



**Westside Creeks Restoration
Oversight Committee (WCROC) Meeting
San Antonio River Authority
100 E. Guenther
Tuesday, March 21, 2017
Notes**

Committee Members Present

Robert Ramirez, Co-Chair
Olga Lizcano, Co-Chair
Rosa Ramirez, Avenida Guadalupe
Theodore Ozuna, Donaldson Terrace NA
Joanne Walsh, Downtown Resident Assoc.
Kathy Kranvek SA Conservation Society

Carmen Vasquez-Gonzalez, SAISD
Abel Ramirez, San Antonio Wheelman
Evelynn Mitchell, St. Mary's University
Kamala Platt, TexasTejano.com
Jude Valdez, UTSA
Skye Curd, West SA Chamber of Commerce

Staff and Public Present

Suzanne Scott, SARA
Dustin Moore, SARA
Therese Kenner, SARA
Brian Mast, SARA
Sonia Jimenez, Ximenes & Associates

Andy Ballard, Jacobs
Steven Dean, Pape-Dawson
Rudy Munoz, KB Homes
Joseph Carreon, Westside Development Corp
Gloria Almaraz

I. Welcome

Ms. Lizcano convened the meeting and Mr. Ramirez welcomed everyone and introduced Dustin Moore as Jeff Tyler's replacement as SARA's lead Watershed Engineer. New members to the committee introduced themselves including Kathy Krnavek with the San Antonio Conservation Society, Rosa Ramirez representing the Avenida Guadalupe Association.

II. Calendar Items

Ms. Lizcano announced the following calendar items.

- San Pedro Creek Subcommittee Meeting – April 13, 2017 at 8:30 a.m. at 100 E. Guenther, Boardroom
- Westside Creeks Restoration Oversight Committee Quarterly Meeting – June 20, 2017 at 6:00 p.m. at 100 E. Guenther, Boardroom

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes

The meeting notes from June 21, October 18, and December 20, 2016 were considered for approval. Ms. Lizcano asked if anyone had any suggested changes. There were none. Jude Valdez made a motion to approve all three sets of notes and Joanne Walsh seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously with no discussion.

IV. Status Report on San Pedro Creek Improvements Project

Mr. Ramirez and Kerry Averyt provided the update. Mr. Ramirez reminded the committee that SARA sends email updates weekly on the project's progress and

street detours. Mr. Averyt then provided an overview of the progress. Please see the presentation for more details.

Mr. Averyt presented information on the considerations for wall enhancements. Specifically, the team is considering culture walls to tell the story of community and culture. The project has nearly two miles of walls. Eight public art themes have been identified. The themes transition as the creek moves southward. Mr. Averyt went on to say there are several other design enhancements being considered with a big focus on Bexar County's history and residents. The areas and ideas for enhancements include the screen around the inlet structure, word art and tile patterns on benches in the plaza, tile work on retaining walls, and murals for the gatehouses.

Diane Kersey and Michael Menchaca has been engaged for tile work and Jesse Treviño for murals. For signage, the style will be similar to the signs used on the San Antonio River. The tricentennial public art installment plan is finalized. The 60' tall aluminum sculpture in the image of a woman's face, The Plethora, will be facing Santa Rosa Street and will be visible from the highway. It will be installed so the shadow is cast on the ground in the plaza. The artist is Jorge Hurada and the fabricators will locally-owned and operated River City Industries. The committee is currently considering the full public art plan.

Mr. Averyt then apprised the committee of the construction closures and detours. Cameron Street will remain closed from Houston to the Santa Rosa Bridge until May of next year. Commerce Street will be closed in September for approximately 3 months. When bridge closures occur, there will only be partial lane closures. He also noted that up to date information on street closures and detours can be found on the project website, www.spcproject.org. The website is viewable on smart phones and the maps are zoom enabled.

In terms of design and construction, Mr. Averyt stated the design will be complete in mid-May 2017 and the guaranteed maximum price (GMP) from Sundt/Davila, the construction manager at risk (CMAR), is expected in mid-July. The tentative construction schedule has Phases 1 and 2 complete in mid-2019. He notified the committee that the construction tour at 10 a.m. on March 31, 2017 is already full. However, quarterly tours will be conducted and if this committee has enough folks interested, a special tour can be arranged.

Mr. Ramirez wrapped up this agenda item and reminded the committee that the San Pedro Creek Subcommittee meets monthly and urged everyone to keep up with the progress.

V. Status Report on Westside Creeks Improvements Projects

Westside Creeks Linear Creekway Trails

Dustin Moore, SARA's project manager, provided the status report. Mr. Moore announced the next step for the trails improvements will be to complete the segments from the previous effort. The Alazan Creek trail improvements contract was awarded to RESPEC and Zarzamora and Martinez Creeks contracts were

awarded to Pape-Dawson. The teams are currently in contract negotiations. The basic schedule is to have survey, design, and permits completed in September 2018 and construction start in January 2019. Mr. Moore emphasized this effort is just the trail improvements and not the channel restoration.

