Did you have sisters and brothers?

**KRATZ:** I've got one older brother. He's two and a half years older than me. Jeff.

**DEUTSCH:** So, college comes around.

**KRATZ:** College comes around. I went to school out west. I went back to California, but this time Southern California. I went to Pomona College, out in Claremont. When I was looking at schools, it was a choice between Pomona and Middlebury. Both are wonderful schools. And I remember visiting Middlebury in April, and they were still using some of the tunnels between the dorm rooms and the school, the classrooms, because it was so cold, and they had just got a big snowfall. And I remember visiting Pomona in January and everyone was in shorts and having barbecues and I thought, "You know, all things considered equal ..." So, yeah, I ended up going to Pomona and loved it.

**DEUTSCH:** And, what did you study?

**KRATZ:** History.

**DEUTSCH:** Of course.

**KRATZ:** Actually, I was a history major. So, my comprehensive exams were in Modern Europe, modern European history, and then my thesis was on Guatemala. I wrote the history of the overthrow of President Arbenz in 1954 ...

**DEUTSCH:** Just let me get the name right. President ...

**KRATZ:** President Arbenz, A-R-B-E-N-Z. Particularly how the Eisenhower administration planted stories in the media to garner support for the overthrow of President Arbenz. It only came out much later that Arthur Sulzberger did indeed plant stories in *The New York Times*.

**DEUTSCH:** How were you so brainy so early? I mean how did you ...

**KRATZ:** You know, when we were in high school, there was a gentleman who was a colleague, who was a friend, who was a year ahead of me. He was from Guatemala. And I remembered there was a year where he didn't come back to school because his parents were colleagues who had fallen out of favor with the President and it was sort of iffy whether he could come back or not. He ended up coming back, which was great. But, I think that planted a seed. What's happening with ...

**DEUTSCH:** You became aware of that. Had you gone down there?

**KRATZ:** No. Did a lot of research on it but still have not been down.

**DEUTSCH:** But, how did you do your research?

**KRATZ:** It was a lot of reading. There was a professor who was my thesis advisor. He had extensive collections on Latin America and this was sort of pre-online, right?

**DEUTSCH:** Yeah.

**KRATZ:** But most of the information was available either through contemporary scholarly books or primary sources. And from the actual newspaper since I was covering the media's portrayal of a series of historical incidents. All of that was available online, on microfiche, which I am sure kids today would be like, "What's that?" So, yeah.

**DEUTSCH:** Well, okay, so you graduate from college.

**KRATZ:** Yes, graduate from college. I actually took a semester off from college to make some money and go back to college. So, I graduated in December instead of May. Studying for my comprehensive exams and finishing my thesis, I was not too terribly focused on what I was going to do after college. That's probably not unique just to me. So, I had a really horrible stint working in real estate for, like, three months because it was a job and I was doing something. I was working for Mike and Irma Nunez of RE/MAX Empire Real Estate in Ranch Cucamonga. [Both laugh] I don't know why I remember that. I was one of those horrible people that called people during dinner and asked if they were interested in selling their home. So, it was telemarketing ...

**DEUTSCH:** Oh, gosh. Oh, I hate you.

**KRATZ:** It was horrible, it was horrible. And what finally hit it for me ... "This is a nightmare and I can't do this anymore." I was actually considering getting my real estate license. "And is this what I want to do?"

**DEUTSCH:** Was this in California or in Connecticut?

**KRATZ:** This was in California.

**DEUTSCH:** Yeah.

**KRATZ:** This was in Los Angeles, just outside of L.A. I remember one night hearing the clank of a fork on, like, a dinner plate and it was clear I had literally interrupted somebody from dinner. Those phone calls would drive my dad up the wall, and I thought, "I am that person on the other end of the line who is ruining dinner for somebody." And I said, "I can't do this anymore. This is horrible."

So then I started looking around. And I applied for a job working part time at a children's museum in Pasadena, a kids' museum called Kidspace Museum. And got the job. I was actually working several part-time jobs at once, making ends meet. And then a position opened up to be full time there as a program manager. I applied for that, got it, and that was my first foray into about a 20-year history of working in museums. It was a very small museum. It's turned into a much larger museum now, a new facility. But I was doing everything from managing staff to designing exhibitions to doing fundraising to designing a website, doing marketing and direct mail pieces. Sort of ...

**DEUTSCH:** Wow!

**KRATZ:** ... a little bit of everything. In a way, it was really helpful because I got to have a sample of all the different tasks that one does in a museum that in a larger museum would be segmented into marketing or education or development or what have you. So I could see what I liked to do and what I really

gravitated towards, and that was education. But it also allowed me later on in my career to have an understanding of what the needs of my colleagues were, too. If somebody's working in communications and there's somebody writing an article, you need to get an answer back ASAP [as soon as possible]. And I could be sensitive to that.

**DEUTSCH:** So, what happened then?

**KRATZ:** So, then, I worked at the museum, the Kidspace Museum, for four or five years. And, then, moved to a larger museum, also in Los Angeles, called the Autry Museum of Western Heritage.

**DEUTSCH:** What was the name of the museum?

**KRATZ:** Autry, as in Gene Autry.

**DEUTSCH:** As in Gene. Okay. Autry Museum of Western Heritage?

**KRATZ:** Autry Museum of Western Heritage. It turned into the Autry National Center when I was there through a series of mergers. But Gene Autry had made his career, of course, selling the mythology of the West, and after he retired he wanted a museum that told the true history of the West. So Gene Autry donated \$54 million dollars to start a new museum in Los Angeles. And I started as the director—oh, I don't think I was a director yet. I think I was just public programs manager. So I was doing the academic lectures and symposia and a film series and music programs for the museum along with other staff.

**DEUTSCH:** What was the real story you wanted to tell? About the Native Americans?

**KRATZ:** About the Native Americans, about the ... The story of the west is a much more complicated one. It's not just cowboys and Indians. It's not black and white. And it is a story of celebration, it's a story of conflict, it's a story of a convergence of cultures that often was messy. But it was important to understand what really happened. Again, there seems to be sort of a running theme here, and I didn't mean it to be, that history continues to inform us to this day.

It ended up I was there for about nine years, doing a bunch of different jobs. I was the assistant director of education, I was the director of public programs, and then I was the associate director of a research institute there as part of the Autry. I started a Native American theater company with a couple—the gentleman is Choctaw—called Native Voices at the Autry. It continues to this day. It's celebrating its 20th anniversary, I think. The only theater group that develops plays by Native American playwrights.

