



San Antonio River Oversight Committee

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JUNE 19, 2006

SAN ANTONIO RIVER AUTHORITY BOARD ROOM

100 E. GUENTHER STREET

5:00 P.M.

MEETING NOTES

ATTENDING: Committee and Alternates: Joe Alderete, Roberto Anguiano, Tony Cantu, Susan Chandoha, Lila Cockrell, Edward R. Day, Tom DeBrooke, Curtis C. Gunn, Jr., Irby Hightower, Glenn Huddleston, Mike Lance, Jeff Neathery, Jon Thompson, Jody Williams; **Staff and Consultants:** Dean Bayer, Jim Boenig, Joseph Cruz, Luis Fierro, Aaron Forland, Arnie Gonzalez, Richard Growchowski, Lori Houston, John Mize, Steve Ramsey, Mark Sorenson, Gayle Brennan Spencer, Arturo Villarreal, Steve Whitesell, Linda Ximenes; and three members of the public.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS

Irby Hightower welcomed the group and recognized Jody Williams, who introduced Joan Gaither, the new representative from the San Antonio Conservation Society.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF MAY 15, 2006

The minutes were approved by consensus with no corrections.

UPDATE ON MISSION REACH ACTIVITIES

Jeff Neathery reported that the Mission Reach Subcommittee met last week and got good updates on the status of the project. He turned the report over to Mark Sorenson.

Architectural/Engineering Status Update

Mr. Sorenson reported setting row markers on the existing river and staking the new channel alignment at the top of bank and in the channel in preparation for the meeting in July with the Corps of Engineers on July 11-13. The meeting is with the City, the County, and SARA to review the 30

percent plans and then go into the field to look at the site markers. Mr. Neathery and Mr. Hightower will be attending as well. Copies of the 30 percent documents are available for review at the annex building.

The disposal site assessment is under due diligence now. Monitoring wells and soil assessment are being done to be sure nothing affects the shallow groundwater.

Eagleland Projects Update

CoE Project

Jim Boenig reported that SARA and the Corps reached agreement on the temporary irrigation system. SARA personnel have been doing using an emergency system to keep the grasses alive. SARA asked the contractor to purchase and install the system, but SARA will operate it using temporary rights to water the project from the river. It should take about three or four months to establish the native grasses. There is a poor stand now and SARA has asked the contractor and the Corps person to evaluate if it should be reseeded.

River Walk Link

Dean Bayer introduced the new staff that will work on the Eagleland projects full time. Mr. Bayer will be fading out, but still be available. He introduced Richard Grochowski, a professional engineer, who will be the lead for the project and Luis Fierro who will be helping him out. He also introduced Lori Houston of the City Manager's office, who will be focusing on the project as well.

He handed out the schedule for the projects included in the Eagleland projects. The schedule incorporated the Corps projects since they have to work together so closely and to show the relation among the projects. He reported that the Eagleland hike and bike phase is under construction, and the contractor is installing storm drains. It is scheduled for completion at the end of December.

Pedestrian Trail

The design for the pedestrian phase from S. Alamo to Guenther should be completed in December 2006, pending the 404 permit. Once they have the permit they can go to TxDOT for approval. After the approval from TxDOT, then the project will go to bids and get approval in three months,

with construction starting in April 2007. The construction should take about ten months.

Mr. Bayer noted that because of the nature of the project for which the 404 permit is being requested (modifications to a manmade channel, the cascades that add oxygen to the water) it should not be difficult to get the permit, but you cannot be sure.

Ed Day asked if the City would be prepared to discuss the Phase 4 Mission Trails and the plunge pool and amenities as part of the schedule for the July Eagleland meeting. He requested a combined schedule for everyone's projects. Mr. Bayer said it could be done and Mr. Hightower agreed that it would be a good idea.

Mr. Hightower welcomed Mr. Grochowski to the project and thanked Ms. Houston for her assistance.

Amenities Master Plan

Mr. Boenig reported that the master planning process was complete. He reported to the King William Association on the schematic costs and priorities at a meeting on June 7. The Crofton/Constance Street project is the priority. The funding for the design should be in place this month so the final design phase can begin in September and the drawings complete in March with construction funding request in April 2007. He emphasized that the Mission Trails package 4 amenities should be included as part of an integrated project.

UPDATE ON MUSEUM REACH ACTIVITIES

Tony Cantu reported that there would be an update on the lighting and acceleration plan and the 50 percent plan for tonight's meeting and turned the report over to Mr. Sorenson.

