



**Westside Creeks Restoration
Oversight Committee Meeting
San Antonio River Authority
100 E. Guenther
May 21, 2019
6:00 pm**

Committee Members Present

Robert Ramirez, Co-Chair
 Skye Curd, Co-Chair
 Gabriel Velasquez, Avenida Guadalupe Assn.
 Matthew Purdy, Beacon Hill NA
 Anne Parrish, Bexar Audubon Society
 Joanne Walsh, Downtown Residents Assn.
 Cary Guffey, Our Lady of the Lake University
 Stella Tenoria-De La Garza, San Antonio
 Conservation Society

Kamala Platt, TexasTejano.com
 Erwin DeLuna, United SA Pow Wow, Inc.
 Veronica Lopez, West SA Chamber of
 Commerce
 Leonard Rodriguez, Westside Development
 Corp.
 Charles Olsten, Woodlawn Lake NA

Staff and Public Present

- Kerry Averyt, River Authority
- Richard De La Cruz, River Authority
- Reuben Bazan, River Authority
- Carrie Brown, River Authority
- Brian Mast, River Authority
- Monica Trevino Ortega, River Authority
- Mick Bartlett, River Authority
- Elaine Bretschneider, Ximenes & Assoc., Inc.
- Rebecca Johnson, City of San Antonio
- Daniel Leal, City of San Antonio
- Erica Taft, City of San Antonio
- Greg Harmon
- Alesia Garloch
- Rodolfo Rosales
- Alicia Davila
- Cosima Colvin
- Amelia Valdez
- Gloria Almaraz
- Roman Fruth
- Rachel Delgado

I. Welcome

Skye Curd welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced her Co-Chair Robert Ramirez. She asked everyone to identify themselves and their organization.

II. Citizens to be Heard

Alesia Garloch introduced herself as a citizen scientist who volunteers to observe nesting birds. She said that Elmendorf Lake currently uses an avian control spray, which includes ethyl alcohol, ethanol, diethylene glycol, and monomethyl ether. It is not meant for use near surface water, since it can negatively impact fish and invertebrates, and also causes negative reactions in asthmatics. She asked the committee to look into the use of the spray.

Mr. Ramirez said the River Authority recently briefed him on the spraying. It is used primarily to protect the River Authority's investment, since the birds were defecating on the tables and benches, and the spray repels them. Mr. Ramirez said that the committee should be briefed before decisions are made so they can inform the community. His biggest concern is that the committee is not kept informed before decisions are made.

Dr. Platt asked about the placement of the aerators, citing concerns about the spray's impact on people. Mr. Bazan said the spray is disbursed straight up into the air and carried by the prevailing winds. Lourdes Galvan, River Authority Board Member, said she was concerned because she was also unaware of the spraying. Mr. Bazan said the sprayer was installed in May 2017, shortly after the grand opening.

Ms. Garloch presented letters of support about safety concerns due to the spraying. Mr. Ramirez asked Ms. Garloch for copies of the letters to be included as part of her presentation.

III. Calendar Items

Ms. Curd reviewed the following calendar items:

- May 25, 2019 - Museum Reach Decennial Fest4All
- June 8, 2019 - CreekFest, Plaza de Fundación, San Pedro Creek Culture Park
- June 13, 2019 - San Pedro Creek Sub-Committee Meeting
- June 15, 2019 - Elmendorf Lake Park Community Pool Grand Opening
- July 11, 2019 - San Pedro Creek Sub-Committee Meeting
- August 8, 2019 - San Pedro Creek Sub-Committee Meeting
- August 20, 2019 - Westside Creeks Restoration Oversight Committee Meeting

IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes, November 20, 2018 & February 19, 2019

The minutes were reviewed and amendments were requested for the February 19, 2019 minutes. Mr. Velasquez asked that "Roberto Rodriguez" be added before "the Godfather." Dr. Platt asked to delete the word "cattle" in reference to the egrets. There being no further corrections, the November 20, 2018 minutes were approved as submitted, and the February 19, 2019 minutes were approved as amended.

V. Elmendorf Lake Egret Mitigation Update, Brian Mast, River Authority

Ms. Curd introduced Brian Mast. He said that the City had received public comments via an online poll, and will convene a stakeholder group within the next four weeks. He said the WCROC and the River Authority would be represented on the stakeholder group, along with other concerned citizens. He also added that the city's team who presented at the last WCROC meeting is no longer presenting to the community.

