



San Antonio River Oversight Committee

421 Sixth Street, #1
San Antonio, Texas 78215

210/354-2925 Office

210/354-2964 Fax

MAY 15, 2006

100 E. GUENTHER

5:00 P.M.

SAN ANTONIO RIVER OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE MEETING

MEETING NOTES

ATTENDING: Committee and Alternates- Roberto Anguiano, Bob Buchanan, Nathan Campbell, Tony Cantu, Susan Chandoha, Lila Cockrell, Edward R. Day, Tom DeBrooke, Curtis Gunn, Jr., Bob Harris, Jeff Neathery, Marion Oettinger, Jr., Jody Williams. **Staff and Consultants-** Dean Bayer, Jim Boenig, Larry Clark, Joseph Cruz, Aaron Forland, Arturo Villarreal, Arnie Gonzalez, Lorna Jordan, Gayle Brennan Spencer, Steve Whitesell, Linda Ximenes and nine members of the public.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Lila Cockrell chaired the meeting in Irby Hightower's absence. She welcomed all in attendance and thanked them for their attendance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF APRIL 14, 2006

The minutes were approved by consensus with one correction: Susan Chandoha needs to be shown as in attendance at the meeting.

REPORT ON THE FINAL DRAFT PUBLIC ART MASTER PLAN

Ms. Cockrell called on Jody Williams to speak on behalf of the Public Art Master Plan Advisory (PAMPA) subcommittee. Ms. Williams reported that the subcommittee approved the draft of the plan with the changes recommended by the subcommittee.

Jimmy LaFlore then took the floor and briefly reviewed how the process evolved from discussions about what public art on the river might be like to

the master plan being presented this evening for consideration by the Committee.

He pointed out that at the beginning of the process the consultant held a facilitated community workshop to solicit ideas and focal points about where priorities might lie in the future; to anticipate the ideas for the future whenever they might come on line. The PAMPA subcommittee reviewed the draft public art plan and advised the consultant. He announced that he was pleased to share the community vision with the Committee and introduced Lorna Jordan, the public art master plan consultant.

Ms. Jordan expressed her enthusiasm for being involved in the process and introduced Larry Clark and Beth Wells of Bender Wells Clark as well as others in her studio.

Ms. Jordan then went on to review the draft of the Public Art Master Plan. She explained that its intention is to allow the artistic expression of contemporary ideas in the rich context of the environment of the San Antonio River. The plan includes the entire project boundaries from Hildebrand to Mission Espada and expands beyond that to all the institutions and businesses and communities interested in being engaged with the River.

Her team began the process with an extensive research phase, playing detective to discover the various aspects of the River's history and character.

She initiated conversations with ROC members and other stakeholders, went on-site and traveled it in cars, boats and on foot to experience it firsthand and imagine how it came to be as it is.

The members of the San Antonio community participated in a workshop and through a series of mapping exercises discovered which outdoor experiences were important and how people related to the River, now and in the past.

Using the information gathered, she developed the draft art plan and two conceptual plans and presented them to the community, at which point people got very enthusiastic. She explained that she made the revisions necessary to improve the plan and was here to present the final draft to the Committee for consideration.

She began her review of the plan by explaining the context for the plan: a series of confluences that evolve from several “edge” experiences that looked at how the community interacts with the river and used that to create case studies.

She went on to say that the inhabitants of the area have told stories of their experiences with the River and these are what provide a lens through which to view the River. Added to that, there is an environmental confluence here that is recognized world wide for its diversity.

You can see the Spanish influence on the built environment and the urban ecology, which the plan focuses on as well. The culture reflects deeply rooted tradition and cosmopolitan modernism. This heritage is expressed in a variety of ways and the diverse arts groups provide a rich texture of experience and history. She emphasized her interest in the power of art to make the city even more powerful that it is.

She pointed out the interaction of the community and the River such as the activities at the Witte Museum and the '04 Arts Group as projects that exemplify the types of projects that the plan describes. The Basura Bash and the River Parade were other examples of this type of interaction.

She explained that she had worked with the community to conceive the plan’s goals in language that reflected the way people would know it. (Please see the listing of the goals in the Public Art Master Plan on the website www.sanantonioriver.org.)

She emphasized that the challenge now is to realize the full potential of the public art as it is envisioned in the master plan. The vision is to conceive of the river and its confluences in changing ways over time and at the same time acknowledge its permanence. These should be poetic narratives that describe the unfolding drama of the River and evoke intimate moments of the individual. Although public, the art works can be personal in a one-on-one setting.

