



**Minutes of the
Westside Creeks Restoration Oversight Committee (WCROC) Meeting
April 9, 2013**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm in the San Antonio River Authority’s Boardroom, 100 East Guenther Street, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas.

Elected Officials Present:

Mr. Roberto G. Rodriguez, San Antonio River Authority Board Director, District 2

Committee Members Present:

Olga Lizcano, Co-Chair	Robert Ramirez, Co-Chair
Abigail Kinnison, Beacon Hill NA	Abel Ramirez, San Antonio Wheelman
Cary Guffey, Our Lady of the Lake University (OLLU)	Jude Valdez, University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA)
Theodore Ozuna, Donaldson Terrace NA	Joanne Walsh, Downtown Residents Assoc.
Patti Radle, San Antonio Independent School District (SAISD)	

Staff and Members of the Public Present:

Gloria Rivera Rodriguez, SARA	Russell Persyn, SARA
Jeff Tyler, SARA	Jerry Geyer
Walter Heard, Terra Design	Rosemary Geyer
Sonia Jimenez, Ximenes & Associates	Steve Tillotson, Kell Muñoz
Brice Moczygemba, Pape Dawson	Sonia Jimenez, Ximenes & Associates
Andi Rodriguez, Kell Muñoz	Linda Whitaker
Shiva Sandrana, Bexar County	Nova Robbins, USACE (Teleconference)

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1: Welcome

Mr. Robert Ramirez opened the meeting and Mr. Roberto Rodriguez gave the welcome.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2: Approval of Minutes for February 12, 2013

Mr. Ramirez presented the minutes to the Committee and asked if there were any corrections. Hearing none, the minutes were approved as presented.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3: Update on US Army Corps of Engineers Feasibility Study

Ms. Gloria Rodriguez teleconferenced Ms. Nova Robbins. Ms. Robbins gave a brief update on the status of the project. She said that after presenting the plan formulation to the Vertical Team last week, the Team was given approval to move forward toward Decision Point 2 which is

scheduled to occur 4-22-13. It is anticipated that after the 4-22-13 meeting (approximately a 15 week time frame) public review would begin on a possible recommended plan. Ms. Robbins will be able to update the committee with more detail after that meeting and hope to have a decision at Decision Point 2.

Mr. Ramirez asked what will happen at Decision Point 2. She answered that the purpose of Decision Point 2 is to receive concurrence from the Corps of Engineers Headquarters on a Tentatively Selected Plan. The Chief of Planning at Headquarters will select a tentative plan out of an array of best value plans presented. Decision Point 2 was extended approximately four months to ensure the Vertical Team provided the requested information to assist the Chief of Planning with his decision.

Since there were no questions, Mr. Ramirez proceeded to Item 4.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4: Update on Elmendorf Lake Park and Westside Creeks Hike and Bike Trails

Mr. Jeff Tyler briefly announced the progress made on the Elmendorf Lake Park and Linear Trails Project and introduced Mr. Walter Heard with the consultant team. Mr. Heard reviewed the project development to date.

Mr. Heard shared the results of the first charette and the community input. The first meeting was in March and the second meeting is coming up in April. They are also in the process of developing some alternative plans. After visiting the neighborhood, they obtained a lot of ideas and input. The final presentation of the final plan will be around May 19, 2013. He showed images from the public meeting stating that they had a good turnout of approximately 85 neighborhood people who attended. This approximation did not include staff or elected officials. There were 10 workgroups discussing ideas. At the conclusion of the discussions, the ideas were narrowed down by having the people select the top things they liked out of all of the ideas. These ideas were then arranged in planning context categories. The top category was natural environment and ecology which includes water quality, educational programs about ecology, developing the island on the park and developing some wetlands.

Another category was connectivity to water, trails and safe street crossings that connect the park to neighborhoods. One break-out group discussed their concern about a methadone clinic located close to the park.

Also discussed was the Veteran's Monument on the western edge of the island. The monument and location have been included in all of the alternative concepts. Other popular items discussed were additional playgrounds and the ability to interact with the water possibly by a splash park, swimming pool or maybe an aquatic center.

Another item discussed was that Elmendorf Lake Park might be a key spot for a farmers market since it is close to the main produce depot to the south. View quarters were discussed to maintain and enhance the view of the park from OLLU and Commerce Street.

Other items discussed were better security – call boxes and lighting; a multiplex facility; soccer field; lighted basketball court; and better parking access. The park should reflect the community

both culturally and historically. Historical family pictures taken in the park were requested to create interpretative signs about the history of the park with an interesting story to go with it.

The last item was having Wi-Fi.

Three alternative plans will be presented at the meeting on April 16. Each plan is a different vision of the park with varying aspects such as land acquisition, facilities, and connectivity concepts. The goal is to have the people choose specific parts of the plans that they like and this information will be compiled into a single plan.

