



**Minutes of the
Westside Creeks Restoration
Oversight Committee (WCROC) Meeting
December 10, 2013**

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 pm in the San Antonio River Authority’s Boardroom, 100 East Guenther Street, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas.

Committee Members Present:

- | | |
|--|--|
| Olga Lizcano, Co-Chair | Robert Ramirez, Co-Chair |
| Roberto Rodriguez | Leonard Rodriguez, WDC |
| Abigail Rodriguez, Beacon Hill NA | Gabriel Velasquez, Avenida Guadalupe |
| Jude Valdez, UTSA | Theodore Ozuna, Donaldson Terrace NA |
| Patti Radle, San Antonio ISD | Janet Dietel, San Antonio Conservation Society |
| Eduardo Hinojosa, Los Bexarenos Genealogical Society | |

Staff and Members of the Public Present:

- | | |
|---|---|
| Lourdes Galvan, SARA Board Member | Russell Persyn, SARA |
| Rudy R. Farias, SARA | Jeff Tyler, SARA |
| Martin Herrera | Linda Whitaker, SARA |
| Skye Curd | Jerry Geyer, San Pedro Creek Subcommittee |
| Roy Patranco | Jesse De los Santos |
| Rosemary Geyer | Norm Lewis, U. S. Army Corps of Engineers (Conference Call) |
| Paul Herrera Councilwoman Shirley Gonzales Office | |

AGENDA ITEM NO. 1: Welcome

Co-Chair Robert Ramirez called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm.

Mr. Ramirez and Olga Lizcano welcomed everyone. Mr. Ramirez welcomed new Board Member, Lourdes Galvan. Ms. Galvan welcomed everyone expressing her thanks for their participation and attendance, and recognized Paul Herrera with Councilwoman Shirley Gonzales’ office.

Mr. Ramirez recognized former Board Member Roberto Rodriguez and noted Mr. Rodriguez would be serving on the Committee and congratulated Committee Member Abigail Kinnison on her recent marriage and is now Mrs. Rodriguez.

Mr. Ramirez discussed membership, indicating five members who have not attended in over a year. He also heard that Midtown Neighborhood Association (NA) no longer exists. Prospect Hill NA, St. Mary's University and Bexar Audubon Society have not responded to the Committee's letter regarding attendance. There is also a slot open for a student representative. At the next meeting, they will discuss the vacancies.

Jerry Geyer asked if the Committee should take action at this time to remove Midtown NA from the membership list. Mr. Ramirez answered that they would not be doing that at tonight's meeting.

Gabriel Velasquez said he believed Our Lady of the Lake University (OLLU) has a greater interest than St. Mary's because of their proximity to the lake and the creeks.

Abigail Rodriguez agreed that Midtown NA does not exist anymore. She suggested replacing it with Los Angeles NA which is in the Woodlawn Lake Area.

Mr. Ramirez said any further discussion on this subject will be brought up under Agenda Item 6.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 2: Approval of Minutes for October 8, 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 and Discussion on U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Feasibility Study

Norm Lewis provided an update stating the Independent External Peer Review (IEPR) Final Report contained 15 comments which were addressed by the Project Delivery Team and the San Antonio River Authority (SARA). The IEPR Panel concurred that the 15 comments were addressed adequately. They also received the cost certification. The total cost for Alternative 6 is \$67.5 million; \$61.3 million for ecosystem restoration and \$6.2 million for recreation features. At the follow-up meeting with headquarters two weeks ago, they successfully explained the cost increase for Alternative 6, which is the Tentatively Selected Plan (TSP). The Corps is moving forward with finalizing the TSP and are incorporating the IEPR team comments into the report. The final report will be presented at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) Senior Leader's Meeting around February 7 or 10, followed by a state agency review in anticipation of the report being completed around April. They estimate the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Civil Works will have the Director's Report reviewed and signed within 60 days.

