



**MEETING NOTES  
NOVEMBER 12, 2015  
SAN ANTONIO RIVER AUTHORITY  
100 EAST GUENTHER, BOARD ROOM  
8:30 A.M.**

**ATTENDING: MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES-** Scott Baird, Marilyn Bradley, Giorgio Colussi, Michael Cortez, Stella de la Garza, Jerry Geyer, Scott Gustafson, Andi Rodriguez, Trey Whiddon. **STAFF AND CONSULTANTS-** Michael Arrington, Kerry Averyt, Rudy Farias, Steve Graham, Bridget Hinze, Marianne Kumley, Jeff Mitchell, John Mize, Brice Moczygemba, Bob Perez, Shiva Sandrana, Suzanne Scott, Steven Tillotson, Laura Vasquez, Linda Ximenes, Randy Dalton, Karen Thomas. **PUBLIC-** Rosemary Geyer, Rick Isbell, Beatrice Moreno, Don Mathis, Kim Miller, Robert Rivard, Claus D. Heide, Tony Cantu, Dave Lallaterra, Bill Badger, Bobby Mengden, Alan Lopez, Peg Rangel, Ryan Aalsma, O. Rangel, Estela Avery, Frank Monaco, Marco Welsh, Tom Welsh, Scott Ball, Elaine Kearney, Joan Miller, Beverly Purdy, Karen Weehler, Robert Ramirez, David Tidwell

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

Michael Cortez called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m., and welcomed everyone and reviewed the calendar items.

**CALENDAR ITEMS**

- a. San Pedro Creek Subcommittee meeting, December 4, 2015, 8:30 a.m. at 100 E. Guenther, Board Room
- b. Westside Creeks Restoration Oversight Committee (WCROC) meeting- December 8, 2015, 6:00 p.m. at 100 E. Guenther, Board Room

**APPROVAL OF MEETING NOTES FROM OCTOBER 8, 2015**

The notes were approved with the following changes:

- Marilyn Bradley and Mark Penner were present.
- Kerry Averyt's name was misspelled.
- Page 2, second paragraph, second sentence, should read: "Key stakeholders, media, public comment, and this subcommittee ..."
- Page 3, fourth paragraph, line 10, should read: "The predominance of the flood control is in the Phase 2 area ..."
- Page 4, third paragraph, should read: "... Commerce Street to Dolorosa Street ..."

Marilyn Bradley moved to accept the meeting notes as corrected and Andi Rodriguez

seconded the motion. ***The motion was approved.***<sup>1</sup>

#### **REVIEW AND INPUT PROCESS OF SUBCOMMITTEE**

Mr. Cortez asked Suzanne Scott, SARA's General Manager, to review the review and input process for subcommittee. Ms. Scott stated that there was a request for the subcommittee to have the opportunity to review the next set of plans before they went to the Bexar County Commissioners Court. She spoke with Bexar County (County) and City of San Antonio (COSA) officials who agreed with that process, so the subcommittee meeting was changed to Friday, December 4, to accommodate the request. That date was chosen so that Mario Schjetnan, the recently selected landscape architect consultant, would be present to make the presentation along with Steve Tillotson. The presentation will consist of any new design concepts emanating from this new collaboration.

The design team had several meetings when Mr. Schjetnan was incorporated into the design team. The last time he was in San Antonio, they met with stakeholder groups including members of the subcommittee. They would like to have this subcommittee meeting serve as the stakeholder review in preparation for the December meeting, and they will also meet with stakeholders who are not on this subcommittee.

Mr. Cortez added that he and Jerry Geyer, his co-chair, asked those who met with Mr. Schjetnan to give feedback on the meetings, and all attendees agreed they were very encouraged.

***Ms. Scott asked the subcommittee to approve that process and no concerns were expressed about using that approach, which was taken as approval.***

She added that the County understands this is an advisory subcommittee, but they want to know where it stands relative to the design.

#### **NEXT SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING RESCHEDULED**

Mr. Geyer and Mr. Cortez reinforced that the meeting was rescheduled to be able to see the design before it goes to the Commissioners Court, and to be able to meet with Mr. Schjetnan.

