



Westside Creeks Restoration Oversight Committee (WCROC) Meeting February 9, 2010 – 6:00 PM

Meeting Notes

Attendees:

Members and Alternates – Robert Ramirez (WCROC Co-Chair), Olga Lizcano (WCROC Co-Chair), Abigail Kinnison (Beacon Hill N.A.), George Martínez (Woodlawn Lake N.A.), Joanne Walsh (Downtown Residents Association), Ashley Hernandez (Student Representative), Rod Radle (San Antonio Alternative Housing), Jude Valdez (UTSA), Theodore Ozuna (Donaldson Terrace N.A.), Dr. Catherine Rainwater (Our Lady of the Lake University), Abel Ramirez (San Antonio Wheelmen), Lourdes Galvan (West San Antonio Chamber of Commerce), Santiago Garcia, Jr. (Westside Development Corp.), Barbara Hall (San Antonio Conservation Society).

Elected Officials – Roberto Rodriguez (SARA Board Member), Názaríte Ruben F. Perez (SARA Board Member).

Staff and Consultants – Suzanne Scott (SARA), Jim Boenig (SARA), Rudy Farias (SARA), Gloria Rodriguez (SARA), Margarita Hernandez (COSA Public Works), Ed Garza (AECOM), Andy Rooke (AECOM), Linda Vela (RJ RIVERA Associates, Inc.), William Long (RJ RIVERA Associates, Inc.).

Members of the Public – Rebecca Flores, Bud Abbott, Narcisso Cano (San Pedro Subcommittee Co-Chair), Rosemary Geyer (Casa Navarro), Jerry Geyer (Casa Navarro), Jesse Valdez, Jose Gonzalez (Urban Collaborative), Cappy Dryden (Sustainable Environmental Laboratories), Jacque Thomas (Jacobs), Jeff Neathery, Melissa Hernandez (Our Lady of the Lake University), Myra Trevino (Our Lady of the Lake University).

I. Welcome & Introductions

Robert Ramirez (WCROC Co-Chair) called the meeting to order and thanked everyone for attending. He asked Olga Lizcano (WCROC Co-Chair) to say a few words. She also thanked everyone for coming and said she looks forward to the upcoming public meeting. Mr. Ramirez then asked Roberto Rodriguez (SARA Board Member) if he had anything to add. Mr. Rodriguez said he also wanted to thank everyone for attending and that he hopes they will attend the public workshop.

II. Approval of the Meeting Minutes (Jan. 2010)

Mr. Ramirez stated that the next item was the approval of the January 2010 meeting minutes. He asked if there were any comments or corrections to the minutes. Since there were none, he said the minutes would be approved as presented.

III. Public Workshop #3 – Planning Update

Mr. Ramirez asked Ed Garza (AECOM) to give an update on public workshop #3. Mr. Garza started by reminding everyone that the third and final workshop will be on Saturday, February 27, 2010 at the VIA Board Room. He added that everyone is encouraged to attend and the meeting will be from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., with a formal presentation at 10:00 a.m. that morning. Mr. Garza mentioned that residents and stakeholders will have an opportunity to ask the project team questions. He said the vision for the overall project and each of the four creeks will be discussed in the presentation. Mr. Garza said the catalyst sites, environmental opportunities, and recommendations will also be part of the presentation.

Mr. Garza said the most important component of the presentation will be the next steps. He said thanks to all the hard work of the subcommittees and oversight committee, the San Antonio River Authority (SARA) will now have a plan for the restoration of the Westside Creeks. He added that it will explain the work that has to continue as it relates to the implementation of the restoration components, possible funding partners that exist, strategies for the funding opportunities, organizational issues in moving forward and specific partnerships available along the catalyst sites. Mr. Garza then described the room and said there would be an area for the presentation, as well as stations for each of the four creeks.

Mr. Ramirez thanked Mr. Garza for his presentation and announced that he wanted to apologize ahead of time for being late to the workshop. He said he is involved with a high school leadership program that also happens to be on the same day. Mr. Ramirez said he will do his best to be available to help at the meeting.