Dr. Platt referenced the survey, which she said consisted of one question that was leading since not everyone agrees that displacing the birds is a good idea. Mr. Ramirez said the question asked for comments on "the plan" but "the plan" was not included for

respondents to see. Mr. DeLuna asked if they could get a copy of the stakeholder group and Ms. Parrish said that the list had not been made public, possibly because the city was still collecting names.

Ms. Parrish read a statement from the Bexar Audubon Society (see attached) expressing concerns about egrets at Elmendorf Lake. Ms. Parrish said the society prefers a multi-pronged approach that includes technology to assist pilots, removal of the landfill attracting the egrets, and relocation of the rookeries.

Mr. Ramirez said that the committee's opinion is not representative of the River Authority, but represents the community's comments. He said the City had taken issue with some of the comments made at the previous meeting.

Mr. DeLuna asked if the City's stakeholder group supersedes the Oversight Committee's purview. Mr. Mast said the stakeholder group will focus on the bird mitigation issue. He said the committee's purpose is the restoration of the Westside Creeks, and while bird mitigation is important to the Oversight Committee, it is not restricted to the Oversight Committee.

Dr. Platt said the city is talking about 800-1200 birds flying over the airfield, although she and Ms. Parrish have not surveyed more than 250 cattle egrets. She questioned why Elmendorf Lake is the focus when it is not home to many birds.

Gabriel Velasquez said the committee has had responsibility for Elmendorf Lake and the islands. He agreed that the City should not convene a separate group, and said the stakeholder group should come back to the Oversight Committee so it can exercise its oversight function.

Ms. Curd introduced Dr. Rodolfo Rosales. Dr. Rosales asked who had made the decision to establish the stakeholder group. Ms. Parrish said she was contacted by Texas Parks and Wildlife as the president of the Bexar Audubon Society. Mr. Velasquez asked if these agencies are higher than the River Authority. Mr. Mast said the River Authority is not a regulatory agency. Mr. Velasquez asked if the Corps of Engineers should get involved to obtain a response from Texas Parks and Wildlife and Joint Base San Antonio (JBSA). Ms. Galvan also expressed frustration with the lack of transparency. Mr. Velasquez said that the city should coordinate with the Oversight Committee on issues related to the Westside Creeks.

Ms. Curd introduced Gloria Almaraz, a citizen who wished to speak. She said she had attended all meetings related to this issue. She said the community outreach for the meetings was inadequate and that there had been no transparency. Ms. Almaraz said she has not observed any birds approaching the flight line in the numbers reported by JBSA, and did not understand why these birds were being targeted.

VI. Briefing on Apache Creek Neighborhood Connection & Public Art Piece, Daniel Leal & Rebecca Johnson, City of San Antonio

Daniel Leal introduced himself. He said that he took notes on questions from the previous topic and will provide them to the City of San Antonio's public affairs group.

He presented plans for the pocket park that will connect Apache Creek to the surrounding neighborhood. The pocket park will be ADA compliant from the street, provide shelter, and include picnic tables and water fountains. He introduced Rebecca Johnson to present information on a focal point for the park.

She said she was working with Mr. Leal's team on a trail design strategy to brand the different trails. She presented the concept to the committee saying they wanted community feedback. The artist selected is Leticia Huerta, a local artist. She said the floral design proposed for the Apache Creek focal point would be implemented across other trails with different flowers and different colors.

When asked how the artist was selected, she said the City has a group of pre-approved artists. Then, a group of local residents select the artist for approval by the city's Arts Commission.

Mr. Ramirez asked how the locations are being identified and how the city will gauge community interest. She said they will involve the Greenway Trails and the Oversight committees. Mr. Ramirez introduced Amelia Valdez, president of the Historic Westside Neighborhood. She said she had not been invited to any meetings on this topic, but they should have been involved.

Cosima Colvin said she and Charles Olsten were asked to serve on an artist selection committee and when they arrived at the meeting, the artist had previously been selected. She said information was simply being presented, instead of having an inclusive process.

Mr. DeLuna said they appreciate everything PASA does to promote public art, but had concerns about the process. He said if the Oversight Committee provides input on the Westside Creeks, they should also provide oversight for the art being placed on the Westside Creeks.

Mr. Velasquez said he appreciated the global approach to this concept because it means the Westside will get the same as other more affluent parts of town. He said it is a way of ensuring the Westside will get a high quality product.

