



**Westside Creeks Restoration  
Oversight Committee Meeting  
San Antonio River Authority  
Online Meeting  
November 17, 2020, 6:00 pm**

**Committee Members Present**

Robert Ramirez, Co-Chair  
Skye Curd, Co-Chair  
Veronica Lopez-Alvarez, WSACC  
Erwin DeLuna, United SA Pow Wow Inc.  
Ramiro Gonzales, Westside Development Corp.  
Charles Oisten, Woodlawn Lake NA

Anne Parrish, Bexar Audubon Society  
Briana Salas, Ph.D., OLLU  
Patricia Seidenberger, SA Conservation Society  
Gabriel Velasquez, Avenida Guadalupe

**Staff and Public Present**

Kerry Averyt, SARA  
Reuben Bazan, SARA  
Carrie Brown, SARA  
Richard De La Cruz, SARA  
Hillary Lilly, SARA  
Brian Mast, SARA  
Steven Schauer, SARA  
Aarin Teague, SARA

Monica Trevino Ortega, SARA  
Michael Kiobassa, Kiobassa Smoked Meats  
Laura Waldrum, Kiobassa Smoked Meats  
Daniel Leal, City of San Antonio  
Laura Calderón, Ximenes & Assoc., Inc.  
On-screen name: RAM

**I. Welcome**

Co-Chair Robert Ramirez called the meeting to order. He welcomed and thanked everyone for attending the meeting. He said Hillary Lilly, SARA, would brief everyone on the virtual meeting procedures.

Co-Chair Skye Curd thanked meeting attendees. She said the WCROC wanted everyone to be heard and have their opinions respected, but they must observe time limits.

**II. Citizens to be Heard**

Ms. Lilly called for Citizens to be Heard. There were no citizens to be heard.

Ms. Lilly reviewed the meeting process. She explained after every agenda item, the WCROC has time to comment. The floor is then opened to members of the public, who have three minutes to provide their comments.

**III. Calendar Items**

Ms. Lilly reviewed upcoming calendar items through November. Due to COVID-19, all classes and meetings continue to be conducted virtually. Calendar items included:

- Yoga on the Creek with Mobile Om: Mondays in November
- San Pedro Creek Culture Park Fit & Flow: November 21, 2020
- San Pedro Creek Sub-Committee Meeting: December 10, 2020
- San Pedro Creek Culture Park Ilume: Making Spirits Bright, December 12, 2020

- San Pedro Creek Sub-Committee Meeting: January 14, 2021
- San Pedro Creek Sub-Committee Meeting: February 11, 2021
- Westside Creeks Restoration Oversight Committee Meeting: February 16, 2021

#### **IV. Approval of Meeting Minutes – May 19, 2020 and August 18, 2020**

Ms. Lilly stated a quorum was not present to approve these minutes. She asked members to review the minutes online and provide their comments to her.

#### **V. Ammonia Spill Recovery Progress Update –Michael Kiolbassa & Laura Waldrum, Kiolbassa Smoked Meats**

Ms. Lilly said the WCROC had reviewed spill details at its previous meeting. The presentation from Kiolbassa Smoked Meats looks to the future. She said the creek had returned to normal. Six new fish species were found in the Mission Reach and water quality had returned quickly.

Ms. Lilly stated SARA had received a Restitution Declaration from the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD). TPWD will visit the spill site, and discuss next steps and the use of funds. The Texas Commission on Environmental Quality (TCEQ) issued a fine to Kiolbassa, and SARA wants both funds combined to use in the areas affected by the spill. Once a determination is made on the use of the funds, SARA will update the WCROC. She introduced Michael Kiolbassa and Laura Waldrum from Kiolbassa Smoked Meats to present Kiolbassa's plans for the future and how they will engage with the WCROC and the westside community.

Mr. Kiolbassa thanked everyone for the opportunity to address the WCROC. He said he had expressed his regrets about the incident to Chris Vaughn, SARA, when they initially spoke. He wants the company to turn the negative incident into a long-term positive. Mr. Kiolbassa said the westside area has been home to the company for more than 70 years, so they take the accident seriously.

