



**Westside Creeks Restoration
Oversight Committee Meeting
San Antonio River Authority
100 E. Guenther
November 19, 2019
6 p.m.**

Committee Members Present

Robert Ramirez, Co-Chair
Skye Curd, Co-Chair
Britt Coleman, Bexar Audubon Society
Veronica Lopez, West SA Chamber of
Commerce
Charles Oisten, Woodlawn Lake NA

Kamala Platt, PhD, TexasTejano.com
Abel Ramirez, San Antonio Wheelmen
Leonard Rodriguez, Westside Development
Corporation
Stella Tenorio-De La Garza, Conservation
Society of San Antonio

Staff and Public Present

Lourdes Galvan, SARA Board, D2
Suzanne Scott, SARA General Manager
Kerry Averyt, SARA
Richard De La Cruz, SARA
Reuben Bazan, SARA
Carrie Brown, SARA
Hillary Lilly, SARA
Brian Mast, SARA
Natalie Manning, City of San Antonio

Veronica Rippel, City of San Antonio
Daniel Leal, City of San Antonio
Cecilia Picazo, SA Water System
Alla Korostyshevsky, SA Water System
Mike Persyn, K. Friese & Associates
Gloria Almaraz
Aubrey Parks
Laura Calderon, Ximenes & Associates

I. Welcome

Mr. Ramirez opened the meeting by welcoming everyone. He noted Britt Coleman was standing in for Anne Parrish, Bexar Audubon Society. He also recognized Lourdes Galvan, SARA Board member and Suzanne Scott, SARA General Manager.

II. Citizens to be Heard

Mr. Ramirez called for Citizens to be Heard. No citizens were signed up to speak. Mr. Ramirez stated that at any time after a presentation, citizens could ask questions.

III. Calendar Items

Mr. Ramirez reviewed upcoming calendar items:

- Museum Reach River of Lights – December 7, 2019
- San Pedro Creek Sub-Committee Meeting – December 12, 2019
- ILLUME - December 14, 2019
- River of Lights Be River Proud Paddling Event - December 19, 2019
- San Pedro Creek Sub-Committee Meeting – January 9, 2019
- San Pedro Creek Sub-Committee Meeting – February 13, 2019
- Westside Creeks Restoration Oversight Committee Meeting – February 18, 2019

IV. Discussion and Appropriate Action on Meeting Frequency – Robert Ramirez

Mr. Ramirez said, at the last meeting, Co-Chair Skye Curd had made a motion regarding the frequency of committee meetings. Her concern was meetings ran long because so much information accumulates between meetings, and then it is dated. The SARA Board considered the motion, but for now, meetings will remain quarterly. To address Ms. Curd's motion, Mr. Ramirez said the Committee will begin receiving monthly email updates. In addition, Hillary Lilly has suggested a tour of the WCROC projects later in the spring. He added the Committee will discuss this at the February 2020 WCROC meeting. He also suggested holding a retreat to explore whether the Committee is meeting their original purpose, and whether it is receiving support from outside entities.

Lourdes Galvan stated the Committee should review its membership meeting attendance, and reach out to encourage attendance at the February meeting. If they do not attend, their organization should be replaced. Mr. Ramirez agreed.

Leonard Rodriguez stated he was disappointed in how the egret situation had been handled when another committee was established to study the issue. He said when the Committee's purpose is disregarded, members may be discouraged from attending. Mr. Ramirez agreed and said there would be further discussion on this later in the meeting.

V. Approval of Meeting Minutes – August 20, 2019

Mr. Ramirez stated a quorum was not present and tabled approval of the minutes.

VI. Briefing on Apache Creek Public Art Piece – Natalie Manning, City of San Antonio

Ms. Manning provided information on the project's location, public art opportunities, a report on the project's community engagement, and the timeline. (See presentation for full details.) The Department of Arts and Culture's goal for this park is to enhance the trail, and eventually install public art in fall 2020.

Mr. Ramirez suggested reaching out to neighborhood associations to have them help determine the historical symbolism that will be incorporated into the project.

Kamala Platt stated a representative of the Historic Westside Residents Association had not received notification. Mr. Ramirez said several meetings ago, he specifically requested they be contacted. He also suggested COSA meet with the Westside Neighborhood Coalition since they represent 12 associations.