Mr. Lewis invited questions. Mr. Velasquez said it was good news that some work will be done on the Martinez but was hopeful for full restoration.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 4: Update and Discussion on San Pedro Creek

Mr. Geyer, San Pedro Creek Subcommittee Co-Chair, mentioned discussions he has had with the Little Italy in San Antonio Project Group on Martin Street. He said they are looking forward to becoming active stakeholders in the restoration of San Pedro Creek. He sees the need to discuss the integration of their project into the formal design study for San Pedro Creek.

Russell Persyn reported that Commissioners Court directed the County Manager to work with SARA to integrate the top firms of HDR and Pape Dawson/Munoz for the design contract and bring it back to Commissioners Court for review.

Mr. Persyn also indicated during the May 25 flood, there was flooding above the San Pedro Creek tunnel inlet. The neighborhood (where Fine Silver is located) was concerned that possible issues involving the tunnel inlet may have caused the water to back up. SARA is coordinating with the City of San Antonio (COSA) to prepare an analysis of the operation of the inlet and outlet tunnels during the flood event which will then be presented to the community. The analysis will reveal if any operational or mechanical changes need to be made to the system.

Mr. Geyer expressed the need to be aware of possible situations arising from the change of the topography regarding drainage due to the Incarnate Word campus and Little Italy of San Antonio community development. He said Mr. Persyn is collecting information regarding the possible contributing factors to flood events.

Mr. Persyn said there was good coordination and collaboration with COSA regarding flood issues.

Mr. Hinojosa asked if the issues they were discussing affected the Incarnate Word Campus. Mr. Ramirez said it was the area for the proposed medical school and not the main campus of Incarnate Word. Mr. Persyn said the area next to Fox Tech is not in the floodplain.

Mr. Rodriguez asked if the flooding was on the access road of the freeway or closer to the neighborhood. Mr. Persyn showed him the location on the PowerPoint presentation.

Mr. Geyer explained how water filters through the tunnel. He said regardless if it is debris hindering water from flowing into the tunnel or too much water flowing into the basin too fast, the overflow will go in the street since it is lower. Mr. Geyer said they have been in discussions with COSA and the flood control people who operate the tunnel.

Mr. Velasquez said besides being clogged by debris, it could be clogged by too much water due to the increasing impervious cover. Mr. Geyer said Mr. Persyn's study would consider that possibility.

Mr. Rodriguez mentioned that the infrastructure is old and there is poor drainage in some of the areas. Mr. Persyn showed him on the PowerPoint presentation the location of the underground box culverts where the creek currently flows under IH-10.

Mr. Rodriguez said the culverts were installed when the freeway was expanded. He suggested staff look at the drainage in that area since it is in an old neighborhood and subject to non-source pollution and debris. He said he was interested in the results of Mr. Persyn's study.

Mr. Persyn said they are building a model for the study of the drainage in the neighborhood and the area along the access road.

Mr. Geyer commented on the collective power of COSA, SARA and some other entities and their remarkable capabilities to run simulations and see if the design is adequate.

Mr. Persyn said their goal is to find out whether the cause is operational or something unique to this specific flood event.

Mr. Velasquez asked if their calculations were based only on historical data or do they take into consideration the characteristics of current rainstorms.

Mr. Persyn said they do not include the current characteristics at this time however it is something they need to review in the future. For example, the United Kingdom adds 20% to rain events to capture the effects due to climate change. When DFIRM was updated in 2005, more recent data was used. The DFIRM 100 year is based on 10 inches of rain in a 24 hour period. Locally there was about 8.5 inches in a 6 hour period. This appears to have exceeded the 100 year event; however it never exceeded the peak rainfall that would be expected in a 10 inch event which produces over 5,000 cubic feet per second down at the inlet. The current 8.5 inch event never exceeded a peak of 2,200 cubic feet per second even though there was a total volume over the 6 hour period larger than what might have been modeled in that same event. The peak flow received was much less than anticipated in a 100 year event. This is due to distribution and timing. Mr. Velasquez suggested San Antonio be a progressive leader by accounting for the climate change when plugging data into the models.

Mr. Velasquez asked if it depends on the location where the mass of the rain drops occur. Mr. Persyn said even though Espada had only 3-4 inches during the time frame, they were flooded because of the rainfall on the west side of the San Antonio River watershed. It is affected by the flow conditions within the creeks and rivers.

