

**DRAFT FOR APPROVAL - Minutes for the Travis County  
Citizens Bond Advisory Committee  
PUBLIC OUTREACH MEETING  
Monday, June 27, 2011, at 6:30 P.M.  
Wells Branch Community Center  
2106 Klattenhoff Drive, Austin**

**Attendees:**

Committee Member:	Representing:	Travis County Staff:	Affiliation:
Joyce Thoresen	Precinct 1	Steve Manilla	TNR Staff
John Williams	Precinct 1	Wendy Scaperotta	TNR Staff
Nicole Francois	Precinct 2	Charlie Watts	TNR Staff
Jeffery W. Travillion, Sr.	Precinct 2	Stacey Scheffel	TNR Staff
Larry Graham	Precinct 2	Steve Sun	TNR Staff
Joe Gieselman	Precinct 4	Randy Nicholson	TNR Staff
Frank Fuentes	Precinct 4	Charles Bergh	TNR Staff
Rosa Rios Valdez	Precinct 4	Laura Seaton	TNR Staff
Terrence L. Irion	Judge	Cynthia McDonald	TNR Staff

Commissioner Sarah Eckhardt      Commissioner Precinct 2

**Guests:**

Keith Stone	Linda Baird	Jane Falkenberg
Jack Gullahorn	Joe Drimmel	Lamar Weiss
Tommy Nobles	Karen Ford	Jerry Bohn
Vernagene Mott	Nina Aguire	John Mooney
Patty Goss	Steve Lindsey	Frank Morris
Bill Monroe	Debby Thompson	Ron Kinney
Doug Boyd	Dick Kallerman	Janet Maxey
Joel Schopp	Jon Beall	Salvador Aguirre
Wayne Coger	Mike Johnson (?)	Gus Kohn
Donna Howe	Anthony Mcguire	Bob Banks
Loretta Farb	Jonathan Ogren	
Lorraine Bier	Anne Brockenbrough	

**Commencement of Meeting**

Meeting called to order at 7:10 P.M.

**Presentations by TNR Staff**

Mr. Charlie Watts, Roadway, Safety and Bike/Pedestrian Projects

Ms. Stacey Scheffel, Drainage and Bridge Safety Projects  
Ms. Wendy Scaperotta, Parks and Land Conservation Projects

### **Citizen Communication**

Mr. Doug Boyd, RE: Support for Conservation Easements

Appreciative of money being allocated in the bond for conservation easements, money well spent, include as much money as you can toward easements. He is an archeologist, lived in Texas 30 years, Vice-President and co-owner of a small business, Pruitt (?) and Associates. Concerned over the loss of cultural resources all over the State. In 2009 helped a local landowner, Anne Brockenbrough, document an important archeological site on her ranch near Manor. She was applying for an easement through the Farm and Ranch Protection Program. Documented was an important archeological site dating back to the Republic of Texas period; this helped qualify the land for the protection program and for a grant from the Federal government, allowing her to sell the development rights to the Hill Country Conservancy, keeping the land from ever being developed and keep it a working ranch in eastern Travis County. Conservation easements are the best bang for your buck; every County dollar is matched by two or three dollars from other sources and benefits Travis County, landowners and future generations. No use of eminent domain to acquire lands, allows County to balance development and natural resources to benefit all for not 5, 10 years, but 50 years. What will be left? Sited San Antonio and the missions; San Antonio at one time was going to eliminate the missions for development yet a grassroots effort stopped this, they are now a national park and a cornerstone of San Antonio tourism. Growth and its development are threatening our quality of life; conservation easements helps to mitigate this.

Mr. Keith Stone, RE: Cameron Road – west of SH130

A landowner on Cameron Road, spoke in support of the Cameron Road improvement west of US 130 project. Spoke of how the project meets all the needed criteria for road improvement projects. Connects to the new airport which opened June 2011, the new interchange at US 130, connects to Gregg Lane, improving a two-lane road to a four-lane divided highway. It is the largest project in the package, and half in Precinct 2, half in Precinct 1. Provides connectivity to other major arterials, including US 130, existing Kelly Lane, the future four-lane Wells Branch Parkway, the existing Braker Lane and the existing improved Howard Lane which will go through at the end of this year, and through Parmer Lane and to US 290. It also connects major employment bases in the County: the new airport, major economic developer for Travis County; Applied Materials, one of the major plants in Travis County; Samsung, currently initiating a \$5 billion expansion program, hiring hundreds of engineers; Dell. Unusual connectivity of roads and employment. Third-party contributions another

criteria. Land owners are providing significant right-of-way and the City of Austin is developing in part of the area now and with future projects for roads and infrastructure.

