



City of San Marcos

630 East Hopkins
San Marcos, TX 78666

Meeting Minutes City Council

Tuesday, October 15, 2019

3:00 PM

City Council Chambers

630 E. Hopkins - Work Session

I. Call To Order

With a quorum present, the work session meeting of the San Marcos City Council was called to order by Mayor Hughson at 3:02 p.m. Tuesday, October 15, 2019 in the City Council Chambers, 630 E. Hopkins, San Marcos, Texas 78666.

II. Roll Call

Present: 7 - Mayor Pro Tem Lisa Prewitt, Council Member Saul Gonzales, Council Member Melissa Derrick, Mayor Jane Hughson, Council Member Ed Mihalkanin, Council Member Joca Marquez and Council Member Mark Rockeymoore

1. Receive a Staff update and hold discussion regarding Cape's Dam, the Mill Race, Thompson's Island, San Marcos River and Visioning Study, and provide direction to the City Manager.

Bert Lumbreras, City Manager, provided some introductory remarks and stated that staff is simply trying to get some direction on how Council would like to move forward related to Cape's Dam and any possible partnerships with the Hays County Historical Commission, and Hays County. Mr. Lumbreras provided that in the Fall of 2018 Staff was contacted by Hays County concerning their interest in having the dam restored. The County, along with Ms. Kate Johnson, Chair of the Hays County Historical Commission, were interested in entering into a partnership with the City to restore the dam. Mr. Lumbreras provided that they have a desire to work on this project including design, construction, public outreach and long-term maintenance, as well as, developing an initial concept or visioning plan. Mr. Lumbreras reviewed some of the previous discussions and actions related to the Cape's Dam issue.

Mr. Lumbreras informed the Council that Staff is seeking Council direction regarding 3 possible Options:

1. Does Council want to move forward with maintaining an interest in restoring the Dam?
2. If so, does the Council want to continue exploring a partnership with the Hays County Historical Commission and Hays County? Mr. Lumbreras

provided that if the Council would like to move forward with this option that there would be several things that would need to happen. He referenced the previous study completed by Dr. Thom Hardy that recommended a second opinion, and mentioned that there would be some more structural engineering work that would have to happen. He referenced issues with hydrology in the area, environmental concerns, habitat concerns, and flood impact concerns.

3. Is Council interested in the concept plan that was presented?

Mr. Lumbreras then introduced Ms. Kate Johnson, Chair of the Hays County Historical Commission. Ms. Johnson introduced Hays County Commissioner Debbie Ingalsbe.

Commissioner Ingalsbe thanked the Mayor and Council for allowing her to share a few words. She stated that one of the things that she hoped that would occur is for the City and the County to continue to work together on this concept. She stated that they would like the Council's input and that she feels it's important to get the public's input as well. She stated that she feels that there is a great opportunity to provide this vision to part of our County and City that has been underserved in the past. She stated that she is not trying to create any kind of division, but that she feels that the eastside of I-35 has lacked in some of these opportunities. She provided that this is an opportunity to provide these kinds of recreational opportunities for the citizens that haven't had access to passive recreation like hike & bike trails and educational opportunities. She stated that she hopes that we can all come together on this vision. Commissioner Ingalsbe also provided that it is equally important to her that we protect, we preserve, we restore our river, and all of the components that Mr. Lumbreras mentioned previously. She stated that we have a treasure in our river and that we need to do all that we can to protect it. She provided that she would be happy to respond to any questions that Council may have.

Ms. Johnson thanked Mayor Hughson and thanked the City Council for allowing them the opportunity to pursue a conceptual plan for the park area encompassing Thompson's Island, the Dam, the Mill Race, Stokes Park and Cape's Camp. She stated that she hopes this will be the beginning of a partnership between Hays County and the City of San Marcos. She introduced Mr. Mitch Wright with Vista Planning & Design who provided the Council with the presentation of the Visioning Study. Ms. Johnson provided that his firm was selected for their ability to balance high quality design with environmental stewardship. His firm also has extensive experience with public engagement should the project go to the next level.

