

**Westside Creeks Restoration
Oversight Committee (WCROC) Meeting
December 9, 2008
6:00 PM**

Meeting Notes

Attendees: **Members and Alternates** – Robert Ramirez, Co-Chair; Abigail Kinnison, Beacon Hill Neighborhood Association; Dr. Catherine Rainwater, Our Lady of the Lake University; Barbara Witte-Howell, San Antonio Conservation Society; Dr. Jose Jimenez, The University of Texas at San Antonio; Ashley Hernandez, Woodlawn Lake NA, Ted Ozuna, Donaldson Terrace NA; and Santiago Garcia, Westside Development Corporation. **Staff and Consultants** – Suzanne Scott, SARA; Roberto Rodriguez, SARA Board; Nasario Perez, SARA Board, Rudy Farias, SARA; Gloria Rodriguez, SARA; Steve Graham, SARA; Ed Garza, AECOM; Andy Rooke, PE, AECOM; Linda Alvarado-Vela, RJ RIVERA Associates, Inc.; Rudy Rivera, PE, RJ RIVERA Associates, Inc.; and Robert Browning, City of San Antonio Public Works. **Members of the Public** – Henry Rodriguez, Representing LULAC and Councilwoman Lourdes Galvan; Elginio Rodriguez, Loma Vista NA; Daniel Monreal, Gardendale NA; Esmeralda Mercado, Gardendale NA; Julio C. Mercado, Gardendale NA; Abel Ruiz, Gardendale NA; and Jose Gonzalez.

I. Welcome & Introductions

The meeting was called to order by Robert Ramirez, Co-Chair of the WCROC. Mr. Ramirez informed the group that Co-Chair Olga Lizcano would not be in attendance and that he would run the meeting for the evening. He then introduced Roberto Rodriguez, SARA Board Member, who welcomed the oversight committee members and thanked them for their participation. Mr. Ramirez then asked everyone to introduce themselves.

II. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Once the introductions were complete, Mr. Ramirez asked if anyone had any objections to the meeting minutes. Linda Alvarado-Vela with RJ RIVERA Associates, Inc. informed the group that changes were submitted for both the September and November meeting notes and these minor changes had been incorporated. Again, Mr. Ramirez asked if anyone had any objections. No objections were voiced by the committee and the minutes were approved with minor changes.

III. Public Involvement Update

Mr. Ramirez then introduced the Public Involvement Update. He said that many of these items were still on hold including the process which would be followed for each of the committee meetings. He then briefly outlined a process which would be documented by the study team and presented to the committee at the January meeting. He said this process would allow for citizens to comment after each agenda item with the understanding that the committee's discussion should occur first, then the public discussion, and then a call for action or a vote on the subject. He further stated that members of the public would be given a maximum of three minutes to speak on a subject.

He reiterated that this is a public participation committee and he wanted it to be as open and accessible to the public as possible.

a. Public Involvement

Mr. Ramirez then introduced Ms. Vela who delivered the rest of the Public Involvement Update. First, Ms. Vela provided an update on the status of the public involvement plan (PIP). She stated that the consultant team was in the process of addressing and incorporating comments received at the November meeting. She further informed the group that the schedule would likely shift slightly with the first workshop taking place in March 2009 instead of February 2009 and the press conference happening in February instead of January.

b. Presentation of Branding Materials

Ms. Vela then presented on the outcomes of the Branding/Key Messaging Workshop. She said the logo concepts that would be presented at the meeting were a result of first identifying common threads or unifying themes from the discussions at the November workshop. She said these themes were then used to develop the key messages and the logo concepts.

Ms. Vela then walked through each of the themes one by one. They included the following:

- Historical Theme – Ms. Vela explained that this had to do with the committee’s desire to honor the rich history of the creeks and the Westside community.
- Cradle to Grave Theme – She explained this theme had to do with the idea that the creeks should have something for everyone regardless of their age.
- Rebirth Theme – Ms. Vela said this theme represented the committee’s desire to see the creeks “reborn” and to see the community reintroduced or reborn as well.
- Connections Theme – She said this theme had to do with connecting the creeks to the community and the many cultural resources along or near the creeks.

She also informed the group that two other sub-themes were present throughout. These themes had to do with providing a health conscious resource to the community as well as providing economic development opportunities. Once she presented all of the themes, Ms. Vela asked the committee to consider the themes that were presented and consider what was missing or needed additional clarification. Following are the points raised during this portion of the discussion.