The next workshop or charette for Elmendorf Lake is April 16 and the final charette is May 13. The first public meeting for Martinez and Alazan Creek Trails is May 6 with two meetings to follow on dates yet to be determined.

There is a public meeting on June 5 for Apache and San Pedro Creeks Trails with two meetings to follow on dates yet to be determined.

Ms. Abigail Kinnison asked what format will be used for the Martinez, Alazan, Apache and San Pedro Creek Public Meetings.

Mr. Heard answered that the meetings will be like a neighborhood meeting to obtain input on trail alignment, trailheads, amenities and connections.

Ms. Kinnison asked if it would be within the framework of the vision plan and expressed the need to differentiate the vision plan and the renderings.

Ms. Joanne Walsh asked how the public will be notified of the May 6 trails meeting.

Mr. Ramirez answered that the notice for the Martinez and Alazan meeting in May will be sent out late this week or early next week. Approximately 4,000 notices will be mailed similar to the Elmendorf Lake Park workshop.

Ms. Walsh asked if that mail out included adjacent or nearby neighborhood associations.

Mr. Tyler answered that the mail out includes everyone within a one-mile radius of the proposed trails. There will also be an email blast along with advertising on SARA and WSC websites.

Ms. Rodriguez said the email blast will be to the Westside Creeks database.

Ms. Olga Lizcano asked what else would be improved besides the Martinez and Alazan Creeks trails.

Mr. Tyler said that trails are all that is budgeted at this time and will line up with the restoration plan.

Ms. Lizcano stated that she didn't think there would be enough room for soccer fields in Elmendorf Lake Park and would it be possible to put them at Rosedale because of its ample space.

Mr. Tyler stated that the data was received directly from the meeting. Inherently some things cannot be funded or there are some that require acquisition. We will be presenting three alternative plans (not all have soccer fields) at the charette/workshop #2 which will be another voting opportunity for the community to vote on the soccer field; however soccer fields were not at the top of the expectation list.

Mr. Heard explained that the workshops/charettes are designed to build on each other and if you are advocating for anything in particular you should attend workshop #2 to keep the item in the forefront, following up with workshop #3.

Mr. Tyler said all input will be displayed at the meetings so the community will see the information was received, consolidated, and contributed to the development of three alternatives. During the third Charette, pieces of each alternative will comprise the final alternative plan.

Mr. Rodriguez commented that in 2010, the voters approved the Westside Creeks walking trails. He also reminded the staff and the city that he was on the Linear Creeks Board for more than seven years appointed by then Councilwoman Patti Radle and they fought hard to get the money (\$10.2 million) for the walking trails. We need to persevere against the mindset that the northeast and northwest projects need to be finished first. The voters are holding him and this committee accountable for the walking trails. Hopefully in the future the walking trails will connect to the confluence of the San Pedro Creek and the San Antonio River according to the community's wishes. However, the community does not want it to become another river walk like the San Antonio River walk to the point that the locals are crowded out by people visiting from all over the country. Some of the ideas he obtained for the beautification of the Westside Creeks is from a Charette for the west side proposed about 20 years ago by Mr. Rod Radle but was never implemented. Another reason for the walking trails is that they will provide a place the community can exercise and thereby improve their health.

Mr. Ramirez mentioned the ground breaking is planned for December 14, 2013.

Mr. Tyler said that after completion of the design, the portion from Elmendorf Lake all the way to the San Antonio River is scoped for design and construction.

Mr. Ramirez advised to keep attending the charettes.

Mr. Jerry Geyer asked how much we can transfer from lessons learned while going through this design effort to the design project of the San Pedro Creek.

Mr. Heard said that without being overly standardized, everything we learn from this process can be repeated for each of the creeks. He commented that when preparing for the Westside Creeks Restoration Project, 10 years' worth of minutes and reports were provided by the San Antonio River Authority.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5: Update on San Pedro Creek Preliminary Engineering Report

Mr. Russell Persyn introduced Mr. Geyer who handed out a report concerning the April 3, 2013 meeting of the San Pedro Creek Restoration Feasibility Study Subcommittee. He stated that the committee would be briefed tonight with the same briefing from the San Pedro Creek Subcommittee Meeting. Present at that meeting were the members of the Westside Creeks Restoration Oversight Committee – Robert Ramirez, Olga Lizcano and Abigail Kinnison; along with Ms. Scott/SARA; the SARA team; and most of the San Pedro Creek subcommittee members.

Mr. Geyer said they tried to capture as much as they could in this report. The subcommittee chose not to make any recommendations or selections; however they chose to push all options forward to get the widest exposure of these options especially to the decision maker, the county and the city afterwards. Mr. Geyer introduced Mr. Shiva Sandrana, Civil Engineer from the Bexar Count who works with Renee Green, the County's Director of Public Works.

Mr. Moczygemba with Pape Dawson-Kell Munoz joint venture gave a quick review of the project. Mr. Moczygemba stated the project renderings and cost estimates are being finalized, the Executive Committee has been briefed and presentations have been made to several property owners in proximity to the project which have evoked positive responses.

