



**Escondido Creek Parkway
Oversight Committee Meeting
Kenedy City Hall
February 10, 2021**

MINUTES

Attendees:

Diana Barrera, Kenedy School Board
Collen Brownlow, San Antonio River Authority
Kristen Hansen, San Antonio River Authority
Meera Keshav, San Antonio River Authority
Gaylon Oehlke, San Antonio River Authority

Kathy Oehlke, Fundraising Committee
Ward Thomas, San Antonio River Foundation
Leslie Wynn, Kenedy City Council
Greg Zaragoza, Interlex

The meeting was called to order at 6:13 p.m. by Gaylon Oehlke.

I. Approval of Minutes

Gaylon Oehlke motioned to approve the November 2020 meeting minutes, which was seconded by the committee and then approved unanimously.

II. Construction Update/Phase II

Collen noted the considerable progress in construction, announcing that the trail connection to Joe Gulley Park had finally been completed. Bollards and signage were to be added to distinguish between the nearby county road and the pedestrian-friendly paths. Other small punch-list items, like trash cans, remain to be installed. Revegetation continues with the horned toad habitat expected to grow in fully as spring approaches; more Muhly grass was planted near the bioretention area to help soak up contaminants from adjacent roadways. The City paving at Pullen St. was also completed, with a new park entrance sign recently added.

Collen started a discussion of Phase II of the project, which involved securing real estate near the 5th St. and Pullen St. entrances and potentially extending trails to both the nearby elementary school as well as all the way into downtown. An initial estimate put the cost of new trail construction (based on the typical trail width of 10') at around \$700-800K, including items such as trash cans and dog waste stations, as well as a potential low-water crossing. Collen examined potential trail routes in the area while Gaylon shared concerns about the high banks of the creek and brush that would need to be cleared.

Leslie stated that installation of a water line along the creek is tentatively scheduled to conclude by August; Gaylon concluded that the City would likely decide whether future trail construction could continue. He also discussed potential issues regarding property in the area (like a nearby trailer park as well as other small strips of land) owned by various individuals and estates, but was confident that negotiations could be reached, allowing further park construction to proceed. Kristen suggested that River Authority's real estate team could contact the landowners directly to help explain the project.

The committee saw the potential of the trail extensions, hopefully providing kids new routes to bike along. Gaylon wondered whether the elementary school had plans to add fences around their playgrounds and parking lots, as that would block access to any trail extension. Diana replied that while she could



bring this concern to the school board, there were no plans to build such fences, as the school and trails should be open and free for the community to use and enjoy. The committee appreciated how many visitors come to the park and use its facilities regularly, realizing that more parking and paved surfaces may be added to accommodate additional vehicles.

Kathy noticed discrepancies among trash receptacles throughout the park; some are smaller, others larger, and only a few had been designated for recycling. Kristen replied that receptacles for trash and recycling should have been paired together originally; this can be fixed when more receptacles are shipped and installed.

III. Maintenance Plan

Kristen detailed the 99-year lease agreement between River Authority and the City of Kenedy, with a maintenance plan to be developed and approved by the committee, and then signed by the committee chair, mayor of Kenedy, and project general manager. Kristen sent a draft of the plan to the City Council attorney back in August; the draft was also circulated to River Authority for further review. Kristen distributed copies of the agreement for the committee's review and consideration to change a clause regarding how much notice should be given between parties should one party desire to terminate the agreement. She maintained that River Authority plans to operate and maintain Escondido Creek Parkway in Kenedy (similar to that of the Museum Reach and Mission Reach in San Antonio); however, River Authority cannot operate and maintain the park if they do not have the funds (approved by the River Authority board) to do so outside of the fiscal year.

Gaylon objected to a proposed clause that would allow either party to terminate the agreement without cause. He recalled other properties and parks owned by River Authority and shared how he felt that funds could be allocated to properties like these instead of those only being leased (like under a 99-year agreement); the River Authority and the City of Kenedy were originally slated to co-own the ECP project, and Gaylon shared that River Authority intends to approach the Kenedy city council and ask for 100% ownership. Concerns remained whether River Authority made too big of a commitment to a park owned by Kenedy, and if the River Authority board would even continue to fund the project. Leslie expressed that future councilors might not be as interested in furnishing Kenedy's continued growth and economic development throughout the community. Ward agreed that there is no benefit to Kenedy for any party to terminate the agreement, and that River Authority would gladly own and operate the park. Gaylon noted that it would require considerable time and effort for the City to find its employees to staff and maintain the park if River Authority were to drop out of the agreement. Kathy shared some frustration that proper recognition of ECP and its operations are being directed to other organizations, and how ECP could potentially suffer without River Authority after so much work put into the project.

IV. Fundraising/Donation Update

Kathy briefly mentioned that a small number of people are interested in donating items like park benches, but she had not pursued donations from the community heavily due to the ongoing prevalence of Covid. She noted minimal concerns over outstanding invoices from previously pledged donations. Kathy recognized previous efforts to convert the highly popular designer bag bingo fundraiser to a virtual format, yet she continues to find that most throughout the community would still prefer to hold the event in person, as the event is a popular social event year after year.

Meeting adjourned at 7:26 PM.

Next meeting will be Wednesday, May 19, 2021.

