



**Westside Creeks Restoration  
Oversight Committee Meeting  
San Antonio River Authority  
100 E. Guenther  
February 20, 2018  
6:00 pm**

**Committee Members Present**

Olga Lizcano, Co-Chair  
Robert Ramirez, Co-Chair  
Joanne Walsh, Downtown Residents  
Cary Guffey, Our Lady of the Lake University  
Kathy Krnavek, San Antonio Conservation Society  
Andi Rodriguez San Antonio Independent School District

Abel Ramirez, San Antonio Wheelman  
Dr. Evelyn Mitchell, St. Mary's University  
Kamala Platt, TexasTejano.com  
Jude Valdez, University of Texas at San Antonio  
Erwin DeLuna, United SA Pow Wow, Inc.  
Charles Olsten, Woodlawn Lake NA

**Staff and Public Present**

Kerry Averyt, San Antonio River Authority  
Jaime Taylor, San Antonio River Authority  
Hillary Lilly, San Antonio River Authority  
Sonia Jimenez, Ximenes & Associates, Inc.  
Manuel Lizcano  
St. Jonak

Cosima Colvin, COSA Linear Creeks Park Advisory Board  
Jennifer Melde, Dunaway Associates  
Walter Heard, Terra Design  
Darryl Spillmann, RESPEC

**I. Welcome**

Ms. Lizcano and Mr. Ramirez convened the meeting and welcomed everyone. Mr. Ramirez asked everyone to introduce themselves to the group. Mr. Ramirez then reviewed the calendar items.

**II. Calendar Items**

- Confluence Park Grand Opening – March 3, 2018 11:00 a.m.
- San Pedro Creek Subcommittee Meeting – March 8, 2018 8:30-10:00 a.m. at 100 E. Guenther
- Alazan Creek 60% Design Public Meeting – March 20, 2018 6:00 p.m. El Progreso Hall 1306 Guadalupe St, San Antonio, TX 78207
- San Pedro Creek Culture Park Grand Opening – May 5, 2018 11:00 a.m.
- Westside Creeks Restoration Oversight Committee Quarterly Meeting – May 15, 2018 at 6:00 p.m. at 100 E. Guenther, Boardroom
- Arts & Culture Committee – March 13, 2018 at 4:00 p.m. - Starts with a tour of Phase I and then a meeting at 100 E. Guenther, Boardroom

### **III. Approval of Meeting Minutes**

The meeting notes from December were deferred until a future meeting due to a lack of a quorum.

### **IV. Citizens to be Heard**

Mr. Ramirez introduced Cosima Colvin, with the Howard Peak Linear Creeks Advisory Board. Ms. Colvin made a statement related to the San Pedro Creek Improvements Project. Ms. Colvin said people who serve on boards are often excited about the projects and may not always think about the unintended consequences. With San Pedro Creeks, she said there is an apartment complex adjacent to the project that up until recently has been very affordable but due to the development of the creeks they are seeing an increase in value. A firm from Houston recently purchased the apartments and is renovating the building and charging extra fees for different things. For some residents, who are elderly and have lived there over 20 years and this increase can be enough to push them out. Ms. Colvin would like to find solutions to this challenge and wanted to thank Mr. Ramirez, Mr. Geyer (San Pedro Creek Committee Chair), and Suzanne Scott for coming to the residents' meeting that took place recently. She said the goal is to allow for this development but also protect long-time residents. She said her personal goal was to be a bridge between both groups so they can find some creative and out of the box solutions to the problem. Ms. Colvin also offered the suggestion the WCROC agenda item, citizens to be heard, should be done earlier in the meeting.

Mr. Ramirez said he attended the meeting and had hoped to speak but the meeting time ran out. He was, however, disturbed to see a flyer that was handed out that mistakenly identified the San Pedro Creeks Committee as wanting to push the residents out. Mr. Ramirez also offered that the Downtown Residents Association (DRA) is part of the committee but the residents did not see themselves as represented by the DRA. Mr. Ramirez recommended doing a community impact assessment in advance of future projects like this to identify potential impacts and ways to mitigate. Ms. Colvin said that there is a precedent for that since the Mayor's Housing Commission is doing a Vulnerable Resident Assessment. She said perhaps this can be replicated elsewhere.

Ms. Colvin also said there was a study done on folks that were displaced by Mission Trails and that tracked the impact of displacement, as well as where they went after being displaced.

