

Closed Caption Log, Council Meeting, 09/01/11

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Leffingwell: The time is 4:00 p.m. We're meeting in the council chambers, austin city hall, 301 west second street, austin, texas. And I'm not getting any feedback on this mic. Okay. We'll now take up our agenda. We have two items. We'll now take up item number 1 to conduct a public hearing and receive public comment on the city of austin 2011-2012 proposed budget. The council also held a public hearing on the proposed budget on august 25th, 2011. Council will close the comment on the proposed budget at the end of this meeting. Council is scheduled to adopt on september 12th. They will continue the hearing on september 13th and 14th if needed. Now we'll go to our speakers on item 1. The first speaker is paul robbins. Is paul robbins in the chamber? Donating time to paul is sharon blythe. Is sharon blythe in the chambers? All right. We'll go to our speaker -- we'll go ahead and go to the next speaker and come back to you. Mary gay maxwell. Signed up against the budget. And you have three minutes.

I'm not really against the budget. [Laughter] it's the only way I can figure out to say what I was doing here. Good afternoon, mayor and councilmembers. I'm here today to support the austin recreation center and its survival as a rec center. Managed by the parks department. You have heard from many supporters of the center over the past few days and their concerns are well expressed. I'm not going to take up your valuable time reiterating what has already been said. By the way, I'm one of those older jazzercizers who benefits greatly from going to class at ark. You have been very responsive to our concerns regarding both arc and dottie jordan, and we really appreciate that. Thank you. I do want to strongly request that you not change the rec center's structure at this time. But that you wait until after the fee analysis has been completed and a good faith effort on the part of the parks department has been made to develop increased usage of that wonderful facility. The center is physically and geographically positioned to be full all the time. It is on lamar boulevard and on the east, house park stadium on the west and the newly constructed highly populated skateboard park on the south. It has a very large parking lot in the middle of all these other very active and very intensively used facilities. The citizens who have come forward on behalf of the center are willing to assist in making the center a viable facility for the city. Surely there's a way to bring more activity into the rec center and improve its bottom line. Please do not contract away or rebrand this facility. It needs to be a parks department run city of austin public facility. Thank you.

Leffingwell: Thank you, mary gay. So we'll go back to paul robbins. And donating time is sharon blythe.

Also donating time is felicia constable who is in the room. She tried to sign up, but the computer was not working.

Mayor Leffingwell: Say the name again?

[Inaudible - no mic].

Leffingwell: Would you sign up with the city clerk, please? All right. You have six minutes.

Nine?

Leffingwell: Oh, i didn't see sharon blythe. All right. You have nine minutes.

Council, citizens of austin. I want to review information that has been withheld or misstated regarding the austin water utility and the cost of the treatment plant which will affect rates, which will affect the budget. On august 10th a council meeting was convened at the construction site of water treatment plant 4. Given the bitter controversy over this plant, the remote location and the lack of a building to hold the meeting in, one might dismiss this as political theater. But I was wondering how much is cost. I submitted an open records request asking for the cost to hold this meeting. And there has been a curious lack of forthcoming information. please provide the cost of the deck and foundation for the deck the meeting was held on? A responsive information. please provide the cost for the labor to transport, setup, break down and providehe tent, audio visual equipment, tables, chairs, table cloths and pipe and draping? If any of this equipment was purchased oriented specifically for this meeting, please provide the purchase or rental cost as well. no responsive information. please provide the cost for water treatment plant number 4 polo shirts. When were these shirts purchased and how many were purchased? Who were they provided to and at what cost? Will the general public be offered these shirts at the same cost? no responsive information. And I have a disclosure to make. I'm really jealous because i was not offered one of these shirts. And I hope to get one. [Laughter] since this and other information was not disclosed, I have filed a complaint with the attorney general's open records division. Okay, now moving on, I want to reply to the percent of capacity. The utility staff has tried to justify for the need for this new plant numerous times by stating that our two water treatment plants were built on or before 1969. This is misleading. These plants were built in numerous phases, and 58% of our capacity was completed on or after 1987. The older capacity should have been routinely maintained or refurbished. Another subject regarding the water treatment plant and information, most recently, as we all know, austin water utility hired a consultant to review the costs of mothballing the plant. Having read this report i can't tell if it is more boring than shameless. Why the utility would hire a consultant so tied to making a profit off city of austin construction projects and then expect it to be an objective is an ex-se 17 shall question that has haunted me several times late at night. The alleged study left out several considerations and it was so biased that it had no pretense of objectivity. Some of the things that were glaringly unaddressed, smls I missed something, it did not properly calculate the cost of non-variable operation and maintenance. Even if the plant never produces a gallon of water, three to four million dollars per year in staff and overhead will be necessary. I do not believe that anything in the documentation was there to outline the expected increase in water demand and consumption. In fact, a marked decrease in consumption has been called for in the water utility's most recent conversation plan. Because of stable or reduced consumption, there will be no need for new capacity for the interim. The report did a net present value calculation of postponing the plant five or 10 years. And it a calculates the cost that it did not calculate the savings. If a plant is built and not needed for 10 years, then for those 10 years it is a, quote, wasted asset, unquote. The way this report was configured, one could justify buying 10 times the capacity of the current plant because there is no calculation for wasted assets. Finally, I believe there's a problem with rate increase analysis. The water utility stated that the water treatment plant will only result in an 6% increase over the next five years. I do not believe they are factoring in times coverage on debtor non-variable operation and maintenance. When these are factored in, I believe the rate increase is something more like 13 percent over five years. Thank you all for your attention. Thank you again to the people that donated time to me.

