

Meeting Notes

March 14, 2019

SARA Board Room, 100 E Guenther Street

ATTENDING

SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS AND ALTERNATES:

Scott Baird, Marilyn Bradley, Bob Cordo, Cathey Meyer, Jerry Geyer, Mitchell Penner, Patti Radle, Deb Bolner-Prost, Lourdes Galvan, Stella Tenorio-De La Garza

STAFF & CONSULTANTS: Kerry Averyt, Denise Blaz, Carrie Brown, Lindsey Campbell, Steve Graham, Kristen Hansen, Suzanne Scott, Anamaria Suescun-Fast, Abigail Bush, Stefania Fontana, Gilbert Jimenez

MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC: Rosemary Geyer, Mark E. Liberatore, Belinda Gavallos, Jen Enfurth, Don Matthis, Robert Ramirez, Nita Shever

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Jerry Geyer, co-chair, called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m. Mr. Geyer reviewed subcommittee business.

APPROVAL OF MEETING NOTES FROM January 10, February 14, 2019

Motion was made by Deb Bolner-Prost and seconded by Scott Baird to approve meeting notes from January 10, 2019 and February 14, 2019. The motion carried unanimously.¹

SUBCOMMITTEE BUSINESS

- Mr. Geyer discussed SARA's continuing efforts to increase subcommittee participation
- Mr. Geyer noted that Bexar County Commissioner Justin Rodriguez will be making recommendations for new members of the subcommittee. More information will be shared at the April meeting
- Mr. Geyer commented that he recommends someone from the General Services Administration be added to the subcommittee

OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

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

Trail Tracker Installation

- Trail counter has been installed at San Pedro Creek Culture Park to collect counts of trail users – an additional trail counter will be added in the coming weeks
- An activity report from the trail counter will be shared with the subcommittee during the April meeting
- Operations team is working with a company to figure out a solution for counting people in the plaza

Questions

- Mr. Geyer asked where the trail counter is located – Ms. Hansen responded that it is installed in the vegetation bed by the Travis St. Gatehouse ... The trail counter counts bicycles and pedestrians
- Mr. Geyer asked if everything is going okay with the scooters – Ms. Hansen responded the scooters are still present but usage has decreased along San Pedro Creek Culture Park, park police and operations staff are continuing to engage scooter users.
- Mr. Geyer commented that he has heard reservation and subscription updates are imminent for the dockless scooters and they may evolve into an effective last mile transportation solution – Ms. Hansen responded the city has created dedicated scooter parking areas throughout downtown

DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY UPDATE

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

¹ Text in bold italics indicates a decision made by the subcommittee.

- Mr. Averyt shared the updated phase map

Phase 1.1 Update

- Additional railing near Travis Gatehouse is currently being installed and is expected to be completed this week
- New lighting is being installed at the tunnel inlet structure – this should be completed next week
- Installation of the trash screen at the inlet pump station has been postponed until late 2019 because it will necessitate the water in the creek being completely turned off, which will cause algae bloom and water quality issues ... Operations and maintenance staff will keep a closer eye on trash in that area until the trash screen is installed
- Full closure of Santa Rosa St. will take place next week to accommodate the pedestrian crossing improvements

Questions

- Mr. Geyer asked whether Mr. Averyt planned to talk about Camaron St. – Mr. Averyt responded that Camaron St. information is included in his partner coordination slide but there is not a lot to report currently

Phase 1.2 Design and Construction Updates

- Concrete pours for the channel bottom and walls are ongoing in the Houston St. to Commerce St. block
- Concrete pours for building underpinning and drilled shaft installation is occurring in Commerce St. to Dolorosa St. block
- Drilled shaft work is ongoing in the Dolorosa St. to Nueva St. block
- Commerce St. bridge work is ongoing
- Full closure of Commerce St. and one lane open on Dolorosa St. will begin in mid-June and continue for approximately six weeks
- Working to accommodate Fiesta parades with the Dolorosa St. closure schedule
- Mr. Averyt shared photos of Phase 1.2 construction taken from the SARA webcams
- Sundt Davila has executed an allowance use agreement with the fire marshall building ... SARA will demolish the building and utilize the lot space for staging and parking, resulting in a cost savings for the project

