ITEM No. 4.a.

Open Space

ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

AMENDED

Wednesday, May 25, 2011, 1:30 P.M.
8th Floor Conference Room
City Hall Building, 2 Civic Center Plaza

Members Present: 5
Bill Addington, Richard L. Thomas, James H. Tolbert, Kevin von Finger, and Charlie S. Wakeem

Members Absent: 3
Robert Ardovino, Lois Balin and Luis Ruiz

Member Vacancies: 1
Terry Bilderback

Planning and Economic Development Staff Present:
David Coronado, Lead Planner; Kim Forsyth, Lead Planner; Todd Taylor, Planner; Geena Maskey, Planner

Others Present:
Lupe Cuellar, Assistant City Attorney, Legal Department; Gonzalo Cedillos, EPWU-PSB; Rudy Valdez, EPWU-PSB; Trish Tanner, Jobe; Heather McMurray, citizen

1. **Meeting Called to Order**

   Chair Wakeem called the meeting to order at 1:36 p.m.

2. **Call to the Public** (items not listed on the agenda)

   Ms. Trish Tanner commented on a mountain lion that killed a deer in Ruidoso, New Mexico.

   Chair Wakeem and Mr. Thomas made remarks.

3. **Discussion and Action**

   a. Approval of Minutes: May 11, 2011

      Chair Wakeem asked Board Members if there were any additions, corrections, or revisions.

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Chair Wakeem referred to the motion language and stated the language was very confusing.

Mr. Coronado explained he had listened to the meeting recording and tried to make sense of it. He requested Board Members revise the language.

Mr. von Finger stated it was his understanding that stormwater acquisition was for open space; not all acquisitions. He assumed Board Members did not want to have purview over all acquisitions.

Mr. Tolbert concurred.

Ms. Cuellar referred to Chair Wakeem comments *"only as it relates to open space and the 10% stormwater dedicated funds"*, and clarified that was what the Chair had asked to be removed from the Stormwater Advisory Committee.

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Mr. von Finger referred to the sentence *"Board Members requested Staff prepare backup information of the entire Keystone Heritage Park property to include acreage, maps, and zoning."* He clarified Board Members requested Staff prepare backup information **for the land surrounding Keystone Heritage Park** not the Park specifically.

No further revisions from the Board.

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. von Finger, seconded by Mr. Tolbert and ***UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR MAY 11, 2011, AS CORRECTED.***

b. Changes to the Agenda

Chair Wakeem requested the following:

1. Postpone agenda item 4 for two weeks;
2. Postpone agenda item 5 for two weeks;
3. Postpone agenda item 7 for two weeks; and
4. Move agenda item 6 following agenda item 9

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Tolbert, seconded by Mr. von Finger and ***UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE CHANGING THE AGENDA.***

4. **Discussion and Action:** Update on Resler and Interstate Highway 10 project.
   Contact: Leo Betancourt, leo.betancourt@txdot.gov, Texas Department of Transportation

   MOTION:
   Motion made by Mr. Tolbert, seconded by Mr. von Finger ***AND UNAMIOUSLY CARRIED TO POSTPONE TWO WEEKS.***

5. **Discussion and Action:** Mitigation bank subcommittee.
   Contact: Alan Shubert, (915) 541-4423, shubertar@elpasotexas.gov

   MOTION:
   Motion made by Mr. Tolbert, seconded by Mr. von Finger ***AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO POSTPONE TWO WEEKS.***

6. **Discussion and Action** regarding Arroyo 41-A development.
   Contact: Jorge Azcarate, CEA Group; Doug Schwartz, Southwest Land Development Services

   MOTION:
   Motion made by Mr. Tolbert, seconded by Mr. von Finger ***AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO MOVE AGENDA ITEM 6 FOLLOWING AGENDA ITEM 9.***

   Mr. Tolbert understood Arroyo 41-A was to be preserved from the mountain to the river; however, after Board Members reviewed plans for future developments, it appeared the arroyo is being narrowed. He asked Mr. Azcarate if indeed the arroyo is being preserved throughout the lands.

   Mr. Azcarate, CEA Group, responded he is complying with the land study, presented to the Board over a year ago, which has not been modified. The developer has staked out the areas designated to preserve open space; the contractor was instructed to back away from/do not disturb the staked out areas. He noted one issue regarding 41-A is the pond. He explained after several aerations of the land study, 41-A was narrowed; however, after several revisions 41-A was widened. The wider arroyo land study was approved by OSAB, CPC and City Council. The answer to the question, *"Are we complying with the land study and everything protected?"* is yes. Mr. Azcarate has every intention of complying with the land study; to include hike/bike trails abutting the arroyo, provide mountain to river connectivity, etc.