Mayor Leffingwell: Next speaker is david foster. David foster. I know he's here. We'll go to the next person and come back to david. Mary arnold. Mary, you have three minutes.

City council, I have not had an opportunity -- I have not taken the time to review the documents with regard to mothballing --

Leffingwell: Did i announce that you have someone donating time to you? Cat broadncaa. You have six

minutes, mary.

Thank you. I would like to reiterate my concern about the sustainability fund, my support for mothballing water treatment plant four at this time and take a moment to look over the proposed austin water utility budget for this year. And to point out some of the figures. The utility is projecting an increase in revenue of about 86% over what they expect to collect this past -- this current year. And a lot of that is the proposed sustainability fund. On the spepped captured side they are planning to issue -- on the expenditure side they are planning to 98 million more in revenue bonds debt service, 16 million, almost 17 million more in debt service over what they spent this year. And I think that's a significant amount of money. For instance, in 2008-2009 4 million in 5 in 2009-'10. And now for 2011-2012 it jumps up to 182 million. So that's quite an increase in just a couple of years. So I really encourage you to take a strong look at the proposed sustainability fund and the proposed expenditures that cause the debt service to increase by that large amount. It seems to me that trying to reduce the costs for water treatment plant four would be a good place to start. Thank you very much.

Mayor Leffingwell: Thank you. David foster?

Thank you, mayor and councilmembers. I apologize for not being here a few minutes earlier. I was having a very interesting conversation with the director of your water utility. My name is david foster. I'm here to represent clean water action and I want to speak also to what until recently was called the sustainability fee and express my concerns. You're already aware that we have a concern with the progressive nature of this proposed fee, namely that there would be a six dollar increase on almost every household irrespective of how much water a household uses or doesn't use. So I won't belabor that point. I want to talk a bit more about the details of the fee and what it's supposed to cover. It's supposed to cover conservation operations, wildlife operations, debt service on wild lands, reclaimed water system as well as making up for lost revenues because of conservation. I want to focus on the third item there, which is debt service on child lands. Part of this money as i understand it is to pay for the debt service on the 1998, the may 1998 bonds that people of austin approved. I was the volunteer coordinate four that company and I remember it very well. Those were water revenue bonds around as a result of approving that, our water 20 a month as the campaign said, about the cost of a bottle of water a month. 20 every month on our water bill since those were passed in 1998, 13 years now. Insofar as this new proposed fee proposes to cover a part of that cost it seems like we're really asking the people of austin to pay for the same thing twice and i don't think that's keeping faith with the voters and i encourage you to look at that. And if I'm correct, then please take that out of your calculations. It's especially important as going forward we're looking at another possible bond election next year which might have more money for acquisition. And more generally it's been said that one of the reasons why these particular programs were called out and a special fee was created to cover the cost because the water utility's mission isn't really wild land operations or debt service on wild lands and so forth. I have to say I couldn't disagree with that more because a part of any water utilities core mission should be protecting the sources of our drinking water and the lands that are in our watersheds. The bcp lands, much are in the bull creek watershed which flows into lake austin upstream from our two existing water treatment plants. So protect those -- to protect that watershed is in fact to protect the source of our drinking water. That may no longer be the case for the 1998 lands that we bought with that lond land since green was decommissioned, but I know the city might choose to build another water treatment plant downstream from barton creek, which would make that creek once again contributed to our so i encourage you then to rethink the mission of the utility and make sure that this community value is anchored in policy. [Buzzer sounds] thank you very much.