Ms. Jordan reviewed a series of six art typologies:

1. Gathering places—overlooks, parks
2. Pathways and connections—links to neighborhoods and pathways to the River

3. Iconic and media artworks—links to the river, but not necessarily permanent ones
4. Natural and built infrastructure—flood protection, recreational opportunities and the need to think about expressing these in artistic terms.
5. Events, residencies and temporary works—ephemeral activities on the river
6. Learning about the river through art

Then she spoke to how to weave these together and frame the art. She commented that Larry Clark had mentioned that the River is a large-scale social sculpture, which she considered and agreed with. The human interactions happen at a variety of scales that need to be represented in the artworks related to the River. Reflects not only the River but also how people interact and relate to it.

The plan considers four scales for the types of projects it suggests:

1. System—a program of projects throughout the River, to divide it into three reaches, each with an individual character. This is the entire River that simultaneously links and highlights the qualities of the river. A sequence of place-based items.
2. Reach—a series of activities that reflect the characteristics of the reach and then link from the River to the community. How to link the streets as a “green element.”
3. Segment—help to develop identity and character for each segment—the plan includes examples of the kinds of projects for these.
4. Site event—events that relate to just one site. Diverse expression and examples of them. Events are an important part of the community and celebrate the history of the area.

In the plan, the segments move from north to south so that they go from the Museum Reach to the Eagleland Reach and then the Mission Reach highlighting the convergence of the different aspects of water and the various capacities of water in shaping the landscape of the region, figuratively and physically.

She went on to explain that two concept plans were part of the plan. The locations for both of them are triangles, one in the Mission Reach and one in the Museum Reach, that complement each other and act as a catalyst to the implementation of the whole plan. The location in the Museum Reach near

the Pearl Brewery echoes the River Walk and the Balcones Escarpment as the water courses through the subterranean channels. San Antonio functions as an oasis to travelers and that is reflected in the grotto theatre, a pocket park amphitheater from the street to the River, in the form of a curvilinear grotto.

The Confluence Theater is at the confluence of the San Antonio River and San Pedro Creek. At this location, the plan shows a formal amphitheater and ecological enhancements and trails. She showed the detail of an architectural backdrop that commemorates the River's origins and San Pedro Springs.

She continued, explaining that the vision of the arts plan is to be metaphorical system of currents, eddies and confluences. The document is a vision document for use by all sorts of people and for raising funds to make them a reality. These projects will have lots of uses and layers. Projects of various types and styles over the next thirty years can be developed using this plan. She emphasized that this is an exciting time in the city and she said she was looking forward to see how the city rallies to move the plan toward implementation.

Bob Harris commended Ms. Jordan, the team and the subcommittee. He said the suggestions made after the first draft were incorporated and taken even further. He agreed that now all will need to take it and generate the kind of enthusiasm to make the plan a reality. He pointed to an illustration on one of the boards that was an example of the details for making these projects happen.

Ms. Cockrell asked for a timetable. Jimmy LeFlore responded that he had been pushing to get the plan completed. Now that it is finished, he will be meeting with Mr. Hightower to see what the next steps are and to identify what other plans this one will impact. He added that he wants to create a bigger picture of how to address those other aspects and decide the proper way to proceed. He noted that he will continue to work with the subcommittee.

Ms. Cockrell pointed out that the river improvements project is a complex project and the arts plan is also complex and imposed onto it. She added that local artists are interested in getting involved. She also pointed out that

there are questions about where the money will come from to fund these different art projects.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

Ramiro Maldonado of the San Antonio Housing Authority asked if the recommendations would be offered as guidelines to the Unified Development Code or how would they be implemented as they go forward. Mr. LeFlore responded that the subcommittee needs to work on the implementation to see how the plan utilization might occur; that is the next phase. The subcommittee decided it was not appropriate to put the implementation information in the document.

The plan provides the options to help navigate—to see if they connect to some of the themes. He added that he hoped people that will see how the different aspects relate, but they will not impose the themes on anyone.

Ms. Cockrell asked Paula Owen of the Southwest School of Art and Craft to comment on the plan. Ms. Owen remarked that it is a dynamic beginning and provides the language with which to begin; it helps us to see the potential and options. She added that now comes the hard work.

Ms. Cockrell then called on Steve Whitesell of the National Park Service who said he did not have anything to add.

Sally Buchanan noted that the San Antonio River Foundation stands ready.

Bob Buchanan pointed out that Ms. Jordan alluded to a thirty-year time scale and the SARIP is on a ten-year timeframe, indicating that the art will continue to evolve and develop as the river evolves as well. He thought that it would be exciting.

Ms. Cockrell asked for the consensus to approve the plan and there were no objections, so the Committee accepted the plan by consensus.

The next meeting is on Monday, June 19, 2006 at the San Antonio River Authority, 100 E. Guenther at 5:00 p.m.