Mr. Persyn said it is up to the Community to decide how much risk should be purchased which will add to the cost of the infrastructure. Mr. Velasquez said to do the job correctly; maybe more money needs to be spent.

Mr. Ramirez said they don't want the cost of doing business to be human cost. Mr. Ramirez commended the quality work the subcommittee performs and encouraged all the members to attend the subcommittee meetings.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 5: Update and Discussion on Elmendorf Lake Park and Westside Creeks Hike and Bike Trails

Jeff Tyler gave an update on the projects announcing they were progressing. He said the property located across from Elmendorf Lake Park where Commerce and Buena Vista Streets split had been purchased as well as a second property near the Woodlawn Lake Park Casting Pond. Both were willing sellers and these are the only two properties that will be purchased.

The Elmendorf Lake design submittal has been extended to incorporate Bexar County's contribution to the project which is allowing for the incorporate of additional features within the park and extending the project limits from 24th Street to Commerce.

Mr. Tyler invited the committee to attend the Martinez and Alazan Trails Open House tomorrow night. The design plan on the trails is over 70% which they are in the process of reviewing. The final plan for the Martinez and Alazan is expected in early February. It is estimated the bid document will be advertised by the second quarter of next year. The design plans for the trails on the Apache and San Pedro Creek is 70% and currently being reviewed and expect the final plan in early March.

Mr. Tyler and Russell Persyn met with Norm Lewis of the Corps of Engineers along with other staff from the Corps' Fort Worth District office regarding permitting and discussing the overall project. Mr. Tyler is also coordinating an Interlocal Agreement with San Antonio Water System (SAWS) concerning the overlapping sewer project along a portion of the Apache Creek trail. Mr. Tyler has also been coordinating with OLLU regarding the trails on their property. Mr. Tyler invited questions.

Mr. Rodriguez asked how much money per mile will the Westside Creeks project cost compared to the \$1 million per mile for the linear creek trails. Mr. Tyler answered \$1.7 million per mile; however Martinez and Alazan are closer to the \$1 million mark. The cost difference is due to the numerous buyouts in 2000 along Martinez Creek which allowed for greater flexibility with trail alignment.

Mr. Rodriguez asked if the money was coming out of the \$10.2 million. Mr. Tyler said yes and that there were other possible sources of revenue such as cost sharing with SAWS along portions of Apache Creek where sewer line work will occur or through construction cost savings.

There was discussion about bridges. Mr. Tyler said the bridges can accommodate both bicycles and pedestrians.

There was discussion on what type of material was going to be used on the trail because concrete seems to invite graffiti. Mr. Velasquez said more aesthetically pleasing materials should be used to offset the pervasive view of the jail, the barbed wire on the fence and the interminable concrete. The discussion focused on the vertical concrete retaining wall material and elevation with request made for verification of cost related to sloping walls to "for instance" slightly off vertical, to perforated retaining surface as per "highway 1604" with growth in partition to stamped and stained concrete. (Cost analysis was requested).

Leonard Rodriguez said the Westside Community should be afforded the same quality of improvements as were done on the San Antonio River Improvements Project given that they are also tax payers. He hopes their expectations of something aesthetically pleasing which also improves the quality of life are met upon completion in 2015. The Westside has the potential of being a stunning asset to City and its visitors.

Ms. Lizcano asked for questions.

Ms. Galvan commented that many good points were brought up during the committee's discussions. With the expectation of beautiful trails, she believes this is a good time for the Committee to be overseeing this final part of the design since they know what they want.

Janet Dietel brought up how artist's creations add to the aesthetics tremendously. She referred to a particular presentation of stone creations by Texas A&M students. Mr. Tyler said he will have the design team review the Texas A&M presentation and then see where it goes from there. He also mentioned that PASA is creating a monument for the entrance of the island.

