



**Westside Creeks Restoration
Oversight Committee (WCROC) Meeting
San Antonio River Authority
GoToMeetings - Virtual
May 18, 2021, 6 p.m.**

Committee Members Present

Robert Ramirez, Co-Chair
Veronica Lopez-Alvarado, WSA Chamber of
Commerce
Erwin De Luna, United SA Pow Wow Inc.
Hillary Lilly, SAISD
Norberto Landin, Prospect Hill NA
Jerry Lockey, Beacon Hill NA

Anne Parrish, Bexar Audubon Society
Kamala Platt, Ph.D., TexasTejano.com
Albert Salgado, University of Texas at SA
Patricia Seidenberger, SA Conservation
Society
Gabriel Velasquez, Avenida Guadalupe
Assn.

Staff and Public Present

Lourdes Galvan, River Authority Board
Member
Reuben Bazan, River Authority
Carrie Brown, River Authority
Christine Clayton, River Authority
Richard De La Cruz, River Authority
Meera Keshav, River Authority
Brian Mast, River Authority
Monica Trevino-Ortega, River Authority

Michael Davila
A. De La O
Diane Duesterhoeft
Jerry Geyer, San Pedro Park Subcommittee
Scott Huddleston, SA Express-News
Daniel Leal, City of San Antonio
Amelia Valdez, Historic Westside Residents
Assn.
Laura Calderón, Ximenes & Assoc.

I. Welcome

Co-Chair Robert Ramirez called the WCROC meeting to order.

II. Roll Call

Ms. Keshav called the WCROC roll. Committee members who were present are listed above. A quorum was not present.

III. Citizens to be Heard

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

IV. Calendar Items

Mr. Ramirez reviewed several calendar items. He said some events would now be in-person. He noted the upcoming WCROC meeting, but was not sure if it would be virtual. The committee reviewed the San Pedro Culture Creek Park (SPCCP) events later in the agenda. Calendar items included:

- Yoga on the Creek with Mobile Om: Starts June 7, 2021, virtual and in-person on Mondays at 6 p.m., at Legacy Park.
- CreekFest: May 22-23, 2021, on SPCCP Facebook page and YouTube
- Community Drum Circle: June 8, 2021, 7 p.m., in-person at Legacy Park
- Fit & Flow: June 12, 2021, 9 a.m., in-person at Confluence Park
- San Pedro Creek Subcommittee Meeting: June 10, 2021, 9 a.m., virtual (GoToMeeting)

- Westside Creeks Restoration Oversight Committee Meeting: August 17, 2021, 6 p.m., venue to be determined

V. Approval of Meeting Minutes – March 2, 2021

The minutes were tabled since a quorum was not present.

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

Ms. Keshav introduced Reuben Bazan and Richard De La Cruz who gave updates on the Westside Creeks Linear Trails Project.

Mr. Bazan reviewed the status of the Apache Creek Trail project, which begins at Elmendorf Lake and ends at Cassiano Park. The project is a joint-bid contract between CoSA and San Antonio Water System (SAWS). The River Authority will manage the trails and park amenities. The contractor has completed all but one concrete punch item, and vegetation and signage is in progress. He said the trail is open, except for a small section where an ADA issue is being addressed.

Mr. Bazan presented the status of the Zarzamora Creek Trail project. Phase 1 is one mile long, and Phase 2 is .45 miles long. Both trails will have 10-foot-wide concrete hike and bike trails. There are three trailheads and eight street connections. Park amenities will include the standard amenities found at the other trails, such as shade structures, drinking fountains, benches, signage and trash receptacles. He said solar lights will also be installed at the trailheads.

All concrete work is in place between Alderete Park and Gen. McMullen, except for a portion at San Felipe St. due to a SAWS conflict. The River Authority issued a stop-work order to the contractor so SAWS could resolve the issue. In the meantime, the contractor is completing the concrete trail, retaining walls, vegetation and signage. The completion date for the San Felipe portion remains to be determined. The overall completion date for the remainder of the project is June 2021.

Amelia Valdez, HWRA representative, said the Apache Creek Park portion of the trailway continues to be neglected. The HWRA wants to see bike rentals, exercise equipment, more signage, greater attention given to the bathrooms, and the pavilions and bathrooms painted. Ms. Valdez said both she and the HWRA had applied to serve on the WCROC, but were not accepted. Mr. Ramirez explained WCROC members represent organizations and not individuals, but added the WCROC would approach the River Authority Board, since they decide on its membership.

Regarding amenities, he said the River Authority had held public workshops and charrettes prior to the projects being designed. He urged the HWRA to attend future workshops so their ideas could be included in the planning stages. She said HWRA had participated and these issues could be discussed at a later time.

WCROC member Gabriel Velasquez said, in light of media being present, he wanted to note the project had been ongoing for more than a decade. Many organizations, like Avenida Guadalupe Association, participated in planning the project, and are avenues for public comment on the project. The Westside Creeks project has been transparent, beneficial to the community, and has exhibited the best outcomes.

Mr. Ramirez agreed and said that was why the WCROC was created and encouraged Ms. Vasquez to stay involved.