Questions

- Mr. Geyer asked when the demolition of the fire marshall building is going to start – Mr. Averyt responded that demolition will happen in the next few weeks
- Ms. Bradley asked what will take the place of the fire marshall property after Phase 1.2 is completed – Mr. Averyt responded that it will be part of UTSA's downtown campus expansion
- Mr. Geyer commented that he understood that Paul Carter Sold the office building strip – Mr. Averyt responded that is his understanding as well
- Mr. Geyer asked if SARA has been able to engage the UTSA downtown expansion architects – Mr. Averyt responded that SARA has been in coordination with UTSA and will continue the dialogue
- Mr. Geyer noted he doesn't want UTSA to come too late to the party – Mr. Averyt responded that they're already at the party

Phase 1.3 and Phase 2 Design Update

- Design team working with Mario Schjetnan this week
- Design team is developing strategy to address the direction from Bexar County to make it a more natural stream environment
- Preliminary sketches and conceptual drawings will be available to share with the subcommittee in May
- Desired design completion is October 2019

Questions

- Mr. Geyer asked whether the Federal Courthouse people will be pulled into the design process – Mr. Averyt responded that SARA has already engaged the Federal Courthouse staff and will continue to do so ... SARA is seeing some cost saving in the way the bank is graded back adjacent to the Federal Courthouse property, but that will necessitate addressing security concerns with Federal Courthouse personnel

Partner Coordination

- Coordination with SAISD on its administration building project is ongoing
- Camaron St. construction utility relocation work is ongoing and foundations are being installed for signal poles in order for the Travis St. to Houston St. block to be completed by May
- The remainder of Camaron St. construction is scheduled to begin in late winter 2019
- Alameda Theater is getting closer to beginning construction – the design is finalized in terms of SARA coordination – SARA will still need to coordinate with them on the demolition and construction of the terrazzo in front of the building. More information to come on whether the fire escape on the side of the building will remain intact or be replaced – this will likely be handled by the Alameda construction team
- Texas Public Radio demolition is underway and they are ready to start adding infrastructure to increase the building by two stories – construction crews are handling project coordination in the field
- Commerce St. has selected Jerdon as their contractor – construction will begin in May or June of this year – the SARA team will be in coordination with Commerce St. project as construction activities will impact each other
- Dialogue is ongoing with the UTSA downtown campus expansion project
- Coordination with the Federal Courthouse is ongoing – the courthouse is having a groundbreaking on March 18th and the construction team is getting mobilized and ready to go
- Executive committee meeting will occur in the next month

Questions

- Mr. Geyer noted that the Camaron St. timeline will affect SAISD – Ms. Radle responded that SAISD was aware of the potential impacts.
- Mr. Geyer suggested enhancing the connection to SAISD at Kingsbury – Ms. Radle reiterated SAISD’s appreciation for having a connection to the creek
- Mr. Geyer asked where the fire escape drops down – Mr. Averyt responded that it is on the east side of the building and drops down to the paseo
- Mr. Geyer noted that if the fire escape remains then that wall can’t be used for something else like art
- Mr. Geyer commented that following the UTSA master planning meetings, Tony Canez was able to make connections with people from the Provosts office ... Members from the Provost office are visiting Casa Navarro on March 27 – Mr. Geyer asked Ms. Trevino-Ortega to attend the March 27 meeting and provide the UTSA representatives with an orientation on San Pedro Creek Culture Park
- Ms. Galvan asked whether Mr. Geyer has more information about what is happening in front of Casa Navarro – Mr. Geyer responded that the state requested the section from Nueva St. to Casa Navarro still be an access for maintenance vehicles
- Ms. Galvan asked whether the name of the street will be the same – Mr. Geyer responded that he did not know
- Mr. Geyer noted that Mr. Averyt is going off for two days to design and workshop with Mario Schjetnan, he wished Mr. Averyt good luck and commented that the subcommittee will be happily awaiting the results