#### **PROJECT ACTIVITY UPDATE**

Jeff Mitchell, Design Team Consultants, reviewed the past month's activities and the ongoing activities, which included:

- Introduction of the team to the landscape architecture review process and the first charrette from October 29 to October 30. As a result, they are looking at ways to manipulate the water so it will be more delightful and interesting.
- Technical review of the landscape architecture concepts
- Second charrette on November 19 and 20, where they will review the constraints imposed by the hydrology and hydraulics and what aspects of the engineering that has already been done that can be modified without going back to zero. They will make fundamental changes in the design as well as review the cost and engineering feasibility and take forward the best ideas.

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<sup>1</sup> Text in bold and italics indicate a decision made by the subcommittee.

- There will be a third charrette on December 17 and 18 to review these things again.
- Steve Tillotson pointed out they are in daily communication with Mr. Schjetnan
- They are continuing the design process for Phase 2.

Mr. Tillotson reviewed the nodes of proposed change from the inlet to Commerce Street, which he referred to as the “upper part of Phase 1,” where they have considered modifications. The changes are a natural consequence of looking at the budget and design details. These included:

- Revised treatment at the inlet structure that provides a better way to screen and take care of appearance
- Redesign of the Tree of Life. Mr. Tillotson was asked to meet with the Little Italy representatives as they redesign the plaza.
- Landscaping at Villa Lagunilla
- Configuration of the *paseo* to get closer to the water
- Use the walkway to make a bioswale along Camaron Street.
- Would like to reduce the retaining walls on the west bank just north of Martin Street to create a more sloped, natural bank.
- Overall it will mean more improved stormwater features for better water quality, better connection between people and the water, and natural treatment of the west bank making it a more natural grassy area, but less accessible.
- From Martin Street would continue the bioswale and add more of a wetlands treatment, keeping the existing walls.
- They may remove the Salinas Bridge. It is the only historic concrete bridge they could keep due to conveyance issues, but they would have to widen the creek. They have decided it would be too expensive and widening the creek would have an adverse affect on the bridge’s stability. If it is removed, it, as well as the other four bridges that are to be removed, will need to be mitigated since they are on the historical list.
- The amphitheater was moved from between Travis and Houston Streets to the east side of the Alameda Theater. This move responds to the reduced right of way available along the west bank, so that area will be significantly redesigned.
- They will create an *acequia* type of water feature to take water from the high water level that would take it into the creek. There would be walkway in that area.
- Along the east bank there would be a wider, simpler esplanade at the high bank between Travis and Houston Streets. There will be a ramp under Houston Street that will serve as the accessible path to the amphitheater.
- All the movement will be on the east bank, but it will be less than what was programmed in the 70 percent plan due to the cost of the excavation, the change in the placement of the amphitheater. In addition, the “layering” of the landscape architecture review has led to some modifications.
- The curvilinear design on the engineered wall is aesthetic.
- The amphitheater will be terraced seating and a stage area at the water level. They will need to address the noise from Houston Street and provide help with the acoustics, probably with a performance shell that wraps this area and reflects the design of the interior of the Alameda Theater. The biggest challenge is comfort since it is a “pocketed” area. They are looking at facilitating air circulation from downstream along a shaded area close to the Penner’s parking lot.
- At the location of the Penner’s parking lot, they will build back the street level parking

that will have an overhang over the creek, and there will be a parking structure to be able to maintain the existing parking. The Dollar General store would ultimately be demolished.

- The south wall of the Alameda will be opened up to provide a south entrance through the plaza area from Commerce Street.
- **A presentation on the Alameda Theater's plans was requested.**<sup>2</sup>
- There is no cost estimate on the Alameda area available because when the cost estimating was done at the 70 percent design, the Houston-to-Commerce Street area had not been designed. The Alameda is not contributing to the costs since they were in the original right of way. There is budget for a performance space, and the cost will be less for that since it has been moved, but the demolition of the Dollar General store and the design for the whole block from Houston to Commerce Streets, will add to the costs, so that is a consideration. A performance space was in the original plans.

Please see the presentation for this meeting for additional information.

### **STORYTELLING AND HISTORICAL NARRATIVES DRAFTS**

Mr. Tillotson remarked that they had submitted the final drafts of the historical narrative and the myth narrative, pointing out that the authors would each make a short presentation on her/his work.