**DEUTSCH:** Interesting.

**KRATZ:** And had Equity productions. We did three big productions a year. We did a lot of outreach on reservations, with the youth, in Native American [reservations] and the youth in Los Angeles and reservations. Did all sorts of public programs, producing a Buffalo Bill Wild West Show. [Laughs] That was fun. Ran Southern California's largest Native American arts market with about 150 native artists from across the Southwest, from across the nation. But [I] reached a point where it was time for something new. And I was encouraged to apply for a position as the vice president of education at the National Building Museum here in Washington, DC.

**DEUTSCH:** Wow! I was just there. I'm going to stop. [Interruption in taping]

So, you were recruited for the Building Museum here in DC.

**KRATZ:** I was.

**DEUTSCH:** What year are we at now?

**KRATZ:** This is 2006. I came back, I interviewed, and was offered the position. And my wife and I packed our things and moved east.

**DEUTSCH:** Tell me about your wife. Where's she from?

**KRATZ:** My wife [Lisa Mascaro] was born and raised in Southern California, in Long Beach, just outside of Long Beach. She is a journalist, has always been a journalist. And she currently writes for the *Los Angeles Times*, she writes for *Tribune*, covering Congress. But, she's been a journalist since she was in college.

**DEUTSCH:** So, coming to DC, she was probably thrilled.

**KRATZ:** Yeah. We thought given my career in museums and her career as a journalist, it was a pretty good place to land. She ended up getting a job as the Washington correspondent for a newspaper out of Nevada, the *Las Vegas Sun*. And then moved over to the *L. A. Times*, I guess she's been there four years now. Four or five years.

**DEUTSCH:** So, she covers Congress?

**KRATZ:** And she covers Congress, yeah. The entire time she's been here, she's covered Congress.

**DEUTSCH:** And did you move to the Hill at that time?

**KRATZ:** Yeah, we did. Yes. We moved straight to the Hill. We thought, "When in Rome," right? [Laughs]



**DEUTSCH:** Right.

**KRATZ:** We might as well. I mean there were other neighborhoods we were looking at, but there was something about the Hill that ... I think it's two things. I think it's, again, being near the Capitol building, and this is the reason why we're all here, right? Or at least why we were founded. We were renting at the time we landed to sort of figure out what neighborhood we wanted to live in, and we just fell in love with the Hill. [I] love Los Angeles, lived there for 18, 19 years. There are some really beautiful locations in L.A., but L.A. in its totality is not a very pretty city. In DC, particularly for somebody who has this sort of love of history, there's this sense of place that's here and the sense of neighborhood that is so strong and so sort of visceral that I think we both made a connection to that sense of place on the Hill. And so when it was time to look, we lived at Second and C and ...

**DEUTSCH:** Second and C?

**KRATZ:** Southeast. We were right across the street from the Library of Congress. Got to understand what an English basement was. They don't have English basements in Southern California.

**DEUTSCH:** Ah. I think one of our other honorees [for the Capitol Hill Community Achievement Award] started in an English basement. [Both laugh]

**KRATZ:** It was great. They had a little row house. That's sort of standard. You know, the owner lived upstairs and rented out the [basement]. Peter Waldron. I don't know if you know Peter. He'd been on the Hill for decades.

**DEUTSCH:** Yeah.

**KRATZ:** And then when it was time to look to buy a house, we really wanted to stay on the Hill. But we wanted to get a little away from the Capitol building because we found that being so close—we were literally within a block of the Hill—when Congress was out of session it, would sort of be a ghost town. And we wanted a place that had a little bit more of a neighborhoody feel and that wasn't so dependent on the rhythms of ...

**DEUTSCH:** Of Congress.

**KRATZ:** ... the Congress.

**DEUTSCH:** So, where did you end up?

**KRATZ:** We moved to Barracks Row. So just a few blocks east. We're at Ninth and I [Streets SE]. Bought a little row house that was built in 1885. I finally found a friend who was tall enough and had a

long enough span that he can physically touch both of the walls [at once] in this house. [Laughter] One of those narrow ...

**DEUTSCH:** My first house—almost.

**KRATZ:** I can't do it. I'm a couple of inches shy, but a friend of mine who's a little taller can. But, we love it. It's just fabulous. We've seen Barracks Row go through a bunch of different changes since we've been there for the last ten years. But there's such a sense of place there. There's such a sense of neighborhood. And having the proximity of the Navy Yard, living around the corner from the Marine Commandant ... I got to tell my father-in-law that literally a brigade of Marines lives across the street, so his daughter is safe. They're all 12 years old, but they're heavily armed 12-year-olds. So, that was sort of neat. You know, doing our shopping at Eastern Market every Saturday ... I mean, it's a pretty magic place.

**DEUTSCH:** Yeah. So, you're at the Building Museum.

**KRATZ:** Yeah. So, we're at the Building Museum, having a lot of fun doing lots of programs on sustainability, doing a lot of ... We did a big effort with *Time* magazine, where I got to design infographics for *Time* magazine on ...

**DEUTSCH:** Infographics?

**KRATZ:** It was a larger project called "Intelligent Cities" that looked at how cities used data and information technology to make smarter cities. We mashed up a bunch of data working with these amazing graphic artists to visualize that data. So, that's the sort of infographics. I didn't know that's what they were called. And we did, I don't know, nine or ten full-page ads in *Time* magazine for these larger educational pieces, lots of symposia. It was a lot of fun. And, in that capacity, I got to know the DC director of the Office of Planning, a woman by the name of Harriet Tregoning. And I brought over a Danish architect and planner named Jan Gehl, G-E-H-L, who had done a lot of work in New York and other places but didn't really know DC that well. I coordinated a breakfast meeting between Jan and Harriet. [Ed: Scott believes this meeting took place in April, 2011.]

**DEUTSCH:** What's Harriet's last name?

**KRATZ:** Harriet Tregoning. T-R-E-G-O-N-I-N-G. Harriet's very well known in the smart growth and planning world. She's brilliant. [The meeting] was at The Liaison, I think. And Jan was running a little late for breakfast. And I asked what I thought was a totally innocent question at the time, which was "Hey, Harriet, what's happening with all that construction on the 11th Street bridges?" [Laughter] Beware

of innocent questions! And Harriet sort of shot me a look and said, “Ooh, hey, Scott. It’s interesting you ask that question because I have this idea to use this unique point in time when the old bridges are coming down, the new bridges are going up, to transform some of the old span and build a park that links both sides of the river.” This was the time when the High Line was getting a lot of attention in New York, so there was a lot of thought in the planning world on how we reuse the old infrastructure and turn it into civic places for people. And Harriet asked if I could help. And it was 7:15 in the morning and I had ...