ART UPDATE

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

Programming

- Get Fit event occurred on Feb. 23 and included free classes in yoga, crossfit, etc. lasting anywhere from 15 to 30 minutes allowing people to experience different kinds of exercise – it was a gorgeous day with perfect temperature, SARA is very pleased with the results and is hoping to do it again next year
- Monday night yoga classes have resumed from 6 to 7 p.m. at the boardwalk
- The Writers Talk a Walk workshop will take place on April 13 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. with Don Mathis – attendees will get a sneak peak of construction and tour the open part of the park
- SARA is planning an anniversary celebration for May 4 – details are in process and will be shared at the next subcommittee meeting
- SARA Education staff is working to host teacher workshops at the creek in June as part of annual teacher training
- June 21 is International Yoga Day – San Pedro Creek Culture Park will host a morning class at the boardwalk at 8 a.m.
- Working on additional workshops and tours – check the calendar and app for updated event information

- San Pedro Creek Culture Park has hosted 16 events since May 5, 2018 – small events and larger events like Illume with a total attendance of 2,000
- The 3rd of July, Illume and Get Fit have been the biggest events to date – Illume and Get Fit included street closures – SARA is looking to make all of these repeat events

Questions

- Mr. Geyer asked if everyone was aware of the direction that Commissioners Court gave at the end of February to emphasize the natural creek interpretation as much as possible – he noted that San Pedro Creek Culture Park will still include flood control measures and enough paseos to have the linear park without doing away with the opportunity to include public art
- Ms. Radle asked if there is someone still working on the cultural connection – Mr. Geyer responded that there is a separate team working on the interpretive plan for the creek from Houston St. south providing recommendations for what history and art needs to be incorporated
- Ms. Radle asked whether the subcommittee would get an update on the interpretive plan – Mr. Geyer responded that Ms. Trevino-Ortega will have an update but a draft will be brought to subcommittee once completed
- Mr. Baird asked how people learn about events – Ms. Brown responded that events have been marketed in a number of different ways including social media, the mobile app, the website, email newsletters, hard copy handouts to immediate neighbors, radio interviews and newspaper ads – SARA is looking at ways to expand outreach moving forward
- Ms. Bolner-Prost recommended geofencing San Pedro Creek Culture Park – Ms. Suescun-Fast responded that geotargeting was utilized for Illume and additional geofencing opportunities are being explored
- Mr. Geyer asked whether Ms. Bolner-Prost was advocating for a special marketing effort – Ms. Scott responded that SARA is looking at The DeBerry Group scope and operating budget to heighten event awareness to ensure we have the team and money available ... Ms. Scott also mentioned offering San Pedro Creek as a free event space to get more organic events coming in
- Mr. Geyer asked whether a tour can be put together displaying how places along the river can be rented – Ms. Brown responded that SARA is working to identify the areas that will be utilized

Plaza de Fundación Artwork

- As a reminder, the project site for the artwork is the upper level of the Plaza de Fundación
- Goals of the artwork included be compelling and aesthetically excellent, commemorate the celebration of San Antonio's 300th anniversary, celebrate San Pedro Creek culture and history, bring life to imagery of diversity and be suitable for the creek environment
- Criteria included experience with similar size projects, sensitivity and creativity with diverse communities, role SPC has played in the community
- RFQ was released last July – a lot of outreach was done to get as much advertisement as possible – an informational meeting was held and recorded on Aug. 9 to cover more detail about the RFQ
- Call closed on Aug. 30 with 166 applications received – including applications from six different countries
- Held a selection panel meeting on Sept. 26 to select the finalists following a cursory review
- Four finalists were selected by a panel of four judges including SARA staff and local artists
- Ms. Brown shared artwork from each of the four finalists – all finalists have great track records and great experience
- Each finalist was contracted to produce a conceptual design – in-depth orientation to the project and tour of the site for finalists was conducted on Oct. 30
- Finalist interviews were held on Dec. 12 – panel ultimately selected Bridge Projects from San Antonio for recommendation
- Bridge Projects is comprised of two artists that have been working collaboratively since 2014, each has 25 years of experience
- Bridge Projects is deeply embedded in SA's art-making community
- Ms. Brown shared Bridge Projects proposal photo for "Creeklines" a structure consisting of 30 stainless steel poles, curvature informed by GPS tracking of students walking like a creek
- The artwork provides the viewer with different experiences from different angles

