

MEETING NOTES
MAY 9, 2019
SARA BOARD ROOM, 100 E. Guenther Street

ATTENDING

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES:

Jerry Geyer, Marilyn Bradley, Cathey Meyer, Mark Penner, Patti Radle, Deb Bolner Prost, Lourdes Galvan, Stella Trevino-De La Garza, Humberto Saldana, Trey Whiddon, Joshua Gerken

STAFF & CONSULTANTS: Kerry Averyt, Carrie Brown, Steve Graham, Kristen Hansen, Tommy Mitchell, Suzanne Scott, Abigail Bush, Stefania Fontana, Gilbert Jimenez, Linda Whitaker, John Mize, Chad Zimmerman, Toney Canez

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: Rosemary Geyer, Mark E. Liberatore, Ken Enfurth, Robert Ramirez, Richard D. Garcia, Andy Rodriguez, Cosima Colvin

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Jerry Geyer, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 9:01 am. Mr. Geyer announced a quorum.

APPROVAL OF MEETING NOTES FROM March 14, 2019

Motion to approve the minutes was tabled until Mr. Geyer reviews and submits his edits.

SUBCOMMITTEE BUSINESS

- Mr. Geyer introduced Joshua Gerken of UTSA as new to the San Pedro Creek Subcommittee meeting. Mr. Geyer requested Mr. Gerken make a presentation at the next Subcommittee Meeting which briefly encapsulates the vision for the downtown UTSA campus.
- Mr. Geyer asked who attended the construction tour in April.

OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

Kristen Hansen, San Antonio River Authority, provided the following updates:

Plaza De Fundacion

- Kristen Hansen said they continue to manage the Plaza de Fundación for water quality. The San Antonio River Authority (River Authority) Environmental Sciences Department takes samples of the water on a weekly basis and on a daily basis when the water is turned off. Ms. Hansen showed a graph which can be found on the River Authority website.
- Ms. Hansen explained that the floating islands are basically a wetland and plan to install seven floating islands in the basin area between Rains of the Heaven and the Manantial. The islands are planted with native plants and provide aesthetics and assist with nutrient uptake. Since the water gets a little stagnant in that area, the roots help remove and consume a lot of the unwanted nutrients. The islands also attract birds and butterflies and are a habitat for aquatic species who feed off of the plant roots.

Eco Counter Figures

- An Eco Counter was installed between Travis and Martin Streets about six week ago and has received over 8,700 hits.
- There was discussion on which type of eco counter to install and Ms. Hansen explained that these particular counters are used along the Mission and Museum Reaches and some of the nature-based parks. Some counters differentiate between pedestrian and bicycle traffic, however the counters along San Pedro Creek do not. During the summer, another eco counter is planned to be installed in

the plaza area to count people coming from the Christopher Columbus parking lot area.

Scooter Update

- Scooters continue to be seen on the trail even though there are signs stating that motorized vehicles are not allowed on the trails per City of San Antonio (City) code. There are plans to reduce the fleet from over 16,000 units down to 5,000 units. Also, they are looking to reduce the number of providers from seven to three through an RFP process. These proposals will be presented at City Council at the end of May.

Questions

- Marilyn Bradley said she loved the idea of the floating islands but asked if there was any thought to the congestion of plants in that area becoming a breeding ground for mosquitoes. Tommy Mitchel said they are taking that into consideration through the design of the floating islands and the vegetation. Ms. Bradley asked how it was being addressed. Mr. Mitchell said they are quantifying the amount of plant material in the islands so they will not be as thick so as to become a breeding ground for mosquitoes. They believe the positives of the nutrient uptake will be so beneficial to help remove the phosphates from the algae. They are working with two consultants on the algae solution. Ms. Bradley asked about the sycamore trees which have extremely large leaves and since the creek is meant to be a flood control project, are there any concerns that these large leaves will fall into the creek and clog it up. Ms. Bradley suggested on future developments using trees with smaller leaves. Ms. Hansen responded that pertinent staff currently listening in the meeting will take note of this. Ms. Bradley asked if the Creek is wheelchair accessible and do they leave marks like the scooters. Ms. Hansen said yes it is wheelchair accessible and wheelchairs do not leave marks like the scooters.