### **IV. Status Report on San Pedro Creek Improvements Project**

Kerry Averyt, San Antonio River Authority Project Manager provided the update. Mr. Averyt said construction is in Phase 1.1 down on Houston Street and the project is still on schedule to complete construction of Phase 1.1 by May 5, 2018. Some of the more notable construction activities included:

- Completing the flagstone at the fountain at the tunnel inlet
- Putting down the limestone blocks for the 12 generation benches at the cascading pools
- Putting the limestone veins in the cascading pools

- Working on landscaping on the west bank between Santa Rosa and Martin
- Finished pouring concrete for the Travis Gatehouse
- Working on the Arsenal pump station

Ms. Walsh asked if the pump station was the reason for the river draining that was on the news. He said it was done so they could connect to the San Antonio River as the recycled water will be shared between both. He said SARA is also going to be in there to clean the river bed while the water is drained.

When the springs are flowing at San Pedro Park, he said it would not be necessary to transfer over water but when they are not, SARA will have flow augmentation from the San Antonio River. Mr. Averyt showed some images from the construction site. He said crews are putting in some of the Menchaca tiles. He also showed images of the cascading pools, the generational benches, and what it looks like south from the bridge at Martin Street. He informed the audience this is near the apartment complex that is having issues. He showed the original retaining wall and then the new retaining wall. He said this would allow for planting in between the two walls. A member asked if the water was flowing and moving or if it was stagnant. Mr. Averyt said this project starts at the tunnel inlet and the outlet comes out south of Guadalupe Street. In between, there are recirculation pumps that ensure the movement of the water but they were turned off during construction and the water was allowed to just flow around the construction site.

Mr. Averyt then showed where the Adriana Garcia mural is going to be and the location of some bioretention cells for water quality. He stated that south of Martin there is quite a bit of progress and he showed images of the Travis Gatehouse. North from Travis Street, he pointed out the walkway and the location of the Alex Rubio mural on the maintenance shaft. He also pointed out the acequia in the area that will outflow near Houston Street. A member of the audience asked how people would access the creek. Mr. Averyt said there will be access points at every street intersection in the form of stairs and ramps. A member of the audience asked if this would still be finished by May 5th and he said yes.

Mr. Averyt said Phase 1.2 includes Houston Street, Commerce Street, and Dolorosa Street bridges, but does not include the Nueva Street Bridge. He said they started knocking down the Dollar General building and will soon be loading trucks up with rubble. Currently, they have one lane closed but once trucks need to take out the rubble, they will need to close two lanes. A member of the audience asked if any of the demolished items would be recycled. Mr. Averyt replied the concrete is usually taken to the landfill but that steel beams and rods are pulled out and recycled. He said that other specialized equipment is also salvaged or sold and that the salvage is included in the contract with the firm doing the demolition as an added incentive.

Mr. Averyt went on to say there are some utility relocations associated with work Package 11 near Commerce and Dolorosa and early Package 12 is some of the heavy civil work which is slated for early March. Mr. Averyt said that when they were doing some trenching near the Spanish Governor's Building they came across some artifacts. The artifacts were not considered significant in and of themselves but indicative that there might be something significant down there. The Office of Historic Preservation and the Texas Historical Commission were involved to see if there are any significant artifacts found. He said they do not think they are going to find anything but as of now work here has halted and, if needed, there may be some full-scale digs. He said workers will tunnel down to 7 ft. and lift soil up in layers to see if they find anything. So far, they have come across some shards of pottery and a flint they believe belonged to an old antique rifle.

Mr. Averyt said they are working on Phase 1.2 design and the consultants are working towards 90% submittal. The bigger focus has been on the Houston to Commerce block. The team worked with Texas Public Radio and the Alameda Theatre and the people developing the building next to the Dollar General. The entire block has been redesigned. Primarily, they are working on the water wall feature. It will require a significant amount of water per minute in order to get the water wall to look how they want it to look. He said 100% design will be completed by May 31<sup>st</sup> and, at that point, the contractor can give SARA a guaranteed maximum price (GMP) and they can move forward with construction.