Public Workshop #3 – Outreach

Next, Mr. Ramirez then asked Gloria Rodriguez (SARA) to discuss the outreach for the final workshop. Ms. Rodriguez said that last week at the subcommittee meeting we shared some of the outreach ideas that will be pursued for the next public workshop. She mentioned that on the SARA website there is a Westside Creeks Restoration Project banner that will take you to the event information. She added that there are 2,200 postcards that will be sent out to property owners, and 10,000 door hangers will be distributed to residents within a quarter of a mile of the creeks.

Ms. Rodriguez said she has some postcards on hand if anyone wanted to take some after the meeting. She said that they have met with Viviana Davila (Express News) who intends to write a story about the Westside Creeks and attend the public workshop. She added that there will be three advertisements in the La Prensa newspaper. Ms. Rodriguez said they have also posted information on community calendars such as WOAI, KSAT 12, KABB, KENS 5, and the Current newspaper. She mentioned that they asked the sub-committees for suggestions of other entities that SARA could reach out to. She said some of those suggestions were to reach out to the San Antonio College radio station, COX Radio, and to create a Facebook event page. She added that the Facebook event page was created on February 8, 2010. Ms. Rodriguez said other suggestions were that postcards be dropped off to the following locations/people:

- Area churches
- The Basura Bash Planning Committee
- The Bihl Haus Arts
- The Woodlawn Lake NA meeting
- San Antonio College Biology Department
- The Bolner Family

- The Mayor and City Council
- Commissioner Elizondo
- Senator Van de Putte
- Congressman Charlie Gonzalez
- Congressman Ciro Rodriguez
- State Representative Mike Villarreal
- State Representative Jose Menendez
- Humberto Saldaña Architects
- Killis Almond Architects, Federal and State officials
- US Army Corpse of Engineers
- Federal Judge Javier Rodriguez
- Ford Powell & Carson Architects
- Lake Flato Architects
- Neighborhood Associations
- St. Henry's Catholic Church
- Bill Millers
- HEB
- Real Estate Owners
- The Spanish Governors Palace
- Area Schools

Abigail Kinnison (Beacon Hill N.A.) asked that Oak Farms Dairy get a postcard. Suzanne Scott (SARA General Manager) asked if attendees from past meetings will get the postcards. Ms. Rodriguez said that everyone that has signed in at past meeting will get the postcard. Mr. Ramirez suggested a notice be sent to all the County Commissioners. Ms. Kinnison added that everyone on the MPO Transportation Policy Board should get one as well. She added that Ms. Rodriguez can contact Scott Ericksen (MPO) to get the information out to the policy board.

Joanne Walsh (Downtown Residents Association) asked that school children be involved somehow, possibly with a poster coloring contest like VIA has done in the past. Ms. Rodriguez said she would look into doing something like that. Mr. Ramirez mentioned that another way to get students involved is to offer extra credit for attending. He added that contacting the district to set something up can be done through Thomas Lopez (SAISD Board Member).

Mr. Ramirez said he wanted to recognize that Nazarite Perez (SARA Board Member) was in attendance. He added that including Mr. Rodriguez, there is a lot of support from the SARA Board of Directors for the Westside Creeks.

V. Stream Restoration Program Presentation

Ms. Lizcano then asked Jim Boenig (SARA) to discuss the Stream Restoration Program. Mr. Boenig said that at the last Oversight Committee meeting Jerry Geyer (Casa Navarro) had brought up the stream team. Mr. Boenig said he was here to discuss the stream restoration program. In his presentation he discussed fluvial forms and processes, priority levels of restoring incised streams, case studies from North Carolina,

the overall stream restoration program vision, SARA's 2010 demonstration project and implementation objectives. For more information, see the attached copy of his entire presentation.

Following his presentation, Mr. Boenig asked if there were any questions. Ms. Lizcano asked what the purpose of the steps were in the slides regarding step-pool morphology. Mr. Boenig said that if designed correctly, it can stabilize small storm events but should not affect the 100 year flood plain. From the same set of photos, Mr. Rodriguez asked Mr. Boenig to explain what the boulders were used for. Mr. Boenig said the boulder J-hook vein is angled upstream and protects the bank. He added that it makes the high water velocity go over the bank and lose power. Mr. Rodriguez said it resembles how the Alazán Creek used to look where it met Martinez Creek.

