



# Our Park. Our Stories.

*JWJ Fundraising Film Pitch 6-29-23*



# The Park

Right in the center of town, across from City Hall and the Library, there's a place.

This one and half acre park has seen a lot over the years. It's witnessed famous people and historical events, both good and bad. And it's been transformed many times—through landscaping, paving, and even a fire.

Through all the ups and downs, it has continued to sit right there at the center—not just a geographic center but a cultural and social center.

James Weldon Johnson Park is the heart of our city. But what makes it **beat**?

It's not simply the space. Trees and greenery have come and gone. Structures have been built, destroyed, and removed time and time again.

The life of the park comes not from the specifics of the space but rather the people who gather there to enjoy it, share their art, or speak their mind.

The space is only a conduit. It means nothing without the citizens. We, the people, give it meaning. And we do so by using the space.

It's our public square: a place to not just celebrate history, but to make new history that itself may one day be memorialized in the very same park.

It's not one story about a park that's changed over the years. It's thousands of stories about the people who've changed the park and been changed by it.

But those stories are just the beginning. This next chapter opens the door to exponentially more.

*Our stories made in our park.*

# The Stories

James Weldon Johnson Park touches the lives of countless citizens.

It's an essential part of our city. It's an essential part of our lives.

And it has unlimited potential if we all come together to support, fund, and engage with it.

We want to make a piece that shows this potential. One that allows everyone to see themselves as a protagonist in the park's story.

We'll do that by expanding the story from a single narrative to an **infinite anthology**.

These stories are not just historical but contemporary, animated, and live action across styles and genres. It's a diverse group of people in a diverse group of stories.

Imagine starting with a voice-over that goes something like this:

*There's a story behind this park.*

*A story about landscaping.*

*Trees and greenery planted and replanted over the years.*

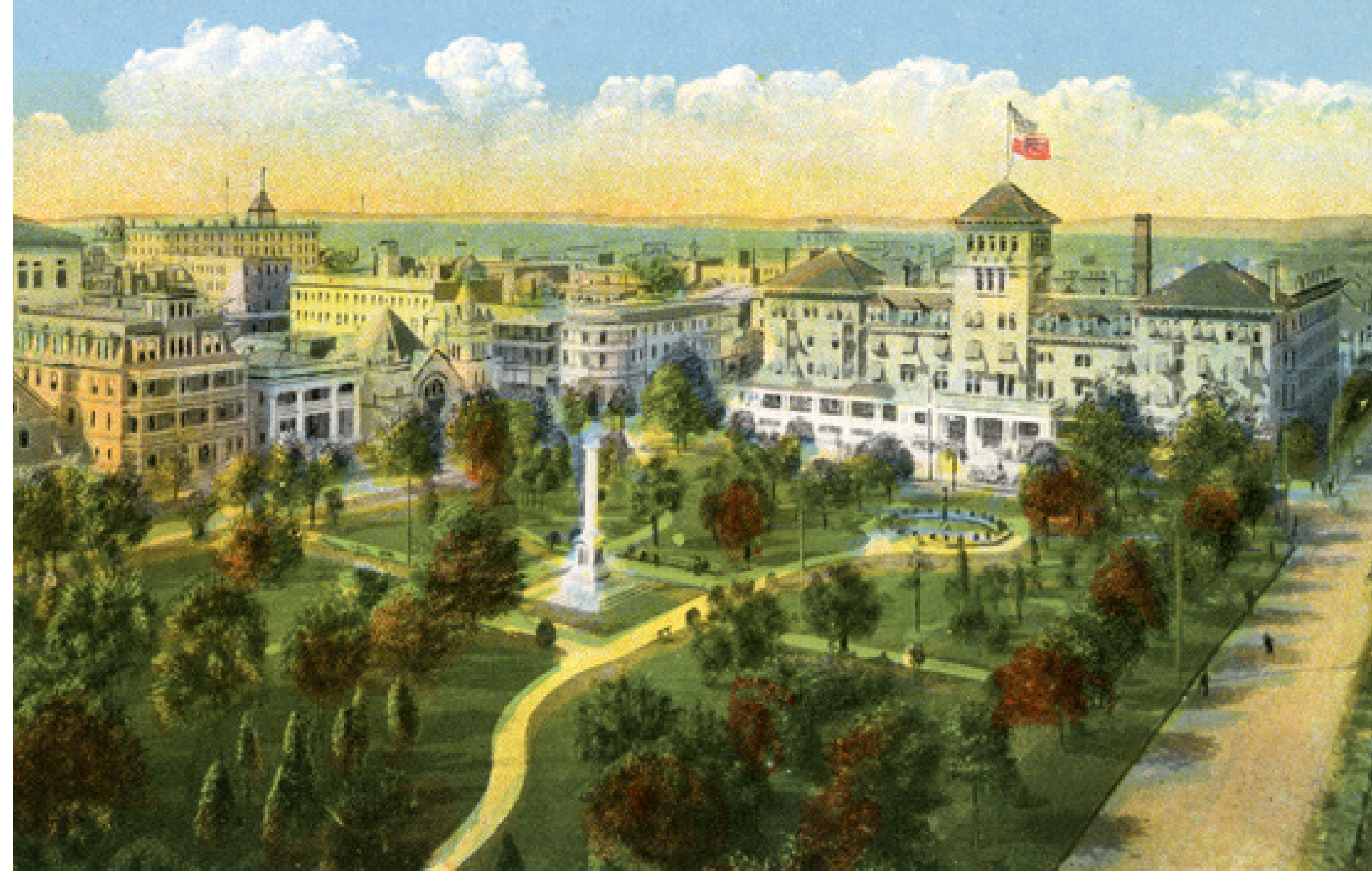
We see an animated sequence. It's a time-lapse of the construction and early days of the park in the style of 19th century paintings.