Mr. De La Cruz updated the WCROC on the Alazan Creek Trail project. The project begins at Lombrano Street and ends at the Apache Creek confluence. It is 2.9 miles long, and includes five street and two trail connections. He described the various construction activities occurring along the trail. The project's expected completion date is summer 2021.

Lourdes Galvan, River Authority Board member, said they needed to identify where graffiti tagging had occurred, specifying a retaining wall between Commerce and Buena Vista streets. She asked if staff was aware of the tagging. Mr. De La Cruz said they were aware and added other several locations were tagged. The contractor was notified of the eyesore and told to remove it as soon as possible. When completed, the project's retaining walls will have an anti-graffiti coating for easy tag removal.

Ms. Galvan said the recent rains had eroded some of the project's dirt walls. Retention areas are now full of dirt. She asked how this will be abated since extensive land was lost. Mr. De La Cruz said every Friday the contractor must clean up dirt that lands on the trails. The contractor is responsible for replacing any lost soil before landscaping occurs. A landscape contractor has since added anti-erosion matting and bedding.

Mr. Velasquez said he has noticed high water velocity in places where the Alazan Creek curves. This water carries large amounts of trash. He asked if any project work would reduce the water's speed. Mr. De La Cruz said water velocities are inherent to the creek's layout, and the trail project has not altered the creek's velocities.

Mr. Jerry Lockey, representing the SPCCP, said there are piles of trash at all of the creeks. He added the parks should not be responsible for cleaning up the trash.

Mr. Ramirez asked about a trash-collector demonstration project located at one of the creeks. Mr. De La Cruz said there is a Bandalong system, near Tafolla Middle School, to capture trash flowing along the creek's centerline. It is cleaned out periodically by CoSA. During very heavy rains, overflows occur and trash escapes. The contractor must remove the trash as part of their contract. After substantial completion, CoSA will be responsible for collecting the trash from the creek.

Mr. Velasquez said the community was to blame for the accumulation of trash. He said a campaign using "cultura" was needed to raise the community's consciousness about littering. Mr. Ramirez agreed. Mr. Velasquez said the Avenida Guadalupe Association could take the lead in convening interested members to meet with the River Authority to come up with ideas, even without available funding.

Brian Mast, River Authority, said 11 tons of trash from the last storm events had been collected. The River Authority is currently conducting focus groups on trash and litter abatement campaigns, and will fund a media campaign in the upcoming fiscal year. Mr. Mast said he would like to see Avenida Guadalupe Association participate.

Mr. Ramirez said, for outreach purposes, WCROC is composed of 20 organizations representing thousands of people whom they can reach. The Westside Neighborhood Coalition also represents 13 neighborhood associations to which they can distribute information.

Mr. De La Cruz reviewed the Martinez Creek Trail project. The trail is 1.45 miles long and includes a hike and bike trail. It has eight street connections and will tie into two existing trails. The project is fully designed and funding is anticipated soon. The project has been on hold due to a SAWS sanitary sewer pipe replacement project completed in spring 2021.

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

VII. Status Report on Brazos St. Pocket Park, Apache Creek NRT Designation, and City of San Antonio (CoSA) Recognition and Formal Naming Process, Daniel Leal, CoSA, Parks Department

Mr. Ramirez introduced Daniel Leal, CoSA, to address the Brazos Street pocket park, the Apache Creek National Recreational Trail designation, and the possible acknowledgement of Roberto Rodriguez.

Mr. Leal reported the city is enhancing the Brazos Street pocket park along the Apache Creek. Enhancements include a 13-foot concrete trail, trees, signage, a garden, sculptures and pavilions. It is slated for completion in July 2021.

He said the Apache Creek Trail will officially be designated as a National Recreational Trail by the National Park Service in June 2021. The designation extends from General McMullen to the confluence with San Pedro Creek.

In response to a request from the WCROC, Mr. Leal presented CoSA's options for acknowledging Roberto Rodriguez's contributions to the restoration of the Westside Creeks. He presented two avenues for the acknowledgement, Recognition or Formal Naming, and provided examples of each.

Mr. Velasquez said the presentation was not responsive to the WCROC's request, which was to name the entire Westside Creeks Restoration project in honor of Roberto Rodriguez. He said the minutes from previous years show this has been an ongoing discussion, but no action has occurred.

Mr. Leal said the city's formal naming process can only be used for an unnamed park property or facility. The city's entire trailway system is named for former Mayor Howard Peak and the Westside Creeks are part of the Howard W. Peak Greenway Trails System. He said once a park is named after a person, the name remains since removing the name would be disrespectful. He cited Mayor Peak's role in the development of the city's trail system.

Mr. Velasquez disagreed with Mr. Leal's comments. Mr. Ramirez asked Mr. Leal to continue the presentation without editorial comments. Mr. Ramirez thanked Mr. Leal at the conclusion of his presentation.

Ms. Galvan said the presentation provided good information on the process, and once someone is elected to represent City Council District 5, they can be asked to spearhead the renaming. She added the WCROC should determine the location to be named in honor of Roberto Rodriguez.