He explained a truck had hit an ammonia refrigeration unit which produced the spill. As a preventive measure, barriers have been installed around all refrigeration units. The company also repaired the damaged stormwater drain which contributed to the accident. Kiolbassa is working with the TPWD and SARA to appoint SARA as the custodian for the fines and restitution Kiolbassa receives. Mr. Kiolbassa said he is in conversation with Frates Seeligson, president of the San Antonio River Foundation (SARF). He told Mr. Seeligson he wanted to focus on the Westside Creeks Restoration project and an educational initiative for school children in the westside. He does not want to simply pay a fine and move on, but use the incident to create a long-term relationship with SARA & SARF.

Mr. Ramirez thanked Mr. Kiolbassa for working with the WCROC on a continuing basis. He said the WCROC will continue monitoring the developing dialogue on the incident, but he was very encouraged by Mr. Kiolbassa's presentation. He asked how the WCROC could have a voice in the discussions with SARF. Ms. Lilly said she would have Mr. Seeligson address the WCROC about the discussions occurring with Kiolbassa.

WCROC member Gabriel Velasquez said Avenida Guadalupe views businesses, like Kiolbassa, as neighbors and has been reaching out to them. He said accidents will happen, and Kiolbassa has worked to address the incident. He hoped Kiolbassa uses the incident as a learning moment to prevent future issues. He ended by saying Kiolbassa is an important part of the neighborhood and has shown integrity.

WCROC member Erwin DeLuna thanked Mr. Kiolbassa for their efforts, saying they could have fixed the problem and gone on, but they also took preventive measures. He acknowledged them for seeking projects offering a long-term benefit to the community.

Mr. Velasquez asked if the WCROC could provide a letter of support for Kiolbassa to SARF. Ms. Curd said action could not be taken without a quorum. Mr. Ramirez asked if SARF would be informed of the committee's support. Ms. Lilly said SARF is working with Kiolbassa, and SARA will work with SARF to keep the WCROC informed. Mr. Ramirez said the WCROC is a creation of the SARA Board, so he assumes the committee will be kept informed. Ms. Lilly agreed.

Ms. Curd thanked Mr. Kiolbassa for speaking to the committee. She said he had addressed misconceptions, making it clear an accident, not negligence, had caused the spill.

#### **VI. Status Report on Westside Creeks Improvements Projects –Reuben Bazan & Richard De La Cruz, River Authority**

Ms. Lilly introduced Reuben Bazan and Richard De La Cruz, to update the WCROC on the Westside Creeks Linear Trail Projects.

Mr. Bazan reviewed the Apache Creek Trail project, from Elmendorf Lake to Cassiano Park. He stated the project is a joint bid contract between COSA and SAWS. SARA manages the trails and park amenities. The project is about two years behind schedule, but will soon be finished. Mr. Bazan said once the capstones are installed and ADA parking is completed, the project will be considered substantially complete. Other outstanding items, like vegetation, will follow and be monitored when the final punch list is reviewed.

Mr. Bazan presented the status of the Zarzamora Creek Trail project, Phases 1 and 2. There will be eight trail-street connections, a bridge and trailhead. Once the trail is complete, visitors will be able to bike or walk from Alderete Park to the San Antonio River. From there, they can head upstream or toward the Mission Reach. Project completion is expected in April 2021.

Mr. De La Cruz updated the WCROC on the Alazan Creek Trail project. The project includes five street and two trail connections. He described the various construction activities underway along the trail. He said about one-third of the trail had been laid. The project's expected completion date is summer 2021.

Mr. De La Cruz reviewed the Martinez Creek Trail project. The trail has eight street connections and will tie into two existing trails. Construction contractor bidding will be conducted when the ongoing SAWS sanitary sewer replacement project, in the same area, is complete. Construction completion is expected by January 2021, about six months ahead of schedule due to good contractor performance.

