



**Westside Creeks Restoration
Oversight Committee (WCROC) Meeting
San Antonio River Authority
100 E. Guenther
Tuesday, June 21, 2016
Notes**

Committee Members Present

Olga Lizcano, Co-Chair
Abigail Rodriguez, Beacon Hill NA
Theodore Ozuna, Donaldson Terrace NA
Joanne Walsh, Downtown Resident Assoc.
Dave Stafford, Downtown Resident Assoc. (Alt)
Teodoro T. Zamora, Prospect Hill NA
Stella de la Garza, SA Conservation Society

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
Leonard Rodriguez, Westside Develop. Corp.
Karen Weehler, Woodlawn Lake NA

Staff and Public Present

Jeff Tyler, SARA
Rudy Farias, SARA
Therese Kenner, SARA
Bridget Hinze, SARA
Nicole Koeninger, SARA

Kristen Hansen, SARA
Sonia Jimenez, Ximenes & Associates
Veronica Mendez
Phoebe Gonzalez

I. Welcome

Olga Lizcano, Co-Chair, convened the meeting and let everyone know that Robert Ramirez, Co-Chair had another commitment. She then introduced and welcomed Prospect Hill representative, Teodoro Zamora, Jr. Ms. Lizcano then announced the calendar items.

II. Calendar Items

- San Pedro Creek Subcommittee Meeting – July 14, 2016 at 8:30 a.m. at 100 E. Guenther, Boardroom
- Westside Creeks Restoration Oversight Committee Meeting – August 16, 2016 at 6:00 p.m. at 100 E. Guenther, Boardroom

III. Approval of Meeting Minutes

Ms. Lizcano reminded the committee that the February meeting lacked a quorum so the meeting notes were not approved. The February notes as well as the April notes were considered for approval. There was no discussion regarding the February notes. The April notes, Dr. Evelyn Mitchell requested clarification be added under item 9, Miscellaneous Items. Specifically, the first paragraph, fourth and fifth sentence, needs to read, "There is an agreement for transfer credits between the two universities and the trails could allow for easier commutes. Memorial Library and Rosedale Park are on the greenway and the trail would also create neighborhood access." There was no other discussion or revisions. Abigail Rodriguez made a

motion to approve the notes as amended. Jude Valdez seconded it. The motion passed by majority.

IV. Status Report on Westside Creeks Improvements Projects

Westside Creeks Linear Creekway Trails

Jeff Tyler with the River Authority provided the update. He began by stating the period from April to June was one of the wettest on record. Mr. Tyler went on to say, as a result of the rain, the schedule for the current trail improvements completion has been delayed.

With regard to the next planned improvements, Mr. Tyler presented a map showing the currently funded Westside trails. The newly funded trails, being paid for from the City of San Antonio's sales tax proposition, on Zarzamora, Martinez, Alazan, and San Pedro Creek were approved by City Council in May and by the River Authority Board in June. The planning will begin in August. Mr. Tyler pointed out the map now includes Zarzamora Creek and no longer includes the segment of Martinez Creek connecting to the I-10 highway.

As for the current trail improvement effort, the Apache/San Pedro Creek trail is slated for opening early next month. This segment will bring the trail to the San Antonio River from Cassiano Park.

Mr. Tyler went on to say, the Alazan Creek trail grand opening was held on Saturday with landscape and vegetation still being completed. The new trail connects the Woodlawn Lake Casting Pond to Lombrano Street. In response to the question of extending this trail beyond Lombrano Street to connect the Lincoln Courts, Mr. Tyler stated the connection is still being explored and the funding is covered under the City's sales tax proposition. The Martinez Creek trail is substantially complete and was slightly delayed due to rain.

Elmendorf Lake Park

Mr. Tyler presented this update. He informed the group that the northern section of the park is expected to be substantially complete in August. It was hit the hardest with the rain and has been slightly delayed. The bridges will be complete by the end of June and the southern section of the park is slated for completion by the end of July. Mr. Tyler showed the progress photos along with the mosaic art benches. Mr. Tyler also showed the various funding sources and allocations for the park improvements. He then opened the floor to questions.

