



ADVISORY BOARD MINUTES

CITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT

Wednesday, December 12, 2012, 1:30 P.M.
2nd Floor Conference Room
City Hall Building, 2 Civic Center Plaza

Members Present: 7

Joseph Nester, Richard Teschner, Katrina M. Martich, James Graham, Chairman Charlie Wakeem

Members Absent: 2

Andres Quintana, Lois Balin, Bill Addington, James H. Tolbert

Vacancies: 0

Planning Staff:

Elizabeth Gibson, Senior Planner; Harrison Plourde, Planner

Others Present:

Rudy Valdez, EPWU-PSB, Lupe Cuellar, EPWU-PSB; Karla Niemen, Assistant City Attorney, City Attorney's Office; Kelvin Kroeker, Stormwater Engineer, Huitt-Zollars; Marci Tuck, Parks & Recreation, Open Space, Trails and Parks Coordinator;

1. Meeting Called to Order

Chair Wakeem called the meeting to order.

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

None.

3. Discussion and Action

- a. Approval of Minutes: November 7, 2012

Chair Wakeem asked if Board Members had any additions, corrections and/or revisions for the November 7, 2012 meeting.

Chair Wakeem requested the following revision:

Page 3, third paragraph, " ... per the State Relinquishment Land Act passed by the Texas Legislature in ~~1931~~ 1919."

MOTION:

*Motion made by Mr. Teschner, seconded by Ms. Martich and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES FOR NOVEMBER 7, 2012, AS CORRECTED.***

- b. Changes to the Agenda

None.

- c. Review the proposed 2013 Open Space Advisory Board Meeting Schedule.

The 2013 OSAB meeting schedule was shown to Board Members. Ms. Gibson noted that the meeting dates and times were scheduled so as not to conflict with the dates and times of the City Plan Commission meetings.

No action was taken.

- 4. Discussion and Action:** Update on the provision of a long-term, sustainable supply of water to the Rio Bosque. Contact: Rudy Valdez, rvaldez@epwu.org

Ms. Lupe Cuellar explained Staff is working with both the Water District and UTEP to establish a long-term, sustainable supply of water to the Rio Bosque. Staff will continue to meet with UTEP to discuss the provisions of the license agreement. Ms. Cuellar noted that the Rio Bosque land was transferred on November 27, 2012, to the El Paso Water Utilities – Public Service Board.

No action was taken.

- 5. Discussion and Action:** Update on the status of improvements to the Palisades, located north of the Sierra Crest and Los Compadres subdivisions at the southern end of the Franklin Mountains. Contact: Rudy Valdez, rvaldez@epwu.org

Mr. Kelvin Kroeker of Huitt-Zollars gave a presentation which discussed the various alternatives Huitt-Zollars identified as potential options for stormwater and access improvements to the Palisades in its report commissioned by the EPWU-PSB.

PALISADES HIGHLIGHTS

Mr. Kroeker noted the Palisades is approximately 202 acres of land located adjacent to the Franklin Mountain State Park which includes Flowpath 23, watershed and existing trails.

Project Goals

Due to the expenditure of Stormwater and Open Space funds for this project, the following goals were established:

1. Flood Control / Debris Control Improvements
Regulatory / Environmental Compliance
2. Open Space and Natural Resource Preservation
3. Public Recreation / Access and Infrastructure Improvements

Stormwater Improvements

- Raise existing dam 6 feet for additional storage & freeboard
- Reduce downstream runoff by 20 percent
- Sediment Pond

- Robinson Avenue – Culvert/Pedestrian Tunnel

Mr. Kroeker then explained/highlighted the three concepts developed by the project team as follows:

Concept Plan A – Advantages/Cost Estimate (excluding land acquisition – \$2.5 million)

- Improved entrance on Robinson Avenue
- Parking and Trailhead hide the existing Dam

Concept Plan B – Advantages/Cost Estimate (excluding land acquisition – \$2.3 million)

- Improved entrance on Robinson Avenue
- Parking and Trailhead on North side of Robinson Avenue

Concept Plan C – Advantages/Cost Estimate (excluding land acquisition – \$1.9 million)

- Improved entrance on Robinson Avenue
- Parking and Trailhead on South side of Robinson Avenue
- Trail with Activity Nodes leading to Dam

Chair Wakeem noted that access improvements may be eligible for funding from Quality of Life Bond monies earmarked for Trails/Open Space.