   Mr. Tolbert remembered certain areas of 41-A would be narrowed. He asked Mr. Azcarate, if in those certain areas, will the arroyo be kept natural or ~~**concaved**~~ c**oncrete.**

Mr. Azcarate responded we're keeping it natural; however, regarding the hydrology, certain things may need to be modified. He commented on extending Resler and what affects that will have on the arroyo. He noted whether or not there will be a bridge structure or a box culvert depends on the hydrology. Regarding the pond, Mr. Azcarate stated, the bottom will be left in its natural state; the sides will be concrete.

Mr. Addington felt utilizing different designs, amenities, and leaving the arroyo in its most natural state possible may increase property values and the quality of life for the property owners.

7. **Discussion and Information:** Funding sources available for open space acquisition. Contact: Richard Garcia, garciarg@elpasotexas.gov

MOTION:
Motion made by Mr. Tolbert, seconded by Mr. von Finger ***AND UNAMIOUSLY CARRIED TO POSTPONE TWO WEEKS.***

8. **Discussion and Action** on recommending that City Council initiate action to purchase property identified in the Open Space Master Plan to include property at 4508 Osborne Drive. Contact: Charlie Wakeem, charliewak@sbcglobal.net

Prior to the PowerPoint presentation Mr. Coronado distributed copies of the zoning map and other information regarding parcels surrounding Keystone Heritage Park.

4508 OSBORNE
Chair Wakeem noted 4508 Osborne seemed fairly far away from the Park and did not look ecologically sensitive. He asked Staff if the property qualified as an acquisition under the Open Space Master Plan. Rather than acquiring the property, Chair Wakeem felt the property could be utilized as a buffer in the event the Park was rezoned NOS (Natural Open Space).

AMENDING THE OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN
Mr. von Finger was unsure whether or not the graded parcel in the corner was included in the Open Space Master Plan. He stated parcels 44, 45, and 46 were critical areas because they are still in a fairly natural state; additionally, parcels 44 and 45 have previously flooded. He noted the Army Corps of Engineers had delineated a portion of parcel 44; however, he was unsure if that delineation included parcel 45. In conclusion, Mr. von Finger would like to amend the Open Space Master Plan to add the area south of the Park and parcels 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 43, 55, and 56 for future acquisition. *Mr. von Finger recommended postponing the item.*

Mr. Coronado referred to the Open Space Master Plan and explained, in addition to parcels 44, 45, and 46; parcels 49, 50, and 60 had been identified as future acquisitions in the Plan.

Chair Wakeem responded Board Members preferred acquiring parcels 44, 45, and 46, as part of the wetlands, as these parcels are ecologically sensitive and identified in the Open Space Master Plan. He stated the only way to amend the Open Space Master Plan is through City Council.

BOARD MEMBER LISTS

Ms. Cuellar concurred and noted the Open Space Master Plan is part of the Comprehensive Plan; the Comprehensive Plan was approved by Council via ordinance. She suggested Board Members prepare two lists:

1. parcels the Board would like to have moved to the top of the list for acquisition; and
2. parcels the Board would like to have removed from the list.

Additionally, Ms. Cuellar suggested Board Members prepare two other lists:

1. parcels acquired via stormwater funds, and
2. parcels that are worthy of preservation i.e., wetland, archaeological for acquisition via other funding sources as funding sources become available.

FUNDING

Ms. Cuellar clarified properties designated for future acquisition, per the priority list compiled by the Board, will be purchased via stormwater funds as these properties contain stormwater element(s) of some type. She explained City Council may not currently have funds; however, should funds become available Council would have adopted your lists already. Additionally, Ms. Cuellar recommended Board Members review the Open Space Master Plan to determine which properties should remain and which properties should be removed.

When the Board compiled their original priority list, Mr. Valdez wondered if the Board had considered land north of the Park.

Chair Wakeem responded the land to the north of the Park would qualify for acquisition because it is a wetland; however, the land to the south would not qualify and would necessitate some other type of funding.

Mr. von Finger responded parcels 44, 45, and 46 were listed and suggested those parcels be utilized as a stormwater overflow project. He made remarks regarding the storm of 2006, overflow, and the spillway to the dam. Additionally, he would like EPWU-PSB Stormwater Utility to consider purchasing the property at the base of the spillway. If possible, Mr. von Finger requested Stormwater Utility Staff review parcels 29 through 33 and 44, 45, and 46 for stormwater elements.

Mr. Valdez explained Stormwater Utility Staff will need to verify whether or not the parcels requested by Mr. von Finger contain stormwater elements.

Mr. Cedillos recalled parcel 30 having a drainage easement.