Mayor Leffingwell: Thank you. Katy gordon. Donating time to katy gordon is anita moore. Anina? Indread (indiscernible). So you have up to nine minutes.

Hello and welcome, council and mayor. My name is katy gordon. I have had a jazzer size franchise at the austin recreation center for the past 30 years. I've also served as president of the advisory board of the austin recreation center for the last 15 years. And I am here to express my concerns of course in the

budget cuts of the austin recreation center. I would even consider myself a bit of an historian, having been there for 30 years. And day in, day out, everyday but sunday. And -- or you could consider me a bit after gladys kravitz since I've watched the entire facility go from the old building to the new building. But what I've observed is this particular situation on putting the austin recreation center on the budget cuts, one of the reasons I think of us of course closing it down is just a terrible idea. It's a terrible idea for a lot of reasons, but first let me start with saying that the recreation center back 20 years ago -- actually, 30 years ago was one of the best children's centers around. The children's program had a waiting list. 00 in the morning before registration. They waited like with almost visa bands. It was an amazing program. But that particular neighborhood changed and went commercial about 20 years ago and unfortunately the recreation center did not stay up with that concept of marketing to more of an adult population that would be in that neighborhood because it is no longer a neighborhood, it is business. We still tried to keep the children's program to help it stay alive. So I'm here to suggest that we look at possibly setting aside this option of shutting the building down october 1st and letting us reevaluate what our options are for at least the next fiscal year so we can come together and do some brainstorming on how we can bring way more money into that building. It is way underutilized. I personally feel it should be more of an adult facility. It's really not designed for children. If you will look at the building you will see where platescape area is, it's on a hill, on the side of a hill is where the playscape is and that's not too safe, but it's just not a good use of the space either. And the building itself has got probably one of the best gymnasiums in the city and it's in the downtown area. But one of the things I've noticed in marketing, in jazzersize we market monthly and have forever and several of the publications. And one of the things i always get is people say where exactly is that building? And they don't even know that we are downtown. They don't know that we're al 12th and lamar. So that right there tells you this building has not been marketed well. At least 20 years ago they took away our mass mailings that was offered to us in our contract agreement that they would do this mass mailing. And that got taken out in one of the budget cuts. And so the truth of the matter is the building has sat there in hopes that people will come to it and it just isn't working. It's poorly marketed and managed. I really believe if we came together and you guys gave us a little bit of time on this. I don't know how exactly that will work with the budgets, but I was sittings in meetings with kimberly and sarah and we were talking about possibly co-managing it and I was one of the people interested in doing that. And unfortunately the price they were coming at was unrealistic. So I think that needs to back to the drawing board and us to discuss it. But the area is no longer really designed for children. And I think that we really need to look at that. I hate to say that for the parents who are not happy about that, but you have waya down the street. They can take a lot of the kids' programming, just straight across mopac. But we don't have a neighborhood to pull from anymore, so we have to put our resources together and our minds together and make this more of an adult facility. It is the most underutilized building I've ever seen and one of the nicest gymnasium floors. You can bring in different types of educational programs in there and all types of things, nutrition programs and things of that sort. The other thing is austin community college used that facility for over 20 years and paid bare bones to the city. And that was an agreement that the advisory board even said was just -- it was ludicrous really if you saw how much they got away with, with a gentlemen's agreement. Finally in the last several years we have made an agreement with austin community college to pay at least between 70 and \$75,000, which was necessary. But it's still not enough to bring us to where we need to be. And I just believe that shutting the rec center down is just -- I can't even wrap my brain around that as an option. And I don't think y'all can either. And especially since you've heard from the citizens. But I do believe that if we really look at this from a managerial standpoint, we can make that building so useful. And there was another point I was going to make about making it an adult facility. You have to realize that most people don't even know that there's a football stadium over there. Most people don't even know house park stadium is there. So this little corner of town is pretty obscure. And once again, just some good signage to get people over there I think would be a plus. I've also looked into different types of volleyball programs, and volleyball brings in about 30% of the money, I believe, brings in about 40% of the money, and then the rest of the activities including jazzersize brings in the rest. But there is an awful lot of opportunity there at the rec center for growth. And I still have three more minutes. Let me sit here and think more. Can I ask y'all questions? No, I can't. Nod your head, wink. I was just curious to know if anyone had even been to the rec center. I know the mayor and I met at the skate park. We've added the skate park -

