

**San Antonio River Commission Board Meeting  
May 20, 2008  
Municipal Plaza Room C**

Members present: Dr. Julian H. Trevino, *Chairman*  
Lynda Billa Burke, *Community Category*  
Lionel Sosa, *Tourism Category*  
David Strauss, *Business Category*  
Darryl Byrd, *Conservation Category*  
Lisa Wong, *Tourism Category*

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Staff Present: Penny Postoak Ferguson, *Assistant City Manager*; Trey Jacobson, *Mayor's Office*; Ann McGlone, *Planning & Community Development*; Colleen Swain, *Assistant Director of Downtown Operations*; Steve Whitworth, *City Attorney's Office*; Kathy Rodriugez, *Historic Preservation Office*

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Others Present: Joan Gaithers; Conservation Society

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Trevino at 9:12 a.m.

Comment from David Straus that the Lone Star Brewery property was not on the river walk was brought to the attention of B. Knightly Development & Construction.

Minutes from April 9, 2008 and April 22, 2008 meeting were approved. (*David Straus motioned, Lynda Burke second*)

**Staff Briefing on River North (Pat DiGiovanni, Deputy City Manager)**

Planning effort was started with the Downtown Alliance and the Community Development Corporation (CDC) which was formed by DT Alliance to be a collaborator with the City. The planning area is north of the Central Business District (CBD) bounded by Broadway on east, the river on the west, and the highway to the north – approx. 400 acres. A Tax Increment Investment Zone has been established within the planning area of approx. 194 acres. Any new development that occurs will be captured by the TIF & those dollars can be used for public infrastructure improvements in the planning area. Approximately \$125 million of public improvements have been estimated. The planning document is in draft form. Staff will brief City Council at B Session to go over plan as is now and discuss new planning process. The zoning piece will be separated from the Master Plan to focus on vision and planning and staff will come back with the zoning and regulating plan. The City intends to buy the plan from the CDC and TIF monies will reimburse the City.

Chairman Trevino commented that it's important for the River Commission to have representation on the River North Plan.

No Action was taken.

**Staff Briefing on International Downtown Association (IDA) (Pat DiGiovanni, Deputy City Manager)**

The City contracted with Michael Stevens, consultant from D.C., to evaluate downtown and spend time with key stakeholders in downtown area. A report was published with recommendations for

improvement. One suggestion was to look for an agent of change to lead the efforts of downtown development. The City Manager placed an office of Downtown Development in the 2007-2008 budget. Before the office of Downtown Development is finalized, the IDA was brought in. The IDA put together a panel consisting of Dave Feehan; CEO of IDA, Michael Stevens, Maggie Campbell from Arlington, Andy Taft from Ft. Worth, and Pat Grady from Phoenix who then toured downtown and met with stakeholders, property owners and real estate agents.

Some initial observations:

- the river walk is a very clean and safe environment
- street level is not very user friendly
- has a failing infrastructure throughout downtown (streets, sidewalks, curb gutter, lighting)
- safety remains a concern downtown: homeless issue, bus operations (bus stops)
- parking system is weak and a barrier to success in terms of using our parking system for economic development purposes
- there was a lack of shared vision among stakeholders, hotel guests & tourism takes over downtown and there isn't a local resident feel to downtown, the hospitality industry has displaced higher paying office.
- local residents lack a commitment, ownership and pride in downtown
- downtown should be considered beyond it's current boundaries, should look at downtown as a center city that reaches out to neighborhoods that surround it

Options on what City should consider in terms of structure:

- stay as we are
- enhance office created by City Manager
- enhance DTA to be a better partner in area of downtown development
- creating public quasi governmental agency (downtown development authority)
- look at a hybrid of an all encompassing umbrella (501(c) 6 organization) that would coordinate with DTA, City and other entities that have interest in downtown

Recommendations are being finalized are will probably be presented week of May 26th.

The River Commission will be a liaison group for the Office of Downtown Development and will be working with Pat DiGiovanni.

No action was taken.

**Briefing and Discussion on Next Steps regarding the San Antonio River Commission's Mission/Vision Statement (Trey Jacobson, Mayor's Office)**

Staff will be coordinating a date to meet with the Chairs & Vice Chairs of Commissions to present the revised Vision statement which addressed comments from the previous meeting to the chairs.

Darryl Byrd asked that we be cognizant of when the terms of the chairs expire and having to start over with the new leadership regarding the Mission/Vision Statement.

No action was taken.

**Briefing on Technical Advisory Committee regarding water clarity and quality (TAC) Updates (Lynda Billa Burke)**

The TAC toured the river walk by barge in the morning in order to see the river water clarity before the barges are put into use for the day. The next big step is to start doing sediment removal.

No action was taken.

**Briefing on delegation from Red Deer Canada (David Straus)**

David Straus passed around a copy of the preliminary master plan for Red Deer. They are using the San Antonio River Walk as their model to build a river walk. An observation that the delegation noticed was that we have lost our diversity – there's not as many small shops, bars and restaurants, there are a lot of new hotels. A newspaper clipping from Alberta, Canada of plans to create a river walk was circulated for viewing.

No action was taken.

**Announcements**

A. J. Rodriguez was named Deputy City Manager as of June 30, 2008. His term as River Commission member ends June 28, 2008.

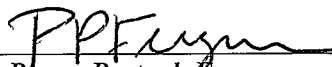
Ann McGlone has been hired by the City of Alamo Heights and will start June 9.

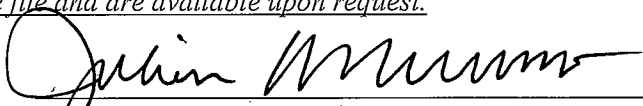
Trey Jacobson drafted letter to city manager asking for consideration to consolidate/coordinate departments working on river related matters.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:13 a.m. by Vice Chair Lynda Burke

Copies of these presentations are made part of the file and are available upon request.

Respectfully Submitted,

  
Penny Post oak Ferguson  
Assistant City Manager  
City Manager's Office

  
Dr. Julian H. Trevino, Chairperson