#### *Historical Narrative*

Mr. Tillotson introduced Maria Pfeiffer, Design Consultants historian, who reviewed the history of the development of San Antonio. She began by explaining that her task was to develop the storyline and history based on archival research that would guide the development of the interpretive elements of the creek. She reviewed drawings, maps and photos of San Antonio from its earliest history to the 1960's and '70's. (Please see the presentation for additional information.)

She noted that she is still gathering photos and other documentation for the historical and interpretive elements.

#### *Myth Narrative*

Mr. Tillotson explained that the history as myth was another aspect of these elements of interpretation. He introduced John Phillip Santos who gave a short overview of incorporating mythic narrative into the experience of the park, explaining that it assumes an understanding of storytelling in the broadest human dimension. The history of the city comes in late to the history of the creek. If the creek were to tell the story it would bring in stories of origins and migrations and the encounters with each other that have transformed us here on the borderlands. He referred to the kind of mythic storytelling found in the codices of Cuahutinchán done in the 1540's in the Cholula, Mexico area that tell the story of their origins and migrations, misadventures and arrival at Cholula.

The myth of origins is an important part of the story and tells us how to experience the park as an immersive engagement reaching back 10,000 years with the original people and the earlier landscape. Our history is rooted in the epic of New Spain and the American republic and their interactions; the city's long heritage – older than the Republic but a

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<sup>2</sup> Text in bold type indicates an item that needs to be followed up.

capital of future mestizo heritage. We are recovering the association with the missions with the World Heritage designation.

He pointed to all these concepts as the inspiration for the signage using the image of the codex as the way to tell the story of the creek- like those in old Mexico. He showed images of the proposed signage that will be at each bridge crossing at high level and low level as well as on concrete pylons and extensive wall surfaces and banks to get the story across in wayfinding and messaging. They are developing special places along the concrete walls; creating *nichos* and the mythic element that comes into the picture.

Mr. Tillotson explained that part of the cost reductions came from eliminating veneer and walls. There will be stone and materials, but they want to use a ribbon wall system of concrete walls that can peel off into seating and plantings: the wall becomes an armature for the history. (See the presentation for more information.)

Mr. Tillotson continued, showing the images for Calder Alley and Campo Abajo as part of what will be shown to the Commissioners Court.

- At Calder Alley, he showed the image from the Preliminary Engineering Study and pointed out there will be low bank *paseo*, a high bank *paseo*, a pedestrian bridge, and the creek will be widened there. There will be something along the Araña Building. They moved the stairs to the opposite side. They cannot put plantings on the bridge because there will still be some vehicular traffic. The stone walls will all be lighted.
- In the Campo Abajo area they initially planned on widening the creek with an undulating wall. The conveyance demand did not allow for having so much structure in the creek, so they had to make it as wide as possible. They kept some of the basic features and adapted them to the hydrology hydraulics from the modeling and the budget. They kept the undulating walls, eliminated the planted area and have a planting zone on the west side to screen and shade the areas adjacent. They added a bioswale feature and will keep a portion of the channel wall to create *miradores* (overlooks) about every 100 feet.

Mr. Mitchell reviewed the themes for the next meeting and the Commissioners Court as being the changes to the project scope and the options for maintain the scheduled 2018 opening.

#### **OTHER ITEMS**

- Mr. Geyer acknowledged the co-chairs still have to send a formal letter to the City of San Antonio to consider including elements of the project for the bond program.
- They also need to send a letter to encourage the use of local artists as much as possible for the public art. They will probably hold off on that letter until they have a better understanding of the process.
- If anyone needs to talk to the project management, Kerry Averyt and Bridget Hinze will be available after the meeting.
- City Council Member Treviño met with Mario Schjetnan and was pleased with the results.
- Scott Gustafson invited everyone this evening from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. to the Central Public Library for a public meeting on the 70 percent design for Houston and Commerce Street.

- He also invited everyone to come on November 30 to the Centro de Artes on November 30, from 4-6 p.m., to celebrate the Zona Cultural designation.

**ITEMS TO PRESENT TO WCROC**

- Revisions to the design
- Status of the letters to the City of San Antonio regarding the bond program and the local artists.

**COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC**

There were no comments due to the shortage of time.

**ADJOURN**

The meeting adjourned at 10:16 a.m.