**DEUTSCH:** [Laughs] You hadn’t had your coffee yet.

**KRATZ:** I clearly had not been caffeinated and said, “Sure, that sounds fun,” having no idea I would leave my job and be raising millions of dollars for the project. And I did this. I volunteered for two years, working on the Bridge Park. I worked at the Building Museum 50 hours a week and ran my staff and everything else. And then nights and weekends, I’d go out and meet with any group that would have me on the agenda, from church groups to ANCs [Advisory Neighborhood Commissions] to civic groups, and pitch the idea. “What do you think? Is this something that you want?” Really targeting the residents in Capitol Hill Navy Yard and then across the river at Anacostia and Fairlawn.

Like many things with the Bridge Park, I didn’t realize how important that process was, particularly, I think, to the communities east of the river where planning often happens *to* that community, not really *with* that community. Going in early and having the respect to ask for permission and to do a needs assessment instead of showing up with the final rendering and saying, “We want your input.” That’s not community engagement. And I think that was appreciated, but that took a lot of time, right? So, we had over 200 meetings those first two years.

**DEUTSCH:** Wow. So, you had over 200 meetings as a volunteer?

**KRATZ:** Yeah. And that’s everything from formal presentations to meetings with church leaders to coffees with, you know, the head of Barracks Row Main Street or the local business owner or what have you. But it was important to get that sort of buy-in. And I think, ultimately, so much of this project has to do with building trust, and that can’t be hurried. Trust is about shared experiences over time and ...

**DEUTSCH:** Just a sec. That’s a good one.

**KRATZ:** ... going out into the community and, just as important, showing up when I wasn’t on the agenda, right? I think I attended one or two ANC meetings up until this point. But, at this point, I was showing up at all the civic meetings because it was important to get to know me. And it was important for me to get to know these local residents.

**DEUTSCH:** Was there any opposition to the idea?

**KRATZ:** I think there was some skepticism. [Laughs] This is a pretty sort of big, bold idea, right? Like, “Ooh, wait, hmm?” I think there was a little apprehension, particularly east of the river, of people that looked just like me. Some white guy in a suit from Capitol Hill coming over and saying “You know what we need...” I think there was a huge trust deficit, particularly east of the river. It gets back to trust. I think that was important to get over. I think there was a real focus, particularly east of the river, “Well, this is great, but who is this going to be for? Is this for us or is this for ...”

This was pre-real concerns about gentrification and displacement. I think that they’ve become much more vocal today, but it was still the same underlying concept of, “Is this for us?” And I think by going through that process and then asking, “Well, then, help us determine what some of the programming should be,” that every single programming idea came from the community. Somebody would show up at one meeting and then they’d come to the next meeting and they’d hear their idea. [We’d] say, “Well, at the last meeting we heard a performance space or we heard an environmental education center or public garden” or whatever. That was building trust because it was that, “Oh, wait, you actually listened to me.” Right? And you’re not just there for show, but you’re actively allowing the community to help shape the project.

**DEUTSCH:** What do you think it was about your background that made you particularly sensitive to that? Was there ...

**KRATZ:** I can just guess. I’d love to paint a portrait that sort of I knew exactly what I was doing and there was a larger plan and, you know, this was just to see if this had legs or not. And I also thought, “Oh, well, okay, great, we can do this and raise some money and we’ll get this thing open in just a couple of years,” not realizing the depth and breadth of this. I think some of this was working in museums, particularly working in Southern California, where we were doing a lot of work again with a Native American population, where it was really important to listen. Right? And I didn’t realize this until looking back on it, but particularly working with Native American playwrights and Native American actors. We did a program where we went out to the Coeur d’Alene reservation and we worked with native teens and we brought these native actors out and playwrights to help work with these teens to develop their own five-minute plays. And then put their plays up on stage. And it was really important to make sure we were [listening] ... There’s an artist out of Philadelphia called Lily Yeh, Y-E-H, that talks about “deep listening.” And it was required to have deep listening. I didn’t have that term for it then. So, I think some of that influenced this ...

**DEUTSCH:** Yes.

**KRATZ:** And I think some of it I learned across the way. I remember one community meeting where I got yelled at, and it wasn't for something with the Bridge Park, it was just somebody wanted to be heard and felt this was the venue to unload. And somebody who has been a big supporter, the executive director of LISC DC [Local Initiatives Support Corporation]—they're a community development financial institution—came up to me afterwards and said, "You know what, Scott, you don't have to answer every question. Sometimes people just want to ..."

**DEUTSCH:** Vent.

**KRATZ:** They want to be heard. And that was a really important lesson. I thought, "Ooh, this is the time I need to let that sink in." So I think that's some of this. This certainly had its shortcomings, but the fact that I don't have a formal degree in planning or anything else ... I didn't have the community outreach playbook [saying] you need to go and have these meetings and have people sign up. And the fact that we were doing this more organically, I think, was different. I think the fact that I live in the neighborhood, right? That this is my neighborhood, too, meant that I had a stake in it. I wasn't some ...

**DEUTSCH:** You weren't an outside expert.

**KRATZ:** I definitely was an outsider coming in east of the river. But, this impacts me, too. I think that sort of helped. And I think that helped provide authenticity, right? Like there was a genuine sort of interest to see if this could work, and the only way that it would work is if it ended up serving the community.

**DEUTSCH:** So, at what point did you go on as an employee?

**KRATZ:** I set a goal. I realized that volunteering for this and having a full-time job was not a ...

**DEUTSCH:** Not manageable?

**KRATZ:** ... a sustainable path. And, so, I set a goal. I sat down with my wife and set a goal, a target. If I could raise a half million dollars, that would allow me to run a larger nationwide design competition, pay for a few years' salary and some programming dollars, and everything else. It wasn't an arbitrary amount, but it was a threshold like, "Let's see if I can do this." And I hit the \$500,000 mark. I think it was December 5, 2013, and I gave my notice the next week. The Building Museum was wonderful, it was great, but it was time to move on.

And I think it's important to mention, too—and I haven't really talked about this that much [in this interview]—that early on Harriet made an introduction between me and the staff of THEARC [Town Hall Education Arts Recreation Campus]. Building Bridges Across the River at THEARC. I've always known

of the amazing work of THEARC, working at the Building Museum and being aware of cultural institutions, but when I found out their doing-business name was Building Bridges Across the River, [laughs] I thought, “Okay!”

