



**Westside Creeks Restoration
Oversight Committee Meeting
San Antonio River Authority
100 E. Guenther
August 21, 2018
6:00 pm**

Committee Members Present

Robert Ramirez, Co-Chair
Skye Curd, West SA Chamber of Commerce
Matthew Purdy, Beacon Hill Area NA
Anne Parrish, Bexar Audubon Society
Cary Guffey, Our Lady of the Lake University
Stella Tenorio-De La Garza, SACS

Carmen Vazquez-Gonzalez, San Antonio ISD
Kamala Platt, TexasTejano.com
Erwin DeLuna, United SA Pow Wow, Inc.
Charles Olsten, Woodlawn Lake NA

Staff and Public Present

Jim Campbell, SARA Board BC D4
Lourdes Galvan, SARA Board BC D2
Kerry Averyt, San Antonio River Authority
Hillary Lilly, San Antonio River Authority
Ruben Bazan, San Antonio River Authority
Carrie Brown, San Antonio River Authority
Richard De La Cruz, San Antonio River Authority
Daniel Leal, City of San Antonio (COSA)
Laura Calderon, Ximenes & Associates
Robert Solero, Pape-Dawson Engineers

Carol Cieszinski, Friends of Casa Navarro
Alexander Pytel, COSA District 5
Andi Rodriguez, San Antonio ISD
Victor San Miguel, Brown Berets
Lydia Garza, Soap Works Resident
Sergio Chavez, Woodlawn Lake
Samuel Woody
Matthew Pundy
Rick Lewis

I. Welcome

Mr. Ramirez opened the meeting by stating that the purpose of the committee is to provide resident input for the vision, planning, implementation, and monitoring of operations and maintenance of five creek projects that include Alazan, Apache, Martinez, San Pedro, and Zarzamora Creeks. He then introduced his new co-chair, Ms. Skye Curd. He said the San Antonio River Authority Board approved Skye Curd, a regular member who had been representing the West San Antonio Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Ramirez said he would handle part of the agenda and then hand it over to Ms. Curd. He acknowledged two of the board members in attendance, Mr. Jim Campbell and Ms. Lourdes Galvan. Mr. Ramirez then asked for audience introductions.

Hillary Lilly with the San Antonio River Authority (SARA) said Suzanne Scott, the SARA General Manager, was unable to attend the meeting due to the death of her administrative assistant.

II. Calendar-Reviewed by RR

Mr. Ramirez then reviewed the upcoming calendar items. He reminded members that the next Westside Creeks Restoration Oversight Committee (WCROC) meeting is set for November 20, 2018.

III. Citizens to be Heard

Mr. Ramirez said this agenda item used to be the last agenda item, but the agenda was rearranged so citizens did not have to wait. He then invited Lydia Garza up to make her public comments.

Ms. Garza introduced herself and said she had not known about the WCROC earlier. She said in October 2017 a new company began managing her apartment complex. Ms. Garza described herself as an elderly, handicapped person. She felt that the new company had treated residents unfairly, had withheld information from tenants, and they feared displacement.

Mr. Ramirez asked what she was asking from the committee. Ms. Garza said that she called many organizations, but no one responded or had been able to help the residents. Ms. Garza wanted to know if anyone had thought about the impacts on their apartments.

Mr. Ramirez then asked again what she would like to see done by the committee. He said the committee has written letters to the Mayor in support of residents. He also said the San Pedro Creek project has had unintended consequences, but the project itself has been positive.

Mr. Ramirez said that the WCROC is a citizens committee and supports the residents' cause. He asked again what the committee could do. Ms. Garza said that if the projects are to continue to go forward, then everyone needs to be notified, including neighborhoods and churches.

Mr. Ramirez said one of the recommendations made to the Mayor was to do a resident impact study for any city project. He also said that residents should get involved and attend meetings before things happen.

Erwin DeLuna called for a point of order. He said when the Westside Creeks were done, the committee had no control over any private developer. He said it is not within the purview of the committee and that Mr. Ramirez issued a letter requesting resident impact studies be done for future projects.

Kamala Platt said Roberto Rodriguez, the person she represents, started the committee to restore the Westside Creeks and that it is supportive of residents.

Mr. Ramirez then called time on the speaker. He reiterated that the committee supported residents and thanked her for her time. He then asked if any board member wanted to say anything.

Ms. Galvan said the Mayor's Housing Committee needs to tackle this issue and that all the WCROC can do is advocate for people living along the creek. Ms. Galvan said this issue should be taken back to Councilwoman Shirley Gonzales.

Ms. Platt asked if the City can add a benevolence clause stating that developers cannot behave in this manner. Mr. Ramirez said the committee can consider the impact on residents; there are lessons learned so something can be done in advance of projects.

Ms. Platt said New York City has rent control so there should be a way to influence what private developers do. She further said the committee should be doing something to advance these protections for residents.

Victor San Miguel then said the committee can do something and that the committee should push elected officials to do something.