A committee member asked if the water would be continuous. Mr. Averyt said most likely the water wall will be turned off at night because it will be operating under SARA hours not Riverwalk hours. The same individual asked if the water wall was only for aesthetic purposes or if it served some other purpose. Mr. Averyt said it is there for aesthetic purposes but it will help stir up the water and create more oxygen for the wildlife. Mr. Ramirez emphasized this is not intended to be a second Riverwalk but rather an urban cultural park. Another committee member asked what the relationship will be to the Mission Reach. Mr. Ramirez said the Westside Creeks have always intended to connect to the Mission Reach. The committee member asked who did the Mission Reach. The San Antonio River Authority is in charge of operations and maintenance but it was funded with Army Corps of Engineers funding with the City of San Antonio and Bexar County working together to provide the upfront funding. The committee member said that when people think of the Mission Reach a lot of people associate it with gentrification and the Westside Creeks Restoration Oversight Committee should do everything they can to keep this from being the case on San Pedro Creek.

Mr. Averyt then went on to talk about San Pedro Creek partner coordination. The partners include Bexar County, City of San Antonio, and the San Antonio River Authority. He said Bexar County and the San Antonio River Authority approved the

Operations & Maintenance agreement and it still needs approval by the City of San Antonio. The City of San Antonio has approved some easements for construction along Dolorosa. Further, the partners have executed the interlocal agreement and established the executive committee. The executive committee is made up of David Smith from Bexar County, Lori Houston from COSA, SARA GM Suzanne Scott, and COSA TCI Director Mike Frisbie. Mr. Averyt said he would report to the executive committee moving forward.

Mr. Averyt then went on to report on public art. He said a lot of the word art is nearly complete and it will be painted to help the letters stand out. He said all five murals are in production right now. He said Kerri Brown is in Florida right now to visit the vendor and make sure everything is on track. He said as soon as the tiles are ready they will start installation. As part of the programming, Mr. Averyt said Ms. Brown is looking to have some regular tours for art and history. He said she is also looking to program some temporary art installations and is in the process of identifying performance sites and determining what types of events would be appropriate for those sites. He said as Mr. Ramirez mentioned earlier, the Arts & Culture Committee will be meeting on March 13. He also said Ms. Brown is working on partnerships with several arts foundations and is also working on doing a partnership with the San Antonio River Foundation.

A meeting participant asked if the artists' images are given to the tile company and they then create the tiles. Mr. Averyt said that the artists' canvas mural is sent to the tile company and they reproduce the images onto ceramic tiles and then they are fire blazed. He said when they do the firing, it can sometimes change the colors themselves so they did have to work closely with the artists to get the colors right or compromise on adjustments. He said all of the murals are in production and the first one will be the Adriana Garcia mural.

#### **V. SPC Culture Park Grand Opening Update**

Mr. Averyt provided the update. He began by saying Anamaria Suescun-Fast was supposed to present but she was not able to make it. He said the presentation focuses more on the marketing for the grand opening. He presented the oversight committee with the logo for the San Pedro Creek Cultural Park. He said the circular motion is meant to be symbolic of the springs at San Pedro Park and the birthplace of Bexar County. He said the sun is a symbol for life and the blue represents the central importance of water to the Culture Park. Mr. Averyt said Phase I of the public relations effort starts April 5<sup>th</sup>, when the park reaches substantial completion and the countdown to the opening begins. The marketing team will start with some of the storytelling. After the grand opening on May 5, the effort will increase with storytelling including talking about the transformation of the creek to a culture park, how the creek integrates with art and nature, what the creek has been used for in the past, and also the purpose of the project as a flood control and water quality project. He said they also want to generate excitement around the park so people will come out and enjoy it.

Mr. Averyt said the multi-leveled approach to tell the story includes several outlets for social media, digital outlets, videos, a community blog, print ads, website, and a mobile app. Mr. Averyt said the creative platform for the marketing campaign is "a culture park flowing with purpose." He said the various platforms will be about the history and the ecosystem. He said they had come up with the design for the Fiesta medals. Mr. Averyt said they would be ready sometime in March before Fiesta and that this committee would be receiving the medals once they arrived.