COMMUNICATIONS ACTIVITY UPDATE

Monica Trevino-Ortega, San Antonio River Authority, reported the following:

- Goal to create awareness of San Pedro Creek during Fiesta time. A video was created.
 - Reached 120,191 people and garnered 220,617 impressions.
 - Received 24,215 3-second views, and 526 clicks to the SPC website.
 - There were 70 post engagements.
- Ms. Trevino-Ortega said they currently have a one-year anniversary campaign going on. A digital anniversary card was sent out by email to the San Pedro Creek database. A one-year anniversary video was created and shown throughout all social media platforms. Also, an anniversary card and a Bundt cake were sent to elected officials to thank them for their support. They are also providing a give-away of commemorative gifts through social media. They are currently building awareness for the inaugural CreekFest and Carrie Brown will discuss this annual signature event. Campaigning for enhanced marketing through social and digital media to run from August through September.
- Mr. Trevino-Ortega announced that the San Pedro Creek Culture Park won Best Government/Public Project award (submitted by Sundt Davila) from the Building San Antonio Awards through the San Antonio Business Journal. San Pedro Creek Culture Park is also a contender for the Community Impact Awards.
- Kerry Averyt announced that HDR and Pape-Dawson received the American Council for Engineering Companies (ACEC) Grand Award (one of 16 recipient projects) for the San Pedro Creek Culture Park. This is one of the most prestigious awards among the design firms since it is difficult for a water project to receive this award. There were 196 projects submitted.
- Mr. Geyer acknowledged the continued outstanding work done by the design and construction teams and also by the River Authority. Ms. Trevino-Ortega thanked the Subcommittee for all of their hard work and presented a one-year birthday cake.

Questions

- Ms. Bradley asked about the 70 engagements that resulted from hits to the website and what does that mean and what kinds of projects does that cover. She also asked where to get the bow ties and scarves. Ms. Trevino-Ortega explained that San Pedro Creek posts continue to pop up on social media websites even after events have occurred which means that people are continuing to share these posts. Ms. Trevino-Ortega said she will look into providing the scarves and ties in the future.
- Mr. Geyer asked if there is a way to compare current website stats to previous stats. Ms. Trevino-Ortega said that the stats are pulled on a quarterly basis and next month the information will be available to compare the stats on current campaigns to previous campaigns.
- Mr. Geyer asked if Judge Wolff received a bow tie and Ms. Trevino-Ortega said she will check and see.

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY UPDATE

Kerry Averyt, San Antonio River Authority, reported the following:

Phase 1.1 - Remaining items

- Mr. Averyt shared the updated phase map.
- Installation completed on the additional railing at the Travis Gatehouse.
- Installation completed on the inlet lighting and they do not anticipate any outages.
- The installation of the trash screen at the inlet pump station is postponed until late 2019 because the water has to be completely turned off for a few weeks to complete the work and would cause algae growth during the summer months.
- Installation completed on the flashing beacons on the Santa Rosa Street pedestrian crossing. Mr. Averyt said that the cars continue to drive through the pedestrian crossing and they may need to engage the City to put in rumble strips. Mr. Averyt believes awareness of the pedestrian crossing is increasing however they will continue to monitor the situation to see if additional measures need to be taken.

Phase 1.2 – Construction Activities

- Houston to Commerce
 - In spite of the rain, work has been done on the concrete pours for the channel bottom and walls and the Penner's parking deck.
 - Some piping and infrastructure has been installed for the water wall.
- Commerce to Dolorosa
 - Channel slab excavation was slowed down this week due to the rain.
- Dolorosa to Nueva
 - Pier cap installation.
 - Excavation has begun on the east bank. Chad Zimmerman said the rain impacts the dirt operations for the excavation. All of the concrete and rebar (piping) on the Penner's deck has been done. Mr. Geyer asked about accumulated water in the excavation area. Mr. Zimmerman explained there is an underdrain system and sump pumps however there is currently about six inches of water in the bottom and four feet of water could possibly accumulate in the channel during a one-inch rain event.
- Commerce Street Bridge
 - Construction of the south half has been completed.
 - The South lane has reopened.
 - Full closure still planned from mid-June through July and one lane back open at the end of July and the full opening of the bridge will be in early October of this year. Mr. Averyt answered that the south sidewalk will be open during the street closure.
- Dolorosa Street Bridge
 - The demolition of the north half of the bridge has begun and hope to rebuild by Fiesta 2020.
 - Traffic will be reduced to one lane until April 2020.