Mr. Valdez noted that he thought the City Engineering Department had developed a fourth Concept Plan, in addition to the three plans presented by Mr. Kroeker.

Ms. Tuck explained the proposed fourth Concept Plan is a hybrid plan of *Concept Plan B* with the *roundabout* included from *Concept Plan A*. Additionally, she noted access improvements to the Palisades, as one of the seven trailheads identified by City Council, for the \$2 million Quality of Life Bond monies.

Ms. Martich explained that there is a drainage and sediment load problem in the area. She wondered if the total cost of each Concept Plan included the cost of the drainage project.

Mr. Kroeker responded that the cost estimates, as prepared, earmark approximately \$1.5 million for flood control needs; therefore, the cost difference between \$1.5 million and each of the total costs presented for the three alternative plans represents the estimated cost for trailhead access improvements, amenities, and roads/parking/roundabout improvements.

Mr. Valdez was unsure if funding has been appropriated for the drainage issues associated with the project; however, he stated he would speak with Mr. Balliew regarding the issue.

Ms. Cuellar suggested that this item be placed on the February meeting agenda to allow staff time to provide more concrete answers for Board Members. Additionally, this would allow EPWU-PSB Staff time to meet with all the internal City Departments including Engineering, Parks, Planning, and Transportation regarding the issue.

Chair Wakeem stated this is an important, City-wide amenity and requested that representatives from the Engineering and Transportation Departments be present at the February OSAB meeting.

No action was taken.

- 6. Discussion and Action:** Revisit past Board action taken on September 26, 2012 to recommend the downzoning of several parcels of land managed by the PSB and located south of the Northeast Master Plan, as well as north of Transmountain Road from their current zoning districts to the NOS (Natural Open Space) zoning district.
Contact: Charlie Wakeem, charliewak@sbcglobal.net

Ms. Gibson provided the Board a presentation summarizing past Board action taken on September 26, 2012 regarding its recommendation to downzone several parcels of land managed by the PSB located south of the Northeast Master Plan, as well as north of Transmountain Road from their current zoning districts to the NOS (Natural Open Space) zoning district.

Ms. Gibson explained that following Board action, Planning and EPWU-PSB staff became concerned that the NOS zoning district may not be the most appropriate zoning district for lands designated as O-1 and O-2 on the Future Land Use Map given the list of uses currently permitted within the NOS district.

Ms. Gibson indicated that, after closer inspection, staff recommends that land designated O-2 on the FLUM and located north of Transmountain Road be downzoned from its current zoning district to the URD (Urban Reserve District). The URD district refers to an area of land that may not be currently available for development, but that has development value with open space opportunities, including scenic corridors, view sheds, arroyos, steep slopes, or protected habitat that should remain in its natural state once development occurs.

MOTION:

Motion made by Dr. Teschner, seconded by Mr. Nester AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED THAT THE OSAB RESCIND ITS PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATION THAT CITY COUNCIL INITIATE THE REZONING PROCESS TO DOWNZONE LAND LOCATED NORTH OF TRANSMOUNTAIN ROAD AND MANAGED BY THE EL PASO WATER UTILITIES-PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD CLASSIFIED AS O-2 (NATURAL) FROM ITS CURRENT ZONING DISTRICT TO NOS (NATURAL OPEN SPACE), AND INSTEAD RECOMMEND TO CITY COUNCIL THAT THE REZONING PROCESS TO DOWNZONE LAND LOCATED NORTH OF TRANSMOUNTAIN ROAD AND MANAGED BY THE EL PASO WATER UTILITIES-PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD CLASSIFIED AS O-2 (NATURAL) AND O-5 (REMOTE) ON THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP FROM ITS CURRENT ZONING DISTRICT TO URD (URBAN RESERVE DISTRICT) BE INITIATED.