Someone asked why having vegetation and shrubs, instead of metal or other materials, was problematic. Mr. Velasquez said that the problem is that one percent of the budget

is dedicated to public art. Dr. Platt expressed a concern with using steel, one of the least energy-efficient materials. Mr. Leal said this park will be a butterfly park.

Mr. DeLuna commented that he understands the community would prefer not to have metal and that one percent is set aside for public art. He asked the committee to recall that the committee's goal is to improve the Westside Creeks for the betterment of the entire community. He said sometimes the committee focuses too much on the little things.

Mr. Olsten said that if the committee does not take advantage of this, it will go to another part of the city. His bigger concern is that the committee should be involved in what flowers get picked and how they are implemented. He said if the city and the River Authority are not willing to provide the data, the committee should respond and submit Freedom of Information Act requests.

Mr. Velasquez said the committee responds when necessary and that Mr. Ramirez has been a good steward when the Oversight Committee needs to act. Ms. Johnson said she wanted to clarify that they can only spend money on public art when it is tied to a bond project or in this case a bond drainage project.

Mr. Velasquez also expressed concerns about the artwork placed where Commerce and Buena Vista split saying it looked out place and he did not feel the community was properly involved in that particular piece of art.

Ms. Johnson completed her presentation by saying the artist is ready to move forward if the community is interested in moving forward.

Mr. Velasquez moved to accept the work as presented to the committee. Mr. DeLuna seconded the motion. Mr. Ramirez then asked to amend the motion to include the neighborhoods in the process moving forward. Mr. Velasquez accepted the amendment to include the Avenida Guadalupe Neighborhood Association, Prospect Hill Neighborhood Association, Westside Historic Neighborhood Association, and the Alazan-Apache Resident Council. Mr. Olsten seconded the motion as amended. The motion passed. Dr. Platt, who voted against the motion, said she was concerned about approving the motion when the neighborhood associations had not been included.

VII. Briefing on Elmendorf Lake BMP Monitoring, Mick Bartlett, River Authority (See Stormwater Monitoring at Elmendorf Lake presentation for details.)

Mr. Ramirez introduced Mick Bartlett, a storm water scientist, who provided background on the BMP monitoring at Elmendorf Lake. He said the first monitoring station was installed at Elmendorf Lake Park in 2019, and had a goal to improve water quality. He said they selected the bioretention on Buena Vista and 20th Street because it met all of the technical requirements.

Mr. Bartlett said their main objective is to quantify pollutant removal efficiencies by collecting a minimum of five qualifying storm events. He said another objective is to determine the water flow characteristics.

Someone asked if they were testing for the chemicals found in the avian spray. Mr. Bartlett said they were not as they test primarily for pollutants related to stormwater events, like metals, bacteria, nutrients, oils, and grease.

Mr. Ramirez asked if there would be an update at the next meeting. Mr. Bartlett said he needs five different events to complete testing and that he would return with the results at that time. Dr. Guffey asked if the data would be made available to the public. Mr. Bartlett said it would when a final report is published.

VIII. Status Report on Westside Creeks Improvements Projects, Richard De La Cruz, River Authority

(See Elmendorf Pool & Linear Creekway Trails presentation for details.)

Mr. Ramirez called on Richard De La Cruz and Reuben Bazan to provide an update on the Westside Creeks Improvements Projects. Mr. De La Cruz presented an overview map of all the trails being designed and those in various stages of completion. He then asked Mr. Bazan to provide an update on the Elmendorf Lake Park Pool.

IX. Status Report on Elmendorf Lake Park Pool, Reuben Bazan, River Authority

(See Elmendorf Pool & Linear Creekway Trails presentation for details.)

Mr. Bazan said that the Elmendorf Pool grand opening is scheduled for June 2019 and that the committee would receive an update later this evening. He said the SAWS project is still active on Shore Dr. on SW 19th Street and that the work would probably not be completed by the grand opening.

He briefly reviewed pool amenities. Ms. Galvan asked if the chairs would be under the umbrellas. Mr. Bazan said the umbrellas are over the water.

Mr. Bazan also reported that there is an issue with the fountains during flooding due to the debris from Zarzamora and Apache creeks. He said the city assumed responsibility when the work was completed in January 2017. One fountain will not be operational for a several weeks. Mr. Ramirez asked if they will be operating by the opening and Mr. Bazan replied that they were working toward that goal.