**DEUTSCH:** That was their articulated theme?

**KRATZ:** That’s their “doing-business-as” name. That’s their official name. And, when I learned that, I thought, “Okay, there’s a fit here somewhere.” So, I started working with them. I sat down with their executive director and director of development to pitch this larger idea of what we were trying to do to transform this bridge and they seemed intrigued and said, “Well, our name is Building Bridges Across the River.” And somehow, I still don’t know exactly why, they said, “Great, let’s see if we can collaborate.” And the executive director at the time was able to provide a couple dozen names of leaders east of the river and make some email introductions and said, “Okay, well, if you’re going to make this work, these are some people that you need to talk to.” And that was such a critical, important step because ...

**DEUTSCH:** Because they had already been there.

**KRATZ:** They had already been there. I think it was two things: (1) I mean, I could have figured out who half those people were, but probably not the other half because they were the local matriarch[s], right? Or the church leaders or what have you. And (2) they helped set up the meeting, right? So it wasn’t some random person calling them, it was somebody that they knew that was trusted and said, “Hey, you don’t know anything about this project but they want to come talk to you and see if this has any legs. Do you have time for a cup of coffee?” And then it was up to me to sort of go and sell it.

**DEUTSCH:** Follow up.

**KRATZ:** As we started working with them, I started raising some grants for them to help support the work. Back in 2013, I think this is right, I wrote a grant that supported ... I took two weeks off from the Building Museum, vacation, and ran a program with teens that were participating as part of the Summer Youth Employment Program, where we paired those teens up with architects and landscape architects and engineers and what have you. And their goal was to design the bridge, to design what this Bridge Park could be. Hardest two weeks of vacation I think I’ve ever worked before in my life. [Interviewer laughs]

These kids were tough and I think they were tough because they wanted to see if the project was real and if I was real. I mean, the first week I thought, “Oh, this is just failing, because the kids seemed checked out and young adults seemed sort of disinterested.” But, then, it was [in] the second week, I remember walking by these two young women [who lived east of the river; names deleted for privacy], who were two of the what I thought most checked out. There were about 20, 25 young men and women there. And I

asked what they were working on. And they said, “Well, Mr. Scott, you said that environmental education was a key goal, so we’re designing our park with structural glass to then look down at the river so we can see the river, if it’s polluted.” And I just was sort of slack-jawed, like, “Wow, not only were you listening to this parade of people that I brought in but you’re actually ...

**DEUTSCH:** Were thinking.

**KRATZ:** ... you’re thinking about this. You’re processing it.” “And we’re going to design art on the glass because we’ve been doing research. We’re going to etch in there ‘this is what happens if you don’t clean the river.’” And it was brilliant, just absolutely brilliant. And their ideas continued to sort of drive how we thought about the Park from the beginning, right? And I think that’s the ...

**DEUTSCH:** Were these teenagers?

**KRATZ:** These were all teenagers.

**DEUTSCH:** Yeah.

**KRATZ:** So, they were like 16, 17, 18. And I still have their models in our office to remind us. And I say all of that for two reasons: We had an important choice to either form our own separate nonprofit, our own 501(c)(3), or align with an existing nonprofit. And we chose the latter. I mean this is a project of THEARC. And, so ...

**DEUTSCH:** So, you’re a part of that?

**KRATZ:** I work for THEARC now. And I think THEARC saw that the idea of the 11th Street Bridge Park aligned with their mission to improve the lives of families and children east of the river. And, again, their name was Building Bridges Across the River. And they saw that I could raise some money to support this work and, when I left my job, left the Building Museum in December, I then started as the first full time [Bridge Park] staff at THEARC. So, I originally pitched the idea to the staff at THEARC that they could be a fiscal agent until we got our feet up and running and then we’d form our own nonprofit. But the board of THEARC said, and I think rightfully so, “No. We’re either all in or we’re not. And we’ll send you on your way and say good luck.” And that’s been the right decision. So, as we ...

**DEUTSCH:** So, technically THEARC is the organization [behind] this.

**KRATZ:** Yeah, absolutely.

**DEUTSCH:** How interesting. I didn’t realize that.

**KRATZ:** Yeah.

**DEUTSCH:** So, let's see. That was three years ago.

**KRATZ:** That was, yeah ...

**DEUTSCH:** Four years ago.

**KRATZ:** Almost four years ago, I guess, now. Right.

**DEUTSCH:** Obviously things have come along a lot since then.

**KRATZ:** Yeah. So, the first task I remember getting ... I was in week two and I got a phone call out of the blue from a foundation I'd never heard of before, the Education Foundation of America. And I later found out how they got connected to me, but they said "We're kind of curious, we've heard about this project, we've heard about your community engagement, and would you be interested in applying for money?" And I said, "Boy, that would be great."

And so they asked, "What do you need?" I said, "Well, we need funds to launch this nationwide design competition." And even though I was in week two, I realized I needed staff. So, they funded our second full-time staff position, which was just so out of the blue and really phenomenal. And that allowed us ... my first real focus when I started there, started as full-time staff of the Bridge Park, was to focus on this nationwide design competition, to take these community-inspired programming ideas and ask designers to manifest it into something real, into something that we could look and taste and touch. The design competitions are not inexpensive endeavors, but we had wanted a chance to do it and we wanted to do it right.

**DEUTSCH:** So, that happened, the design competition?

**KRATZ:** So, that happened. We launched it in April of 2014. [In] most design competitions, the designers have no connection to the client, more or less the community, and that didn't make any sense to us. So I made the decision that we needed to engage the community as part of this. We pulled together a group of community stakeholders from Capitol Hill and from Anacostia and we called it—we were kind of making things up as we went along—but we called it our Design Oversight Committee. And their job was to ... in every design competition, or most design competitions, there's what's called the design brief that is the sort of bible. This sets out what the goals are, what the objectives are, how the designs are going to be judged, all of the mechanics. And before a single designer and landscape architect or engineer saw it, we had the community leaf through that and tell us what they thought. And they made some pretty big edits. And I think that, looking back, that was a critical moment because the ...



**DEUTSCH:** What were the edits?

**KRATZ:** So, they changed some of ... We had 13 principles and they moved around the priority of some of the principles. They got rid of some principles and added some new ones. I can't remember off the top of my head what they were. They gave some different emphasis on some of the programming spaces. They made sure [we were] thinking early about how the park could be an economic generator, particularly for east of the river. And I think that was a moment where, you know, we brought together this pretty diverse group of designers and church leaders and people from the National Park Service and just local residents. It was a test to see are we going to be names, you know, on the back of a folder or on a website or are we actually going to have decision making authority. Right? And I think they saw that, while we didn't take all their decisions, we took most of them. And then their role was to meet with the four final design teams. We had 40 ...