Schedule Update

Mr. Sorenson reported that the 50 percent final design drawings are under review by the partners; comments were due last Friday. They will be meeting in the next week or so to review the documents. They will get the final cost estimates in the next few days. He noted that the costs are going up because of a variety of factors.

Property and easement acquisition is continuing on an ongoing basis.

Mr. Sorenson reported that the mitigation plan for the 404 permit is under refinement. He explained that if a stream is damaged, it must be mitigated either off-site or on-site. Medio Creek project and the Medina River Park are possible off-site mitigation locations. Because the project is affecting a perennial stream the mitigation must be made on another perennial stream. SARA will be touring the sites this week to see if they will work and then have Parks and Wildlife and Fish and Wildlife do another tour. This is on a fast track with the Corps so it should not take too long. He pointed out that it is not a critical path item at this point. Construction is scheduled for December 2006 and that timeline can be met with the 404 permit.

Development Agreement and Acceleration of the Channel Work

Lori Houston reported that the City is still working on the development agreement and SARA, the City and the County are still working on an Interlocal Agreement. They are waiting for the cost estimates and anticipate the development agreement will be ready for approval in August. She noted that the Mayor emphasized that this is important.

Comments on the Sample Light Fixtures

John Mize asked if people got a chance to look at the fixtures that had been temporarily placed just north of the St. Mary's Street Bridge. They were placed on top of a 16-foot pole with the base at 14 feet, which will be just above the level of flooding. He showed a photograph of the fixture and explained the features that would make it work. The poles will be spaced approximately 60 feet apart and the fixture will have a 70-watt bulb. This fixture has the bulb totally within the lamp above, so there is no view of the light source.

Mr. Mize showed photos of the lamp lighting at night also. He pointed out that there is no direct view of the light source at the first floor level of any of the adjacent buildings.

Mr. Cantu said he ran into Joe Kaplan, the lighting consultant, who explained some of the details and said the new light is superior. Joe Alderete asked where the fixtures were made and if they were readily available. Mr. Mize responded that the distributor is here in San Antonio.

Lila Cockrell asked how hard it was to change the bulbs. Mr. Mize explained that the top piece screws off and you reach in to change the bulb. There will also be low level bollard lighting, some step lighting and

illuminated handrails at the turning basin. The metal halite bulbs that will be used last around 2-3,000 hours at least.

The lights will remain up at the location about where Pardo's used to be for another two weeks or so.

Mr. Alderete asked if there is a deterrent to vandalism because they have been having a lot of vandalism of the lights out at Woodlawn Lake. Mr. Mize responded that a heavy-duty glass shield protects the lamp. The cost of the glass shield that conceals the lamp is approximately \$15.

Mr. Mize commented that they have not noticed a lot of vandalism in the segment where the lights would be—there is still a lot of activity in these areas. He explained that the bulb is a standard single ended lamp that is readily available. CPS will maintain the light and have the plans for the lighting now. Mr. Hightower noted that the quality of the lamp and the color of the bulb are much than in other places. Mr. Alderete asked that the information be given to the City for the other sections of the river and in other places.

Mr. Bayer pointed out that the new technology will be used in the Mission Trails and the Eagleland sections.

Mr. Hightower asked if there was consensus for approval on the bulb. Mike Lance asked that the Downtown Residents Association be contacted to be sure they are okay with the fixtures.

There were no concerns expressed, so the fixture and the bulb were approved by consensus.

BRIEFING ON MEETING OF COMMITTEE OF SIX

Mr. Hightower noted that there had been a Committee of Six meeting and complimented Suzanne Scott and Lori Houston and others for their efforts.

Suzanne Scott explained that the Committee of Six members are Mayor Phil Hardberger and Councilman Richard Perez, SARA Board members Jim Johnson and Sally Buchanan and County Commissioners Tommy Adkisson and Sergio "Chico" Rodriguez. The SAROC Co-chairs are considered ex-officio members of the Committee. Others who attended were representatives of the River Foundation (SARF) —Sonny Collins, Nick

Hollis and Gayle Spencer—as well as Tom Wendorf from the City, Joe Aceves from the County and Greg Rothe from SARA.

The presentation was set up as a general overview first and then went into the specifics of each reach. They talked a lot about the funding. They had more information on the Museum Reach and the preliminary cost estimates showing increases that were caused by several factors.

