



**MEETING NOTES  
AUGUST 7, 2015  
100 E. GUENTHER  
8:30 A.M.**

**ATTENDING: MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES-** Ben Brewer, Marilyn Bradley, Ernest Bromley, Giorgio Colussi, Michael Cortez, Pat DiGiovanni, Caleb Etheredge, Jerry Geyer, Scott Gustafson, Andi Rodriguez, Humberto Saldaña, Trey Whiddon. **STAFF AND CONSULTANTS-** Michael Arrington, Kerry Averyt, Tony Canez, Dan Curry, Steve Graham, Bridget Hinze, Kerim Jacaman, Jeff Mitchell, John Mize, Brice Moczygemba, Bob Perez, Russell Persyn, Suzanne Scott, Laura Vasquez, Linda Ximenes. **PUBLIC-** Jeff Webster, Don Mathis, Asher Reilly, Orlando Rangel, Iris Dinnick, Robert Ramirez, Heath Cover, Chris McKnight, Claus D. Heide, Olga Lizcano, Marylee Williams, Anna Alicia Romero, Hector Cardenas, Blake Rosenthal, Rosemary Geyer

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Jerry Geyer called the meeting to order at 8:34 a.m., noting that the items on the agenda did not require a quorum, except for the approval of the meeting notes.

**CALENDAR ITEMS**

Michael Cortez reviewed the calendar items.

**APPROVAL OF MEETING NOTES FROM JULY 9**

Ben Brewer moved to approve the minutes as submitted and Giorgio Colussi seconded the motion. Motion carried.

**PRESENTATION ON 70 PERCENT DESIGN**

Suzanne Scott, General Manager of the San Antonio River Authority, reviewed the design process emphasizing the unusual swiftness of the timeline authorized by Bexar County. She noted that the public comment process has lagged behind the design process so there will be some modifications to the design as indicated by the public input. She emphasized that public comment is being taken into account for the design. The co-chairs have been taking the comments very seriously and have been meeting with the design team and others to assure the comments are considered. She added they will be presenting the design to Commissioners Court on Tuesday in a workshop format for them to consider approval of moving forward.

Pat Giovanni commented on a letter referred to in a Rivard Report article about a stakeholder who had concerns about the design. He questioned the process

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wherein the subcommittee was not informed of the letter from this and other stakeholders. He objected to reading about these concerns in the newspaper, instead of being notified at the subcommittee level. He hoped this situation would be discussed at this meeting.

Ms. Scott read the letter she received from James Lifshutz, pointing out that the response to his request to remove some elements of the project and addressing them more slowly is being evaluated now. The subcommittee had not been informed because the design team did not have a specific design response yet. When asked why the subcommittee was not informed about the letter, Ms. Scott responded that the co-chairs were informed and the design team was considering all letters and concerns; they did not want to put any stakeholder above any other. The letter stated concerns similar to those expressed by others.

The co-chairs have met with the design team and the County representatives to address the concerns about the design expressed in letters and through the survey implemented in May-June. These concerns and the co-chairs' interest in addressing them have been reported at the last two subcommittee meetings.

Although appreciation for the co-chairs' leadership was stated, Mr. DiGiovanni questioned the value of the subcommittee if they are not kept informed of the concerns about the design as well as the praise for it.

Mr. Geyer stated that the major concern during the meeting with the County staff was that the overall design for the full length of the linear parkway was being overshadowed by the emphasis placed on illustrations of specific features and design elements. There is a feeling that some features are "overdone" because the illustrations are too exuberant and the colors are too vivid. The meeting attendees agreed that the illustrations are mostly placeholders at this point, and we can expect changes as the design proceeds. The County will continue to focus on the overall design and make adjustments to individual features as the design progresses. All of these concerns had also been discussed with the subcommittee at previous meetings.

The design team will illustrate some changes for Bexar County Commissioners Court so they can give an idea of how the design will change from the 70 to 90 percent points. . Some of the specific features in question may become part of areas subject to the art curation process being coordinated with the City's public art process.

For the 70 percent design, the team focused on the infrastructure to be sure it is sound and can be built upon. The purpose of the project is flood control so they have to be sure those elements work under conditions when the channel is full and there is significant runoff from surface drainage. The goals of the project, the public input and the costs all have to be balanced through the decision-making process.

The design team includes a cost estimator and construction management firm who

will provide a cost estimate for the 90 percent design. The contractor will determine the actual costs at the time of the bids. Cost estimates are done throughout the design process. The estimates at 70 percent have increased about five percent from the 40 percent estimate because of the inclusion of utility relocations. Some of the relocation costs are eligible for reimbursement. Other costs need to be included. There will also be a Value Engineering review to see where changes can be made to lower costs without sacrificing any of the infrastructure or general design objectives.

The County wants to focus on Phase 1 and 2 because the flood benefits come in Phase 2. The entire project will be designed, but only Phases 1 and 2 will be constructed on this timeline.