**DEUTSCH:** So, this is the community group that you put together?

**KRATZ:** Yep, yep, that were invited.

**DEUTSCH:** And what's it called? Does it have a ...

**KRATZ:** This was the Design Oversight Committee.

**DEUTSCH:** The Design Oversight Committee, okay.

**KRATZ:** And, actually, we went to the City Council members and asked them to help us select who these folks were. Ward 6 and Ward 8, on either side of the river, got an additional voice because they're closest to the park, so it should be weighted. We went to the 13 City Council members, and 11 of the 13 ended up submitting names to us. Which was great. Great for several reasons. It brought in new people that weren't on our radar, with different expertise. We went to the City Council members or their chief of staff and said "Okay, here are the goals. We're looking for somebody who is interested in design or the environment or the economy," our sort of key goals for the project. And they all took it pretty seriously and nominated some really amazing folks. You know, we launched this thing, and I'd done a lot of heavy work priming the pump in the design community to get people excited about this through my contacts that I had built up over the years at the Building Museum. We had 41 entries representing 82 firms from across the United States.

**DEUTSCH:** How many entries?

**KRATZ:** 41, the entries were all a combination of, as required, landscape architects and architects. So they were all teams. It was 82 firms from around the country.

**DEUTSCH:** Wow!

**KRATZ:** And some of the best designers on the planet. And that was a real moment when ... you know, when you throw a party, you never know who's going to show up. But when we kept skimming all the packets coming in and ...

**DEUTSCH:** It was an exciting time.

**KRATZ:** "Wow! And that's this firm, oh, my goodness, and it's that firm. And wow."

**DEUTSCH:** So who was the judge? Your committee?

**KRATZ:** We had a formal jury. The jury was comprised of designers. It was the [former] dean at Howard University's design school, architecture school [Harry G. Robinson III]. It was a planner. Somebody who was the dean at ... Where is Toni? Toni's [been a professor at City College of New York, at Harvard, and is the founder of the firm Urban Planning for the American City in New York]. Toni Griffin. She worked in the Anacostia Waterfront Corporation so knew DC really well. There was a community engagement specialist, an amazing woman out of the University of New Mexico, Michaela Pride. Who am I forgetting? We had a public health official because public health is really important, and that's a little unusual. It was a former [special assistant to the] director of the Centers for Disease Control, a gentleman by the name of Howard Frumkin. We had a landscape architect, Carol [Mayer-Reed].

They winnowed it down from the 41 teams to six teams. We interviewed those six teams. They all flew to DC. The jury interviewed them and then we winnowed it down to the top four teams. And those four teams then received stipends to actually begin the work of designing the Park. And at this point we brought the Design Oversight Committee back in to help lead a day-long orientation session of "This is what the community wants, this is what's important to the community." And then most importantly—and this is the thing that most freaked out the designers, I think—we required that each of the four final design teams met with the community multiple times over the summer.

**DEUTSCH:** Mm-hmm. And that may have been something that they were not used to.

**KRATZ:** [Laughing] It was definitely something that they weren't used to. Now, they could use their time however they would like and they all used it very differently. Some brought in models, some did conversations, some did voting. It was the most valuable thing for each of these designers. And it made each of their designs much better, because they could get real time feedback during the design process. And at the end of that, the Design Oversight Committee reviewed the four final designs that were submitted and ranked them. And then that went to the jury and the jury made the final decision. But they

had the information from the Design Oversight Committee, from the community, and if they were going to decide on a different team, there better be really compelling reasons why ...

**DEUTSCH:** And did they end up choosing the one that was ranked ...

**KRATZ:** Everyone was unanimous.

**DEUTSCH:** Yeah. It was unanimous.

**KRATZ:** And that was a little moment of anxiety because, keep in mind, I didn't get to vote. You know, I'd fundraised for this. I'd been devoting several years of my life to this. And that's typically how it's done. But, you know, I think any of the designs would have been fabulous and great and they selected the right one. But, still, you know ... [Laughs] It's sort of like a shotgun marriage, right? You think, "Well, this is who you're going to be working with."

**DEUTSCH:** Okay. And so what is the ...?

**KRATZ:** So, the architecture firm is called OMA. It's the Office of Metropolitan Architecture. They have not worked in DC. Well, they are doing some work now, but hadn't at the time. They did the Seattle Public Library.

**DEUTSCH:** Are they a West Coast firm?

**KRATZ:** No, we're working with the office out of New York. They were started in the Netherlands and that's still where their headquarters are. But we're working with their New York office. And then the landscape architecture firm is Olin.

**DEUTSCH:** That sounds familiar.

**KRATZ:** Yeah. They've done a ton of work here. They did the sculpture garden at the National Gallery.

**DEUTSCH:** Is that O-H-L-E-N?

**KRATZ:** O-L-I-N.

**DEUTSCH:** O-L-I-N, yeah. National Gallery, yeah.

**KRATZ:** They did Canal Park. They just won the design competition to redo the grounds of the Washington Monument. They're now doing Franklin Square Park downtown. So, yeah. And they're both amazing architects and landscape architects at both firms.

**DEUTSCH:** So, that was a big moment, when you got the design.

**KRATZ:** That was a big deal. We had exhibitions up around town. We had an exhibition at THEARC and downtown at the American Institute of Architects. We had an exhibition at the Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum. We solicited online input with a partnership with *The Washington Post*. We had people voting online. And as it turned out, everybody was unanimous. It was really one of those rare moments where everybody was unanimous for the same design, so we knew we were on the right track. So, yeah, that was a big deal.

**DEUTSCH:** So, where does it stand now? So, the design is ...

**KRATZ:** So, the design is selected. It took us longer than we anticipated, but we finally have our designers under contract. We are working with the city. We are working with the District Department of Transportation, DDOT, to build this because I've never built a bridge before [laughter] and they have. We begin pre-construction in December, and that means doing permitting, engineering work, right of way, all the sort of boring but important work. And now the designers are under contract and they are working on the designs, up to 15% designed, 30% designed, all the way up through construction. So it's going to be about a year and a half of preconstruction. Ideally, break ground in mid-2018 and then the earliest we could open up would be end of 2019.

**DEUTSCH:** Given all this, I think it's surprising that a lot of people still don't really know about this.

**KRATZ:** One of the things I joke [about is] that there are 72,000 people who live within two miles of the bridge park and I haven't had a chance to talk to all 72,000 people yet. [Interviewer laughs] We're working on it. And so this is where it's really important to make sure of two things: It's interesting because this project gets compared to the High Line in New York a lot and we've worked very closely with the founders of the High Line. And they did a very different path where they were focused immediately on just fundraising, fundraising, fundraising, and to get this thing built. In our case, yes, we're focused on that, too. We've secured about \$15.5 million towards a \$45 million capital campaign. But it's been really important from the beginning to make sure that we were engaging the community. I mean I think that's part of our DNA. So, we ...