Chair Wakeem further commented that he felt the uses permitted within the NOS (Natural Open Space) district ought to be reviewed. A subcommittee was appointed and agreed to meet in early March to review the NOS ordinance to include permitted uses within the district and recommend revisions to the ordinance as needed.

SUBCOMMITTEE:

Chair Wakeem appointed the following subcommittee to review the NOS ordinance:

1. Chair Wakeem
2. Ms. Katrina Martich
3. Dr. Richard Teschner

Ms. Gibson agreed to email the OSAB the NOS ordinance for their review.

With regard to land located south of the Northeast Master Plan and designated O-1 on the FLUM, Ms. Gibson indicated that staff recommends the OSAB give staff additional time to find a suitable zoning alternative given that neither URD nor NOS appear to be appropriate.

Ms. Cuellar further requested that the OSAB provide the EPWU-PSB an additional six months at minimum to explore other options which may be available for this particular parcel of land.

MOTION:

Motion made by Ms. Martich, seconded by Dr. Teschner, AND UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED THAT THE OSAB RESCIND ITS PREVIOUS RECOMMENDATION THAT CITY COUNCIL INITIATE THE REZONING PROCESS TO DOWNZONE LAND LOCATED SOUTH OF THE NORTHEAST MASTER PLAN AND MANAGED BY THE EL PASO WATER UTILITIES-PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD CLASSIFIED AS O-1 (PRESERVE) FROM ITS CURRENT ZONING DISTRICT TO NOS (NATURAL OPEN SPACE).

No further action was taken.

7. Discussion and Action: Working session to discuss and prioritize potential Quality of Life Bond fund Open Space acquisition opportunities.

Contact: Marci Tuck, tuckmj@elpasotexas.gov

Chair Wakeem reminded the Board that the Quality of Life Bond was recently passed. The Bond includes \$5 million earmarked for Open Space Land Acquisition/Conservation and \$2 million for Trailhead improvements, both of which are part of the Open Space Master Plan. Chair Wakeem would like to further discuss potential projects that could be undertaken using these funds, and in particular, Open Space projects that would qualify for the \$5 million earmarked for Open Space Land Acquisition/Conservation.

Chair Wakeem requested that the Board think carefully about acquisition projects that would not qualify for funding from the El Paso Water Utility – Public Service Board Ten Percent Stormwater Open Space Fund, but may qualify for funding through the Quality of Life Bond funds set aside for Open Space Land Acquisition/Conservation.

Ms. Nieman agreed she would review what type of projects could be considered by the OSAB for recommended inclusion as Open Space Land Acquisition/Conservation projects to be funded by monies set aside for such purposes in the Quality of Life Bond.

The Board agreed to postpone the agenda item for further item until the following month due to an impending loss of quorum.

No further action was taken.

8. Adjournment

MOTION:

*Motion made by Dr. Teschner, seconded by Mr. Nester and **UNANIMOUSLY CARRIED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING AT 3:48 P.M.***

Following adjournment Chair Wakeem went over items to be included on future agendas; they are as follows:

1. Working session to discuss and prioritize potential Quality of Life Bond fund Open Space acquisition opportunities.
2. Access and Stormwater Improvements to the Palisades. To be placed on the February agenda.
3. Options for the parcel of land located south of the Northeast Master Plan, managed by the PSB and designated O-1 (Preserve) by the FLUM. To be placed on an agenda in six months' time.
4. Update and discussion regarding the Northwest Environmental Service Center Master Plan located adjacent to Keystone Heritage Park.