Mr. Jack Gullahorn, RE: Cameron Road – west of SH130

Spoke in support of Cameron Road west of US 130. Talked of how this is the most expensive project on the list of current proposed projects. Emphasized the criteria including connectivity and added capacity existing and future. It would provide a major north-south thoroughfare, the only one in this area except Dessau Road which has become the main "escape" from SH130. More people using two-lane Cameron Road from Pflugerville to US290. This project is critical. It links the pending Wells Branch Parkway with Parmer Lane and Howard Lane. Harris Branch and Arterial A will also be a factor along with this project in US130/290 connectivity. Two school sites, Manor ISD and Pflugerville ISD site less than a mile from the connection at Cameron Road. Also, the new proposed entrance to NE Metro Park will be on Wells Branch to Cameron Road. This project is critical, Pflugerville is the 8<sup>th</sup> fastest growing city on the US according to census figures for cities over 10,000 in the US. Appreciate your consideration and that this project stays on the list.

Mr. Lamar Weiss, RE: Cameron Road West

A farmer in the Cameron Road west area, works about 1000 acres on both sides of the area. Has lots of problems moving equipment, cannot at all from 8:00-9:30 a.m. in about five miles in either direction (due to traffic.) Safety issues: friend, a motorcycle rider, had an accident swerving to avoid a car going too fast on the road. Very hazardous area. Future development, the airport, it is the next corridor between US130 and Dessau Road, need the road and improved safety.

Mr. Jerry Bohn, RE: Cameron Road West

Spoke in favor of Cameron Road improvement. Has lived off the road for 30 years and has not seen much improvement except for a new bridge which was very nicely done. Has seen traffic increase from a dozen cars a day to a dozen cars every 30 seconds at rush hour, coming and going; for the first time in 30 years has to wait to get out of his driveway. Not really fussing about it, but sometimes it can take awhile. This project is an important improvement for the future and for right now as traffic is very dangerous for a two-lane road. When Wells Branch and Howard Lane goes through there will be an increase in traffic. Works with Lamar (Weiss), would like to see the project go through.

Mr. Frank Morris, RE: Cameron Road West

Constituent of Precinct 2, risk of being completely redundant, voicing his support of Cameron Road west project. Believes this is an important step to leverage the

infrastructure that is already in place and for the residential and business growth projected for the area. A great non-toll option for US I-35 (US130?), relieve congestion on Dessau Road, vital north south link for NE Travis County. Important that people and businesses in the area have the correct infrastructure to do business, live, get to the grocery store, etc.

Mr. John Mooney, RE: Support for Cameron Road West Project

Lives in Precinct 2 towards town, so does not live in the area around the proposed Cameron Road West project yet supports it. Beneficiary of a working road structure in town and believes if we are committing to the (NE Travis County) area that infrastructure be sound. Clear that in order to get growth going in this area and that we need to be responsible and do it right. The main structure should be put together properly and Cameron (Road) is a critical piece. Believes anything we can do north-south to relieve pressure off I-35 makes sense. We are making a commitment to this area, saying where the growth is going, let's make sure the crucial elements are there, Cameron Road is one.

Mr. Dick Kallerman, RE: Parks and Conservation Easements

Board Chair of the Save our Springs Alliance and is very pleased to see \$74 million for Parks and conservation easements. Realizes this money will be challenged by many, many other projects and believes these (types of projects) should have the highest priorities because our population is growing and needs more and more parkland and water and \$74 million is going to help assure that we maintain water supply and recreation. There is not a lot of other money coming from elsewhere, Feds are having trouble of their own, and perhaps after August 2<sup>nd</sup> we all have to pitch in. The State is planning to close three, maybe four, parks, shifting administration, maybe be less recreation. Not sure where the City is in this kind of expenditure although he expects it not being too much. TxDOT did get money from the General Funds, yet the amount is going down, in the range of \$2 billion for transportation. Parks and recreation, in their (staff) presentation, spoke of also water and control; when we think of water, think of parks to help keep the water supply pure. Conservation easements, wants to make a very good case for keeping it and even increasing it.

Mr. Ron Kinney, RE: Support for Cameron Road West Project

In favor of Cameron Road west project. Many speakers, most points have been covered. Has lived six blocks off Cameron Road for 35 years, has seen traffic change dramatically. It funnels right next to their street from a four-lane to a two-lane country road. He is in favor of this project, logical in his mind. If this is a preferred development area it is logical to get the infrastructure in place and then allow it grow as it will from there.