Regarding the Museum Reach, they talked about the unfunded elements and the River Foundation representatives pointed out that about \$11.8 million worth of those items are infrastructure items, not amenities.

The staff spent time pointing out that the funding is going for the channel, and to help the Committee members understand that the river will be accessible by boat, but not pedestrians in this section of the River.

There is a total of \$14.5 million that is not currently funded and the project cannot go forward until the costs get resolved. It was agreed that the staff would look at value engineering, but no one wanted it to affect the aesthetics or the quality of the project. The City agreed to look at other possible resources and put together a proposal for the Council's consideration. Council Member Perez stated he would make his best effort to convince his colleagues to fund the infrastructure items.

Not as much information was available on the Mission Reach because they will be doing the first review of the plans in July and the cost estimates are not yet available. At this point, it looks like the 30 percent plan costs are within the \$124 million project estimate, which is more than the General Reevaluation Report (GRR) estimate. It is likely that the costs will increase on this reach as well.

Greg Rothe reported that the SARA staff held a conference call with the Assistant Secretary of the Army regarding the status of the GRR's approval. They were concerned about the possibility that the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) might look at the smaller plan rather than the locally preferred plan since it would probably come closer to matching their usual formula. The ASA wanted to know what we wanted him to do. SARA recommended that the ASA push for the locally preferred plan and not allow the OMB to use their generic formula since this project has many special features.

The Committee agreed with that approach and told him to go forward with the community's plan, putting on a full court press to the OMB and the legislature. SARA has met with OMB and the person they met with was open to considering the special features and not using their standard formula. If the OMB does not select the preferred option, the local partners can still implement it, but they would have to provide the funds for the part of the project that did not receive federal funding.

When the GRR is approved by the ASA, then SARA can sign the Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA) and move forward with the project.

Mike Lance asked when the ASA would approve the GRR. Ms. Scott replied that it should be any day now.

Mr. Neathery pointed out that the ROC explored the options a year and a half ago and agreed that it wanted to go for the full project.

The lighting in Option 3B detracts from the habitat value, so it will go forward without it. Ms. Scott pointed out that it is a small concession. She reported that she was not sure what they would be doing about the pedestrian crossings. The pedestrian crossings are budgeted at a cost of \$1.5 million that was a 50-50 cost share. They have not looked at them in detail, to see where they could be done so that it does not affect the habitat.

Ms. Cockrell added that one significant thing to come out of the Committee of Six meeting was to be able to revisit the "amenities" like the sidewalks and lighting along the river, which are really basic items. For example, the safe harbor is a necessity for harboring the City's vessels. SARF has already communicated their request to look at funding those items.

Ms. Cockrell suggested the ROC endorse this effort to get the basic items funded and not treated as amenities. She pointed out that it is hard to get private funds for things that people assume the City pays for; items that are not embellishing or extra, but basic infrastructure. The ROC agreed to endorse the efforts of the Foundation to get these items funded by the City.

Linda Ximenes will draft a letter for signature by the Co-chairs.

Mr. Neathery remarked that the project could be funded through the Corps since they receive some funds to do projects at their discretion. Ms. Scott

pointed out that the Corps is to limited \$5 million of discretionary funds. Eagleland done that way because it was a smaller project.

Mr. Boenig commented that the smaller plan would not allow for right of way acquisition and limited the amount of vegetation that could be included.

OMB may not automatically budget for the lower one either. Mr. Hightower asked anyone who knew the President to let Ms. Scott know. SARA has already written to the OMB and they need to continue to maintain communication. The Corps said they may be able to get the project into the President's 2008 budget. The national significance that may be leveraged may be the River's connection with the missions.

FEDERAL FUNDING UPDATE

Ms. Scott reported that nothing had changed. There is still \$2.35 million in the House appropriation.

She thanked all who signed the letter of support, which included all of the members except for two who were not available.

Ms. Scott pointed out that Senator Hutchison understands the project's importance and the support in the community. She will work to increase the amount in the Senate bill and then there will be a conference committee in August.

PUBLIC ART MASTER PLAN UPDATE

Mr. Sorenson reported that the plan is ready to print. Lorna Jordan is being asked to hold off for now on the copies until it is clear who the reviewing agency will be. Jimmy LeFlore is working on the draft process.

Mr. LeFlore raised the issue of what to do when several groups separately want to fund something and may not know it. They may have different approaches, etc. The approach for that kind of situation is being addressed.

COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC

There were no comments from the public.