Mr. Geyer asked Mr. Tyler his opinion whether there needs to be another tax voted on at the next election to continue funding the project like they did in 2010 with the 1/8 cent sales tax. Mr. Tyler said by 2016 all the \$10.2 million will need to be expended for the project. Patti Radle agreed with this suggestion.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6: Briefing on Oversight Committee Representation

Rudy Farias distributed a list of the twenty-two members who make up the oversight committee. He identified five that had not attended a meeting this past year: Mid-Town NA; Bexar Audubon Society; St. Mary's University; Prospect Hill NA; and the Student Representative. Mr. Farias is waiting on replies to a letter sent encouraging them to attend.

Mr. Farias requested that the committee reach out to people in these organizations and see if there is an interest to serve on this committee. He said other organizations have expressed an interest in being on the committee. He said they will take recommendations and meet with Ms. Galvan and the Co-Chairs to formulate a list to present to the SARA Board for approval.

Mr. Farias reviewed the past accomplishments of the committee. He announced that there will be six meetings next year beginning in February.

Mr. Velasquez made a request of Mr. Farias for a report at the upcoming February meeting concerning the discussion with SAWS regarding Martinez Creek.

Mr. Rodriguez said since the San Antonio River Improvements Project is completed, the focus needs to be on Westside Creeks. He said the Committee needs to advocate with the Mayor and City Council to complete the Westside Creeks Project with the trails coming along the heart of the Westside. They need to keep the momentum, the passion and the vision going.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7: Citizens to be Heard

Skye Curd expressed her concern that the Elmendorf Lake Park vision does not represent the public's vision. She is frustrated as a citizen and a homeowner that what they were told in the public meetings is not what was implemented. She said she didn't understand why an offer was not made to purchase the methadone clinic since the owner was willing to sell. Mr. Hinojosa said he thought someone at the last meeting said that the clinic was going to be moved. Mr. Velasquez said at the last meeting they discussed the possibility of needing a maintenance facility for the park which could be a favorable use for the clinic if it was purchased.

Jesse De los Santos said he has lived in the Westside Creek area since 1938. He thinks walkers and runners should have separate trails. He said he will be taking his wife on the trail in a wheel chair. He also said that in his opinion the name of the creek that enters the San Antonio River should be Alazan not San Pedro, because the San Pedro Creek runs into the Alazan. Mr. Rodriguez said he could see Mr. De los Santos' point and suggested dividing the 10 foot trail into 8 feet for the walkers and 2 feet for the bicycles. He said he wants this project to accommodate everybody and provide quality of life.

Mr. Velasquez asked if there has been any progress in communications with the San Antonio Housing Authority (SAHA) regarding the improvements on the trails. He also suggested this would be a good time to draft a letter or begin a dialog with the City about coordinating the hike and bike trail project with the needed improvements under the Guadalupe Bridge. Ms. Galvan agreed saying it was a very good idea and could possibly coordinate with the development of the area over the bridge that the Westside Development Corporation is doing.

Mr. Farias said they have briefed SAHA along with other property owners up and down the creeks so they are aware of the Westside Creeks Restoration Project concepts. Once the funding is secured and moved from the concept phase to the design phase, there will be additional interaction with those property owners.

Mr. Velasquez suggested adding SAHA to the list of potential partners especially since they have so much real estate along the creeks. Mr. Farias said he would add them to the list.

Ms. Lizcano suggested they might be in need of a neighborhood association. Mr. Velasquez said they have resident councils. He said a member of the Avenida Guadalupe Association Board is a Resident Leader of the Resident Council. Mr. Farias said they have briefed the resident councils at Cassiano Homes and the Alazan Apache Courts.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8: Miscellaneous Items

Ms. Lizcano invited comments.

Mr. Hinojosa asked if the committee meeting could start at 6:30 instead of 6:00. He believes there would be better attendance if it wasn't during rush hour traffic. Mr. Farias said he would make it an item for discussion at the next meeting.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 9: Next Meeting – Tuesday, February 11, 2014

Ms. Lizcano announced the next meeting will be Tuesday, February 11, 2014, at 6:00 p.m.

AGENDA ITEM NO. 10: Adjourn

Since there were no other comments or statements, the meeting was adjourned at 8:20 p.m.