



San Antonio River Oversight Committee

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SPECIAL CALLED MEETING

NOVEMBER 26, 2007

100 E. GUENTHER

5:00 P.M.

SARA BOARD ROOM

AGENDA

ATTENDING: MEMEBERS AND ALTERNATES- Joe Alderete, Robert Anguiano, Dermot Brosnan, Bob Buchanan, Tony Cantu, Susan Chandoha, Lila Cockrell, Edward R. Day, Tom DeBrooke, Evangelina Flores, Joan Gaither, Curtis Gunn, Jr., Bob Harris, Glenn Huddleston, Mike Lance, Marise McDermott, Richard Moore, Jeff Neathery, Jason Stevens, Jon Thompson
STAFF AND CONSULTANTS- Joe Aceves, Jim Boenig, Catherine Nixon-Cooke, Claude Harding, Kerim Jacaman, Addison Looney, Mark Sorenson, Steve Whitesell, Linda Ximenes and eight members of the public.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Lila Cockrell called the meeting to order and welcomed all the members to the meeting.

UPDATE ON MISSION REACH ACTIVITIES

Jeff Neathery reported that there was exciting news. A subcommittee met last week at a special meeting to approve the 100 percent design. He turned the meeting over to Addison Looney for details.

A/E Status Update

Mr. Looney reported that the 100 percent design plans were distributed and responses are due by 4:00 p.m. on Friday so he can enter responses into the Corps' comments control system. The changes to the weirs, riffles and bridges that are in the plan were part of the briefing to the ROC and the subcommittee.

Schedule Update

Mr. Looney went on to report the following:

- A variance will be needed for the tree permits because of technicalities in the Unified Development Code. The permit will be applied for and sent to the City Arborist.

- Several variances will be needed for the floodplain permit. He is working with the City Floodplain Engineer, the Corps and Carter-Burgess to make sure there is documentation to show how things happened as they did.
- The Mission Reach Subcommittee has recommended that the color of the concrete on the hike and bike path matches the color of the banding and the concrete on the Mission Trails hike and bike path.
- The next Mission Trails meeting is December 6th.
- Six of the 15 properties that are needed have been secured already. Four are set for City Council approval and the remaining five are being condemned for different reasons.
- The spoils site on Southton Road is being readied for acceptance of materials. The site will be vacated by mid-February. SARA is finalizing the contract for the design team for the site.
- The SAWS utility relocation work began the week of November 11. They are boring beneath the River to place a sanitary sewer siphon. All was going without a hitch until they hit water and the hole is filled.
- The official bid package for Phase 1 construction goes on the street in mid-January with pre-bid advertising before that to encourage a good number of bids. The award will be in March.

Jim Boenig reported the following on the briefing to the Committee of Six on November 16, 2007:

- Phase 1 is 1.4 miles from Lone Star to the confluence of San Pedro Creek. This requires 15 acres and the spoils site.
- He showed an illustration of how it would look with the native grasses as planned and went on to review the ecosystem restoration enhancements.
- Eight of the 10 riffles, now called weirs, would go into this phase of the construction. The weir structures will be about three to four feet in height and include the canoe chutes. Outcropping of boulders will be used to make it look as natural as possible. This phase of the project will do all the excavation work and the elimination of the invasive grasses. The native grasses will be planted the following year by separate contract.
- He also reviewed the recreational enhancements.
- We are on schedule to get the right of way acquired that is needed.
- On the funding plan, he said that \$126.6 million was the original figure and divided that to show what was available for construction and construction management. The cost went up from \$19.6 to \$23.5 million and these funds were allocated based on what the actual expense was covering.
- SARA hopes to receive between \$4 and \$10 million in the next month. It will be possible to accelerate even if no money is received now from the Federal Government, so he showed how the local funds would be allocated in that event. These local funds will be reimbursed if the funds from the Federal Government are appropriated. The Federal funds are available for Phase 1 if it is necessary to advance local funds, but it would only be for Phase 1.

- Justification for the budget increases included escalations in the fuel and materials costs, additional design enhancements to the riffles and increased base flow as a result of the rains, causing additional costs for moving that extra water.
- There is an outstanding issue now for the stability of the banks with the Corps that includes all of the San Antonio River Improvements Project (SARIP) construction. The Corps is saying that anything more than a 4/1 slope is in danger of instability over a 40-year period. This is a last-minute issue and SARA is not sure what will be required. It will probably go up the chain of command at the Corps and the hope is that they will separate this from the current construction, which can be remediated at a later date.
- Phase 2 is funded for 100 percent, Phase 3 is funded 100 percent and Phase 4 does not have any funding at this time except for design.

Consideration of the 100 percent Design

Asking for the approval of the 100 percent design so that it can move to the SARA board, City Council and County Commissioners for their approval. Ms. Cockrell asked if there were any questions and commended the Mission Reach Subcommittee. **There was agreement to approve the 100 percent design by consensus, since there were no concerns expressed.**

Consideration of Construction Authorization for Phase 1

Mrs. Cockrell asked Mr. Boenig to review what was being asked and he explained that the construction authorization would be for about \$1 million more and that the County would provide \$16.5 million and \$7 million from the City. **There was agreement by consensus to approve the construction authorization. No concerns were expressed.**

UPDATE ON EAGLELAND ACTIVITIES

Mr. Boenig reported on the following:

Corps of Engineers Project

- Irrigation pipes have been removed except for the wildflower area. The revised tree planting plan will be presented to the Eagleland Subcommittee at their next regular meeting.
- SARA will be presenting the final draft Crofton Park plan at the next meeting also.
- Due to the delays in coordination with the Corps' contractor and the vegetation contractor, the erosion control will be done in the spring. It is not yet clear how much the Corps will provide in additional funds for the Eagleland project.