Committee Comments

- Under historical, the San Antonio Conservation Society thinks oral histories would be very powerful. We are losing older generations and we need to be able to capture that history.
- Mr. Ramirez asked if we were talking about setting up a project within a project to do the oral histories. He said that voices of the community do need to be heard but the question is do we put it into the plan or do we start something now.
- One of the oversight committee members cited a Stanford research project on how older people spend their medical dollars as a possible model.

- Someone else said that we need to reach out to older members living along the creeks.
- Someone else mentioned that many of the older graves from the Battle of the Alazan were moved to San Fernando #1 and that there is currently a group lead by Rudy Rodriguez with www.tejano.com to erect a monument at that cemetery.

Public Comments

- Most big cities have a farmer's market. There is one on the Westside that is little known or frequented by outsiders. He said that perhaps this could be redeveloped as an economic development project.
- Ms. Vela said she did not hear anyone opposed to any of the themes but rather comments voiced in support of the themes. She asked if anyone else had any comments on the themes.
- Suzanne Scott, General Manager for SARA, said the themes also needed to capture the architectural and cultural history of the Westside.
- Someone else mentioned that it was also important to capture the indigenous people of the area. He said AIT-SCM had approached them for a place to conduct ceremonies and that perhaps such a place could be incorporated into this project.
- Dr. Catherine Rainwater asked that the committee not lose sight of the creeks and the reasons for the project.
- Another individual said the project needed to bring in old folk tales like that of La Llorona.

Once the committee completed their discussion on themes, Ms. Vela went on to introduce the key messages developed by the consultant team based on the themes. She said that key messages are defining thoughts or points that target audiences should take away about the project. She said these are typically short and can be called sound bites. She then reviewed the top tier key messages and said that these three key messages are supported by other additional points. The top tier key messages include:

- **Key Message #1:** The Westside Creeks Restoration Project is a community-based planning effort initiated by the San Antonio River Authority to restore the environmental condition of the Alazan, Apache, Martinez, and San Pedro Creeks, maintain the current flood control components of the creeks, and provide increased opportunities for people to enjoy these urban creeks.
- **Key Message #2:** The Westside Creeks Restoration Project aims to restore the creeks in such a way that keeps with the rich historical and cultural background of the Westside Community.
- **Key Message #3:** The Westside Creeks Restoration Project will provide ecosystem restoration that will increase the biological stability of the creeks and reintroduce native wildlife.

Once she had finished presenting these to the committee, she asked that they look at them in further detail and submit any comments they might have for them to Erika Resendiz at Resendiz@rjrivera.com prior to the next WCROC meeting.

The final pieces of the branding materials presented by Ms. Vela were the logo concepts. She said these are graphical elements that will serve to unify the brand for this project. Again, she said these are based on the themes gleaned from the Branding/Key Messaging Workshop.

Ms. Vela presented a total of four clusters of logo concepts including the following:

- Logo Concept #1 – Ms. Vela said this concept is meant to represent the deep-seeded roots of the community and the history of all four creeks. It is also made to show how the roots will breathe new life into the community through the image of a vibrant tree or leafy plant.
- Logo Concept #2 – Ms. Vela said this logo is meant to represent the rebirth of the community through the image of wildlife being brought back to the creeks. In one, the wildlife is a craw-dad caught in flowing water. In the other, the wildlife is a bird once again attracted to the creeks.
- Logo Concept #3 – For this logo concept, she again talked about the rebirth and reintroduction of all things natural. The grass concept is simple by design and the wildlife shows an image of what could be. She also showed a variation of this logo with the Basilica of the Little Flower in the background.
- Logo Concept #4 – Ms. Vela said these various logo concepts were meant to express the theme of Cradle to Grave or that the creeks would provide a place for people of all ages.

After presenting the various logo concepts, Ms. Vela opened the floor for comments. She asked the committee to identify which one or two stand out, if there are any that can be dropped from consideration, and if there are any that can be modified to be better. Following are the points raised during this portion of the discussion.