A final presentation package is being prepared to brief the County Commissioner at a meeting tentatively scheduled for April 23, 2013. In late April or early May the formal presentation will be presented to Commissioners Court. Mr. Moczygemba introduced Mr. Tillotson to review the different areas of the project and their renderings.

Mr. Tillotson presented an update on the project design renderings. He said the focus is on the health of the creek, history and cultural landscape it represents. The design goals were formed similar to those for Elmendorf Lake. When we get into the actual design process, community input will be obtained out of which some of the goals, ideas, concepts and principals will evolve.

Even though the basis of this project is flood control, the vision is for a linear park though downtown as opposed to just a walkway, creek or floodway. We are not trying to cater to the tourists but to the locals. Also, we want to look at the watershed and water quality management of the creek as part of the design. This is an economic, cultural and historic context as we look at revitalization efforts that reconnect people with the creek, the urban core and make sure that this is a quality of life resource.

The charm of the river walk is being right next to the water which we want to include in this design. Also, want to reuse as much of the channel infrastructure as possible for economic and historical reasons. We want to recreate aquatic habitat to nourish life and provide places to support various activities. We also want to bring the art that is culturally based in San Antonio into the project. We envision paseos, iconic pavilions; ribbons of life, bridges, and portals while connecting though a very complicated series of urban landscapes that has streets, sidewalks and transit lines.

Mr. Tillotson said the project begins around Fox Tech at the inlet structure and ends at S. Alamo Street. We want to take advantage of existing drainage easement and acquisition opportunities. Mr. Tillotson then briefed on the six character areas.

Mr. Tillotson showed a before and after version for each character area. He showed different cost scenarios, not necessarily design options, but exploring in context of budget and engineering project possibilities. Mr. Tillotson said the most important goal is to make it a continuous and connected creek.

Mr. Roberto Rodriguez requested a copy of the PowerPoint renderings.

Mr. Ramirez asked if this was the final form.

Ms. Radle asked how the pricing would develop and when would it be available.

Mr. Moczygamba answered that they have gone through the pricing exercise and will make it available following the Commissioners Court briefing, hopefully within a month.

Mr. Ted Ozuna asked how is it determined whether to use the more aggressive plan versus the less restrictive plan.

Mr. Moczygamba answered that more than likely it will be a hybrid evolving during the design process.

Mr. Persyn said that after briefing the County Commissioners and if the project moves forward, the next step in the process is to move into a preliminary design phase. At this point we are attempting to create a baseline to see if there are any fatal flaws of which they don't see any. Next is a vision that is building on what the committee has put together from the conceptual plan.

Once we finalize the renderings and cost estimates, we will have a final deliverable to make available to the Committee, and then move to the preliminary design phase.

Mr. Rodriguez asked when the plan will be presented at Commissioners Court.

Mr. Persyn said at this time they are not scheduled on any court agenda but expect some time after April 23. Hopefully on or before the next Oversight Committee meeting we should have the final product for the committee.

Ms. Lizcano commented that it was a great presentation. Mr. Ramirez also commended him on the presentation along with Jerry Geyer and Michael Cortez for their work with the sub-committee.

Mr. Geyer commented on the VIA street car project. He said if there is an east/west route, it will cross the San Pedro Creek and the Committee needs to be sure the street car project is compatible with the San Pedro Creek project.

He said it is important that any plans pertaining to downtown should be tied to the Westside Creeks Project.

Ms. Walsh asked when the next meeting of the Subcommittee is scheduled.

Mr. Geyer wants to meet a couple of weeks before the Oversight Committee meeting on June 11, 2013 and it also depends on what happens at the County.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6: Citizens to be heard

Since there were none Ms. Lizcano moved on the agenda item No. 7

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7: Miscellaneous Items.

Mr. Geyer mentioned Marti's located at Commerce Street and San Pedro Creek is expanding. Mr. Geyer also announced work by the local community to support a project providing us support to formally submit the applications for Casa Navarro to be chosen as a national landmark which would be good for the creek.

Ms. Rodriguez repeated the upcoming meetings:

- Elmendorf Lake Park Improvements Public Workshop #2 is Tuesday, April 16, 2013 at 6:00 p.m. at Rodriguez Elementary
- Martinez and Alazan Creeks Linear Creekway Trails Public Meeting is Monday, May 6, 2013 at 6:00 pm at Woodlawn Theater
- The Elmendorf Lake Park Improvements Public Workshop #3 is Monday May 13, 2013 at 6:00 pm at Rodriguez Elementary

Ms. Lizcano introduced Ms. Linda Whitaker, SARA.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8: Next Meeting.

Mr. Lizcano announced the next meeting will be Tuesday, June 11, 2013.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9: Adjourn.

Since there were no other comments or statements, the meeting was adjourned @ 7:17 pm.