



MEETING NOTES
SEPTEMBER 10, 2015
SAN ANTONIO RIVER AUTHORITY
100 EAST GUENTHER, BOARD ROOM
8:30 A.M.

ATTENDING: MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES- Marilyn Bradley, Ben Brewer, Ernest Bromley, Bob Corbo, Michael Cortez, Ed Cross, Stella de la Garza, Caleb Etheredge, Jerry Geyer, Scott Gustafson, Andi Rodriguez; **STAFF AND CONSULTANTS-** Carmen Abad-Fitts, Michael Arrington, Ronnie Biediger, Sam Dawson, Rudy Farias, David Garza, Steve Graham, Bridget Hinze, Kerim Jacaman, Marianne Kumley, Jeff Mitchell, John Mize, Brice Moczygemba, Amanda Nasto,, Bob Perez, Russell Persyn, Shiva Sandrana, Suzanne Scott, Steven Tillotson, Todd Brant, Kerry Averyt, Linda Ximenes; **PUBLIC-** Don Mathis, Heath Cover, Randy Smith, Dave Stafford, Darrell Arevalo, Rick Glover, Robert Ramirez, Rosemary Geyer, Robert Rivard, Anna Alicia Romero, Larry Stevens, Damien Mavis, Debra Benditz, Frank Monaco, Saul Guido, Bill Badger, Brandi Ware, Beverly Purdy

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS- Michael Cortez, Co-chair, called the meeting to order at 8:45 a.m. and asked everyone to introduce themselves. He reviewed the calendar items.

CALENDAR ITEMS

- a. San Pedro Creek Subcommittee meeting, October 8, 2015, 8:30 a.m. at 100 E. Guenther, Board Room
- b. Westside Creeks Restoration Oversight Committee (WCROC) meeting- October 13, 2015, 6:00 p.m. at 100 E. Guenther, Board Room

APPROVAL OF MEETING NOTES FROM AUGUST 7, 2015

There was a motion by Marilyn Bradley to accept the meeting notes with the changes submitted by Jerry Geyer. The motion was seconded by Ed Cross and approved.¹ (See attached changes.) Humberto Saldaña, who was absent due to a prior commitment, had submitted several questions requesting information about the date of the Commissioners Court meeting, if other issues had been raised by the public, when the 90 percent renderings would be presented to the subcommittee and when the 70 percent plans would be posted to the website.

¹ Text in italics and bold type indicate a decision made by the subcommittee.

REVIEW OF BEXAR COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT WORKSHOP

Jeff Mitchell, Design Team Consultants, provided an update from the last subcommittee meeting and the Commissioners Court presentation.

- Discussion of the items from the last meeting- design coordination with other projects, design concerns, potential cost reductions and a review of the presentation for the Commissioners Court and the design team's response and actions to the directives of the Court. The actions included the approval of the 70 percent plans and the construction phasing process. Of the \$97.8 million estimated construction cost for the project, \$49 million is currently available. Consequently, the design team will complete the 90 percent design for Phases 1 and 2 – from the Tree of Life through South Alamo Street to about the railroad bridge. The design for Phases 3 and 4 will be completed at a later date.
- The update on the designs will be brought as soon as available. Phase 1 will be more complete with amenities; Phase 2 is primarily for flood control and would take more land out of the floodplain.
- To address the budget issue, the recommendation at the Commissioners Court was to strip out all the amenities in Phase 2 to make it solely about flood control. Commissioners Court asked that South Alamo Street to the railroad bridge only be flood control, but the rest would include the amenities.
- The Tree of Life Plaza would still be included and the design will be reexamined in response to concerns.
- Phases 3 and 4 will be completed once the design for Phases 1 and 2 is completed. Design for Phases 3 and 4 will overlap the beginning of the construction for Phases 1 and 2. **There was a request for a schedule indicating the design and construction of Phases 1 and 2 and design and construction of Phases 3 and 4 for the next meeting.**²
- Project changes that have been requested and are being reevaluated include: removing the arch from the Tree of Life; removing the shade structure from the Salinas Street Bridge; deferring all art funding/allocation to a separate process; and capturing all value engineering that does not significantly affect the design. Suzanne Scott reported that SARA has talked to the San Antonio River Foundation about funding the art projects in the same manner as was done for the San Antonio River project.

PROJECT ACTIVITY UPDATE

Mr. Mitchell reported the following:

- Value engineering will be completed some time in November. **A detailed summary of the value engineering was requested for the November meeting.**
- Reviewed the suggested changes based on public comments to the Tree of Life Plaza and the Salinas Street Bridge. (Please see presentation for more information.)
- The amphitheater design and the Guadalupe Street Bridge designs were not shown since they are still being modified and are not completed yet.
- Project changes since the August 11, 2015 Commissioners Court Workshop include the desire to shift the amphitheater to the west bank, but they are not sure where yet. The

² Text in bold indicates an item requiring action taken.

design footprint has been expanded to include the Dollar General store location in order to minimally impact the parking at Penner's. SARA has been consulting with the Penner's owners who also own the Dollar General property. Since there is clarity now about Houston and Commerce Street, **the suggestion was to meet with the Alameda architects and report back to the subcommittee on the meeting.** Due to some confusion regarding the location of the area where the amphitheater had been located in the design, there was a request for **a simple diagram to show that area for the next meeting, even if they need to be shown as areas still under discussion.**

- The amenities will be included from Guadalupe Street to South Alamo Street now, so the design will be refined to show what they will be.
- Current and ongoing design activities include taking the design back to schematic design on Houston and Commerce.

Landscape- Todd Brandt, landscape architect for the design team, reviewed the landscape plan, focusing on the Villa Lagunilla section, from the inlet structure to West Travis, as a model for what is being done for the creek. (Please see presentation for visuals.)