Mr. Wright began by explaining that this presentation and the maps, comments, and strategies are conceptual only. The information contained in the work is only to explore the potential of a more comprehensive master plan. He explained that the vision presented here; Seeks to promote the rehabilitation and interpretation of the Thompson/Cape dam, mill race, Thompson/Cape mill site and turbine structure, as a special place; the very beginning of San Marcos industry.

Mr. Wright explained that Cape's Dam is a Crib Dam and explained that it is meant to be porous and that water is meant to flow through it as well as over it. Mr. Wright reviewed the Master Plan Process and the steps that would be taken: historical & environmental assessments, strategy and design. Then public engagement online and meetings with stakeholder groups. The last step would be drafting up the master plan document. He spoke about the rehabilitation concept of the dam and how it could provide safe access for people of all abilities. He continued by explaining the conceptual improvements for the Mill Pond and Thompson Dam. He reviewed the possible improvements to safety, access and bank stabilization in the area.

Mr. Wright provided that the overall goal of the rehabilitation is not related to recreation, but instead to prioritize the historic features and environmental beauty of the area.

Mr. Wright explained that the overall goals of the visioning study are: achieving a balanced approach for historic structure rehabilitation, educational interpretation, and leisurely activities while preserving the ecological integrity of the San Marcos River through pragmatic conservation and restoration initiatives. Providing a special & diverse asset to be enjoyed by San Marcos and Hays County residents, accessed by trails reaching out in all directions. Providing comprehensive safety and access, focusing on ADA, EMS servicing, Trails, & Water Access.

Mr. Wright reviewed the general study area, and explained that one of the goals is to maintain this section of the river as a quieter place with less access. He explained that there would be less parking & access and that the study addresses the balance of environmental protection with historical and recreational assets.

Mr. Wright reviewed the first goal of achieving a balanced approach and explained that the Vision Study caters to three main areas: environmental

integrity, historic rehabilitation and interpretation, and social/leisure access equity.

Mr. Wright reviewed the analysis and strategies:

Coordination with all necessary City and County departments

Existing conditions assessment

Flow-through design modeling of a rehabilitated Cape's Dam as part of the assessment informing design

Post assessment after first phase improvements completed

Monitoring to include recreational activity seasonal levels

Establishment for strategies including river access points

Terrestrial survey conducted on sensitive landscapes.

Invasive species removal

Mr. Wright reviewed the second goal of providing a special and diverse asset.

He provided that: A place for historians to understand San Marcos History better, a place for people interested in natural places for bird watching, hiking, relaxing, environmental study, a place to learn about urban impacts on the environment , and a place to relax and enjoy being outdoors.

Mr. Wright reviewed the third goal of providing access & safety. He explained the access and safety issues in the project area, and explained the structural systems for natural grass EMS drives, emergency call boxes, safer ingress/egress places, installation of traffic calming devices, addressing the existing unsafe conditions and adding lighting if appropriate. Mr. Wright explained how a wetland demonstration garden would work in the project area and would benefit the San Marcos River.

Mr. Wright reviewed maps of the historic & ecological framework and the leisure activity framework.

Mr. Wright reviewed the importance for the City to address the following Parks, Recreation and Trail Issues and explained that it could do the following:

Improve pedestrian and bicycle access to the riverfront park system

Improve water access for swimming and wading

Improve water access for people with disabilities

Better connect the riverfront parks to a citywide or regional trail system

Improve existing parking areas

Add additional Water access points to lessen impact of existing access points

Mr. Wright concluded his presentation.

Discussion was held regarding Cape Road and if the amount of traffic on the roadway has been considered. Mr. Wright provided that it was well beyond the ability of this visioning study, but it was discussed.

Discussion was held regarding if the State and Federal Agencies being contacted and getting their feedback regarding what permits and permissions would be necessary to restore the dam.

Discussion was held regarding the diverse of water to the Mill Race and away from the main channel.

Discussion was held regarding getting a second opinion scientific study that would evaluate the dam.