Additionally, Mr. Moore announced the award of the Alamo Area Metropolitan Planning Organization's (AAMPO) grant to fund the trail enhancements. Alazan's initial award is \$2.5million and \$1.5million for Martinez. The final recommendation and AAMPO Board approval is scheduled for next month, April 2017.

Elmendorf Lake Park

Mr. Moore continued and provided the update. He stated there are several small tasks to complete before the project will be completely finished. He noted the splash pad is open now and a video of the grand opening is available. Subsequently, the co-chairs, since they were unable to attend the re-opening ceremonies, were presented mementos and a plaque commemorating the grand re-opening.

Mr. Ramirez concluded this agenda item by announcing an exhibit of Elmendorf Lake Park's history and the restoration effort is open to the public at the Las Palmas Public Library.

VI. Restoration Update

Brian Mast representing SARA provided the update. He began by reminding the committee that this past December he reported to them a letter to the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) was needed from the Federal Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to state that the restoration effort is budgetable and is eligible to go through the appropriations process. Mr. Mast also reminded the group that the USACE has already done the preliminary design and the letter is the next step. As of December 21, 2016, OMB sent letter to USACE. The letter tells USACE to prioritize this project among their other ecosystem restoration projects and to move forward to the budgeting phase. This is a huge step forward and a better position than the Mission Reach in terms of the request to receive federal funding upfront. Appropriation requests for the fiscal year 2017 and 2018 budgets are \$2.335 million each to do preliminary engineering design for Apache, Alazan, Martinez, and the very southern section of San Pedro creeks. After the preliminary design is complete, the effort will move into 100% design and eventually construction. There is a continuing resolution that expires in April. If Congress does an omnibus appropriation, there would be a slim chance to get some funds during the 2017 fiscal budget cycle. The USACE Fort Worth District has suggested splitting the money into smaller portions to get to the \$2.335 million design funding. This project is a high priority for USACE-FW and is one of seven national pilot projects to test new planning paradigm they instituted several years ago. However, Mr. Mast noted that urban ecosystem restoration projects have struggled in the past to get funding. He went on to say that based on the federal budget that was presented last week, it appears defunding of large watershed projects (i.e. Chesapeake Bay, Florida Everglades) is occurring. This

dynamic may prove to be better for urban restoration projects like the Westside Creeks. The appropriations requests have been provided to the San Antonio delegation and SARA continues to keep communicating with them. Updates to this committee will continue as the process moves forward.

There was some discussion about the benefits of the restoration and what angles to take to get funding. Mr. Mast stated that talking points include the boon for economic development that has occurred since the San Antonio River improvements were completed. The Mission Reach has generated an estimated half a billion dollars in south side economic investment.

In closing, Mr. Mast said SARA is working with a class at St. Mary's University conducting a cost-benefit analysis based on connecting St. Mary's to Our Lady of the Lake. Dr. Mitchell added that the students have already identified potential walkways and developing estimates for them. This summer, Dr. Mitchell will work with engineering students to begin the design effort with a presentation to City Council in spring 2018. Ms. Scott also stated that the president from each of the colleges has been communicating. She will follow-up with them to get the status.

Mr. Ramirez lauded the efforts of the two universities as well as UTSA for their research efforts in the Westside creeks area and SAISD's involvement.

VII. Miscellaneous Items

Alazan Creek Trash Collector

Suzanne Scott reported that the collector was destroyed. SARA is now going through the process to get it refabricated. She stated the vendor did not realize how much thatch would be in the creek during rain events and is re-engineering it. The installation of the collector was a demonstration pilot project and failed while under warranty. SARA will be paying for some of the re-engineering effort with the vendor is also contributing. Ms. Scott went on to say the education efforts for the collector are moving forward and SARA is meeting with SAISD on Monday.

Andi Rodriguez representing SAISD added the school district met with SARA partners to discuss the hands-on learning opportunities to educate the neighborhood, the community, parents, and the students. The district is engaging the Environmental Science team at Tafolla Middle School (in close proximity to the location of the collector) and is very excited about the possibilities. Ms. Scott noted SAISD students are also being engaged for the San Pedro Creek art and engineering effort.

USGS Sediment Study

Mr. Ramirez stated the report has been published and copies were distributed to the committee members. The study results were presented at the last committee meeting. Ms. Scott added that any comments are welcome and the restoration effort will enable SARA to remove some of the sediment toxins.

VIII. Citizens to be Heard

None.

IX. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:40 p.m.