Committee Comments

- The roots on the first concept are meant to represent the creeks but the map is inaccurate. It is hard to comment on the concept because the inaccuracies are distracting.
- I would like to see the roots concept combined with the grass logo.
- I like the maps (roots). I like the grass where restoration is highlighted. I like the grass with the shaded basilica.
- Is that the right bird and right plants?
- I like the white bird with the blue tear drop because it reminds me of the bird I saw pecking at the concrete. It looks sad.
- The bird should be a white egret.
- I like the egret but am not too happy with the grass. I like the map with the tree best. I like the way the roots change colors with the brown representing the dry beds and the blue representing the parts with water.
- I don't like the second logo concept because it doesn't look like a crawfish. It looks more like a fetus. Pick anyone but that one.
- I like the maps. I like the grass with the church. I also like the multi-generational logo.

- In Prospect Hill area you have German and African American cultures as well. The early sisters at OLLU were German. Need to include other cultures.
- I don't know that Little Flower is the only icon. I like the maps logo and the leaf logo under the fourth concept. I also tend to prefer the earth tone colors better.
- I like the bird with the grass.
- To me less is more. I like the logo with just the grass. The bird looks like a flamingo and needs to be made to look more like an egret. I don't like the map because to me the roots look like cracks. Also, the image of La Basilica looks like a mission. Stylize the big grace too make it a W. Use more color of water and clay color.
- I like the tree with the roots.
- I like maps with creeks. Need to make it more accurate. Another landmark that could be used is the Woodlawn Lake Lighthouse.
- Add "Los Arroyos" to the logo somehow.
- Don't underestimate fonts role in logo.

Public Comments

- I don't like any of them. What about non-Catholics? Don't use the church. Would love to see something in Spanish. Bring something that represents each of the areas.
- I agree. The egrets are just one of the birds. You also see crackles, pigeons, vultures, and eagles. You can also see turtles out on the creeks. Perhaps a collage with all of it in there.
- Ms. Vela then asked what features could be used to represent each of the creeks. For Apache Creek the audience said the courts, Elmendorf Lake, OLLU and the birds. For Martinez Creek they said Oak Farms, Juan Martinez, Deco District. For Alazan the Woodlawn Lake Lighthouse. For San Pedro Creek they said the San Pedro springs.

Ultimately, the committee agreed to keep logo concepts #1 and #3 with the modifications mentioned and eliminate logo concepts #2 and #4. They also asked that an additional logo concept be development that draws in an icon for each of the four creeks and incorporates it into one logo. Ms. Vela agreed to do this and distribute to the committee in December so that they could solicit feedback from their various organizations prior to the next committee meeting on January 13th.

c. Web Site Planning

After collecting feedback on the logo, Ms. Vela quickly reviewed the Web Site Planning packet provided as a handout to the committee. She said a logo would have to be selected before the Web site could proceed to development. She also presented three domain name options and asked the committee for additional options. The additional options that were mentioned included:

- www.losarroyosdemibarrío.com
- www.losarroyos.com
- www.westsidearroyos.com

She said these would be presented to the committee in January for a vote. She said the packet included a draft site map that outlined the various pages that would be included in the initial Web site. She asked that the committee members review this and provide any feedback to Erika Resendiz at Resendiz@rjrivera.com prior to the next committee meeting.

IV. Miscellaneous Items

Mr. Ramirez then continued on to the final portion of the agenda. He asked Ed Garza with AECOM to provide an update on the status of contract negotiations. Mr. Garza said they were very close to reaching an agreement and only had some minor language to work out. He said the only reason the consultant team was moving the first workshop was because the site analysis had not been completed yet. He said at this point it is in the hands of the attorneys but both sides agree to the price and scope of work. Mr. Farias, Project Manager for SARA, said both sides are proceeding as if they had a contract and the contract will be dated back to November 1st to allow the consultant team to be compensated for the work already completed. He said everyone has been working on this very hard because once it is signed both sides have to abide by it.

Mr. Ramirez then said the next WCROC meeting is scheduled for January 13th, the second Tuesday of the month. He further said they would do follow up calls for the next meeting to increase committee member participation.

V. Public Comment

Mr. Ramirez then invited the public to provide any comments they might have. Henry Rodriguez was the first to speak and he said he wanted to comment on the work the oversight committee was doing because they truly included the public in their meeting. He said he wanted to commend the committee for giving the public an opportunity to participate during the meeting and not just at the end of the agenda. Mr. Ramirez thanked him for his comments and said the purpose of this process was to gain community input and that he would continue to encourage people to speak up.

