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**Westside Creeks Restoration
Oversight Committee (WCROC) Meeting
November 10, 2009 – 6:00 PM**

Meeting Notes

Attendees:

Members and Alternates – Robert Ramirez (WCROC Co-Chair), Olga Lizcano (WCROC Co-Chair), Roberto Hinkson (San Antonio Conservation Society), Abigail Kinnison (Beacon Hill NA), Thomas Lopez (San Antonio ISD), George Martínez (Woodlawn Lake NA), Joanne Walsh (Downtown Residents Association), Ashley Hernandez (Student Representative), Theodore Ozuna (Donaldson Terrace N.A.), Rod Radle (San Antonio Alternative Housing), Abel Ramirez (San Antonio Wheelmen), Jude Valdez (UTSA), Dr. Catherine Rainwater (Our Lady of the Lake University)

Elected Officials – Roberto Rodriguez (SARA Board Member), Roberto Anguiano (SAWS Board Trustee), Samuel E. Luna (SAWS Board Trustee)

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

Members of the Public – Roman Fruth, Albert Esquivel, Charlotte Kahl (OST), Gib Hafernick, Jesse H. Valdez, Narciso Cano, Neil Thomas (JACOBS), Jesse De Los Santos, Abigail Grass (Lanier High School), Kevin Conner (JACOBS), Thomas C. Lopez (JACOBS), J.R. Carmona, Barbara Hill

I. Welcome & Introductions

Robert Ramirez, WCROC Co-Chair, called the meeting to order and thanked everyone for attending. He then introduced several newcomers including Roberto Anguiano and Samuel E. Luna who are San Antonio Water System Board Trustees; Roman Fruth a cyclist interested in connectivity along the creeks, Margarita Hernandez with the City of San Antonio Public Works Department, and Jesse De Los Santos who is a 70-year resident of Alazán Creek.

Mr. Ramirez welcomed the new guests and then introduced Roberto Rodriguez, SARA Board Member, as the moving force behind the committee. Mr. Rodriguez also welcomed everyone and informed the group that there is a new SARA Board Member that will be sworn in on Thursday, Michael Lackey, who will also be supporting the Westside Creeks Restoration Project.

II. Approval of the Meeting Minutes

Mr. Ramirez then asked that the minutes be changed to refer to the president of OLLU in the masculine. He then asked for other changes. Linda Vela (RJRA) stated that changes were made at the request of Abigail Kinnison and were highlighted in yellow in the copies distributed at the meeting. Mr. Ramirez then called for approval of the corrected minutes without objection and the minutes were approved.

III. Update on Stakeholder Meetings

Next, Mr. Ramirez asked Ed Garza to present an update on the stakeholder meetings being conducted by the study team. Mr. Garza said he was meeting with individual stakeholders to focus on catalyst site areas as well as some of the potential funding partners. He said the meetings conducted to date fall into three categories including elected officials, property owners, and some of the other funding partners and stakeholders that would have an impact on the project. He said the marked ones are meetings that have not yet occurred but are planned. One of these is with the mayor and county judge. He said these would occur once a concept is completed with cost estimates because these meetings need to be very in depth. He said he did attend a meeting with Mayor Castro which Mitch Meyers, a property owner near OLLU, organized. At this meeting, Mr. Garza indicated to the Mayor that he would be following up with a formal presentation. Mr. Garza also met with Commissioner Elizondo and there is already some funding available around Elmendorf Lake through Bexar County.

Mr. Garza said he wanted to brief the group so they could see that even though these individuals have not been attending committee meetings or workshops, they are involved in the process and being communicated with. He then opened the floor for questions.

Mr. Ramirez asked if there was an opportunity to partner with any private entities. Mr. Garza said this was discussed with Dean Steel. He said the consultants are taking a pulse of where they are so they can report on opportunities to partner. He said the team also wants to show the catalyst sites where there is excitement or willingness to participate. Mr. Garza said they are not at a point where they can discuss specifics since a full market assessment has not been completed at this phase. The conceptual plan will identify opportunities for mixed use but will not specify the types of retail.