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Leffingwell: I went to the rec center when it was at the old building.

And the -- did you actually participate in activities there? I never saw you in my jazzercise class.

Mayor Leffingwell: Well, it wasn't jazzercise. It was basketball and the jimmies things, horse things.

And they had the ballet studio upstairs. The old building was fabulous. I wish we wouldn't have tore that down, but that's a whole other topic. So you've been to the -- you've been to the new building and you've seen -- it's just spectacular and we have spent a tremendous amount of money on a brand new air conditioning unit. We've spent a ton of money -- I came to the planning commission to get the roof on there in '06. We finally got the roof on there and then the next thing I know we're on the chopping block. And none of it made sense to me. I have talked with Sarah, and I have to say I am very loyal to the parks department. I am very, very loyal to them. They have been very good to jazzercise. I really want to work together in this deal. We are not looking at anybody as being the bad guy here, but I believe if we make these cuts it's unfortunate. And I just plead with you that we not do this. And I have sent you an email with my phone number if you would like to call me. Thank you.

Mayor Leffingwell: Thank you. Councilmember Morrison has a question for you.

Morrison: It's more of a comment. And that is I think you make a very important point about needing it market is properly to the right folks for the right program, whatever they may be, because there was a phase in my life where I was in your jazzercise class for several years. And you're great. But the point is that gymnasium is full several hours a day with jazzercise because it's the right program at the right place and have you market it had correctly. I think it proves the point that if we take this rec center and use it wisely, it will really be -- provide a service and be a great resource for this community.

Thank you very much. And -- my time is up. I wanted to say real quick that I would like to be involved in those meetings if that's possible to help you -- just since I've been there for 30 years and I can tell you the hours and time.

Morrison: I think that would be very important.

I would be more than willing to do that. Thank you.

Mayor Leffingwell: Gus Pena. Gus has three minutes. And after Gus is Johanne Parks.

Mayor and councilmembers. Good evening, Gus Pena, proud East Austin native, proud United States Marine Corps veteran, served in Vietnam. Please continue to fully fund or increase funding for summer job programs for the youth. Do not postpone the cadet A.P.D. class. We need more officers on the streets. You need to fund more money for social service agencies. The need is increasing. We have more families becoming homeless. Not acceptable. Please continue to collaborate with Austin Independent School District to help fund dropout prevention, truancy programs and educational measures. Please volunteer your time to help mentor a student who needs help for college excellence. I apologize to you and I call her the Queen of the Environment, is Mary Arnold. I love her and respect her Bill Bunch also for bringing WTP 4 issue to the fore. I apologize to them. Couldn't get involved as much as I wanted to because I have other issues in the community. I dropped 60 pounds. Social service agencies need our funding. We have a lot of people that are hurting. Rent. Utilities. You name it, they're hurting out there. Do not increase the property tax. You're killing our people. People can't help -- do not have the help and the money to feed their children, pay their rent. You want to raise property taxes. You're lowering property values, raising property taxes. I told the county this already. It's not acceptable. We're hurting right now. This is a recession. We have at least three more years of this stuff and it's