Veronica Rippel, COSA Public Art Division, said COSA had implemented a social media campaign, and had kept the survey open for six weeks. She stated they will reach out to the neighborhoods and there is sufficient time to get input. When asked, Ms. Rippel said they could present to the neighborhood associations.

Upon conclusion of the presentation, Mr. Ramirez stated at this time, Ms. Curd would conduct the remainder of the meeting.

VII. Briefing on SAWS Rehab Package BBC Central Package 1, Alla Korostyshevsky, San Antonio Water System

Ms. Korostyshevsky stated this project is taking place near Alazan Creek. She wanted to provide information on the SAWS project in case neighborhood residents have questions.

She introduced Mike Persyn, K. Friese & Associates, as the Engineer of Record for the project. Mr. Persyn explained the project addresses sanitary sewer overflow reduction at two sites along Alazan Creek. The first location is near the confluence of Alazan and Martinez Creeks. The second location is near Tafolla Middle School. He provided project details on each location. (See presentation for full details.)

Ms. Curd asked about the difference between sewer rehab and a bypass. He explained sewer realignment involves realigning an existing pipe. A bypass is temporary and goes around an existing sewer line.

Ms. Galvan inquired about odor. Mr. Persyn said there will be sewer odor when the manhole cover is opened, but it will dissipate once closed.

Stella Tenorio-de la Garza asked if the community would be notified. Ms. Korostyshevsky said residents near the pipelines would receive a letter.

VIII. Status Report on Westside Creeks Improvement Project, Richard De La Cruz & Reuben Bazan, San Antonio River Authority (See presentation for full details.)

Mr. Bazan reviewed the Elmendorf Pool Project. He stated the project is being finalized in the next three weeks. The project is substantially complete, but corrections must be made on the pool and other items. Once the project is closed out, the warranty period begins.

Mr. Bazan then presented on the Apache Creek Trail, from Cassiano Park to Elemendorf Lake Park. There has not been much progress as the contractor has been slow. SAWS has had to push for completion. This project was due for completion in May 2018. This applies to both the SAWS Sewer Line Rehabilitation and the Linear Creekway Trail. SAWS has given the contractor until the end of November before seeking liquidated damages. The SAWS scheduled completion date is March 2020 for the trails, but it is likely the contractor will not complete the project in 2020.

Ms. Curd then called on Mr. De La Cruz to continue the presentation. Mr. De La Cruz provided an overview of the Zarzamora Creek Trail construction. The work is beginning at Alderete Park and the contractor has staged the construction trailer there. He stated residents near Alderete Park have received notice about the project.

Mr. De La Cruz reviewed the Alazan Creek Trail project, which is in the contracts phase. He stated Spaw Glass was the recommended contractor and December 2019 is the expected construction start date.

Regarding the Martinez Creek Trail, Mr. De La Cruz stated the project is currently on hold due to the SAWS Sanitary Sewer Replacement Project. The trail construction is scheduled for completion in June 2021.

Ms. Curd inquired about the source of funding for the trails. Mr. De La Cruz responded the funding comes from COSA and TxDOT with SARA managing the construction.

Mr. Rodriguez requested a status report be given on the US Army Corps of Engineers' (USACE) effort and the restoration of the creeks (not the hike and bike trails) at the February meeting.

Regarding funding, Brian Mast, with SARA, said SARA has been working with its congressional delegation to secure funds. He stated beneficial language to help obtain this funding was added to documents that clarify the appropriations bills.

Suzanne Scott, SARA General Manager, stated SARA had been discussing a new funding source that could fund the project locally or be used as a match. She added tomorrow the Board will discuss whether to embark on a public education program about a potential tax and the projects it could support.

Ms. Galvan said the restoration of the Westside Creeks is at a stalemate and funding is needed. Community input should direct whether restoration should be abandoned or completed.

Ms. Scott said at tomorrow's Board meeting, the Board will be asked to approve a public education campaign. Then, using that information, the Board can determine whether they want to put the restoration project on the ballot.