Next, Mr. Perez, SARA Board Member, spoke and said that he used to swim in the Apache and San Pedro creeks and is well-acquainted with the animal habitats that were once there. He said there have been a lot of changes since then but he learned to swim in the lake and the swimming pools. He referenced the “camarón” (Spanish for shrimp), fish, canoes, and “el ojito de agua” (Spanish for eye of water) and said he knows the area very well from growing up in the community.

The final speaker was Elginio Rodriguez with the Loma Vista NA. He said he had just found out about this project. He said he is from the Loma Vista NA. He said there was an area with trees behind the neighborhood. He said that when he complained no one wanted to clean the area until the birds started coming in. He said we need to be careful of what we ask for because if we ask for wildlife the wildlife will come and also move into the neighborhoods. He said they also had a problem with rodents and possums once the area was cleaned. He urged the committee to focus on fixing the flood control

functions of the area first. He said there is still flooding just to north of General McMullen. He also said that the homes in the area were built pretty solid but started to shift a year after the creeks were channelized. He asked if there could be a survey or study done to see how soils have shifted or could shift as a result of this project. He was specifically concerned about how the removal of concrete-lined channels might cause soils in the area to shift.

After this, the meeting was adjourned by Mr. Ramirez at 7:30 p.m. and no further business was discussed.

Attachments

- Sign-in Sheets
- Branding PowerPoint Presentation

Distribution

- Westside Creeks ROC
- SARA Staff
- Consultant Team



Westside Creeks Restoration Project

Public Involvement ■ Branding ■ Web Site Planning





Public Involvement

Public Involvement ■ Branding ■ Web Site Planning

Public Involvement Plan & Timeline

- Public Involvement Plan (PIP) currently under development
- Anticipate changes to the schedule
 - First and Second Workshops will shift
 - Kick-off Press Conference shifting to February
- Draft PIP will be presented to committee during January meeting
- In the process of incorporating committee feedback from last meeting

Branding

Public Involvement ■ Branding ■ Web Site Planning



Branding/Key Messaging

- Solicited committee input during November meeting
- Reviewed comments and searched for common threads or themes
- Developed initial key messages and logo concepts based on those common threads or themes

Theme #1 – Historical Theme

- "There is some real history along those creeks that we would like to remember."
- "Good command of the historical value of that particular community."
- "I also think there are incredible architectural resources in these areas that could somehow be incorporated."

Theme #2 – Cradle to Grave Theme

- "I would like to see that something for every age group is incorporated into the design"
- "Has to be completely people friendly"
- "We are having a big party by a creek and we look at each other and it is unique – becomes a point of jealousy to other communities – you can see there are generations at the party"

Theme #3 – Rebirth Theme

- "Recognition, understanding of the Westside. Bringing back the community and reintroducing it. So the community is reintroduced as a result of the process."
- "Changing the negative and definition and culture of the Westside – if I told my friends we were doing this they would be surprised that the Westside would be considered for this."
- "This is the rebirth of the community."

Theme #4 – Connections Theme

- "It can't be an us them kind of thing – we have to be working together."
- "That goes back to providing linkages to facilities that are in close proximity like Our Lady of the Lake."
- "Make connections to transportation networks"

Other Sub-Themes

- Providing a healthy resource to our community.
 - In terms of opportunities to exercise and be fit, as well as a healthy environment.
- Providing economic development opportunities to our community.
 - In terms of drawing new investment into the community and increasing opportunities to those already in the community.

Feedback on Themes

- Is there anything missing from the themes?
- Is there anything that needs to be clarified within any of the themes?

APPROXIMATELY 10 MINUTE DISCUSSION

Key Messages

- Defining thoughts or points we want our target audiences to take away from our public involvement campaign
- Clear and concise sound bites that will be utilized throughout all of our outreach materials
- Please review these key messages and provide your comments by email to resendiz@rjrivera.com prior to the next WCROC meeting.

Logo Concepts

- Logo concepts are graphical elements that will serve to unify our brand for this project
- They were created based on the themes gleaned from the Branding/Key Messaging Workshop

Logo Concept #1



Logo Concept #2



Logo Concept #3



Logo Concept #4



Feedback on Logo Concepts

- Which one or two stand out?
 - Are there any that need to be dropped from consideration?
 - If there is a preferred logo concept, are there any modifications that can be made to improve upon the concept?
- APPROXIMATELY 10 MINUTE DISCUSSION
