



ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

Wednesday, November 9, 2011, 1:30 P.M.
8th Floor Conference Room
City Hall Building, 2 Civic Center Plaza

Members Present: 7

Katrina M. Martich (1:36 p.m.), James H. Tolbert, Richard L. Thomas, Andres Quintana, Bill G. Addington, Kevin von Finger, Charlie Wakeem, Chair

Members Absent: 2

Joanne Burt, Lois A. Balin

Planning and Economic Development Staff:

Mathew McElroy, Deputy Director; David Coronado, Lead Planner; Raul Garcia, Senior Planner; Todd Taylor, Planner; Frank Delgado, Planner

Others Present:

Lupe Cuellar, Assistant City Attorney; Marcia Tuck, Parks & Recreation; Richard Garcia, Parks & Recreation; Kareem Dallo, Engineering & Construction Management; Omar Soueidan, Engineering & Construction Management; Waleed Abuissa, Engineering & Construction Management; Rudy Valdez, EPWU-PSB; Gonzalo Cedillos, EPWU-PSB; Trish Tanner, Jobe; Judy Ackerman; Sal Alonzo, CSA Design Group; Heather McMurray; Jane, Fowler; John Sproul, UTEP-CERM; Daniel Borunda, IBWC; Efrain Esparza, TxDOT; Tony Uribe, TxDOT; Ray Dovalina, TxDOT

1. Meeting Called to Order

Chair Wakeem called the meeting to order at 1:31PM.

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

None.

3. Discussion and Action

- a. Approval of Minutes: October 26, 2011

PAGE 1 OF 4, Members Absent

Mr. Coronado explained Staff inadvertently left off Mr. Thomas.

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. von Finger, seconded by Mr. Thomas and **CARRIED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR OCTOBER 26, 2011, AS CORRECTED.**

ABSTAIN: Mr. Thomas

NOT PRESENT: Ms. Martich

b. Changes to the Agenda

Mr. Coronado requested Board Members move Item 8 to the forefront of the agenda.

MOTION:

*Motion made by Mr. von Finger, seconded by Mr. Tolbert and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA MOVING NUMBER 8 TO THE FRONT.***

NOT PRESENT: Ms. Martich

c. Review and comment on current subdivision applications, as indicated below:

- (1) **SURW11-00005:** Resler Drive Street Vacation – being a 0.115-acres portion of Resler Drive Right-of-Way, City of El Paso, El Paso County, Texas
- LOCATION: North of Paseo del Norte Road at Resler Drive
- PROPERTY OWNER: City of El Paso
- REPRESENTATIVE: CSA Design Group
- DISTRICT: 1
- STAFF CONTACT: Frank Delgado, (915) 541-4238, delgadofx@elpasotexas.gov

Staff gave a presentation and Mr. Sal Alonzo, representing CSA Design Group, explained the reason for the street vacation.

Mr. Cedillos, EPWU-PSB Stormwater, stated EPWU-PSB had no issues with the request.

MOTION:

*Motion made by von Finger, seconded by Mr. Thomas and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE.***

4. **Discussion and Action:** Report from TxDOT on the plant selection used in the landscaping plan for Transmountain. Contact: Tony Uribe, TxDOT, tony.uribe@txdot.gov

Mr. Ray Dovalina gave a presentation regarding the plant list for the Transmountain West project – Loop 375 from I-10 to Tom Mays Park entrance (copy of presentation on file).

Mr. von Finger asked Mr. Dovalina why TxDOT is not going to use native plants (from the Parks & Wildlife Department's recommended plant list) from I-10 to Paseo del Norte.

Mr. Dovalina responded that, in coordination with the City of El Paso and the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, the goal was not to put a lot vegetation in the area from Paseo del Norte to the Park entrance.

Mr. Tolbert stated that matter was never brought before the Tree Subcommittee of the Parks & Recreation Board.

MOTION:

Motion made by Mr. Addington, seconded by Mr. Tolbert that the OSAB recommend to City Council that the City Council encourage TxDOT to use native plants along this design.

Chair Wakeem suggested that the City of El Paso arborist, Mr. Brett Pearson, be present at the next OSAB meeting prior to the Board making any recommendations to City Council.