BOARD MEMBER LISTS

Ms. Cuellar noted Ms. Carmen Arrieta, CFO, Financial Services, will be present at the next OSAB meeting to discuss other funding sources. Staff will place an item on the next OSAB agenda regarding Board Member lists to be presented to City Council:

1. properties that would not qualify under stormwater funds; and
2. properties to removed from the Open Space Master Plan

NATURAL OPEN SPACE ORDINANCE

Mr. Addington commented on possibly rezoning Keystone Heritage Park to NOS:

Chair Wakeem asked Staff when the NOS will be presented to Council.

Mr. Coronado explained the ordinance was presented to Council; however, Council requested the ordinance come before the LRC (Legislative Review Committee). Mr. Coronado will meet with Mr. Etiwe, Development Review Manager, to discuss the Committee's requests of Staff.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN.

9. **Discussion and Action** on an ordinance amending the 2025 Proposed Thoroughfare System as detailed in the Map Atlas of the Plan for El Paso and its related documents as originally approved by the El Paso City Council in 1999, and as subsequently amended, to add Plexxar as a north-south Collector Arterial with Bike Lanes, connecting the extensions of La Mesa Avenue and Hoover Avenue, across Trans Mountain Road, east of Resler Drive and west of the extension of Paseo del Norte Road.
Staff Contact: Todd Taylor, (915) 541-4114, taylortc@elpasotexas.gov

Mr. Taylor gave a PowerPoint presentation and explained this is a city initiated request. In April 2005, Plexxar, as a collector arterial, was removed from the Major Thoroughfare Plan; however, March 29, 2011, City Council requested the City Manager add Plexxar back into the Major Thoroughfare Plan. Staff did not receive any adverse comments from the City of El Paso Department of Transportation, Metropolitan Planning Organization or TxDOT.

Chair Wakeem responded his position has always been to add Plexxar back on the Major Thoroughfare Plan on the condition that Paseo Del Norte is deleted and diverted to where Plexxar is.

Mr. Addington disagreed. It was his opinion that Plexxar would induce sprawl, impact arroyos detrimentally, and accelerate development to the top of the mountain.

IMPACT ANALYSIS

Mr. von Finger wondered if the City had conducted Staff analysis on sprawl inducement and the impact on arroyos.

Mr. Coronado responded approximately two months ago TxDOT gave a presentation on the area at a TAA meeting.

Mr. von Finger noted TxDOT has not necessarily done a good job in looking at impacts. He made comments regarding Smart Growth vs. Sprawl and whether or not these actions favor one or the other or if they are neutral.

Mr. Taylor explained City Council discussed providing more connectivity for future development(s).

No further comments or questions from the Board.

MOTION:
Motion made by Mr. Tolbert, seconded by Mr. Addington ***TO SAY NO, DON'T DO IT.***

Mr. von Finger asked if the Board could eliminate Paseo; as a compromise.

Chair Wakeem concurred and suggested adding *"unless Paseo is eliminated"* as a friendly amendment.

Mr. Tolbert responded he could have said that *"unless Paseo is eliminated, then No on this*"; that's a difference there.

Chair Wakeem clarified Mr. Tolbert's motion language *to recommend denial unless Paseo is deleted*.

Mr. Addington accepted the amendment to the motion.

AMENDED MOTION:
Motion made by Mr. Tolbert, seconded by Mr. Addington ***AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO RECOMMEND DENIAL UNLESS PASEO DEL NORTE IS DELETED.***

10. Discussion and Action: Items for Future Agendas

Chair Wakeem requested the following postponed items:

4. Discussion and Action: Update on Resler and Interstate Highway 10 project.
5. Discussion and Action: Mitigation bank subcommittee.
7. Discussion and Information: Funding sources available for open space acquisition.

Additionally, Chair Wakeem requested:

1. Report on parcels immediately north and immediately south of Keystone Heritage Park. Contact: Gonzalo Cedillos
2. Update/Progress Report on Trailhead Issue

Staff requested:
Open Space Master Plan:

a. Identification of and prioritization of sites for acquisition *that qualify* for stormwater funding;

b. Identification of and prioritization of sites for acquisition *that do not qualify* for stormwater funding;

c. Identification of sites in the Master Plan that should no longer be in the Master Plan

POINT OF INFORMATION

Mr. Valdez noted alternative funding sources are listed in the Open Space Plan.

PARK POLICY – KEYSTONE HERITAGE PARK – ALLOWING VARIOUS ACTIVITIES

Mr. von Finger would like to arrange a Subcommittee Meeting with Ms. Balin and Ms. Cuellar to discuss archaeological, research, excavation, etc.

11. Adjournment

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Thomas, seconded by Mr. von Finger ***AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING.***

Minutes prepared by Donna Martinez