There was a question about the splash pad's location and features. Mr. Tyler explained the location will be next to new playground near 19th Street. The pad itself has a 25-foot diameter and six motion-activated components. In response to a question about additional funding, Mr. Tyler reminded everyone that the City is requesting \$2 million of the 2017 bond be included in the parks package from District 5. These funds are anticipated to fund a new pool at the park. There was a question about another construction tour and the grand opening date. The River Authority offered to conduct another tour and the grand opening date has not been set. The final question asked about concessions at the park. Mr. Tyler explained that

concessions are not anticipated and the River Authority would not be involved with that decision.

V. Status Report on San Pedro Creek Improvements Project

Bridget Hinze with the River Authority provided the updated. Ms. Hinze stated there is no design update this month since the agencies are doing internal reviews. She reminded the committee that the San Pedro Creek Subcommittee holds monthly meetings that are open to everyone. Ms. Hinze went on to say the Sundt/Davila Joint Venture was selected as the team for the construction manager at risk (CMAR) and are currently in contract negotiations. The Bexar County Commissioner's Court is expected to approve the selection on July 12.

Ms. Hinze went on to report on the status of the San Pedro Creek Design Overlay District. She is working with City's Office of Historic Preservation to create an overlay district similar to the River Improvement Overlay (RIO) Districts. The San Pedro Creek overlay will come under the heading of RIO 7. This new RIO will provide design guidelines for private development along the creek. The draft guidelines were sent to the City for review and the formal approval process. The new RIO is slated for consideration by City Council on September 8th or 15th, depending on the number of comments received. RIO 7 boundaries include all four phases of the creek improvements. Most of the area falls within the Downtown design guidelines (separate from the RIOs) and are designed to work in conjunction with the existing guidelines. A new overlay will be created for each phase of the San Pedro Creek improvements – RIOs 7A-7E. Ms. Hinze concluded this portion of her presentation by stating the guidelines do not apply to residential properties.

Art Assessment

Ms. Hinze continued the San Pedro Creek update and presented on the public art effort. She reminded the group that Bexar County, the funder of the improvements, removed the public art element from the base project last year. After re-evaluating the effort, the County has decided to contract a group of art consultants to develop a public art administrative framework. The panel of three consultants will recommend steps to initiate the art program. These steps include where to house the program and the program's structure. The committee had several questions. Ms. Hinze answered questions, unless otherwise noted.

Q: The public art program was originally scoped as a theme that evolved [the codex] – has this theme been drooped? *Not necessarily. The only decision was to take a step back to look at how the program will be done first. It is not lost.*

Q: What is the committee selection process? *This process was a recommendation from the art committee to secure these types of consultants. The request was sent to 17 consultants and three teams submitted proposals. This team was selected and the entire effort for the recommendations is \$50,000.*

Q: Are any of them local – it doesn't seem like locals are involved enough? *No. The County is looking at a more programmatic approach, with revolving art and more opportunities for local artists to be involved. This team is very knowledgeable about these types of programs. This [WCROC] committee was invited to meet them. They also met with local elected officials and the design team. They will not be selecting*

the artists or the art. They are looking at the organization that will house the program since there is no sponsor or funding identified.

Ms. Hinze went on to say Westside art groups were invited to participate in a local artist focus groups. The invited groups included Avenida Guadalupe Association, San Anto, and Guadalupe Cultural Arts. The three consultants will be back in San Antonio in late July. In response to several committee members saying they did not get invited to the June meeting, Ms. Hinze offered to set up a meeting for the WCROC to meet them. The committee presented her with a few more questions.

Q: In the early days of forming the oversight committee, we wanted South Texas and local flavor represented – what happened to that approach? *The design team is local and the project will reflect the history and culture of San Antonio. John Phillip Santos and Maria Pfeiffer contributed and that research is still on the table.*

Q: What is that these consultants have that no one local has? *Experience in creating an administrative framework for this type of program. Throughout their assessment and research, they are looking at other programs to look at budgets. These individuals have implemented these types of organizations.*

Ms. Hinze continued her presentation by stating the next steps in the process include the art consultants conducting additional research and refining their recommendations. They will be in San Antonio at the end of July to present the draft framework and collect feedback. In September, the art consultants' recommendations will be presented to the art advisory committee, the San Pedro Creek committee, the San Antonio River Authority Board, and Bexar County Commissioner's Court.