Pedestrian Path

Mr. Boenig reported the following for Richard Grochowski who was unable to attend:

- The pedestrian bridge will arrive the first of December and be housed at Brooks City-Base. If cleanup can occur in early 2008, it may be possible to install the bridge as part of Mission Trails Package 4A, since they will be using the same contractor.
- There is a rumor that James Lifshutz may be doing some cleanup in the next few months.
- The EPA rules for that area are pretty confused now and it seems it will take some time to clear them up.

- The abutments on the Brackenridge High School side will be completed in early 2008.
- The budget for the pedestrian phase is at \$3.5 million.
- There are no updates on the Corps 404 permit.
- The railroad trestle will be removed as part of the Mission Trails 4A package since it is not on railroad right of way.
- There is no definite word now on the hand rails along the trail.

UPDATE ON MUSEUM REACH ACTIVITIES

Schedule Update

Tony Cantu reported that the subcommittee had met twice in November to get updated on the schedule and to discuss the Park Segment trail. Writ is working hard to get what is needed for the Venue Tax Committee. There were a good amount of comments from the public and interested parties met to address the concerns expressed by the Audubon Society and River Road Neighborhood residents.

Mark Sorenson reported the following:

- The existing expenditures are at 20 percent of the budget, which is right where they should be. The progress map showed the project at 20 percent complete and the contract amount was 19 percent, so it looks good. The work got thrown behind for about two weeks with the rains, but is back on schedule now.
- Most of the construction now is in the vicinity of the construction office yard.
- He showed photos of the construction as it is proceeding now and explained the different work that is being done.
- He reported that there is a lock and dam webcam on the website and displayed the actual website for all to see. There are also still photos on the website that show the construction as it progresses.
- He reminded everyone that every Friday he has a walk-through and is willing to show everyone the project.

Park Segment Trail Alignment

Mr. Guess reported that the request for funding for the revenue for the Visitors Tax would not specify a particular alignment for the trail. It will be decided at a later date.

UPDATE ON VISITORS TAX STATUS

Milton Guess gave an update on the meeting with the Mission Reach Subcommittee on the enhancements. He reported the following:

- His committee will make a recommendation to Commissioners Court and will add that since the ROC and the Committee of Six have been meeting for ten years, that this structure continue to oversee the River projects for the Visitors Tax.
- The Court has asked Mr. Guess's committee to provide priorities and funding designations. This level of detail is not likely to be included in the final recommendations by the Court.
- There was no decision about where the Park Segment trail would go and he thinks the Commissioners Court will come back to the ROC for the specifics, once the bond passes and they know how much money there is.

- The document showing the priorities for funding that is being distributed at this ROC is a draft document. He invited everyone to come to the Visitors Tax committee meeting on Nov. 29 at 4:00 p.m.
- He emphasized that the Park Segment trail alignment is not part of this decision.
- The recommendation to the Commissioners Court is for a total of \$125 million. Of this \$71 million for the Mission Reach, the whole base project, which can be reimbursed as the federal money comes in. There will be \$3.6 million recommended for the Park Segment in order to create a continuous trail from Brackenridge Park to Mission Espada. This would be for the \$75 million in project expenditures the Court asked for initially. The estimates he has show that it would take \$176 million in 2010 figures to do the whole project from Mission Espada to Brackenridge Park.
- His subcommittee and the ROC subcommittee reviewed the additional items listed on the document to decide what could be the other expenses to total \$125 million. It would take an additional \$75 million to complete everything, but the subcommittee is recommending \$38 million worth of betterments and enhancements and other needs.
- Altogether, the request is for \$110 million for the Mission Reach and \$12 million for the Park Segment, with \$2.6 million for Eagleland.

Mrs. Cockrell commended all for the work done and she pointed out that all of the members think the River is the priority issue for the Visitors Tax revenue.

Mr. Guess announced there will be a public meeting on December 13 at 5:00 p.m. at the Municipal Auditorium to present these items to the public. On December 18 at 2:30 p.m. there will be a public hearing before Commissioners Court. Everyone will be presenting and there will be an opportunity to comment at that time. He will send additional information to the ROC members.

The ROC agreed by consensus that \$125 million is the minimum amount that would be sought for the Visitors Tax.

UPDATE ON FEDERAL FUNDING

Suzanne Scott reported the following:

- There were no resolutions to the different appropriations at this point. There is a Continuing Resolution now for funding, but we probably will not know anything until the end of the year. There is no information on the Energy and Water Appropriation.
- SARA is moving forward on using local funds.
- SARA officials will go tomorrow go to Ft. Worth to discuss with a Congresswoman there about working together to get the project funded.

SAN ANTONIO RIVER FOUNDATION UPDATE

Kim Abernethy, the new Assistant Director of the foundation, reported in Catherine Cooke's absence. She reported the following:

- They have secured \$13 million to date.
- The foundation is working with SARA to be able to construct the enhancements from the Public Art Master Plan.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Charles Bartlett, commented on Avenue A as one of San Antonio's most famous secrets. Many people want to keep it that way. He added that on Monday the Parks Board will form a special committee to oversee and monitor the activities on Ave. A and the Conservation Society has passed a resolution to create a sanctuary there.

This is probably the only vestige of the original River in San Antonio. There is interesting wildlife and the bird population almost rivals Mitchell Lake although it is only 2 blocks long.

People come to visit it from all over the world, and it is a place to be managed carefully and preserved. It is an area worth looking at and treating carefully. Don't want to love it to death. The Parks Board is already talking to Parks and Wildlife about it and he is glad the ROC is seeking funding for it.