Joanne Walsh then asked the location of Zion Lutheran Church. Mr. Garza said it is off of Cincinnati near the area where homes were purchased for flood mitigation along Martínez Creek. He said they are in the process of closing and putting the building up for sale. They met with them because of the opportunity of the property being for sale in the catalyst site.

Rod Radle said that the San Antonio Alternative Housing (SAAH) has started meetings to discuss the 18 acres that the Cano Brothers own and have for sale. They are discussing how it can be configured. He said they are in the brainstorming phase right now looking at the 18 acres. He said the next meeting will take place at St. Henrys which is right behind the 18 acres at 7 pm on Tuesday, November 17, 2009.

Ms. Walsh then asked what the options are for Zion Lutheran Church. Mr. Garza said the opportunities identified in the catalyst site are primarily on the recreational side. However, he said that depending on the feasibility of what can be done with the flood zone there, the study team will still look at the highest and best use for the area. It is still an unknown at this time.

IV. Review of Meeting Schedules and Discussion Topics

Next, Rudy Farias (SARA) presented the schedule for the remaining meetings. He reminded the group that they started meeting over a year ago and are now heading towards the home stretch. He said he wanted to share some proposed meeting topics that were identified through discussions with the consultant team and the co-chairs. Mr. Farias said this would help set the stage for the remainder of this project. He pointed out that the San Pedro and Apache Creek Subcommittees will meet following the oversight committee meeting to designate a chair or co-chairs. He also stated that he talked with the co-chairs of Alazan and Martinez Creeks and it was determined there was not a need to have a meeting of these subcommittees immediately following the oversight committee.

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Mr. Ramirez then said that December is the last real opportunity to provide feedback on the contents of workshop #2. He urged the San Pedro Creek subcommittee to change their meeting date so that it occurs prior to the oversight committee so they can provide their recommendations at the following week's oversight committee meeting.

Mr. Farias then reviewed the schedule. He also showed cross sections of potential restoration – going from very natural, to moderate to very urban. He said this discussion of the level of restoration for the various creeks will occur at the December meeting. He said the oversight committee would also discuss the workshop findings and then the alternatives for each of the creeks.

He reviewed the schedule for January and February and said the third public workshop would occur at the end of February or beginning of March. For this reason, there is no meeting scheduled for March to allow consultants the time they need to work and in April the subcommittees will have the opportunity to review the findings/draft report for their individual creeks. Mr. Farias said that this project will continue even though the Conceptual Design Phase will be complete. He further said that they hoped to schedule a wrap-up celebration at the end of the phase.

Mr. Ramirez asked about the review of the draft report in April. He wanted confirmation that this review would not be to make major changes but that it would be a final review. Mr. Farias confirmed that the last chance for “substantive” feedback to workshop #2 findings would be during the December and January timeframe. He said that the final report would also include opportunities for financing and that workshop #3 would be more of a presentation of what was done.

Ms. Kinnison then said that the Martínez Subcommittee's next meeting falls on December 7th but that perhaps this could be changed to December 1st or November 30th to allow the subcommittee to digest some of the information before the oversight committee. Mr. Farias said that he would get with the consultant team on this issue.

Ms. Walsh also requested a list of the action items from previous minutes and how those were responded to by the team. Mr. Ramirez asked if the group wanted to establish that as a protocol and the motion was carried without any objections to provide the oversight committee with a list of action items and how they were addressed.

Thomas Lopez then said that he would like to see the oversight committee continue to meet beyond 2010 to keep the momentum going. He was concerned that the discussions, thoughts and ideas gathered over the past year would be lost if the group did not meet on at least a quarterly basis to see the status of various components.

Mr. Farias said that when this phase of the project ends (conceptual design phase), the board will have to approve funding for a second project phase so the committee can continue to meet either every other month or quarterly. He said SARA budget planning occurs in January and the fiscal year starts in July so he does anticipate a next phase and will be requesting funds.