Tricentennial Art

Ms. Hinze informed the committee that Bexar County is interested in commissioning a tricentennial art piece. They have allocated \$900,000 toward an initial public art effort. Specifically, the County wants an installation at the tunnel inlet/Tree of Life Plaza and a placeholder for art on the southern edge by Santa Rosa. The project has been requested to be fast tracked to have it complete for the May 2018 tricentennial celebration. Ms. Hinze went on to explain out of the \$900,000, \$750,000 will be for the tricentennial art piece, \$100,000 to establish locations for two rotating art pieces, and the remaining \$50,000 for temporary art pieces to be installed in the first three years.

The process for artist selection will include an open call to artists, review of responses by the Art Advisory Committee and the Art Evaluation Committee, a shortlist recommendation to be approved by Commissioners Court, followed by proposals submitted by the shortlisted artists, public comment, staff reviews, interviews, and ultimate approval by Commissioners Court of the selected artist. The fast track schedule intends to have the entire selection process and County approval all complete by October 25, 2016. Ms. Hinze explained the Art Evaluation Committee was set up by Bexar County and will be chaired by Precinct 2 County Commissioner Paul Elizondo and include County Judge Nelson Wolff, representatives from District 1 City Council, the River Authority board, one property

owner, one resident, two arts organizations, and one local historian. She went on to say Art Advisory Committee will support the artist selection effort by reviewing and contributing to the open call for artists and the request for proposals to the shortlisted group. Ms. Hinze pointed out there will be an opportunity for public comment on the proposals.

The committee asked about having the same process in place for all of the Westside Creeks public art. One committee member was concerned that San Pedro Creek is being given an abundance of funding and the other creeks, as well as Elmendorf Lake Park, are considered less important. Other committee members added that historically the committee recommended strongly that all creeks have money set aside for art and that the proposed San Pedro Creek public art structure is creating a continued funding source should be applied to Elmendorf Lake Park and the other creeks. Ms. Hinze indicated she would make this recommendation to the County. Dr. Mitchell make a motion to send a letter to the River Authority to request the public art framework include all the Westside creeks and have at least one art installation on each of the four creeks. There was some discussion about private versus public funding. Abigail Rodriguez seconded the motion and the motion passed with all in favor and none opposed. Ms. Hinze went on to the next item under the San Pedro Creek update.

Groundbreaking

Ms. Hinze announced the groundbreaking for the first phase of the improvements is to be held on Thursday, September 8, 2016, from 6:30-9:00 p.m. It will be held near tunnel inlet where the Tree of Life Plaza will be constructed. With no further questions, Ms. Hinze concluded the San Pedro Creek update.

VI. Update on a Trash and Floatables Collection System to be Installed in Alazan Creek

Nicole Koeninger, Engineer with the River Authority, presented the follow-up to this item from the last WCROC meeting. Ms. Koeninger was asked to present to the committee to address concerns brought up at the last meeting. She explained the purpose of the system is to reduce contractor costs to clean trash from the creeks after a rain event. The device will consolidate and make trash collection much more efficient. She noted that in 2015, 203,130 pounds of trash was cleaned from the Mission Reach.

More specifically, Ms. Koeninger explained that Alazan Creek and Riverside Creek are the two pilot locations selected for testing the system. She went on to say other sites were considered and showed the group a map of the locations along with how the Alazan Creek flows to the San Antonio River Mission Reach. Ms. Koeninger reminded the committee how the system works using a trash basket and boom that rises and falls with the water level of the creek. The trash that is not captured by the system will have to be hand collected but that amount is expected to be significantly less than the amount without the device. There were 33 sites considered for the pilot study and a number of criteria to make the determination of an ideal site. The committee was provided the Trash and Floatables Review Guide along with the list of sites and the criteria matrix.