Questions

- Ms. Meyer asked if wayfinding signage to read “approaching San Pedro Creek” can be placed at the traffic light on San Saba Street indicating the San Pedro Creek Culture Park. Mr. Averyt will check with the City on signage.
- Mr. Geyer asked about the Phase 1.2 plan of construction to Nueva Street being altered to stop halfway behind the red building. Mr. Averyt said the plan was to stop just short of Nueva Street because the decision was to wait on the Nueva Street gate construction until Phase 1.3 through Cesar Chavez Street.
- Ms. Bradley followed up on Ms. Meyer’s question concerning signage. She suggested that the signage make mention of the awards. Mr. Trevino-Ortega said the website includes the awards and possibly the fence wrapping could also reference the awards.
- Deb Bolner Prost asked what the speed limit is on the pedestrian crossing and said it should be 20 mph. Mr. Averyt said the speed limit is 30 mph. Mr. Geyer said Judge Wolff wrote a letter to the City about lowering the speed limit. Mr. Geyer suggested contacting someone higher up at the City rather than the street planning level.
- Ms. Lourdes Galvan asked about the downtime due to the rain and if it will set back the schedule. Mr. Zimmerman answered that the five-year rain history is built into the schedule so we are still on schedule.
- Humberto Saldana asked if we are asking the City to modify the wall and suggested making it visually accessible to the pedestrian walkway. Mr. Averyt said the City is open to designing inverted arches with wrought iron but it will have to go through the planning process.
- Mr. Saldana asked if we are protecting the structural stability of the Continental and Araña buildings. Mr. Averyt said we are liable for possible damage and before any work is done, Mr. Zimmerman’s team performs a structural survey on both the inside and outside of the buildings. Mr. Averyt answered Mr. Saldana’s question that yes the structural survey is shared with the building owners.
- Ms. Galvan voiced her concern about the wall being historic and Mr. Averyt assured her they will go through the Historic and Design Review Commission approval process. Mr. Geyer suggested meeting with Betty Bueché, Bexar Heritage & Parks Department Director stakeholder group for that area. Eddie Romero answered Mr. Geyer that Centro is not currently involved with that group in a formal capacity but would be happy to make a presentation on the San Pedro Creek Project.
- Mr. Romero asked about the pedestrian access on Commerce Street during the June and July closure. Mr. Averyt said the pedestrian south sidewalk will remain open. Mr. Romero said he and Mark received some updates from the City on the timeline, specifically for the Laredo to Flores Street section.
- Mr. Geyer asked if the City’s Commerce Street Sidewalk Expansion and Renovation Project is subject to change again. Mr. Averyt said there is no change to the size of the expansion of the sidewalks however some of the amenities may have to be reduced. Mr. Averyt said he is supposed to get updates tomorrow from the Project Manager on the Commerce Street Sidewalk Expansion Project.
- Mr. Romero answered Mr. Penner concerning his meeting with the City regarding the phasing of their portion along Commerce Street. He said the focus of the meeting concerned the coordination of schedules with TPR and the Penner’s and that block because it is going to get complicated with everything going on in the area. They plan to flip the phases to start with the north side of Commerce Street instead of with the south side of Commerce Street from Laredo to Flores Streets during the period of October 19 to December 20. They will discuss at a separate meeting.
- Stella Trevino De La Garza said on the recent tour she noticed that some of the older walls were demolished and asked what was being done with the stone. Mr. Zimmerman told her the stone was being repurposed. Ms. De La Garza asked how much of the wall is being demolished and if they went through a process for permission. Mr. Averyt said the design team worked with the Texas Historical Commission and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Mr. Averyt said about 60% of the wall is being preserved. Mr. Averyt said some of the stone is put back into the construction on the creek and some is being stored at River Authority facilities. Mr. Zimmerman said some of the rocks are not reusable because of their small size.

Phases 1.3 and 2 - Design Activities

- The second series of charrettes conducted to help keep developing the design process.
- Design concepts were presented to Judge Wolff and Commissioner Justin Rodriguez and received their approval to keep developing them.
- The Design team is developing design concepts.
- They will request Commissioner Court approval on June 18th of some renderings which show the design for the changes for these phases.