Mr. Averyt then showed some of the interactive components of the website and mobile app. He said a lot of the literature about the park would be available online and will include a walking tour. A participant asked who would produce the content for the website. He said the DeBerry Group. The participant said she had been out to Elmendorf and liked quite a bit of the content on the interpretive signage but that they also included some information on birds she had never seen at Elmendorf so it seemed very general. She also asked if the committee had input from the African-American community because there has been a push to get them more involved in the Tricentennial. Mr. Averyt said they were looking to acknowledge and tell the story of the first African-American church near the Alameda Theatre. He said this question has come up more recently so they are working to make sure they do not get excluded. The participant said she wanted to make sure that local resources were reviewing the content that was going up to ensure the information is accurate. Mr. Averyt said they had internal experts that were reviewing this information but that they were certainly open to discussing any items that seemed wrong.

Another committee member asked if the fish displayed on the boards were going to be in the river. She said the Koi were beautiful and colorful but she did not believe they were appropriate. She was told the fish were just placeholders for now until appropriate pictures were available. Another participant said SARA should also look to involve the Southeast Asian community. Another participant asked how much city funding has already gone towards the app development because Millennials seem to be averse to downloading apps and prefer responsive websites instead. Mr. Averyt said he was not sure but that he would pass this information on to the team.

Mr. Averyt said April 5th at 11 a.m., they will have the countdown to transition news conference where the new logo will be revealed, the website will be announced, and they will start to do several promotions and build excitement. He said the plan is to do some more of the selective industry tours.

## **VI. Elmendorf Lake Park Pool**

Ms. Lizcano introduced Jamie Taylor, SARA's Project Manager, to give a presentation on the Elmendorf Lake Park Pool. Mr. Taylor started by showing the original configuration. He said it was a little bit difficult to merge the original design with a lap pool. He showed the original design and said they were looking for a more organic feel to it. He said after meeting with the City of San Antonio and discussing pumps and filters and what works best, the design consultant went back to the drawing board and was able to make it feel a little more organic.

Mr. Taylor then introduced Walter Heard from Terra Design Group to talk more about the pool amenities and design. Mr. Heard said the pool configuration has been rounded out from a pool designed strictly for recreation to one that includes a lap feature and a beach entry. The pool breaks out into several different areas. The lap feature is fairly shallow at about 5 feet. The beach area goes from zero and slopes at a shallow 5% grade. He also outlined the blue shade structures on the map that are on a single pole. He said some of these are out in the water and allow parents to have shade in the shallow end of the pool while they watch their children. He said the other end of the pool is for the adults and the water is deeper. There are also three seating areas at this end of the pool. Mr. Heard then showed similar pools designed in other areas of the city. Mr. Ramirez then asked if there were any bubblers that shoot water up above the surface of the water. Mr. Heard said that there was an issue with doing these because as soon as these features are included, it turns it into a spray garden instead of a pool and the design guidelines would be totally different for sanitation and filtration. He said they used to do it this way but State regulations have changed and now they are not able.

Mr. Heard said they have done three different shade studies to identify the optimal location for the shade structures. He said often these can look like they are randomly placed but they are actually placed for different times of the day in a very strategic manner. He then showed the guard building, the restroom, and changing room locations. He showed the connection to the playground and the parking lot. Mr. Taylor said they have been working with park staff to make sure that everything provided at the park is easily replaceable in case anything breaks.

Mr. Taylor said the schematic design phase was just completed so they are entering the design phase until April. He said there are a few additional permits needed from the City and the construction documents will be done by May or July and construction will start by August 2018. The goal will be to have it open by Memorial Day 2019. A meeting participant asked if there will be lifeguard stations and Mr. Taylor said yes. He also asked if there would be dividers between the different depths. Mr. Heard said this would be done using buoys. The same person asked if there would be security at night in addition to the fence around the pool. Mr. Heard said the park is very busy as compared to what it was several years ago and the more people that are out there, the more secure the area becomes. Mr. Taylor said the fence around the pool is a fine mesh and it is very hard to get over the top.

## **VII. Status Report on Westside Creeks Improvements Projects**

Mr. Taylor provided the update. He said they have received comments for Alazan, Martinez, and Zarzamora Creeks. He said for Zarzamora Creek, people thought the topographic lines on the maps made it difficult for people to understand so this issue was addressed before the subsequent public meetings. For Martinez Creek, he stated the public agreed that the information was clear and easy to understand and they were able to offer their feedback. He then reviewed a summary of the feedback collected for each of the creeks.