Mr. Joel Schopp, RE: Additional Pedernales River Parkland

Representing the Central Texas Mountaineers, a non-profit organization with members in central Texas and all precincts in Travis County, also Dallas, Houston, San Antonio, across the whole State. In favor of the Pedernales River Corridor project. Most visitors to the area there are rock climbers from across the State, nation. Acquiring this land will make this area an even bigger destination and create more jobs in Travis County. Also the group will contribute after the purchase with trail work, trash clean-up and will continue to be involved.

Mr. Jon Beall, RE: Bonds

Here to ask for more money for parks and land conservation projects. Current amount not enough. Financial analysis shows we can reduce future costs of fixing future problems and providing services when we spend money on parks and open space, particularly when there is participation from other players. Not against roads, but (he questions is it true that) more money has been spent in central Texas on roads than any other region in the United States. We attract people and businesses despite the powerful forces of the rising and falling business cycles. People keep coming because of our clean air, our environment and our natural infrastructure that we preserve. We have made central Texas rich because we were able to preserve Barton Springs and we need to preserve our beautiful places. We have got a good start on it thanks to Travis County; we have spent money in west Travis County, time to spend some in east Travis County. If we can preserve these beautiful places, our future will be secure.

Mr. Anthony McGuire, RE: BMX Racetrack at NE Metro Park

Founder of Central Texas BMX, a non-profit organization promoting motocross and BMX racing in central Texas. Support of the BMX racetrack at NE Metro (Park.) At a previous meeting learned of economic cutbacks in relationship to the bond resolution. Have stepped back with a lower (dollar) number for the project that would help build a facility and bring a race track into north Travis County. It will bring people into the area from all over the state and the country; if it is a national level track it could bring thousands of families into the area for events. Recently a new BMX/skate park opened in downtown Austin. They don't require helmets or safety gear of any kind. As a parent it made him sick to his stomach. Bicycle motocross racing strictly enforces helmets, pads, gloves, goggles, all the gear you would want to your kid to have on when going around a track or down your driveway. He makes sure his kids have on all this safety gear whenever they ride because he can't afford the medical bills. BMX strictly enforces safety. Parks in general, kids will be kids, things happen like bullying. When unsupervised, happens with out check; all open time, every time, BMX park will be supervised and rules will be abided by including wearing of safety gear, answering to complaints, etc. Location of park on US130 will bring in many visitors from all over the country, filling hotel rooms, etc. several times each year.

Terry Irion asked if there was a public-private contract outlined between his organization and the County. He replied yes, that he had asked the County what would make them feel comfortable in dealing with an outside entity to operate this. He believes the County does not want to get into the "running a BMX track" business. He said the response was there is comfort in dealing with a nonprofit organization where all the funds go back into running and maintaining the facility. His organization would be the track operator, answer to the County, oversee all activity at the track, including birthday parties or races, when ever it would be open. It would be open for at-will public access yet would be open only under supervision. They are a registered non-profit and are in the process of establishing 501-C3 status.

Steve Manilla asked Charles Bergh to explain the details of the proposed BMX track operation. Charles stated that it would be very similar to the way we operate County soccer fields. Nonprofits come and rent the soccer fields/soccer complex for big soccer events. These guys won't have the "market cornered" for the track; any group that has a BMX club can use it, the same way we operate the soccer complex or a baseball complex. Same rules. No one has exclusive rights. The American Bicycle Association (ABA) will actually construct the track and we will provide the park infrastructure. We may need help from Austin contractors and engineers yet we will rely on the ABA to actually build the track.

Steve Manilla reiterated that the money in the bond for NE Metro Park does not include any funds for the bike track; it is infrastructure, i.e. the parking lot, the park amenities to help serve it. We need them to help build it.

Mr. McGuire shared that many people don't hear the "B" for bicycle and think BMX means motorcycles, not bicycles. He also explained the difference between the BMX track built downtown and this proposed BMX track is that it is not a freestyle, an "extreme games" kind of track with jumps, tricks, etc. It is a race track with a start and finish that anyone can ride. It means keeping your tires on the ground instead of having them fly up in the air which he feels would satisfy a lot of parents.

Mr. Rob Bauhs, RE: Unaccepted Road Bonds

Speaking in support of the substandard roads program. Keep the money in there to prevent citizens from suffering injustices by some inadvertent error. Easy to look at this program as "someone built a road out in the country and now they want the County to take it over" and it is more than that. Lives in Wells Branch had a plot accepted by the City. And the County gave the developer a "punch list" (that needed to be completed before the County would accept the roads? Mr. Bauhs distributed the list to the members present) which he never completed, there fore the roads in this area were not, and have not, been accepted by the County. 15 years have gone by and the citizens of this

community has found out these roads were never accepted. Money in the substandard roads program helps communities like his.