Mr. Velasquez said the Westside Creeks project would not be happening if Mr. Rodriguez had not fought for its restoration. Mr. Rodriguez is called the "Godfather of the Westside Creeks" for a reason. When investment was not coming to the Westside creeks, Mr. Rodriguez showed the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and the River Authority, where the 1954 channelization specifically mentioned the Alazan, Apache, and Martinez creeks. The entire city has enjoyed San Pedro Creek for generations, which would not have been possible without Mr. Rodriguez's work.

Mr. Ramirez suggested he, Ms. Galvan, Mr. Velasquez, and others who are interested, meet to plan the renaming effort. He said the exact renaming request needs to be determined. Ms. Galvan

said Bexar County had been involved in the creeks project and might have an interest. Mr. Ramirez added that since the Westside creeks are also a federal project, there may be naming opportunities outside of CoSA's process.

Jerry Geyer, San Pedro Creek Subcommittee, said he wanted to be involved in the renaming. He said there are many historical records from the Conservation Society and other organizations, which document the efforts to improve the creeks by Mr. Rodriguez and others. He cited instances of support by Bexar County leaders for Rodriguez's work on the creeks.

Mr. Ramirez said he would circulate an email about the meeting to discuss the renaming and encouraged members to attend.

See the related presentation, City of San Antonio Update, for additional details.

VIII. Status Report on San Pedro Creek Culture Park and Communications – Christine Clayton & Monica Trevino-Ortega, River Authority

Mr. Ramirez acknowledged the presence of Jerry Geyer, San Pedro Creek Subcommittee.

Ms. Clayton reviewed the status of Phase 1.2. The USACE's public comment period for the historic foundation's design expired March 8, 2021. Due to an issue with the email submission process, the submission deadline was extended to June 14, 2021 for those persons who emailed their comments. Other Phase 1.2 work continues. The USACE has allowed utility work, outside of the footprint of the foundation, to proceed.

The River Authority is also developing a plan for removing the foundation components ineligible for the National Historic Register, as well as a plan for the eligible portions of the foundation. A stakeholders' workshop is being planned focusing on preserving the archeological site and telling its story. The goal is for USACE to approve a final design by August 2021.

Ms. Clayton reviewed construction activities for Phase 1.3, from Graham St. to Cesar Chavez Blvd. Work is starting on a bioretention pond with green infrastructure, which will treat the water before it reaches the creek. She noted this is possible because of a partnership with nearby property owners.

In Phase 2, from Guadalupe Street to the railroad bridge, utility relocation is ongoing. Archeological features were found on S. Alamo St., however archeological investigators approved removal, allowing the project to proceed.

Ms. Clayton said Phases 3 and 4 will complete the project, and connect all of the segments. These two segments will extend all the way to the confluence with the Alazan Creek beneath I-35. The River Authority recently received the first design submittal. They are reaching out to property owners and stakeholders for property acquisition and to update them on the design. They are also working with Union Pacific Railroad and the Texas Department of Transportation since work will occur within both of their rights-of-way.

After the SPCCP presentation concluded, Mr. Geyer said SPCCP has an extensive trash collection and removal system to prevent different types of trash from entering the tunnel system. He said the draft designs for the Phase 4 SPCCP Linear Parkway, from Cesar Chavez to El Paso St., were impressive and the WCROC will like the design. The project will be completed in 2023.

Mr. Ramirez asked Ms. Clayton to provide the Phase 4 information mentioned by Mr. Geyer to the WCROC through Ms. Keshav, who will transmit it via a monthly packet.

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

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

Ms. Brown provided an update on the public art project in Phase 1.1, Creek Lines. This piece was commissioned to celebrate Bexar County's 300-year anniversary. It will be located in the upper plaza when installation begins in June 2021.

Phase 1.2 has a new project, the Five-Panel Mural. Teams of artists have been selected as finalists who will submit proposals. It is anticipated Commissioner's Court will approve the project in June 2021.

Ms. Brown reviewed the SPCCP calendar items listed on the meeting agenda. She said starting in June, some in-person events will be held, such as Monday Night Yoga and the Community Drum Circle. She highlighted Creekfest 2021, occurring virtually on May 22-23, 2021 on Facebook and YouTube.

Ms. Galvan said SPCCP presentations should include information on the River Authority's joint events with the SA River Foundation to encourage broader participation. Mr. Ramirez asked Ms. Keshav to request the information from the foundation.

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

X. Miscellaneous Items

Mr. Ramirez told Ms. Galvan they needed to review the list of member organizations who have not participated and replace them. He asked Ms. Galvan about moving forward on this since the River Authority Board must act. She agreed it was time to seek interested members.

Regarding a meeting to pursue an honorific naming for Roberto Rodriguez, Mr. Ramirez asked Ms. Keshav to coordinate an email to the members to identify those interested in attending.

Regarding a quorum, Mr. Velasquez suggested changing the quorum requirements. Mr. Ramirez, agreed it could be done, but only if a quorum was present to change the by-laws.

XI. Adjourn

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:40 p.m.