

# ***CITY OF SAN ANTONIO CONSERVATION ADVISORY BOARD***

## **MINUTES**

August 23, 2023

### **BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

<b>Member Name</b>	<b>Agency Represented</b>
Dr. Francine Romero	<i>San Antonio Parks &amp; Recreation Board</i>
Ms. Jessica Alderson	<i>Texas Parks &amp; Wildlife Dept.</i>
Mr. Homer Garcia	<i>COSA Parks &amp; Recreation Dept.</i>
Mr. Steve Graham	<i>San Antonio River Authority</i>
Mr. Thomas Marsalia	<i>Edwards Aquifer Authority</i>
Mr. Scott Halty	<i>San Antonio Water System</i>
Mr. Rader Gilleland	<i>Uvalde County</i>
Dr. Russell Persyn via Webex	<i>Medina County</i>
Mr. Rogelio Garcia	<i>Greater SATX</i>

### **STAFF PRESENT**

Grant Ellis, Natural Resources Manager, Parks and Recreation  
Phillip Covington, Special Projects Manager, Edwards Aquifer Protection Program (EAPP)  
Susan Courage, Senior Management Analyst, EAPP  
Steve Whitworth, City Attorney, City Attorney's Office  
Ben Gorzell, Chief Financial Officer

### **GUESTS PRESENT**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Organization</b>
David Bezanson	The Nature Conservancy
Doug Dillow	Green Spaces Alliance
Clay Thompson	Green Spaces Alliance
Lisa Pack	Landowner
Patricia Seidenberger	San Antonio Conservation Society

### **REGULAR BUSINESS**

Meeting was called to order at 1:00 pm by Chairwoman Francine Romero. Roll call was taken by Dr. Romero.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Dr. Romero asked for approval of the minutes for the June 28, 2023 meeting. Mr. Scott Halty motioned for approval of the minutes. Ms. Jessica Alderson seconded. Minutes approved as amended. Motion carried.

## **ITEMS OF COMMUNITY INTEREST**

- Mr. Phillip Covington stated that the total land protected under the EAPP is 178,034 acres.
- Mr. Covington stated that acquisition of a conservation easement on the 650-acre D&M Bendele Ranch (aka Melissa Bendele Ranch) is scheduled for City Council on August 31, 2023. He added that closing on the 217-acre Smart Ranch is expected to occur in September 2023. The protected acreage for the program is anticipated to be 178,901 acres by the end of Fiscal Year 2023.
- Mr. Covington reported that Dr. Francine Romero, Thomas Marsalia and Scott Halty were all appointed to the CAB at the August 17, 2023 City Council meeting.

## **CITIZENS TO BE HEARD**

Ms. Lisa Pack spoke on behalf of the Aquifer Alliance to promote the Scenic Loop property that is under consideration by the program. Ms. Pack read a letter on behalf of the Aquifer Alliance that endorsed acquisition of the property and stated that it would be beneficial to the program due to the development growth in the area.

## **INDIVIDUAL ITEMS**

1. Briefing update on the Edwards Aquifer Protection Program Funding Update:
  - a. Mr. Ben Gorzell presented an overview of the new EAPP funding. He explained that the new funding mechanism will take place through the City Municipal's Corporate Fund, which has been allocated for fiscal years 2022 through 2024. He stated that although the new program funding has not been spent yet, the funds for the remainder of 2022 will be available for new acquisitions purchased this year. He also stated that a total of \$30 million has been allocated for fiscal years 2022 through 2024, which is equal to \$10 million a year. Mr. Gorzell also clarified that the allocated \$10 million a year is an approximate amount that can be adjusted higher or lower as needed. He further explained that the amounts can be adjusted by a few million depending on the program's priorities. Mr. Gorzell also answered questions by individual CAB members regarding the long-term use of the funds and their availability. He also mentioned that the funds are in secure loans and that the interest rates are offset by investing some of the funds in assets that generate revenue.
2. Discussion regarding the Edwards Aquifer Protection Program's proposed acquisitions in Fiscal Year 2024 and prioritization of future acquisition projects:

