
City of San Antonio

River Walk Capital Improvements Advisory Board
DRAFT M I N U T E S

Friday, July 30, 2021

1:30 PM

WebEx Meeting

Board Members Present:

Sam Panchevre

Charles Riley

John Jacks

Homer Garcia III/Melinda Cerda - Proxy

Shanon Miller

Board Members Not Present:

Kenneth W. Briggs

Others Present:

Robert Rinn –Center City Development and Operations Department; Cynthia Martinez –City Center Development and Operations Department; Viengsai Vongchampa-City Center Development and Operations Department; Lincoln St. George-City Center Development and Operations Department; Jamaal Moreno, Public Works Department

Citizens to be Heard: None

Other Guests: Tania Gunn-Beaty Palmer Architects

I. Call to Order and Roll Call

Board Chair, Charles Riley called the meeting to order at 1:32 PM. Shanon Miller arrived at 1:40 PM. All members were present except for Kenneth W. Briggs.

II. Citizens to be heard

No one signed up to speak

III. Approval of Minutes

Sam Panchevre motioned to approve the minutes from the March 30, 2021, meeting. Motion was seconded by Mr. Riley and all board members present were in favor.

IV. River Walk Capital Improvements Fund Update

Viengsai Vongchampa reviewed the current River Walk Capital Improvement Fund and stated that it included the abatements to patio leases that City Council had approved for August 2020 through December 2020. The impact to the fund is \$260,000. The FY 2021 revenue has been adjusted to \$376,249 with a projected end balance of \$641,154. Mr. Riley asked if the funds are being collected or has the abatement been extended and monthly leases are being collected. Mr. Riley asked if the abatement funds would be recovered or if they were waived permanently. Mr. Vongchampa clarified that the abatement has been applied and was waived permanently. John Jacks stated that this was a city-wide abatement that included other City leases with varied time periods based on the location of the facility. Mr. Riley stated that a future discussion on how the fund will affect future projects. No approval from the board is needed at this time; this was an update on the fund. John Jacks asked if the expenses were for capital improvements projects that are currently underway. Mr. Vongchampa stated that is correct. He also clarified that if the proposed expenses were not paid out by September 30th, the funds would be carried forward and expenses would be paid in the new fiscal year. The FY 2022 balance is \$641,154. Mr. Riley asked how much gets collected monthly and Mr. Vongchampa answered that the City collects approximately \$53,000 per month.

V. River Walk Capital Improvements Phase VI Update

Tania Gunn from Beaty Palmer Architects provided a brief update on the areas currently under construction. Area 13 by the Chamber of Commerce building receiving the final touches and is at 75% complete. The area under the Alamo St Bridge is also completed at 75%. River level of the streetcar station is currently under construction and still requires work. Area 10 upper area by the SAWS tower has been completed and the contractor is working on punch list items. The contractor is working on the river level in front of the Arneson Theatre stage on installing an ADA ramp, repointing Hugman flagstone, and handrail improvements. Work has been completed in the Casa Rio area. The contractor was able to complete the work without having to close the sidewalk. Upcoming work includes electrical upgrades on both sides of the N St Mary's St Bridge.

Mr. Riley requested a list of completed projects and a list of projects that need to be completed. He also asked if the project is on budget and on schedule to which Tania stated that it was and that we were not experiencing high cost on materials. Cynthia Martinez stated that there have been some delays with receiving materials due to pandemic and inclement weather earlier this year. The project is scheduled for completion in December 2021. The board discussed planning for phase VII or future projects at the next meeting. Mr. Jacks stated that Phase VI was the last phase of the comprehensive plan for the river walk. The board will need to make a decision on whether another comprehensive approach is taken for the next phase, or do they look at other areas not addressed in previous phases. A future agenda item could be an overview of completed work in the first six phases and outstanding projects. There was a discussion on gathering input from City staff, business owners, and tourists on the types of improvements they would like to see. CCDO staff will draft a survey that addresses amenities, access and maintenance (aesthetics or practical purpose) and distribute to the

board members with the list of completed and uncompleted projects so that they can be discussed at the next meeting. The board members will finalize the surveys and determine the best way to conduct the surveys. John Jacks introduced Robert Rinn as the new Interim Assistant Director for CCDO. Robert's background at the Parks and Recreation Department and ten years' experience at Texas Parks and Wildlife will help him in this new role.

VI. River Walk Landscape Recovery Update

Lincoln St George presented an update on the loss of river walk landscaping due to the winter storm back in February 2020. Since March 2021, crews have been working on replanting in the river bend and extension in time for the NCAA Women's Final Four event. There are several large palm trees that need to be replaced. As of today, crews have planted \$100,000 worth of plant material. Crews will focus on watering and maintaining the newly installed plants since it is summer. Mr. Riley asked if the city was looking to replace the lost trees and Mr. St. George stated that his staff was looking at replacing the lost specimen out of the Valley and California. Mr. Jacks stated that the department will be asking for additional funding in the proposed new budget cycle for plant material that was lost. Mr. Riley asked if CCDO staff could share the base budget for plants so that the board can see how they can build on that. Mr. Panchevre inquired whether Centro PID crews maintained the river walk. John Jacks stated that they have a custodial contract with the city for the pan and broom operations and trash removal on the river walk from the city's general fund and not Centro PID funds. This frees up the city crews to focus on the planting and maintenance of the gardens on the river walk. Mr. Panchevre stated that these crews do a good job maintaining the river walk. Mr. Jacks mentioned that there has been a loss of some large trees over the past month due to recent rainstorms. Mr. St. George stated that there was going to be some maintenance on the bald cypress trees along the river walk. The damaged wood is a result of the winter storm earlier this year. Crews will also be looking at replacing the trees lost during the recent storms. Mr. Panchevre inquired if any work was being done on the main channel. Mr. St. George stated that crews maintain the river loop and extension as well as the main channel up to Lexington St. This area has more perennials than annuals whereas the south channel which goes down to Alamo has more native landscaping such as pecan trees and burr oaks. Mr. Jacks stated that the Public Works Department does a lot of work on the main channel from a maintenance perspective on the floodway. They are working on getting the Gate 5 repaired. Mr. Panchevre asked about the status of a more permanent solution for Gate 5. Mr. St. George stated that he was informed that PW was looking at a replacement of the gate. Mr. Panchevre mentioned that he has seen kayaks on the river and channel and inquired if this is something that will continue. Mr. Jacks stated that it is operating on a temporary pilot program that will become a permanent part of the Go Rio contract that will be operated by a sub-contractor.

VII. Other Business

Mr. Jacks mentioned that CCDO will be gearing up for the holidays with light being checked and installed on September 1st. Mr. Riley asked about the status of the barge ride and Mr. Jacks stated that for the next meeting we can plan to go on a barge ride and then hold a meeting. Mr. Jacks encouraged the members to try a self-guided tour on a

kayak to get a different perspective of that level of the river. Mr. Jacks stated that the city is in discussions with the San Antonio River Authority and the Public Works Department on a possible river draining for the river loop this coming winter. The river may be drained for a day or two. A decision would be made by September.

VIII. Adjourn

There being no further business, Mr. Riley motioned to adjourn the meeting at 2:18 PM without objection.