- Phases 1 & 2 are about half of the project, and has more landscaping and almost twice the amount of trees as the Museum Reach.
- Because the creek is a floodway, the landscape is divided into three zones: aquatic, riparian and upland.
- The design team came across the concept of flower carpets, originated in Canary Islands, which culturally ties it to San Antonio and since the creek will be a pedestrian "street", they will apply the pattern in a similar way. Brandt showed the design along that character area, pointing out that all are different, but with similar plantings.
- Included the plant palette, some of which were pictured, which consists of all native plants and where they can be placed based on the zones.
- Who will be responsible for the maintenance of the landscape – the City of San Antonio or SARA – still needs to be determined. The design attempts to make the maintenance as easy as possible. **There was a request to report on the landscaping again at a later date.**

Public art

The public art program is shifting at this point, so there was no report on it at this time. **An update on the process was requested since it is changing.**

Wayfinding

- Wayfinding features and the places of access where they will be located were described. They will be using the walls to mark the historic areas and references to the history and the cultural myths as well. (Please see the presentation for additional information and visuals.)
- Information on the storytelling part of the project will be presented at the October subcommittee meeting.

Property Owner Coordination

Russell Persyn reported on meetings with some of the property owners affected by the project.

- Steve Tillotson reported that he had met with the Christopher Columbus Italian Society

regarding their plans for the plaza/park on their property. They are discussing the several issues and will continue to coordinate the design with them as much as possible.

- The location of the new Frost Tower and the Santa Rosa property are also being coordinated for the design.
- Randy Smith of Weston Urban was asked to comment on the coordination with SARA and the Weston Urban project. Mr. Smith noted that when they are finished with their third phase, they will have approximately 20 acres of property, a lot which will cluster around the creek. They have been working closely with SARA for some time now and once they announce their architect, they will have her/him, as well as their landscape architect, coordinate with SARA.
- Issues such as fire and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access are issues related to the design around the Alameda character area. Bridge design and other structural issues need to be addressed as they work on the design for the area. They hope to be able to show the subcommittee how this will all come together at the next meeting.
- The property for the federal courthouse managed by the General Services Administration (GSA) has not yet been conveyed to the City of San Antonio (COSA), so the team has charted out a process forward that would not interrupt their discussions with the GSA. They want to get both COSA and the GSA to approve what is planned.
- SARA staff met with the Residence Inn owner who was very positive.
- Requests for access to the project from the Judson Lofts are being coordinated. Costs for the additional design are being given to them and the team hopes to have a written agreement by the time of the construction bid so the contractor can include this as part of the bid for the project.
- The Guadalupe Street Bridge needs to be redesigned to address the current flood control situation and will probably need a small piece of right of way. HEB and SARA own property in that area.
- A property owner in Phase 3 is asking for impounding of water, but it may not be feasible in that location. They are in discussion with the property owner.
- SARA staff are meeting with property owners who have made formal requests, and there have been lots of meetings with property owners. There has been a lot of effort on all ends to continue communication with property owners. **The request was made to provide information on the formal requests at the subcommittee meetings when they reach major collaborations. Interim messages may also be sent out regarding these as time goes by.**

OTHER ITEMS

There were no other items addressed.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM WCROC AND ITEMS TO PRESENT TO WCROC

Robert Ramirez, Co-chair, explained the role of the Westside Creeks Restoration Oversight Committee (WCROC) and the reason they receive summaries of the subcommittee's activities. Following the last summary, the committee agreed to the following recommendations:

- Open up the selection process for the public art process to ensure more locals; open call for artists (to include schools and universities).
- Suggest percentage not to be less than 75% of the art allocation to go to local public art amenities.

- Public art consider sensitivity and respect South Texas and San Antonio culture and history.
- Consider funding from the COSA's 2017 bond to include complete trail connectivity and other non-flood control components. They are concerned the about loss of amenities and want them to be part of the next bond program.
- Mr. Geyer asked David Garza, City of San Antonio, to respond to the last request. He reported they discussed it at the last WCROC committee meeting. They talked about the committee members being involved in the process for the inclusion of projects on the bond. He suggested writing a letter beforehand requesting to be involved in the process of developing the bond program and being considered for funding in the bond. Mr. Garza will be working with the committee for that process. They will need to be able to ask for precisely what they want with a dollar amount attached. Discussion of the composition of the bond committees should begin about six months beforehand. Mr. Ramirez emphasized there was a great concern about the amenities being dropped out in the Lower Reach. Mr. Tillotson pointed out that it was just a matter of timing. It will all be included in the design.
- When asked about what would be presented at the next WCROC meeting, **Mr. Geyer stated the co-chairs would draft a letter to the City regarding the 2017 bond in response to the WCROC's recommendations.**

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Heath Cover requested that water features be designed so they could function year-round given the drought restrictions. Mr. Mitchell responded that reuse water would be used, so that insulates water features from being shut off due to water restrictions. Recirculated water in the tunnel will maintain the flow from the inlet to the outlet structure.

Robert Rivard requested digital copies and at least handouts. Bridget Hinze pointed out that SARA has digital copies available after the meeting online and handouts are available at the meetings.

Michael Cortez introduced Scott Gustafson who announced that the Zona Cultural has been approved by the Texas Commission on the Arts, providing fantastic place making opportunities for the Westside and the San Pedro Creek runs right through it. Information about the Zona Cultural is on the Centro San Antonio website and background information is on the *Rivard Report*.

Frank Monaco noted that all should be aware that World Heritage Site designation property owned by the Christopher Columbus Society was the location of the first mass in 1718 at first site of the Alamo.

Mr. Geyer announced this is the second year of seeking National Historic Designation for the Casa Navarro, which is adjacent to the creek.

ADJOURN

The meeting adjourned at 10:42 a.m.