Phase 1.2 – Partner coordination

- Mr. Averyt said they have not met with the SAISD design team since the last meeting but met recently concerning drainage and are keeping the coordination going regarding the street crossing.
- Camaron Street construction
 - Mr. Zimmerman is wrapping up the Travis to Houston block.
 - The remainder of the project is to begin in late 2019.
- The Project Team coordination for the Alameda Theater is still in design and there has not been a lot of coordination with them recently however they do remain in touch with their team.
- Mr. Zimmerman and his team meets with Texas Public Radio construction team weekly to coordinate activities.
- Commerce Street
 - Value engineering/scope reduction ongoing. Construction to begin in October.
- Mr. Averyt met with Mr. Gerken of UTSA a few days ago to discuss the UTSA downtown campus expansion to see what their vision looks like and make sure the coordination is there as their design develops.
- They met with the Federal Courthouse (GSA) design team a couple of times since the last meeting.
 - Design and construction coordination ongoing and we are on the same page.
 - Mr. Averyt showed a picture explaining that a lot of excavation has been done but has slowed down due also to the weather conditions. Mr. Averyt said the San Pedro Creek Project footprint is going to expand toward their building which will eliminate the need for the construction of a retaining wall. Additional landscaping will be installed which is more economical than a constructing a retaining wall. Instead of using low impact development features such as a detention basin around the perimeter, the design team came up with a series of bio swells which will work as detention as well.
- The groundwater pumped out around the Alameda Theater through the water treatment system has not had any hot samples so far and the water has been up to drinking water standards.
- Mr. Averyt met with the Executive Committee and a new schedule for regular monthly meetings is being developed.

Questions

- Ms. Galvan referenced the Rivard Report article about a meeting concerning the UTSA downtown campus expansion and suggested that the Subcommittee coordinate something to keep the community informed. She asked that there be a presentation made to both the Subcommittee and the community. The community around UTSA has been reaching out to Ms. Galvan about the expansion and there are about 75 single family homes on the west side of the bridge that will be impacted by the expansion along with the downtown community. Mr. Geyer said he has asked Mr. Gerken of UTSA to give the Subcommittee a presentation and Ms. Trevino-Ortega said they will plan a presentation to the Subcommittee in June. Robert Ramirez said any information UTSA has become aware of regarding any planned apartments and student housing for the area around the expansion should be included in the presentation. Mr. Ramirez said the community is very concerned about increased property value along with displacement. Mr. Romero answered Mr. Geyer that he did not attend the meeting. Mr. Saldana

said he did attend the meeting and that it was advertised on social media. Steve Graham said he did not go into the meeting but did read the Rivard Report article concerning gentrification and displacement. Mr. Graham said the San Pedro Creek Project has been accused of similar things in the past and we need to make sure we are doing everything to be a good community partner and this community is looking at how we mitigate our adverse effects. Mr. Gerken said we are in the same boat and expressed the need to communicate more and make sure the message of what we are trying to do there and be a good steward and work together.

- Mr. Geyer said he has been corresponding with Dr. Kimberly Andrews Espy, Provost at UTSA, and she had asked we defer some of these things until after graduation. Mr. Geyer suggested Suzanne B. Scott and Ms. Trevino-Ortega from the River Authority and Tony A. Canez with Bexar County have a meeting concerning this.
- *Cosima Colvin, a member of the Howard Peak Linear Trailway Advisory Board and does work for District One, read the following statement: Good morning Committee members and thank you for your service to the City and the residents of San Antonio. It has been several months since I have spoken in front of you but I would like again to remind the members of this Committee that the outcome of the San Pedro Creek Project and its reputation and image is inextricably tied to not only its beauty and benefits but to the underbelly of its inconvenient consequences. This Committee is in a unique position to have both the benefit of experience based on the Phase 1 development and the opportunity to apply learning lessons from that experience into the present and the future as this improvements projects continues into Phases 2 and 3. Although I enter my advocacy of considering the impact over public investment dollars from the existing property owners through a residential lens, what I have learned recently is that there is a similar and parallel impact on the small businesses as the value of the properties in the vicinity of the San Pedro Creek increase, smaller older businesses especially many of the industrial or light industrial businesses that have operated along your creek for many decades are now coming under pressure to sell so that more attractive projects can replace them. And while I am not arguing the benefit of owning an asset that is now more valuable than it used to be and the opportunity to act on that, not every property owner wants to do that and how do we make sure that they are not gentrified out any more than we want to see residents gentrified out. Again I would ask this Committee to consider advocating for a human impact study to be included in with the other studies that are performed when embarking on a public improvements project such as the San Pedro Creek and including the entire Linear Creekway Trails Project. I would also like to suggest that a housing expert advocate be included as a member of this Committee to provide that prospective and to be able to act as liaison for the Mayor's Housing Commission and the Neighborhood and Housing Services Department.* Mr. Geyer responded that she made an excellent and very concise statement and they will take her comments under advisement and see what the Subcommittee, the River Authority and Bexar County can do about it. Mr. Geyer said Robert Ramirez, Suzanne Scott and some of the Subcommittee members previously attended meetings with the Soapworks Apartments and other apartments regarding these issues. Mr. Geyer said the problems of displacement are not just problems that are tied to these projects but also a problem we are facing in the whole revitalization and increase in density of the inner city and the immediate suburbs. He said District One City Councilman Roberto Trevino was also involved and trying to put together a type of thing that would be put in place so that when any project was introduced into the area, a group of specialists from all of the different specialties would do an assessment on the impact. Mr. Geyer said they will follow-up and see what Roberto Trevino was able to achieve.
- Mr. Geyer stated that when the project shifted into Phase 1.3, the design lead shifted more to Ford, Powell and Carson and Munoz is now a supporting design team member and is the design team for Phase 1.2. Munoz is also involved with the Federal Courthouse Project which provides a lot of continuity.