**DEUTSCH:** Which is different from the High Line it sounds like.

**KRATZ:** Not in the same way. Yeah. And I think, actually I know, that they would say that, too. I don't think that's a criticism on them. But for instance, we started—there had been talk for a long time with environmental groups up and down the Anacostia River to hold a big river festival. “Can we all get together and can we all have a big celebration?” But no one had been able to pull that together and didn't have the time or capacity, so we said, “Oh, we can be a convener for this.” And we held our first

Anacostia River Festival three years ago. And it had 6,000 people, right? It's an annual event, so last year's event had 8,000 people. And these are really ...

**DEUTSCH:** When is it? What time of year?

**KRATZ:** It's April, so it's part of the National Cherry Blossom Festival and presented in partnership with NPS, with the National Park Service. We raise about \$220,000 a year to put it on. I think we're about \$5,000 away from goal for this year, which is great. And it's a moment where both sides of the river can get together for one day, right? And have a moment in time together that will happen 365 days of the year after the Bridge Park opens. And it's been a wonderful way for us to test and pilot programming to see what works. To see what music people like. We built a floating dock in the river to get people just where the docks will be in the future Bridge Park, to get hundreds of people out in kayaks and canoes. We partnered with over 34 nonprofits to help coordinate this whole thing. And there was a moment ... Last year, I was talking to a sponsor and my back was to the stage, and there was a go-go symphony up on stage. I don't know if you know go-go music.

**DEUTSCH:** [Laughs] Go-go. Well, I know it's DC's ... I know it's very DC.

**KRATZ:** It's very DC. This is a great example. It was a symphony. There was a full symphony and they were playing go-go music. It was so incredible. The music was just ... It was hopping and ...

**DEUTSCH:** Who were the musicians?

**KRATZ:** We had worked with Washington Performing Arts to curate the whole stage. So I can't remember which symphony it was that they had. My back was to the stage. And they were jamming, playing go-go music but, you know, with violins and cellos. And the person I was talking to said, "Scott." Just interrupted me and said, "Turn around." And I turned around and there were people who clearly did not come to the park together that weren't only hanging out together but they were dancing with each other, right? I mean there was young, old, black, white. I mean everybody was just out there grooving. [Bell rings several times] And that's ultimately, if we could encapsulate sort of a larger goal for what the Bridge Park can do, it's that. Right? Bring together people who otherwise wouldn't normally connect and cross paths.

**DEUTSCH:** That was the moment.

**KRATZ:** Yeah. That was a super special moment. So we're doing things like the river festival. I won't go through all of the programs that we're doing. One of the other programs that sort of connect ... And this, too, I should say brings in ... We had the Navy Yard band kick off the day at the Anacostia River

Festival. And then, you know, the Anacostia [High School] marching band plays, and so it's bands from both sides of the river.

One of the community-generated programming spaces on the future Bridge Park is urban agriculture. So, last year we started collaborating with communities of faith on both sides of the river to establish urban farms, because churches often have land that is fallow that they're not using. So, we partnered with the University of the District of Columbia and we raised the money for this.

**DEUTSCH:** What did you call it? To establish urban farms?

**KRATZ:** Urban farms. We have four urban farms. One in Ward Six and three in Ward Eight.

**DEUTSCH:** And how are they connected with the bridge?

**KRATZ:** They're on either side of the bridge. And the reason why we're doing this and what the connection is sort of several-fold. It's a way for us to test and pilot some of the programming ideas before we start pouring concrete up on the Park. It continues to build community, right? Because often congregations are an immediate way to, you know, build, engage more deeply with the community. Last year we grew over 1,400 pounds of fresh fruits and vegetables.

**DEUTSCH:** Wow.

**KRATZ:** These are various sizes, but some of them are quite big. Our partner with National Community Church on this side of the river ...

**DEUTSCH:** Is that the one that meets at the theater?

**KRATZ:** Yep. At the Miracle Theater. They've got a big plot of land just underneath the freeway next to Virginia Avenue, between Seventh and Eighth. It's our Barracks Grow farm. [Laughter]

**DEUTSCH:** I like it.

**KRATZ:** And then we've got three sites east of the river. This year we're expanding to another four sites. And we're hoping to go into Hopkins, the Hopkins [Apartment Public] Housing, which is really needed. It's going in front of residents' councils and everything else, so we'll see if ...

**DEUTSCH:** So, you'll actually have a farm in the Hopkins ...

**KRATZ:** It will be onsite at Hopkins. And quite big if the community wants it. It's important, just like everything we do, to make sure that the community is engaged. And, not only that, not only do we create these sort of food hubs, but we're also creating little cultural hubs where we partner with arts groups on

this side of the river. We partnered with CHAW [Capitol Hill Arts Workshop] and had arts funding where they hired an artist to work with the community to develop these large art pieces. And on this side of the river they painted this beautiful shipping container that was all rusted out and sort of cruddy looking. And had the community to—and I participated in several of these—help paint it. And it's these large striations. It's really quite beautiful.

**DEUTSCH:** Where is that?

**KRATZ:** That is onsite at Barracks Grow, so it's between Seventh and Eighth Street, off Virginia Avenue. Do you know where the Marine Barracks rehearsal ...

**DEUTSCH:** Mm-hmm.

**KRATZ:** It's just across the street from that. It's all sort of torn up with all the construction down there, so it's a little hard to get to.

**DEUTSCH:** Yeah.

**KRATZ:** And then the last thing to mention is something we're spending a lot of time on. Early on, when we went out into the community and asked what should be on this park, we heard really great programming ideas that were incorporated, but we also heard jobs, right?

**DEUTSCH:** Jobs.

**KRATZ:** Particularly east of the river. And this gets to that question that I mentioned before of who is this park for, right? We were getting all this attention for the design competition. We had hired—even before the design competition—an economic development analysis that showed all of the economic benefits of what a civic space like this can bring. And that was great. But, one of the things we saw is that these kind of big parks can increase property values. Which is great, if you own your house. If you're some of the 75% of renters who live east of the river, not so great, right?

**DEUTSCH:** Mmh.

**KRATZ:** In the High Line's case, it raised property values 103%.

**DEUTSCH:** Wow.

**KRATZ:** So, what was really critical ... We went out and talked to the High Line and a bunch of other projects, big sort of civic spaces like we were planning to build, and tried to figure out what do we do. We can't just ignore this. And it was really important that we started early, right? Typically, we bemoan

gentrification and displacement after it happens. But you can't put the genie back in the bottle after. Once the market starts to move, it's going to move so much faster than we could possibly respond to it.