With regard to community outreach and education, Ms. Koeninger informed the group that the River Authority will be developing materials to educate the community about the device. They also plan on implementing this type of system into the middle school student's curriculum along with the "don't litter" campaign to help reinforce and lend to understand the consequences of littering. Ms. Koeninger then took questions from the committee.

Q: It looks like 75% of the potential locations did not meet the criteria – why would you choose a device that doesn't have widespread application? *The River Authority hired a firm to look at trash-laden areas without knowing the type of equipment that would be tested. If this pilot is successful, then other locations will be considered.*

Q: Did the contractor consider best practices? *Yes, the team considered national best practices to include Dallas, two sites in Florida, and one site in Georgia where the trash boom system was used.*

Q: Austin has velocity issues too? *The River Authority doesn't have the ability to capture the trash in the street like they do in Austin. The idea is to have the River Authority show that the collection system does work and then go to the City and the County to get their support.*

Q: What is the timeframe for the pilot? *The notice to proceed will be issued in the next couple of weeks. The device should be in place by the end of August or early September. The data collection period will be for three to five years. The results will be largely dependent on the weather. The system will be checked between rain events and will be compared to the time it takes to hand collect the same amount of trash.*

Q: Can this committee be part of the review process? *The agency is that far just yet. Currently, we are working on the educational component and other outreach. The review process or schedule is not yet known.*

A public comment period was suggested.

Q: Is there a backup plan in the event device fails? *The trash will just continue to flow downstream to the San Antonio River and will be picked up as usual.*

There was discussion about preventing littering and the ability to change human behavior. It was agreed that education is good and that campaigns, such as *Don't Mess with Texas*, have been known to work.

Q: How is success being defined? *The agency is looking at cost and does the device mitigate the problem. Kristen Hansen added that currently staff collects trash, weighs it, and reports it. The trash collected by the device will be weighed and see if it reduces the amount of trash further downstream. The agency has numbers based off a study in California and these numbers will be used as a guide. There is about one million pounds of trash that could make it to the Mission Reach and at this site alone, about 80,000 pounds could be collected.*

Q: What is cost to install the device? *It is approximately \$500,000 with \$36,000 annually for operations and maintenance.*

The request was made to have the metrics shared with the committee once the criteria for success are finalized.

With more discussion about the location and the purpose of the pilot, Ms. Lizcano concluded the agenda item but stating the need has been proven and the committee is not necessarily opposed to the installation as much as they are concerned that the school district and the community were not involved in the decision-making and notified earlier. She requested that in the future, the agency inform affected parties of what they plan to do.

VII. Miscellaneous Items

Dr. Mitchell asked for her motion from the last meeting to be considered now that a quorum is present. Ms. Lizcano informed her the letter from St. Mary's University President has been received by the agency. Dr. Mitchell renewed her motion to send a message to the River Authority to develop a conceptual plan to develop an Apache Creek trail to connect St. Mary's University to Our Lady of the Lake University. The idea is to have the plan in place when bond funding or any other funding sources become available. There was brief discussion about the length of the trail, funding sources, and it was noted that during a cursory study, it was determined there was not enough right-of-way and property would need to be acquired. Dr. Mitchell suggested that the trail could go to street level in places that are tight. She explained that by passing the motion, the committee's endorsement could signal the River Authority to start a new process. She also stated that St. Mary's (an alum) is willing to explore contributing to the funding. Rudy Farias added there is support for expanding the trails and a community desire and options can be formulated to see what can be done and who can finance it. Ms. Lizcano called a vote and the motion passed with all in favor and none opposed.

Abigail Rodriguez added that the boundaries of the Westside Creeks Restoration effort may need to be revisited if there are that many areas that want trails outside of the original boundaries of the US Army Corps of Engineers study.

VIII. Citizens to be Heard

Veronica Mendez requested clarification on the Elmendorf Lake Park budget. Mr. Tyler explained the effort was divided into three contracts and offered to stay to discuss it with her further.

IX. Adjourn

With no further business, Ms. Lizcano adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:44 p.m.