Lourdes Galvan (West San Antonio Chamber of Commerce) asked Mr. Boenig to go back to a slide that showed a very lush drainage area. Mr. Boenig said that the image was of North Carolina and it would be a very different scene here in Texas due to our lack of consistent rainfall. Margarita Hernandez (COSA) asked how the trash will be dealt with. Mr. Boenig said that the educational component of the project will help develop an appreciation of the creeks. He said that informing the public that all the trash they drop on the ground will end up in the creeks is very important. Mr. Boenig said on the Judson area project they are being very selective of the types of plants. He said they knew safety was a concern so they picked short plants with good root systems. He added that certain types of plants along the banks of a creek can help stop trash from entering the water. Mr. Rodriguez said he thinks the community should decide the types of plants that are included in their areas.

Barbara Hall (San Antonio Conservation Society) asked if the 12 potential sites identified in his presentation were in Bexar County. Mr. Boenig said they were, but that future projects will be in Goliad, Karnes, and Wilson Counties. Ms. Hall asked if the Escondido Creek was one of the creeks they were watching. Mr. Boenig said that it was being watched.

Rod Radle (San Antonio Alternative Housing Authority) said that all the concrete channelization will make it difficult to transform some areas into a natural setting. He asked what could be done to change the concrete. Mr. Boenig said that if something could be constructed to reduce the peak surge of flow then it might allow for channelized areas to be restored. Joanne Walsh asked if Mr. Boenig thought the concrete walls would be changed. Mr. Boenig said he thinks a hybrid system that incorporates new flood control measures along with some areas that will continue to be channelized.

Mr. Ramirez asked if there were any more questions about the presentation. Since there were none, Mr. Boenig thanked the committee for their involvement. Mr. Ramirez thanked Mr. Boenig for his presentation.

Mr. Geyer asked to make a comment. He said the reason he requested that Mr. Boenig come to discuss the stream project was to get everyone interested in what could be done. He said even in the worst areas there are things that can be done to improve the waterways.

VI. Miscellaneous Items

Mr. Ramirez said that under miscellaneous items the committee would like to hear from the subcommittees and asked for subcommittee reports.

Alazán Creek Report

Ashley Hernandez (Student Representative) said they went over the information for the public workshop and discussed outreach options.

Apache Creek Report

Dr. Catherine Rainwater (OLLU) said that Daniel Aguilar (SARA) and Nefi Garza (SARA) gave a presentation on Apache Creek. She said they learned about the history of the lake and what is possible for the future of it. Mr. Radle added that there were 3 students who helped get volunteers to pick up trash around the lake. Mr. Ramirez added that this Thursday there would be a meeting about Elmendorf Lake and invited everyone to attend. He said it would be at Rodriguez Elementary on February 11, 2010 at 6:00 p.m.

Martínez Creek Report

Ms. Kinnison said that they discussed the public workshop and possible outreach opportunities.

San Pedro Creek Report

Narciso Cano (Subcommittee co-chair) said that Mr. Geyer continues to influence elected officials on all levels regarding San Pedro Creek. He said they discussed entities to get involved from the Federal Courthouse project and HEB.

Ms. Walsh said that at meeting recently she asked Judge Wolff about the Westside Creeks and he replied that he was aware of the project, specifically regarding San Pedro Creek. Mr. Geyer then added that they plan to meet with Judge Wolff after they meet with Commissioner Elizondo.

Mr. Ramirez thanked the subcommittees for their reports and added that he had one other update. He said that Dr. Henry Flores has resigned as representative from St. Mary's University. Dr. Steven Nivin has been named as his replacement.

VII. Next Meeting

Ms. Lizcano said the next item was to discuss the next meeting date. Rudy Farias said there will not be any meetings in March. He said the next round of meetings will be the first week of April and the Oversight Committee will meet that second week.

Mr. Ramirez said that he went out to Mr. Radle's pilot project and walked around the area. He asked Mr. Radle to discuss the progress with his project. Mr. Radle said the progress has been slowed due to the inclement weather, but that the completion date is still set for May 1, 2010. Ms. Lizcano asked what kind of bridges will be used. Mr. Radle said they were similar to those bridges at Brackenridge Park, but will be improved of that design.

VIII. Adjourn

Mr. Ramirez then thanked everyone for their attendance and adjourned the meeting.

Action Items

- SARA staff needs to follow-up on outreach recommendations.

Attachments

- Presentation

Distribution

- WCROC
- SARA Staff
- Consultant Team