**DEUTSCH:** Right.

**KRATZ:** We needed to be intentional and we needed to make sure we worked with the community, just like we'd done with everything else, needed to figure out what that plan was. So we got a whole bunch of housing experts together and think tanks and really smart people to collect data of who lived and worked within a one mile area of the Bridge Park. And then, more importantly, we spent most of 2015 having larger stakeholder meetings over the course of about seven, eight months to develop what we called an Equitable Development Plan that had 19 recommendations in three categories: workforce development, small business enterprise, and housing. And we announced that the fall of 2015 and then we've been spending the last year starting to implement these.

**DEUTSCH:** So, it was workforce development, small business ...

**KRATZ:** Small business enterprise and housing.

**DEUTSCH:** Wow.

**KRATZ:** It's become much more than a park.

**DEUTSCH:** [Laughs] That's an understatement.

**KRATZ:** And I thought this was mainly just going to be a housing thing because that's where we see it pop up, right? It's rising housing prices and it's affordability. But it became really clear when talking to the community that if you don't have a job ...

**DEUTSCH:** It really doesn't matter.

**KRATZ:** To be simple, affordable housing is that much more challenging if you're unemployed.

**DEUTSCH:** Right.

**KRATZ:** Right. So, I'll give you a couple of examples of what we're doing. It's like, "Well, that's great, Scott. How do you do it?" We have started a Home Buyers Club that's been ongoing for a year that focuses on Ward 8 residents. And 77 participants are currently signed up, 24 of which, now that we've been going through this a year, it looks like 24 will be purchasing their own home east of the river in this first quarter.

**DEUTSCH:** Wow.



**KRATZ:** Which is pretty amazing. We had started tenant workshops for residents in Ward 6 and Ward 8. Last year we partnered with another nonprofit to lead weekly tenant rights workshops.

**DEUTSCH:** Wow.

**KRATZ:** And funded that work. We're spending a lot of time focusing on building a community land trust that can hold property in perpetuity and keep it deed restricted and keep it affordable. And are working on building the larger acquisition strategies and governance strategies and community outreach strategies. We just hired in our fourth full-time staff person, whose sole job is to implement this plan, because this was taking up about 50% of my time and we needed somebody focused 100% on this. They joined our staff in December. We now have staff from Wards 5, 6 and 7 and 8, as it turns out. And, from the beginning, the local group LISC, L-I-S-C, has been supporters of ours from the beginning and provided a bunch of technical expertise as part of the Equitable Development Plan. But, when we announced the recommendations, they said "Well, we want to help implement this." And we said "Well, okay. What does that look like?" And we spent several months working with them and it was our great honor to stand onstage with them last May where they announced a \$50 million commitment to help invest in the one mile area around the Bridge Park to help us implement the Equitable Development Plan.

**DEUTSCH:** \$15 million?

**KRATZ:** 50, 5-0.

**DEUTSCH:** 5-0. To help develop the area.

**KRATZ:** To invest. And that \$50 million does not go to us. It goes to local nonprofits that are insuring what our goal of the Equitable Development Plan is, that local residents who've helped shape this project from the beginning can continue to stay and thrive there. And they've already pushed out [i.e., invested] \$12 million. So, they're funding Sasha Bruce, for instance, on this side of the river, [which] is expanding their teen housing, at their site.

**DEUTSCH:** On Eighth Street? Oh, the site over here.

**KRATZ:** No, this site over here. Yeah. Is it Maryland?

**DEUTSCH:** Maryland Avenue [NE]. Yeah.

**KRATZ:** They are funding a group called the Yachad that does free home repair for seniors on both sides of the river.

**DEUTSCH:** How do you spell that?

**KRATZ:** Y-A-C-H-A-D. They are funding two ...

**DEUTSCH:** So, they, Link?

**KRATZ:** LISC.

**DEUTSCH:** LISC, rather.

**KRATZ:** Yeah. Local Initiative Support Corporation is their full title. I'm feeling bad I'm making you write so much.

**DEUTSCH:** [Laughs] I just like to take notes so I don't have to rely on that [indicates recorder].

**KRATZ:** In the District we have this law called the TOPA or the Tenant Opportunity to Purchase Act that gives tenants the first right of refusal to purchase their property. And, with loans from LISC, there are two apartment buildings over on Good Hope Road in Ward 8 that they helped the tenants purchase their own property. So, those are 18 families that now can continue to stay and thrive and capture some of that rising equity. We have raised separately about a million and a half dollars separate from the \$50 million dollars to help implement this and we are continuing to build more support for that. And I think ultimately that can be just as big of a legacy as building this big park if we can provide the tools and build capacity within the community on both sides of the river to help shape the neighborhood that's around them. That can be an enormous legacy for this park.

**DEUTSCH:** But the park is really huge. I mean ...

**KRATZ:** Park's big.

**DEUTSCH:** ... it's a hugely big deal.

**KRATZ:** Yeah, yeah. No, it is. And I think of all the goals, I mean it's connecting people to the water, it's public health, it's painless economic development ... The goal that most viscerally connects with particularly residents in Capitol Hill, Navy Yard, and around the park and Ward 8, is that physical metaphor of a bridge. Right? That river has been this dividing line for generations. And to have a space that people can come together and connect, I mean that is extraordinarily valuable and special and so needed, and so desperately needed in these times.

**DEUTSCH:** Which makes it quite different from the High Line, which is a lovely place to walk but doesn't quite have that sort of thematic strength.

**KRATZ:** Yeah. We worked very closely with the co-founders of the High Line. Robbie Hammond, particularly Robbie and Joshua [David], the co-founders, and Robbie recognized that if he were to go back and do it over again he would have had ... there were lots of community meetings and everything else but, as he put it, it was more focused—whoops—it was more focused on getting it built than thinking what kind of investments do they need to make in the neighborhood. And I think the High Line gets beaten up frankly kind of unfairly because they had no idea ... They thought that maybe 300,000 people would show up, maybe. And they had close to eight million visitors last year. Number one tourist attraction in New York City. New York City, right? So they had no idea of what success they were about to unleash. We don't have that excuse. We can learn from them. And, indeed, Robbie has pulled together something called the High Line network that we're part of, transformed infrastructure into parks projects. And one of the things that Robbie's most interested in is this issue of equity.