Stella Tenorio-De La Garza asked how the city was notifying the community about the pool opening. Mr. Bazan then invited Erica Taft, with the City of San Antonio. She said the information was on the city's social media accounts and that they would send notices to neighborhood associations. Ms. Galvan asked if they could send notices to area libraries to post and Ms. Taft agreed.

Mr. Ramirez said he also announced the opening at the Westside Neighborhood Associations Coalition. Ms. Taft said they sent out postcards within a three-mile radius.

Ms. Taft mentioned the website at www.sanantonioparksandrec.gov. She said there were other programs and more would be coming soon.

Dr. Platt asked questions about the presence of water hyacinth at Elmendorf Lake. Mr. Bazan said that he is going to be communicating to the City of San Antonio on how they manually eradicated them prior to construction so they can do the same. Dr. Platt asked if it was all manual. Mr. Bazan said some areas can use water-related herbicide but that most of it is manual. Dr. Platt asked that Mr. Bazan come back to the committee with a report on this topic.

After the pool update, Mr. Bazan continued reporting on the Westside Creeks trail projects. He said a bid for the Zarzamora Creek Trail was being evaluated, and will likely go to the board in June for a contractor recommendation. He then reviewed the trail details for Zarzamora Creek.

Regarding Alazan Creek, Mr. Bazan said the project is pending TxDOT approval of the environmental documentation prepared by the River Authority, as well as Union Pacific approval. He then reviewed the trail details for Alazan Creek.

Mr. Bazan said that the Martinez Creek Trail is on hold until the 2021 timeframe due to the SAWS sewer line project. He reviewed the trail details for Martinez Creek and presented the shade structure proposed for Alazan and Zarzamora Creeks.

X. Status Report on San Pedro Creek Culture Park and Communications, Kerry Averyt and Monica Trevino-Ortega, River Authority

(See San Pedro Creek Culture Park presentation for details.)

Kerry Averyt presented the remaining activities under Phase 1.1 and Phase 1.2 construction. He mentioned the installation of flashing beacons at the Santa Rosa pedestrian crossing. Mirrors on poles allow pedestrians to see oncoming traffic, but this does not always work as desired. If there is still an issue after a few months, the River Authority will ask the city for another improvement, such as rumble strips.

Regarding Phase 1.2 construction, he said the River Authority plans to close Commerce Street in mid-June to mid-July to complete bridge construction and utility installation. The River Authority has done a significant amount of outreach in advance, and he noted that pedestrians will not be rerouted.

Mr. Averyt spoke on their coordination efforts. He said the River Authority held a subcommittee meeting earlier in May, where he presented the same information. He mentioned coordinating with San Antonio ISD, UTSA Downtown Campus, Texas Public Radio and the Alameda Theater. The River Authority will also coordinate with the GSA federal courthouse project.

Monica Trevino-Ortega, community outreach and relations staff for the San Pedro Creek Culture Park, said they have several social media campaigns planned in support

of the park's one-year anniversary. Ms. Trevino-Ortega also provided an update and demonstration on the mobile app, which can be found at www.spcculturepark.com.

She then provided an update on the interpretive plan. She said Dr. Toxee has finalized the interpretive plan and Maria Pfeiffer and David Haynes are working on the interpretive panels for Phase 1.2.

She also discussed media inquiries. She said both KSAT and KENS inquired recently why the water is off and on and how the public is notified. Ms. Trevino-Ortega said River Authority is looking into text alerts to inform the community when water will be turned off.

She said the River Authority won the state and grand award for the ACEC Engineering Excellence Awards Gala. This is a significant honor, as they competed nationally against 195 other projects.

XI. Update on Public Art for San Pedro Creek Culture Park, Carrie Brown, River Authority (See San Pedro Creek Culture Park presentation for details.)

Carrie Brown reviewed programming at San Pedro Creek and discussed Creek Fest, planned for June 8, 2019. Since June 8 is Election Day, Dr. Platt asked if something could be done at the event to promote voting, and Ms. Brown replied they could.

Ms. Brown reviewed information on the permanent art installations. She said the Request for Qualifications for the water wall closed May 8, and 27 applications were received. She is assembling a panel to select three finalists to develop proposals, with the artist or artist team to be selected by late July.

With regards to Phase 1.3 and Phase 2, she is working with the design team to identify art and programming opportunities, so she can develop budgets for board approval in June. She mentioned they are also exploring partnerships with the city, UTSA, and the Linda Pace Foundation.

XII. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.