Mr. Geyer asked if there was a need to call special meetings when situations arise. There was no desire expressed on the part of the subcommittee members present to change the process. **They requested however, that they be provided more information as situations of concern occurred.**<sup>1</sup>

The co-chairs agreed this was an important conversation to have at this time.

Jeff Mitchell, Design Team Consultants, reviewed the process for the design and the information gathered from the public through the workshops and the survey. The emphasis for this level of design has been on the infrastructure, and they have also been focusing on coordinating the public art. They are working on developing a process to incorporate the public art and setting up a Public Art Advisory Committee with the City's Department of Cultural and Creative Development. Caleb Etheredge is the San Pedro Creek Subcommittee representative on the advisory committee. There will be a solicitation by the end of September. The design team is still deciding how the solicitations will function.

The team has also been reviewing the costs and refining the phasing for the construction, based on the cost estimate they received last week. As a result they are extending the boundary to Phase 2 to the railroad bridge downstream of South Alamo. They are looking at how to reconcile the costs and still address public feedback concerning design, amenities, etc.

Mr. Mitchell reviewed the areas in which they can refine the design to address the costs. (Please see the presentation for details.) One approach would be to do all of the design elements in Phase 1 and limit the initial construction in Phase 2 to the flood control elements, and then add the amenities later. This approach would fit the budget for Phases 1 and 2 and construct the project.

When asked how this would be presented to Commissioners Court, Mr. Mitchell responded that they would have new renderings on the Tree of Life Plaza and the

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<sup>1</sup> Text in bold type indicates an item that needs follow-up or some kind of action.

archway that are not available today. **Once SARA gets authorization to move to the 90 percent design, the new renderings would be presented to the subcommittee.** The amphitheater is more complex since they are coordinating the design with the Frost Bank Tower. The Campo Abajo would be the fourth visualization if it were only a flood control project.

There was a discussion of the benefits to the whole area around the amphitheater. The design team is exploring how to integrate all the different elements so that it enhances the life within the nearby community. The intention to have the Alameda Theater opened at the same time as the amphitheater was expressed by a subcommittee member.

Once the design for Phases 1 and 2 are complete, the team will focus on designing Phases 3 and 4.

Steve Tillotson stated the final draft of the storytelling aspect was due from John Phillip Santos on August 15<sup>th</sup>. They hope to open the process up in a meaningful way and will have this set up in the next 10 days. Then they will be able to inform the advisory committee how to proceed.

When asked to describe the landscaping aspects of the project, Mr. Tillotson, explained there will be a great deal of landscaping used: aquatic plantings, shady green experiences will be created except where it is not feasible; there will be more “softscaping” than hardscaping. Once the design process began, the team decided to bring on a full-time landscape architect who could focus completely on this project. **The request was made for a presentation by the landscape architect of the landscape elements and how they integrate into the flood control aspect of the project for the September subcommittee meeting.**

Mr. Mitchell reviewed different drawings from the 70 percent plan. He pointed out that the plans do not show the floodplain but show the channel. The floodplain will be within the channel once the project is constructed.

The 40 percent plan is already on the website and the 70 percent plan will be uploaded so that it will not take forever to download it, since it is a big document. The pdf files are organized by character area. **A notice will be sent out once it is uploaded.**

Mr. Geyer strongly encouraged everyone to attend the workshop with the Commissioners Court on Tuesday, which will focus primarily on San Pedro Creek.

When asked to comment, Olga Lizcano, co-chair of the Westside Creeks Restoration Oversight Committee (WCROC) asked if there would be anything presented to the WCROC, and Robert Ramirez, co-chair of the WCROC **requested a presentation on what the subcommittee is doing.**

## **OTHER ITEMS**

There were no other items presented.

## **ITEMS TO PRESENT TO WCROC**

- A summary of the San Pedro Creek Subcommittee's activities

## **COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

Don Mathis asked if Larry Stephens would comment on his artwork and how it will fit in with the project. Ms. Scott noted that the artwork is not approved at this point and will be part of the curation process.

Mr. Cortez asked Mr. Etheredge how the Public Art Advisory Committee meetings were going so far. Mr. Etheredge responded that they seem to be following the City's process for attracting and identifying the artists. They will be using a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) process and other mechanisms.

Hector Cardenas was introduced as someone who was instrumental in the preservation of the San Pedro Springs Park. He was also involved in the establishment of the Fire Museum. Mr. Cardenas thanked everyone for their work and remarked that he was glad "things are going to be toned down." He also thought it would be helpful to see the art and how it will be distributed. He had two questions: 1) who is going to maintain the art: the City or SARA; and 2) who will handle the flood control gates downtown? Ms. Scott replied that SARA is talking with the City of San Antonio (COSA) to determine who will maintain the art. The three downtown gates are similar to the Brooklyn Street gate and Gate 6. It has not been determined yet who will maintain and operate them. Much of it is automated. Regulations will need to be determined and operating and maintenance protocols established.

Ms. Lizcano thanked everyone on this project, and pointed out that it's one of the main creeks of the Westside Creeks Improvements Project.

## **ADJOURN**

Ben Brewer moved to adjourn and Giorgio Colussi seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 10:17 a.m.