**DEUTSCH:** Now, who, tell me—Robbie?

**KRATZ:** Robert Hammond. He's the co-founder of the High Line. H-A-M-M-O-N-D. And the thing that most interests Robbie is how do you make these spaces that are inclusive and equitable and intentional from the beginning. Because if the long-term legacy of these big parks like the High Line are unleashing tsunamis of gentrification, that's not a legacy that anybody wants to be behind. And they've done an awful lot of work that doesn't get reported of hiring from local community and doing job training and really learned from that, but Robbie's really looking to us with our Equitable Development Plan to sort of figure out how to get this right.

**DEUTSCH:** Are there projects like this going on in other cities ...

**KRATZ:** Yeah.

**DEUTSCH:** ... that you know about?

**KRATZ:** There's the Beltline in Atlanta that they're transforming 22 miles of railroad track into a big circular loop around the city that's a much bigger project than ours. There is a park that they decked over a freeway in Dallas called the Klyde Warren Park that opened a few years ago. I have yet to go there. I need to go there soon. It's beautiful. We've talked to their founders. There's the 606 that is an elevated train track, abandoned in Chicago, that opened up a year and a half ago. 606 is the area code for Chicago, which is the reason why they chose it, so it could feel sort of local. There's an elevated train track in Philadelphia that just broke ground about four months ago. There's a project in Miami that is under construction right now that creates a larger path underneath the light rail. One of the most interesting ... There's a project in Toronto that's also a path underneath their light rail where they're breaking ground

this year. And they are going to make, I think I have this right, a quarter mile long skating path in Toronto. It sort of makes sense for the Canadians. And all of these representatives from all of these groups meet on a regular basis so that we can ...

**DEUTSCH:** So, you mean it'll freeze in the winter and you can ...

**KRATZ:** Yep. And we share ideas and share how do we work collectively, from nuts and bolts to sort of larger national issues.

**DEUTSCH:** Any major obstacles ahead? Is it clear sailing from now until opening day?

**KRATZ:** We still have money to raise, but we're working hard to get that done. We've received some really wonderful support from the Kresge Foundation, \$1.2 million investment from Kresge. We set a goal last year of having three seven-figure gifts to really kick off this larger capital campaign from different typologies: a large national foundation to give us that sort of [start] and Kresge fit that goal; [and] local philanthropists. So we announced a million dollar capital campaign gift from the Hornings. Joe and Lynne Horning.

**DEUTSCH:** Oh, my gosh.

**KRATZ:** Do you know them?

**DEUTSCH:** Yes, I do know them.

**KRATZ:** They are remarkable. Love Joe and Lynne. They've been so supportive from the beginning.

**DEUTSCH:** Yeah. They've been supportive of so many things.

**KRATZ:** Yeah.

**DEUTSCH:** They're H-O-R-N-I-N-G?

**KRATZ:** That's correct.

**DEUTSCH:** Yeah. Is Lynne L-Y-N-N?

**KRATZ:** L-Y-N-N-E. And Joe.

**DEUTSCH:** Yeah. So, that was the local philanthropy.

**KRATZ:** Local philanthropy. And now we have a pending \$2.5 million capital campaign gift that we're cautiously optimistic about from a large corporation. And we're working to get that announced and

locked down. And the goal of that—it's a little in the weeds—is no matter who you are then, if you're a big corporation, you can be like, "Oh, they gave?" Or if you're a local group you can think, "Oh, the Hornings gave you a million dollars?" Or if you're a large national foundation you can say, "Wow, Kresge, one of the biggest foundations in the United States, they gave you 1.2 million and they're looking at making additional investments later this year." It provides that just continued momentum.

**DEUTSCH:** Will fundraising be an ongoing issue? I mean will it in some way become self-supporting or will fundraising always be ...

**KRATZ:** There will always be funding for programming, you know, if we want to do a festival or certain other things. But those are the easier dollars to raise money for. I want to make sure [of] the general operating, the really tough dollars to raise money for. Having the project be self-sufficient and economically sustainable has been critical from the beginning. Even so much so that we called it out in the design competition, that we needed to have earned revenue opportunities. Because we're going to run this park, right? And we're building into our \$45 million capital campaign a \$10 million endowment. The café and restaurant will be a significant revenue generator, less for the sales for the café, more for a percentage of catering. And then we think the largest revenue by far will be special event rental income, and we've built that into the space.

**DEUTSCH:** Because there are beautiful spaces I bet.

**KRATZ:** There're some beautiful spaces. They're for weddings or conferences or meetings or fundraisers or whatever. I'm working with a local special event company to help map that out. Because it's remarkable the number of big capital projects that focus on the bricks and mortar and don't think about, oh, how much is it going to cost to operate? So I've been working on being relentless on driving down operation costs and increasing all of the earned revenue, the potential. And that's where it's been so helpful talking to these other parks around the country, to have a sort of reality check of, "Well, how much did you get?" Like a restaurant on the High Line is going to be a little different than like a restaurant in Philadelphia. And it's going to be a little different than a restaurant in L.A. "How did you structure their lease? Did you profit share?" I mean this gets very much in the weeds, but that's been something that we've been focusing on from the beginning.

**DEUTSCH:** Well, it's almost exhausting to hear about everything that you've had to do to get this going. Do you ever have time to do anything else? [Laughs] You said you have a dog. You must walk the dog sometimes.

**KRATZ:** I do.

**DEUTSCH:** What kind of dog?

**KRATZ:** She's a hound, a rescue dog, from Lucky Dogs. They scooped her up—she was going to get put down the next day in a high kill shelter in Virginia—and brought her to DC.

**DEUTSCH:** What's her name?

**KRATZ:** Casey. And I go running. A tired dog makes a happy owner. So at least twice a week—we're members of Congressional [Cemetery]—so twice a week, at least, I take her for a run to Congressional and let her off the leash and that's great. It's such a beautiful night tonight, I think tonight I'm going to go for a long walk just around the neighborhood.

**DEUTSCH:** Yeah, it is gorgeous.

**KRATZ:** Yeah. And that's a great way to sort of unwind. So, going, like, hiking with my wife and the dog. There's a great park over in Virginia, appropriately enough called Scott's Run. It's over by Great Falls, the park that takes you down to the banks of the Potomac that's just beautiful.

**DEUTSCH:** Where you can hike down there?

**KRATZ:** Yeah. You can just do the hike and do a mile loop or a ten mile loop or anything in between. That's really lovely. And then, just my wife and I on Friday or Saturday nights just walk to one of the 32 restaurants [interviewer laughs] that we can walk to in the neighborhood, right? And make this sort of fantasyland. And just hang out with our neighbors and get to see people on the Hill.

**DEUTSCH:** We are lucky. We live in a great neighborhood.

**KRATZ:** We most certainly do.

END OF INTERVIEW