a. Mr. Phillip Covington presented an overview of the proposed acquisitions for fiscal year 2024, as well as prioritization of future acquisitions. A total of nine projects were highlighted as candidates for funding in fiscal year 2024 with the \$20 million to be appropriated as part of the City's budget. Properties under consideration for fee simple acquisition or protection via conservation easement will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Properties located in Bexar County will need to contain significant karst features and opportunities to leverage funding will need to be evaluated. Properties will not be considered for protection if the geological assessment ranks the property less than high for water quality and quantity benefit to the City of San Antonio unless a significant bargain sale is offered by the landowner. Creation of a development pressure heat map will assist EAPP staff and the land acquisition team in identifying undeveloped, unprotected properties within the EAPP target area that are at high risk of development in the future. Prioritization of future projects will also be dependent upon weighting changes to the GIS Spatial Model as recommended by the Scientific Evaluation Team. The fiscal year 2024 proposed acquisitions are within the recommended budget and meet the highlighted prioritization goals.

3. Briefing and update on Texas A&M University – San Antonio and the University at San Antonio's (UTSA) Proposition 1 funded water quality projects:

a. Mr. Phillip Covington presented an overview of the status of the Texas A&M Emergency Response Education and the UTSA Permeable Pavement water quality demonstration projects. He stated that the term of the Texas A&M Emergency Response Education project is being extended by eight months to March 31, 2024 in order to incorporate new stakeholder input into the training materials. Mr. Covington also discussed the UTSA Permeable Pavement project which will receive a 16-month extension to December 31, 2024 as a result of construction delays and due to extended drought conditions which are hampering the collection of post-construction monitoring water samples.

4. Discussion and update regarding the Moos Ranch Phase II and Stoner Ranch projects: The Nature Conservancy

- a. Mr. David Bezanson presented the Moos Ranch Phase II for final approval.
- b. Mr. David Bezanson presented the Stoner Ranch for final approval.

5. Discussion and Update regarding the Scenic Loop Property and SA MUD No. 1 Phase II projects: EAPP Staff

- a. Mr. Phillip Covington presented the Scenic Loop Property for stage 2 approval.
- b. Mr. Phillip Covington presented the SA MUD No. 1 Phase II for stage 2 approval.

**Closed Regular Session & Opened Executive Session started at 2:10 pm.**

Deliberate the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property and discuss related legal issues pursuant to Texas Government Code Sections 551.072 (real property) and 552.071 (consultation with an attorney).

**Closed Executive Session & Opened Regular Session ended at 2:46 pm.**

3. Action on proposed acquisition from Agenda Items 4 and 5.
  - Chairwoman Romero opened the floor for motions:
    - Mr. Scott Halty motioned for stage 2 approval of the Scenic Canyon property. Ms. Jessica Alderson seconded. No further discussion. Motion passed.
    - Mr. Thomas Marsalia motioned for stage 2 approval of the SA MUD No. 1 Phase II property. Mr. Stephen Graham seconded. No further discussion. Motion passed.
    - Ms. Jessica Alderson motioned for final approval of the Moos Phase II Ranch. Mr. Steve Graham seconded. No further discussion. Motion passed.
    - Mr. Steve Graham motioned for final approval of the Stoner Ranch. Mr. Thomas Marsalia seconded. No further discussion. Motion passed.
4. Program fiscal report: Mr. Phillip Covington presented an updated copy of the expenditure report Mr. Covington stated that the updated expense report reflects a small remaining balance of 2015 Proposition 1 funding; \$90,000 will be applied toward the D&M Bendele Ranch conservation easement acquisition and the remaining \$246,141 will be applied toward Edwards Aquifer Authority's interlocal agreement for contractual services in Fiscal Year 2024.
5. Monitoring status report: Ms. Susan Courage stated that there were no updates to report.
6. Report, Discussion, and Action regarding Agenda and for the next CAB meeting – September 27, 2023 at 1:00 pm, at the San Antonio River Authority.

Adjournment at 2:51 pm.