Discussion was held regarding to parking in the area and the parking strategy and why it is being suggested to be limited.

Discussion was held regarding having the city commission an archeological study of the area.

Council Member Marquez asked why the dam wasn't removed in 2016 following the vote of the City Council to remove it. Director of Parks and Recreation, Drew Wells, provided that following the Council's direction to have the dam removed that the City was working with US Fish and Wildlife to have the dam removed to help work through the permitting process and that it stalled and we were unable to get all of the necessary permits to remove the dam. This was due to some objections received from the Texas Historical Commission and shortly after that US Fish and Wildlife removed themselves from the project.

Discussion was held related to a study that was provided by Recreation Engineering and Planning that evaluated options on keeping water in the Mill Race and modifying the dam structure.

Kimberly Meitzen, PhD, Associate Professor in the Geography Department at Texas State University responded to questions from Mayor Pro Tem Prewitt related to dewatering and riparian zones. She recommended that the Council look into having another sediment study conducted. She addressed concerns about the water table lowering and the impacts to riparian zones in the area.

Mayor Hughson provided that the City spent a large amount of time and money to ensure that our wastewater plant functions as well as it does.

Council Member Rockeymoore supported dam removal, and was interested in lots of aspects of the master plan that was presented.

Council Member Marquez supported dam restoration and moving forward with the plan.

Council Member Gonzales supported receiving another opinion related to dam removal and supported the plan.

Council Member Prewitt supported dam removal due to all of the science that is behind it and would like to know if rebuilding the dam would even be possible by talking to the necessary State and Federal agencies. She also provided that the concept plan is a great idea, but has multiple questions prior to moving forward with it. She stated that she was supportive of the plan, but would like to identify who all would be part of those conversations.

Council Member Derrick supported dam removal, but that a second opinion should be conducted. She would also like to know what the Federal agencies say before moving forward as well.

Council Member Mihalkanin supported the further exploration of the concept plan and partnering with Hays County, and supported the restoration or rehabilitation of the dam. He was also supportive of an additional study being completed, but provided that it was very important that the study be completed but must be completely independent of the existing studies. He also provided his perspective regarding to the benefit of the Spring Lake dam and how it is prolonging the life of the springs.

Mayor Hughson provided that she is still on the fence about removal and hopes that there is still some way that the crib structure can provide enough flow and still maintain the Mill Race. She supported the conceptual plan, but has concerns about the fiscal impacts and cost sharing. She provided that she would like to see what Federal and State agencies say related to permissions and permits would be needed.

Following discussion, the Council provided consensus for staff to seek what permissions and permits would be needed from State and Federal agencies to remove or repair the dam. No further direction was provided.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

2. Executive Session in accordance with the following Government Code Section(s):
- A. Section § 551.071 - Consultation with Attorney: to receive advice from Legal Counsel on Kinder Morgan Pipeline
 - B. Section §551.087 - Economic Development: receive a briefing and deliberate regarding the potential offer of Economic Development Incentives to Kattera

A motion was made by Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Gonzales and seconded by Council Member Rockeymoore to enter into Executive Session at 5:25 p.m.

The motion carried by the following vote:

For: 7 - Mayor Pro Tem Prewitt, Council Member Gonzales, Council Member Derrick, Mayor Hughson, Council Member Mihalkanin, Council Member Marquez and Council Member Rockeymoore

Against: 0

III. Adjournment.

Council returned from Executive Session at 5:53 p.m. A motion was made by Deputy Mayor Pro Tem Gonzales and seconded by Council Member Rockeymoore to adjourn the work session meeting of the City Council at 5:53 p.m., Tuesday, October 15, 2019. The motion carried by the following vote:

For: 4 - Council Member Gonzales, Mayor Hughson, Council Member Marquez and Council Member Rockeymoore

Against: 0

Absent: 3 - Mayor Pro Tem Prewitt, Council Member Derrick and Council Member Mihalkanin

Jamie Lee Case, TRMC, City Clerk

Jane Hughson, Mayor