Mr. Rodriguez said that he is excited to see community leaders involved and is looking forward to Mr. Radle's trail on Apache Creek. He reinforced Mr. Farias statement and said the board will continue to support this effort until it becomes a reality. He thanked Mr. Lopez for suggesting that the group continue to meet and he also asked that feedback presented at Workshop #3 be incorporated into the final report. He did not want to shut out ideas received at Workshop #3.

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Ms. Walsh asked if the final workshop would be conducted in an open house setting. Mr. Garza said that perhaps there could be exhibits up at a location for several days prior to the open house to allow people to go see it prior to the final workshop.

Mr. Radle asked when the study team would be looking at financing more in depth because the Westside TIRZ is currently seeking projects for consideration. Financing will be discussed at the third workshop but the consultant team is actively pursuing opportunities such as those with the federal courthouse and the Westside TIRZ.

V. Discussion of Potential Venues and Dates for Workshop #3

Mr. Ramirez asked the committee to identify potential meeting locations for the next workshop so the committee can select a location at the next workshop and so the consultant team can check on their availability. Following are the venues mentioned during this discussion:

- Let's have it at Zion. It is right on the creek.
- Our Lady of the Lake at the community room in the library. The chapel auditorium is also available as well as the Blue and Red Rooms at Providence.
- Irving Middle School is on a catalyst site as well as Brackenridge High School. Parking is better at high schools.
- Is the gym at Cooper being used? Yes.
- Where is Memorial High School? Is it near any of the creeks? No.
- We should hold it by one of the two creeks that have not had meetings nearby – San Pedro and Martínez.
- SARA can check into the Vistana Apartments which are adjacent to San Pedro Creek. They have a meeting space with a parking garage.
- The Mexican American Unity Council has a big area and should be interested.
- The VIA Community Center could be available. Ms. Kinnison offered to check.
- The City of San Antonio Cliff Morton Development and Business Services Center is near San Pedro Creek.
- The St. Paul's Community Center has an auditorium.

The committee asked the consultant team to prioritize the list according to venues that are near the creeks and have not had a meeting in the past. This motion carried with no objections. The committee also discussed potential dates towards the end of February and early March in order to avoid conflicts with Spring Break. They decided to pursue February 27 or March 6. Ashley Hernandez asked if it was possible to incorporate some type of workshop into the Basura Bash event taking place on March 27, 2009 at Woodlawn Lake. Mr. Ramirez said they could look into making this an additional event.

Mr. Ramirez asked committee members to check with their organizations regarding the potential date and venue as this would be placed for a vote at the next meeting.

VI. Miscellaneous Items

Ms. Walsh said that the first hard surface road from Florida to California was the Old Spanish Trail. She and Charlotte Kahl met with elected officials to brief them and discuss the area where the Old Spanish Trail, VIA's Bus Rapid Transit, and the Martínez Creek improvements all intersect. They shared with them

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that this would be an excellent spot for a BRT station that could perhaps do some historic story telling. It seems that there are several efforts all coming together at that point and that it is important to highlight.

VII. Next Meeting

Mr. Ramirez reminded the group that the next meeting will be the second Tuesday of December, on December 8, 2009 at 6:00 pm at the San Antonio River Authority.

VIII. Adjourn

With no further items to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

Action Items

- A. Correct October minutes to refer to the president of OLLU in the masculine.
- B. Explore possibility of moving Martinez Creek Subcommittee to December 1st or November 30th.
- C. Develop an action item list that documents how action items were addressed.
- D. Prioritize and research list of potential venues.
- E. Research potential meeting dates for conflicts.
- F. Explore possibility of holding an additional outreach event in conjunction with the Basura Bash clean up at Woodlawn Lake on March 27, 2009.

Attachments

- Sign-in Sheets
- Workshop Presentation
- Handouts from Presentations

Distribution

- WCROC
- SARA Staff
- Consultant Team