Ms. Vernagene Mott, RE:

Resident of Precinct 2 and believes the proposed project for Wells Branch Parkway will flow nicely. She is also on the Pflugerville School Board and supports the proposed project for Cameron Road in NE Travis County where the largest population growth is expected due to affordable land. This will be very good for the ISD which still has 1/2 to 2/3 yet to develop. Pointed out an area ready to develop for 1200 homes, Wildfire (?) She supports whole-heartedly the projects at Rowe Lane and Weiss Lane and encourages bike lanes because bikers love this area. Cameron Road hosts marathons and needs improvements. Wants to keep options open in the future for Weiss Lane to connect to Cameron Road. Supports the new entrance to NE Metro Park and is hopeful for a Wilbarger-Gilliland basin greenway connection and is hopeful for horse trails in that development area as well. Feeder roads connecting FM 973 to US 130 or cut down onto Parmer Lane is very heavily traveled at this time, between 6:30 and 8:15 a.m. she estimates about 50 cars a minute. She wants to know about the Jesse Bohls bridge project and will discuss with a staff member after the meeting. Again, Weiss Lane and Rowe Lane, please include bike routes.

Mr. Tommy A. Nobles, RE: Rowe Lane Improvements

A 50 year County resident, friend of Jeff Travillion and recognized and praised Commissioner Sarah Eckhart. Supporting all comments made so far in favor of the Cameron Road project. North-south infrastructure in this part of the County is critical. Referred to his email sent in regards to Rowe Lane improvements and is very serious in his support of this project. Asked about the Texas Tollway Authority and their involvement in the various projects. All improvements too the north-south corridor are very important and wants to know if there are any improvements planned for FM 685 into Rowe Lane. He lives in the Steve's Crossing (?) subdivision which he calls the North Pole of Travis County because if you go too far you are in Williamson County. He wants to know if there is a turn lane planned for this highly congested area and if not would like it to be considered.

Ms. Lorraine Bier, RE: Bonds

Said she is just a taxpayer and not affected by any of the projects, saw the ad in the paper and wanted to understand how the bond process worked. Has voted against bonds because she thinks they are ambitious. Presentations were good, lots of information, clear that the presenters knew what they were doing and thoughtful and passionate about the choices made. Nothing she saw that she wouldn't love to have, but was taken aback by the bond scope and feels there is too much than what we can afford at this time. Puzzled why we are such a rich

County and run so deeply in debt and is fearful of going into debt in these times of uncertainty. Roads and water projects sound useful but parks projects sound like icing on the cake. She will not be able to support a large bond referendum, tone it down to the must, must haves.

Mr. Jonathon Ogren, RE: Open Space Bond

Runs a small company called Seegla Group (?), focusing on conservation and regional planning and analysis, does a lot of mapping. Also serves with Jack Gullahorn on the Citizens Advisory Task Force for the Comprehensive Plan for the City of Austin. Has been involved with several open space issues in Central Texas, Travis County over the last 10 years, including Hogue Reimer. Supports the Committee's priorities concerning open space. Onion Creek and Gilliland, places where you obviously have to spend money: there is a (indiscernible name Golden Massen Baby Love's Setting?) on Gilliland Creek where the water quality doesn't meet the water standards we need it to and Travis County and City of Austin needs to spend money on it mitigating problems that we've already created; on the Pedernales River Corridor and partnership that can be grabbed on to, landowners interested in working with the County and you are doing so, going to able to leverage your dollars and create a green space from Hogue Reimer to Pedernales State Park. Would like to turn previous comments on their head; you need to pay dollars for open space now and not 40 years from now. Costs the County less to purchase open space due to lessened services costs. Water quality, watershed, erosion issues; paying for open space now, not later when costs are higher and encourages more money to be spent of open space and conservation easements.

## **Action Items**

### **Discussion on Other Items and Next Steps:**

No Discussion. Next meeting will be held Wednesday, June 29, 2011, at the Lago Vista City Hall at 7:00 P.M. The Proposed 2011 Bond Property Tax Impact Calculator will be up the web site soon. The Chairman thanked all citizens who presented testimony and emphasized this was the main purpose of this evening's meeting.

## **Adjourned**

Meeting adjourned at approximately at 8:40 P.M.

Note: Above items summarized from the verbatim minutes. Due to the background noise, audience comments, and the levels at which constituents/representatives were speaking into the microphone, verbatim minutes of the meeting are transcribed as best as possible. Please refer to the tapes of the meeting for specific



questions regarding the contents in this document. You can call TNR's open records request line at (512) 854-7683.

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