- Ms. Brown shared a diagram looking down on the plaza how the 30 poles are marked out – colors notated speak to stones at the base of the polls – artwork also includes the addition of creek diagram onto plaza paving
- Ms. Brown shared a photo depicting the view of the artwork from across the creek
- The artists are seeking additional input from the community on the project on their website
- Bexar County Commissioners delayed the vote on the project during the last Commissioners Court meeting – currently working with the artist and the Commissioners to refine the design based on feedback from selection panel, county staff and Commissioners Court
- SARA will present the revised final design to Commissioners Court in May
- Assuming approval SARA would issue the NTP with fabrication in June for installation in Spring 2020
- Feedback on the artwork can be given directly to Carrie and supplied online
- Artist proposed etchings on each of the poles with historical information about that particular decade etched in to the base of the pole – artist will be researching this element and finalizing what the actual text looks like

Questions

- Mr. Geyer clarified that the project is the tricentennial artwork – a Bexar County project that SARA is managing
- Mr. Baird asked what the artwork would be made out of – Ms. Brown noted that the poles would be made of steel, anchored and bolted in the ground, they would not be kinetic, they don't move – the bottom portion of the pole will be completely straight, which makes it difficult to climb – Bridge Projects is taking a closure look at that including starting the curvature higher
- Mr. Geyer asked Ms. Brown to explain that when it was pitched to the Commissioners Court there was an educational component included – Ms. Brown explained that Bridge Projects proposed using a portion of the budget to set aside funding for education – funding workshops, transportation to and from the creek for students, and developing a curriculum for teachers to use, heavily focused on historical nature of the project – feedback from Bexar County was that more of the budget be focused on the physical structure – SARA is evaluating its ability to take on some of those educational components within its educational team, because that portion of the project was interesting to all involved – artists are open to everything and it is being investigated
- Mr. Geyer commented that he thought the education program was ill defined – if there was an educational program who would run it? Who would replenish the funds? How would it be sustained? Would they be under contract to SARA? The idea has a long tail – Ms. Brown responded that SARA is evaluating all questions – Mr. Geyer responded that the subcommittee would like to know more about it
- Ms. Bolner-Prost asked for an explanation on the lighting around the sculptures – Ms. Brown responded that the lights would have varying colors allowing warm and cool lights to contrast each other, the lights would reflect on the surface of the material offsetting the coloration instead of lighting it all with one color
- Ms. Bolner-Prost asked the height of the sculptures – Ms. Brown responded they are approximately 24 feet tall – Ms. Bolner-Prost commented that the artwork is a great opportunity for a showcase piece
- Mr. Geyer noted that when it was presented to Commissioners Court Bridge Projects had a model of the sculpture that they were showing and turning around displaying how it changed with sunlight and shadows – Mr. Geyer expressed he thought it was an intelligent design far superior to previous options
- Ms. Bolner-Prost commented that it was much less controversial
- Mr. Geyer reminded everyone that SARA has been tasked by Bexar County with managing this difficult project

COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

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

Interpretive Plan Update

- Second interpretive plan meeting took place on Feb. 27 and included discussion about whether to include Spanish translation on interpretive panel recommendation
- Monica and Carrie Brown are researching options for including two different languages on the interpretive sign panels – the interpretive committee recommended tapping Mario Schjetnan to see how this has been done in other locations
- Consultant Dr. Anne Toxie went through items that needed clarification – the committee will meet again adding fourth meeting to schedule and scope – looking at April 15/16 timing