*A story about construction, and even destruction.*

The park grows into a grand green space. But suddenly it's overtaken by the Great Fire which burns it to the ground.

*But that's just one story...*

*The story of this park is much, much bigger.*



# The Stories

We see the park quickly transform throughout the years, not only the park itself but the style of animation.

The image rapidly and seamlessly shifts art styles from 19th Century to 20th Century, Modernism, The Harlem Renaissance, Pop Art and beyond. Perhaps we even see some real archival photos mixed in as well.

*It's a thousand stories with even more characters...*

From here we dive into a new world of stories both animated and live action across various styles and genres.

Each story is a vignette composed of just a couple shots with their own distinct color palette and look. All together they add up to the much larger story of the park.

One story could be a documentary of a free concert in the park.

But we could also have a serious story, shot in black and white, where a demonstrator holds up a sign that says "Justice for All."

*People who remember history and make new history...*

The story of a food truck vendor may be full of rich orange light with slight slow motion to create a warm, comforting feeling, like the food they serve.

On the other hand, someone doing their morning exercises in the park could feature fast staccato movement with a dramatic blue look.

Some of these vignettes will be animated including any historical ones with possibilities such as President John F. Kennedy giving his speech or James Weldon Johnson himself.

Each of these would be animated in a different style appropriate to their respective time periods and emotional significance.







## The Stories

We also want to mix in a few light hearted and fun vignettes because enjoyment is a fundamental purpose of the park as well. Imagine a water gun fight in the Kids Zone that looks like an epic western showdown.

On the animation side, there are many opportunities with the cultural events that the park hosts such as the upcoming *Viva La Fiesta* event.

The style of those vignettes would be inspired by the art of their respective cultures.

The end result is a collage: a representation of the many different types of people and stories found in the park.

We'll include a variety of activities including recreation, social connection, art, history, community identity, activism and more—all made possible through this great public space.

Toward the end we'll also unveil some of Walter Hood's new concept art to demonstrate how the future vision will cultivate even more possibilities.

*The future is not a singular next chapter.*

*It's an opportunity for us all to write our own chapters...*

For example, we could see the proposed stage or LED wall as we say something like:

*To share our stories, art, and ideas...*

All this builds to a dramatic final montage. A series of close-up portrait shots for every character, live-action and animated. We see them all for a split second: a diverse group of all backgrounds, ages, and races.

*A place for everyone. Where any story is possible.*



**JAMES WELDON JOHNSON**

CELEBRATES

**BLACK**

**HISTORY**

**MONTH**



YESTERDAY, TODAY & TOMORROW





# The Production

With this film we want to make something that is not only emotional but also builds excitement for the future design.

It's a piece that highlights the importance of the park by demonstrating how it strengthens our community. A concise, target runtime of 1.5-2 minutes makes the film easy to share with a variety of stakeholders and interested parties.

The first step will be a conversation to narrow down which stories are most important to highlight. Across historical events, everyday activities, cultural events, concerts, Art Walk and more—there truly are endless possibilities.

On the creative side, diversity is a fundamental piece of the story. Purposeful casting will ensure our subjects truly represent a cross-section of the community.



## Thank You.

Thank you for the opportunity to share our ideas.

Great public spaces like JWJ Park are the bedrock of a healthy community. By bringing people together, they shape the history of our city for the better.

As artists we understand and value the cultural importance of these spaces. And we're excited to add our small chapter to the much larger story of the park.