ART UPDATE

Carrie Brown, San Antonio River Authority, provided the following updates:

Phase 1.2 Interactive Water Wall

- The Request for Qualifications for the Interactive Water Wall was released to the artists on the prequalified list and is why it was not seen on the website or advertised. The call closed yesterday, May 8th, and they received 27 applications.
- They are currently assembling a selection panel and scheduling meetings to review the applications received. Three finalists will be selected to develop proposals for the Project and anticipate having artist/artist team on board by late July.
- Ms. Brown mentioned regarding the tri-centennial artwork in Phase 1.1 that they are in the process of collecting some additional feedback and were pushed back a little on the schedule so will have additional information next month on the revised design.

Programming

- On April 13 the Writers Take a Walk Event occurred which was a collaboration with Don Mathis. Despite the rain, it was a great event. Ms. Brown said there was a poem competition with 1st through 3rd place prizes. Mr. Dean Lockwood won first place and the poem is shared on the social media page. Mr. Averyt also led a construction tour.
- A free yoga class is now provided every Monday of the month instead of the first Monday of the month at 6:00 pm.
- May 14 is the Community Drum Circle Event. Since there have been a lot of requests for this event, they will be scheduled on a quarterly basis.
- June 8 is the CreekFest event which is being launched as a signature event along with the other signature events of Illume in December, Get Fit in February and now CreekFest in June which is inspired by World Environment Day. There are plans to have an event associated with the San Pedro Creek Culture Park one-year birthday however this will be a separate event from CreekFest. Ms. Brown will have some more information next month on CreekFest and it will also be shared on social media along with an email blast.
- There will be a free yoga class on June 21 as part of International Yoga Day.

Phase 1.3/Phase 2 Planning

- Ms. Brown is working with the design team through these charettes to identify some art and programming opportunities as part of that redesign effort and the conversations are going very well. They are trying to identify specific art opportunities along with the budget to be presented at Commissioners Court as part of the presentation regarding the redesign of Phase 1.3/Phase 2.
- They are revisiting some of the potential partnerships (COSA, UTSA, Linda Pace) for this area. They have had very high level conversations but have not made any commitments or specific plans.

Questions

- Mr. Romero said that public art is always one of those high visibility things and it would be interesting to hear what the selection process is as part of the story. Mr. Romero asked, that as the Creek evolves and grows, will there a Spanish language strategy for engaging the community as a whole. Ms. Trevino-Ortega said it was a great idea and as they go forward they will be more mindful of having the Spanish translation. They have discussed this concerning the Interpretative Plan for the website and the mobile app and are also considering, specifically as it relates to the poem, to create a chat (scrap) book of all the submitted poems along with the Spanish translation.
- Mr. Geyer suggested as the CreekFest event grows, to maybe consider not having it on the same weekend as the Texas Folklife Festival.

- Mr. Geyer asked if the Subcommittee could see the Phase 1.3/Phase 2 design before it is presented at Commissioners Court on June 18. Mr. Canez said they would need to have a discussion because they are already on a tight schedule.
- Mr. Geyer asked Mr. Canez if after this meeting he could meet with Mr. Mathis because there are some people on Facebook who are interested in having something down in Phase 2 or in that area to honor the railroads.

CALENDER ITEMS

Mr. Geyer said these have been reviewed.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC AND SUBCOMMITTEE

- Mr. Mathis announced that there will be a book release and celebration on May 14th at 6:30 pm at the Public Library for the book by Anthony Head, *Spirit: The Life and Art of Jesse Trevino*. Mr. Head and Mr. Trevino will be there.
- Mr. Geyer asked Jenna Stolge of Weston Urban regarding the screen adjacent to the parking garage being finished. She said she is not involved in the logistics of the project but has not heard of any concerns.

ITEMS TO PRESENT TO Westside Creeks Oversight Committee:

ADJOURN

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Romero and seconded by Ms. De La Garza at 10:25 am.