Following Chair Wakeem's suggestion, Mr. Tolbert withdrew his second to the motion.

Mr. Efrain Esparza, TxDOT/El Paso District Design Engineer, distributed a copy of the project plans, currently under contract.

For the next OSAB meeting, Chair Wakeem explained, the Board will hear a presentation from the city's arborist, in conjunction with perusing TxDOT's project plans.

Mr. Addington withdrew his motion.

Mr. von Finger would like to include an email from the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department, through Ms. Lois Balin, Urban Biologist, as part of the backup information.

Chair Wakeem requested the item be postponed to the next OSAB meeting. Staff will invite Mr. Pearson and someone from TxDOT to be present.

Ms. Martich requested City Staff email .pdf file copies of the TxDOT plan to Board Members.

ITEM WAS POSTPONED TWO WEEKS.

5. Discussion and Action: Report from UTEP and EPWU regarding issues involved in providing water to Rio Bosque.

a. John Sproul, UTEP-CERM, jsproul@utep.edu

Mr. Sproul confirmed he and Mr. Balliew met last week and discussed possible avenues. Mr. Balliew informed Mr. Sproul that he did want to meet with Mr. Archuleta prior to meeting with the Board.

b. John Balliew, EPWU, jeballiew@epwu.org

Mr. Valdez explained Mr. Balliew would like to meet with Mr. Ed Archuleta, President/CEO, EPWU-PSB, to discuss the Rio Bosque issues prior to coming before the OSAB. Additionally, Mr. Valdez explained there are many budgetary, permitting, contractual, and regulatory issues that must be addressed. Mr. Valdez will forward Board Member's comments and concerns to Mr. Balliew.

- c. Judy Ackerman, Rio Bosque Volunteer

Ms. Ackerman commented on the delay concept and the effect on trees. She encouraged EPWU-PSB to eliminate any further delays.

- d. Robert Hood, Roberto R. Bustamante Wastewater Treatment

Mr. Hood was unable to attend the meeting.

- e. Jesus Reyes, El Paso County Water Improvement District #1

Mr. Reyes was unable to attend the meeting.

- f. Daniel Borunda, International Boundary and Water Commission

Mr. Borunda stated the International Boundary and Water Commission (IBWC) supports the Rio Bosque Wetlands Park. IBWC has provided in-kind services and financial support to UTEP (Mr. Sproul) to provide water to the Wetlands Park.

Mr. Borunda will forward, to Board Members, information regarding IBWC's efforts to develop an environmental water rights transaction framework, developing ways and means to transfer water to restoration sites or areas such as the Wetlands Park.

ITEM WAS POSTPONED TWO WEEKS.

- 6. **Discussion and Information:** Report on the policy of awarding park credits as it pertains to open space and trails.

Contact: Nanette Smejkal, (915) 541-4331, smejkalnl@elpasotexas.gov

Items 6 and 7 were discussed concurrently.

Mr. Richard Garcia gave a presentation regarding the City of El Paso's policy for awarding park credits to open space and trails (copy of presentation on file) and explained why a developer was not awarded park credits for certain projects. Mr. Garcia explained that Parks Department Staff evaluates each project individually.

- 7. **Discussion and Action:** Issues regarding successfully receiving park credits for the inclusion of open space and trails in projects.

- a. Conrad Conde, Conde, Inc.

Mr. Conde felt awarding park credits was a policy issue rather than "one side versus the other side". He commented on the difficulty in developing Park Ponds and Open Space. Mr. Conde referred to issues regarding the seven acre arroyo within the Desert Trail Subdivision.

b. Rick Cordova, RICOR Engineering

Mr. Cordova was unable to attend the meeting; however, Chair Wakeem read into the record an email sent to Chair Wakeem from Mr. Cordova (copy of email on file).

Mr. Garcia commented on the recently developed Saipan Park pond, park amenities and the size of the park. Additionally, Mr. Garcia responded to questions and/or comments from the Board.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN.

8. **Discussion, Information and Action** concerning the ASARCO West Regulating Plan.
Contact: Mathew McElroy, (915) 541-4193, mcelroymx@elpasotexas.gov

MOTION:

*Motion made by Mr. von Finger, seconded by Mr. Tolbert and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE THE AGENDA MOVING NUMBER 8 TO THE FRONT.***

NOT PRESENT: Ms. Martich

Mr. McElroy asked the Chair what interest the Board has in the matter and what action the Board wants Staff/City Council to take.