- Anticipated topics at the next meeting include options for Spanish translation and reviewing a draft of interpretive plan

Social Media & Mobile App Updates

- Android phone users are using the audio tour less – Google Play guidelines for apps are a little more strict – SARA is looking into options to ensure that users with both phones have identical experience
- Mobile app promotion campaign including Spanish mobile app information will begin again soon
- Website updates – 7,551 users are going to the website – received over 19,000 page views
- Top five website landing pages are home page, Illume event page, project phases, construction updates and the Get Fit event page
- Traffic generating sources are Google at 2,500, 2,000 people entering direct, 1,092 from Illume event promotion and 436 from social media and video – specifically Illume content

Questions

- Mr. Geyer asked if there is any sort of consensus on metrics, what do they really mean? – Ms. Suescun-Fast responded that because San Pedro Creek Culture Park is such a unique space, we are building our own baseline to understand what can be enhanced and built upon
- Mr. Geyer asked whether there is a comparable thing going on with the Mission Reach, Museum Reach or San Antonio River – Ms. Trevino-Ortega noted that San Pedro Creek Culture Park is the only space that has its own dedicated marketing efforts, everything for other portions of the river is embedded in SARA promotion
- Mr. Geyer commented that we will just have to wait and see – Ms. Suescun-Fast responded that the enhanced marketing program will held to build the baseline and establish key performance indicators, Ms. Bolner-Prost agreed, Ms. Scott added that with only four blocks completed SARA is building the plane at it is flying with important elements like parking coming online only a month ago
- Ms. Scott noted that San Pedro Creek Culture Park is beautiful but there is not much else for visitors to do there like there is at the Pearl – once there is a reason for people to go to the park it will serve as a connection to destinations that people want to visit

San Pedro Creek Culture Park Awards

- 2018
 - TxA Citation of Honor Award
 - ENR Best Project Award – Landscape
 - Mayor’s Choice Award – Best Project
 - ACEC Texas Engineering Excellence Award – Water and Wastewater Gold Medal
 - Grand Award Winner (1 of 16) – automatically entered for the grand concepter award which will be announced at the black tie gala on May 7 in Washington, D.C.
- 2019
 - Best of the City Ongoing Transformation Award – San Antonio Magazine
 - American Advertising Awards
 - GOLD – Best online/interactive campaign
 - BRONZE – Fiesta medal
- Ms. Trevino-Ortega polled the subcommittee to see if there was interest in a construction tour in place of the April meeting – Ms. De La Garza, Ms. Bolner-Prost and Mr. Geyer expressed interest in a pre-Fiesta construction tour

Questions

- Mr. Geyer asked whether San Pedro Creek Culture Park would have a Fiesta medal this year and if so, when will they be in – Ms. Suescun-Fast noted that Fiesta medals are in production and are scheduled to arrive right before Fiesta
- Mr. Geyer asked whether Fiesta medals would be available for the April meeting – Ms. Suescun-Fast noted that it is possible

CALENDER ITEMS

Mr. Geyer reviewed the following calendar items:

- a. San Pedro Creek Subcommittee meeting, April 11 at 9 a.m. at the San Antonio River Authority Board Room
- b. Writers Take a Walk, April 13 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the San Pedro Creek Culture Park

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS FROM PUBLIC AND SUBCOMMITTEE

- Ms. Shaver expressed concern about people throwing things up on the proposed artwork and asked how wide are the bases of the poles – Ms. Brown responded that they are designed to be about 6 inches wide – Ms. Shaver noted that she envisioned people shimmying up the poles and signage prohibiting touching and messing with the artwork take away from the beauty, she suggested SARA will need someone working full time to maintain the artwork – Mr. Geyer responded that the operations and maintenance staff would be responsible for maintaining the artwork

ITEMS TO PRESENT TO Westside Creeks Oversight Committee:

- Westside Creeks Oversight Committee meets quarterly and will not meet prior to April 11

ADJOURN

A motion to adjourn was made by Mr. Baird and seconded by Ms. De La Garza at 10:32 a.m.