For Alazan Creek, Mr. Taylor said some of the feedback included a need for restrooms, water, and shade structures. He said general safety was also a concern but that this comes up often for all hike and bike trails. For Martinez Creek, he said people had many of the same concerns with the addition of pedestrian crossings, shades, and comments on the traffic signs. For Zarzamora Creek, the comments included the need for shade and a desire to see the trails extended all the way out to the Medical Center, as well as some comments about traffic and way finding signage. He said seating, water, shade structures, and signage were the top concerns overall and pedestrian safety was another big one. Mr. Taylor said for this trail system there will be lighting, security systems, shade, seating, water, and other amenities at the trail heads.

Mr. Taylor then provided an overview of the three Westside Creeks Trail System. He said Martinez and Zarzamora Creeks are at 70% design and Alazan Creek is entering the 95% design phase. He said at the public meeting on March 20<sup>th</sup>, SARA will be accepting comments on that phase. He said all of the creek alignments and locations of trail heads are locked in and SARA will be seeking feedback on the design of the trail heads. He then turned it over to the consultant, Darryl Spillmann with RESPEC Engineering. He said the hope is to get the project out to bid in August and the entire six miles will be complete by late 2019 and early 2020.

Mr. Spillmann then went over the design schedule. He said the next public meeting is March 20<sup>th</sup> and the hope is to advertise the project for bid this summer. He talked about the various aspects that were considered as part of the design. Some of this includes the elements of design or opportunities to see new and unexpected things as you are walking or riding a bicycle from one end to the other. The landscape architect said this was being done in a way that ensures safety so the surprises are not necessarily startling but just a new view or perspective.

A participant noted the importance of good signage for the facilities especially downtown. The consultant representative said signage was being given careful consideration and from all different directions. Mr. Spillmann went over the Alazan Creek project. He said they have a budget of \$6 million. This includes \$2.5 million in Federal Highway Administration monies and \$4 million in local money.

A participant asked if all of the trails would connect to Confluence Park. Mr. Taylor said they would all connect and people would have access to Confluence Park, the Mission Reach, and downtown. Another question was asked regarding connections to the streets. She asked which one was closest to UTSA Downtown campus. She said Cesar Chavez Street would be the closest at this point. She said it is right next to the SAHA property.

Mr. Taylor then went over some of the challenges encountered on the project. He said it is a tight schedule to fit within that funding cycle. He said SARA applied for a railway permit to go under the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) and it was denied. SARA is continuing to work with them to try to get this approved. There is an option that a portion of this project is not built when everything else is done and SARA is working to keep this



moving forward through an in-person meeting with UPRR. Mr. Taylor said the railroad does have a new permit reviewer. He said the main issue for the railroad is they consider it a liability to have pedestrians or any kind of traffic under one of their bridges. Also, the Army Corps of Engineers has not done their review yet so SARA staff will be going to meet with them in person.

For Martinez and Zarzamora Creek, he said there were not many changes since the last meeting. These projects are still over budget by quite a bit so SARA is looking for opportunities to reduce costs.

Mr. Taylor concluded by saying that everything is on track and schedule and they are looking for the next public meeting in March. Mr. Taylor said the lighting will be at the trailheads but SARA cannot have lighting along the creeks because it is a restoration project so FHWA does not allow lighting as it disrupts aquatic life. Someone asked what the options are with regards to the railroad. A participant said that in all the times she had worked with UPRR the first response is always a categorical no but they are typically open to more detailed discussions and it will be critical to have all the facts to present to them. Ms. Lizcano asked if there are any possibilities of sharing the committee the actual routes of the trail ways so they know where they are. For the next public meeting, the consultant team will be providing renderings so people can see what the projects look like.

#### **VIII. Miscellaneous Items**

Ms. Lizcano said she went by Elmendorf Park and they were starting on the public art work on the triangle property (used to be a restaurant). Mr. Ramirez said previously he had heard about some technology that is possible for Elmendorf. Mr. Taylor said the technology looks like a giant iPhone. He said the City originally wanted to put it by the Elmendorf Lake Pool but they did a traffic study and realized there is not enough traffic flow to make it work. Instead, they are putting it next to a nearby bus stop. Mr. Taylor will bring more information on this kiosk to the next meeting.

Abel Ramirez said that the League of American Wheelman are having their big summit next month and it would be good to send them a letter of the challenges being encountered on this project because they will be visiting their congressmen and some of them have very good connections.

#### **X. Adjourn**

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:53 p.m.