Mr. Mast said at the next WCROC meeting, the funding issue can be put on the agenda. He encouraged everyone to contact the Bexar congressional delegation to communicate to the USACE that the Westside Creeks Ecosystem Restoration Project is a high priority for the community.

IX. Status Report on San Pedro Creek Culture Park - Kerry Averyt, San Antonio River Authority

Mr. Averyt reviewed the status of the project for Phase 1.2 Construction and Phase 1.3 and Phase 2 Design. (See presentation for full details.)

X. Update on Public Art for San Pedro Creek Culture Park - Carrie Brown, San Antonio River Authority

Ms. Brown gave an update on the Fashion Week event held on October 3 and reviewed upcoming events.

Ms. Curd stated the San Pedro Creek Culture Park smart device app should add an option to receive event alerts. Ms. Brown responded she would look into it.

Ms. Brown described the Interactive Water Wall Project. A microphone will capture sound directed toward it, and the water wall lighting will react to the sound by changing colors. She was asked how the audience will know the wall lights are reacting to the TPR broadcast when no one is using the microphone. Ms. Brown stated they are working on information for the viewer that explains how the wall operates.

Ms. Curd asked if loud, nearby sound, such as curse words, could be picked up by the microphone. Ms. Brown responded the waterfall will create ample sound and the microphone picks up only what is immediately nearby.

Abel Ramirez asked if the microphone was stationary and could attract vandals. Ms. Brown said the live microphone will be encased within the stationary, bronze-cast microphone statue. Since bronze is durable, it can withstand vandalism.

Ms. Brown concluded her presentation by announcing the San Pedro Creek Culture Park won the 2019 Public Art Network Year-in-Review Award. She noted it is the only national award for public art projects. (See presentation for full details.)

XI. Miscellaneous Items – Robert Ramirez

Mr. Ramirez stated he would report on the Elmendorf Lake bird situation and on a meeting that occurred earlier that day.

Mr. Ramirez said he spoke with Bill Pennell, COSA Parks and Recreation, who implements the bird disbursement process. This habitat modification process will occur in phases throughout December. Notices describing the process will be mailed to neighboring residents beginning November 20.

Next, Mr. Ramirez updated the committee regarding his meeting with COSA Councilwoman Shirley Gonzales. He said it was COSA's general consensus that since the military is being affected, not much can be done. He added the City is considering some of the suggestions previously provided by the WCROC, such as the bird detection radar system.

Dr. Platt asked if the City is aware of the migration and the lake is a water, food and shelter source for the birds. She stated since the federal government is involved through the USDA, an environmental impact statement is required, as well as a public comment period.

Mr. Ramirez said the issue was raised and COSA said they would handle it directly through the USDA and the US Air Force. They did not discuss a restraining order since this falls under the SARA Board's purview. He stated he does not speak for SARA. But as an individual, he will meet with any organization to discuss further action. However, the WCROC could not act since the SARA Board must approve their actions.

Ms. Galvan said she had called District 5 staff, but had received no response. She added these concerns are falling on deaf ears and didn't think the Board could address the situation or force any action. Mr. Ramirez agreed, but said they could make a recommendation to the Board.

Mr. Ramirez stated Councilwoman Gonzales is spearheading a program called the Ecological Master Plan Overlay for Elmendorf Lake Park, that includes Bird Island. Today's meeting was the first one. The plan is at the visioning stage. He mentioned Mayor Hardberger had attended. A second meeting for the community is planned around the first of the year.

Mr. Ramirez explained Councilwoman Gonzales wants to enhance Elmendorf Lake Park. She had reached out to Mayor Hardberger about developing a conservancy similar to the Phil Hardberger Park Conservancy. A conservancy could be part of a 2022 bond, but Councilwoman Gonzales prefers private funding. Mr. Ramirez said the WCROC should be represented at the table during the planning process.

Dr. Platt asked if spraying would stop as part of ecological enhancement. Mr. Ramirez said the City's Climate Action and Adaptation Plan was brought up and he thinks it could be used as justification to stop the bird spraying.

He asked everyone to read the bird mitigation plan; it even mentions use of lethal force if necessary.

Mr. Ramirez stated he wanted to recommend a bird sanctuary be one of the projects undertaken.

XII. Adjournment at 8:05 PM

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.