Ms. Platt asked if the letter to the Mayor could be made public. Mr. Ramirez said it could be circulated to the committee and that it had been reviewed by several people before being sent. He asked for additional citizens to be heard and when no one responded. He then turned the meeting over to Ms. Curd.

IV. Approval of Minutes – May 15, 2018

Ms. Curd called for approval of the minutes. A quorum was not present, so the minutes were not approved.

V. Westside Creeks Improvements Projects – Rueben Bazan, SARA

Ms. Curd then introduced Rueben Bazan to provide a status update on the Westside Creeks and the Elmendorf Lake projects. See attached presentation details.

VI. Elmendorf Lake Park Pool – Reuben Bazan, SARA

Mr. Bazan briefed the committee on the status of the Elmendorf Lake pool. See attached presentation for details.

Mr. Bazan responded to various questions members asked about the project's amenities, such as the location of showers and the splash pad, bathroom lighting, fencing and shade.

Mr. Bazan then reviewed the Martinez Creek project. Ms. Parrish asked if the plantings would be like those along the Mission Reach. Mr. Bazan said it would simply be grass due to funding. Ms. Lilly said the future plans are to look at using USACE funding to restore the habitat. She said eventually native landscaping will be added. She said currently there is no budget for it but SARA will continue to work towards that.

Mr. Bazan reviewed the trailhead at N. Sabinas Street. He said some of the areas are not conducive to having the trailhead in the creek. He said this was one of those areas. He then showed the University Avenue Connection and said this is an area where they just put in a basketball court.

Mr. Bazan then provided an update on the Zarzamora Creek Trail and reviewed the different amenities that will be available along the creeks. Ms. Platt asked about the use of concrete trails. Mr. Bazan said concrete is used because the water would erode asphalt and would not

last. Ms. Platt asked to see what the difference in cost is between the different types of surface. Mr. Bazan said they could research this.

Ms. Platt said she was concerned about the environmental impact of adding impervious cover in the city. Ms. Curd asked if staff could do a comparative analysis. Mr. Bazan said that concrete has a 30 year life span and it is hard enough to get funding for a project and the more expensive the material the harder it is to find funding or do maintenance.

Ms. Curd said that it is a situation where it may be a necessary evil due to cost constraints. Mr. Averyt said another reason they are recommending concrete is that it is a proven material that will not be washed away. Mr. Bazan added that it was considered because flooding occurs only once or twice a year. Ms. Curd then asked to move on to the next item due to time constraints.

VII Status Report on San Pedro Creek Culture Park – Kerry Averyt, SARA

Mr. Ramirez introduced Kerry Averyt to give an overview of the San Pedro Creek project. See attached presentation for details.

One of the audience members asked about the algae and how long it will remain. Mr. Averyt said algae occurs naturally. Once the aquatic vegetation is planted, this will reduce algae nutrients. Currently, the water is often shut down during construction which contributes to the problem. Mr. Averyt said they are using aluminum hydrate to help control the algae. Ms. Parrish said she was concerned about using aluminum hydrate. Mr. Averyt said this was only for short-term use and that its use was being closely monitored.

VIII. Update on Public Art for San Pedro Creek Culture Park – Carrie Brown, SARA

Carrie Brown provided an update on programming. See attached presentation for details.

She said there were several events in May, June and July but not many in August due to the heat. She said she is currently working on future events. She said she is testing the area to see what works, what does not work, and planning events for the holiday season. Ms. Brown said that along with programming the space she is working to make it available for other groups and their events.

Ms. Brown talked about the Tricentennial artwork. She said the original contract was suspended and they have released a new request for qualifications (RFQ.) due by the end of August. She said they are only requesting qualifications and the three finalists will each submit a proposal.

Mr. Ramirez wanted to clarify that this was the art piece formerly known as Plethora. Ms. Brown then reviewed the schedule for the Tricentennial artwork and said the plan is to have the artwork installed and completed by the winter of 2019.

Ms. Curd said that an artist at the public hearing mentioned not having any experience. She asked if there were any small projects to give them this type of experience. Ms. Brown said that once the program gets rolling, there will be a platform for temporary installations, so artists can

gain experience. There are also national programs where established artists help emerging artists gain experience. She said the COSA also has similar programs and Ms. Brown has talked to them about how to work together.

A committee member asked if there is a way to get the public involved in the art along San Pedro Creek. Ms. Brown said this is definitely a possibility and that there are many different ways to get the public involved.

Mr. Ramirez mentioned the new art installation at the New Elmendorf Lake Park and encouraged everyone to go see it.

Ms. Platt asked if there is a way for the community to give input as to what history the murals will be portraying. Ms. Brown said the County has an idea of what they want, but the staff and artist will need to drill down with the community. Ms. Brown then asked if anyone had questions and hearing none Ms. Curd moved on to the next agenda item.

IX. Miscellaneous Items

None

X. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 8:21 P.M.