Ms. Curd asked if the Apache Creek Trail Project was over-budget due to SAWS delays. Mr. Bazan said SARA had realized a small savings. Since the two projects were stand-alone, there were duplicated items, such as tree protection coverage or demolition. Duplicate items were removed from SARA's project budget, creating a savings. Other budget items, such as a retaining wall, were no longer needed due to the SAWS project. Mr. Bazan said when the contract is over, COSA will have funds returned to them. COSA plans to issue a contract for new trail lighting, making Apache Creek the only trail with lighting.

WCROC member Patricia Seidenberger asked if the current projects were funded by the city's 2015 bond or if funding was needed. Ms. Lilly responded all of the trail projects are fully-funded

by the city bonds. The creek restoration project that has been discussed for future implementation is currently unfunded.

See the related presentation, Linear Creek Trailways, for additional details.

### **VII. Status Report on San Pedro Creek Culture Park and Communications - Kerry Averyt, River Authority**

Kerry Averyt reviewed the current status of Phase 1.2 construction work and the African Methodist Episcopal (AME) Church foundation and mitigation process. Mr. Averyt said one of the most significant activities underway is the archaeological work on the AME Church foundation. There are ongoing project coordination activities with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), the Texas Historical Commission, and the COSA Office of Historical Preservation.

He said SARA is setting up a public outreach process to present a report on the structure's eligibility for inclusion in the National Historic Register. The site includes the old Alamo Icehouse and original Menger Soap Works Factory. Once SARA receives an eligibility determination, possibly by March 2021, they can review their mitigation options. Some construction could occur before March, depending on the eligibility determinations. Since the site location is at the northernmost point of the project, the area cannot open until construction is complete. The new completion date is spring 2022.

Mr. Averyt said Phases 1.3 and 2 construction was well underway. He stated SARA is coordinating its landscaping and civil site work with UTSA's design team. He reviewed various street closures due to the projects. Mr. Averyt said Phases 1.3 and 2 will reach substantial completion by February 2023.

Mr. Averyt said SARA had recently executed a contract amendment for Phases 3 and 4. Complete designs for both phases are expected by August 2021. This is a construction manager-at-risk project, where a set monthly fee is paid to manage the project. If SARA can construct Phases 3 and 4 during the same timeframe as Phases 1.3 and 2, SARA can save approximately \$250,000 per month. SARA is pushing to complete the design so construction can overlap and generate the savings.

Mr. Averyt reviewed ongoing partner coordination with COSA, the UTSA Downtown campus expansion, and other entities. He said that the Executive Committee, comprised of Bexar County, COSA and SARA representatives, had not met due to distancing restrictions, but members continue to coordinate by phone.

Mr. Ramirez congratulated Mr. Averyt on his promotion, and said he looked forward to working with his successor.

See the related presentation, San Pedro Creek Culture Park, for further details.

### **VIII. Update on Public Art for San Pedro Creek Culture Park (SPCCP) - Carrie Brown, River Authority**

Ms. Brown said they are preparing for Illume, SARA's annual holiday event. Due to the pandemic, the event will be virtual and include food demonstrations, dance groups, and artwork. She reviewed upcoming events (see events under Calendar Items above), which will remain virtual through March 2021.

Ms. Brown provided updates on the permanent public art projects in Phase 1.2. Artist Adam Frank's *Stream*, located between Houston and Commerce streets, will interact with a 250-foot waterwall across from Texas Public Radio (TPR) headquarters in the Alameda Theater building. She said SARA has contacted TPR and Penners to discuss coordinating their exterior lighting with SARA's artwork lighting.

Ms. Brown reviewed *Poetry and Historical Text*, which presents poetry by John Phillip Santos, etched into the limestone walls constructed in Phase 1.1. The artwork will be located at Alameda Gardens at Commerce St., and between Dolorosa and Nueva. The project is continued from Phase 1.1., as are the custom tiles designed by Michael Menchaca for Phase 1.2.

See the related presentation, San Pedro Creek Culture Park, for more details.

#### **IX. Miscellaneous Items**

No miscellaneous items were discussed.

#### **X. Adjourn**

Mr. Ramirez wished everyone safe and happy holidays. Ms. Curd confirmed with Ms. Lilly that there was no quorum. Ms. Curd thanked everyone and looked forward to working together in 2021. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:05 p.m.