Chair Wakeem explained that Mr. von Finger requested a section of ASARCO property, zoned T-4 under SmartCode, located in the wetlands area and adjacent to the Rio Grande River be zoned T-1.

Mr. McElroy explained the requirements necessary to change the SmartCode. He will ask Staff to take some photos of the site and to explain to the Board the Regulating Plan and how the Regulating Plan relates to the site. Mr. McElroy noted the question is whether or not the ASARCO Trustee is willing to change the transect zone. Mr. McElroy will ask Mr. Carlos Gallinar, Comprehensive Plan Manager, to contact the ASARCO Trustee regarding allowing public access and/or tours of the property.

In the interim, Chair Wakeem requested Staff verify whether or not Board Members would be allowed access to the property and, for the next OSAB meeting, Staff provide photographs.

Ms. Martich requested Staff mention to the Trustee that she is OSHA certified in Hazardous Waste Operations and Emergency Response (HAZWOPER), the requirement necessary to access the site.

NO ACTION WAS TAKEN.

9. Discussion and Action: Items for Future Agendas

Chair Wakeem:

1. Asked Staff to invite Mr. Brent Pearson, Arborist, to the next OSAB meeting to discuss the plant selection used in the landscaping plan for Transmountain.
2. Asked Staff to invite Mr. John Balliew, EPWU, to the next OSAB meeting to discuss issues involved in providing water to Rio Bosque.
3. Asked Mr. Valdez to update Board Members regarding the Stormwater Advisory Committee changes to the Stormwater funding.

Mr. Tolbert:

Asked Staff to update Board Members on the Mitigation Subcommittee.

Staff:

Staff will update Board Members regarding the ASARCO property.

Chair Wakeem asked if Board Members had any further comments or discussions.

MOTION:

*Motion made by Mr. Tolbert, seconded by Mr. von Finger and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO CANCEL THE OSAB MEETING IN TWO WEEKS AND MEET AGAIN FOUR WEEKS FROM NOW.***

10. Adjournment

MOTION:

*Motion made by Mr. von Finger, seconded by Mr. Tolbert and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO ADJOURN AT 3:11PM.***

From: Cordovaelps@aol.com [mailto:Cordovaelps@aol.com]
Sent: Tuesday, November 08, 2011 9:39 PM
To: charliewak@sbcglobal.net
Cc: Coronado, David A.
Subject: OSAB meeting

Good evening Mr. Wakeem:

I understand you have put an item on the agenda and have invited me to be at the OSAB meeting on Wednesday Nov. 9th. As I've discussed with Mr. Coronado, because of family medical issues, I am having a very difficult time being available but if I can, will try to be there.

I am not sure of the full intent of the item but understand it involves issues regarding park credits for open space.

If I in fact am not be able to attend on Wednesday, I do offer the following comments:

From past experience, I do not consider requests/discussions for open space park credits as welcome by the Parks Department. Until there is a clear policy on open space/park dedications and park credits for open space dedication, the City will continue to have problems in acquisitions without purchase or voluntary efforts from the property owner. To date, all our experience regarding credits given for open space dedication have been negative and at the discretion of the Parks Director. There is obviously very little desire to agree to park credits or incentives for open space dedications.

Although I understand and fully agree that development needs active parks in the neighborhoods. I completely disagree that active parks should be large and flat in the mountain foothills. The combination of active and passive parks including the open space that follow the terrain of the areas seems should be a common goal.

We've tried to tie the active park areas with arroyos/open space and were in several instance denied with the requirement to move parks and consolidate into larger parks away from the open space areas. In our opinion the combination would have been more effective and aesthetic.

Fortunately the property owner has agreed to dedicate open space to achieve more of the effect initially desired by the property owner and because of the cooperation we've received from the City Engineering and EPWU Stormwater on providing for less intrusive drainage/storm water control basins. However, much of the original aesthetic intent has been lost.

Nevertheless, to achieve what I believe is a common goal of the property owner and the City, a clearer and friendlier policy is necessary regarding combination open space/park dedications.

Thank You, Rick Cordova