going to get worse. Economic development, economic development. Jobs, jobs Jobs, jobs Jobs will pay a higher -- you know, a good wage, liveable wage with benefits so that people can support their families and pay rent. Affordable housing. The last had three affordable units, rental units, apartment units on riverside drive, have been torn down, people displaced. More units for singles. No units for families. We need to do a better job of holding the developers accountable. The rec centers, the dottie jordan and the other one, i apologize. I don't have enough time. But anyway, keep 'em open. It's counterproductive to close rec centers that help the senior citizens and the children, the two most gifted segments of our population, that of the senior citizens and children and youth. How can you put this burden on them? We don't have homes for them. We can't educate them appropriately. (Indiscernible). We have four more years of algebra placed on the burden of our students in order to graduate. My son can't afford a house. Other kids will not be able to afford housing. We're killing 'em, we're hurting them. We need to do a better job of leadership, providing the programs for the kids to become self sufficient, self sufficient. I'm here to help y'all out, guys. If you want me to -- I don't think I'm intelligent, but i tell you what, if you listen to my background and what I've been through you will have a better idea of what's going on in the community. Do a better job. Thank you.

Mayor Leffingwell: Johanne barks. Donating time is vera givens. Eugene allen. barks, you have up to nine minutes.

Good afternoon. Thank you for allowing me to speak again. As I was saying the last time and so it goes. I just have a few -- a couple of clarifications. This is old business from the last time. However, you will probably be a little bit surprised. The last time I made a comment about -- I was given information to make comments about a 450-dollar fee that was going to be assessed to us at the dottie jordan rec center. The information given last time based on the fact that this was done by pardon through a loophole and not with the city council approval. I have since talked to the legal department and to the pard and this is the correct skinny on all of that. First of all, I would like to give credit to the attorney for -- from the city legal department who assisted me with this. Lela fireside. That's a beautiful name, by the way. Patience galore, very professional. She helped me get past this ordinance bit that was involved, although that's still a gray area. But then she got me the information on the budget. Every cotton picking bit of it for every department in the city. And then steered me towards parks. The parks department. And of course I talked to kimberly mcneily on that. Very professionally, very patient, lots of long emails. We went through every -- everything in the parks budget that applied to what we were concerned about. Finally got down to the crux of the matter. There's a couple of gray areas there, but we're going to take care of that later on. We finally got an answer, but the bottom line is what I'm saying here is -- and you need to appreciate this. Probably doesn't happen very often. You're right and we were wrong. So there. The legal department and for parks. I don't know if anybody is here from parks or not. Bless you. Thank you. Okay. So anyway, that was one old thing. The other old thing that was not exactly correct was on the fence that we had installed at the front of the park is a rail, wooden fence. And my report the last time was based on information that this was covered by our grant money that we have there at the park this time. Legally after that I was informed no, we do have grant money, but for some reason the city decided to build the fence and use their own money. This kind of blew my mind as money is tight in budget and I couldn't figure out why they would do that, but they did. So the credit there goes to the city itself building the fence. We still have some grant money, so we'll figure something else for that. But my momma taught me a long time ago that the first sign of being mature is being able to admit when you make a mistake and i consider myself a pretty mature person and I can still hear her voice. So there you go. That's old business. New business -- some thanks to y'all. We had run into a little bit of a controversy this past week -- not controversy, concern. That's a better word, this past week about we wanted to advertise our high school program. With everything in a state of flux and no real words being said about yes, we're going to keep it open, parks said no, you can't do that. But councilmember morrison helped us with that and the city manager. I want to give credit to city manager ott who helped stepped in and told pard, leave it alone for now. Let them get this out there because we really don't know what's going to happen after y'all do your next voting in the next couple of weeks. So anyway we were able to go ahead and advertise for that as well as for our flag football program, the registration was coming up there again and the kids are ready to register. They're ready to take part. And -- but we didn't know what to tell them. Again, we're in this never, never land right now. It is very difficult. As a matter of

fact, councilmember cole, one of your favorite things down there, the groovers, we just found out from them that they're so unsure about what's going to happen that they're going -- they've decided they'll have to find someplace else. And we don't want that to happen. But it's all because right now we don't know what your vote is going to be. We know what we hope your vote is going to be, and anyway, we're going to work from there. The last thing I want to mention very quickly -- i don't need my nine minutes, I don't believe. Do I hear a silent yay? The petition will go up until the time we know what will happen with the work number. The new number is 7041 signatures. New ones are coming in daily, constantly. I do want to reiterate what the lady said about arc a minute ago. It's a matter of marketing. We're not only concerned about is it going to at a open. The other concern is -- I'm not going to say if. When it stays open, it needs to be marketed better. We need to get more programs out there. We have the people who want the programs, but we just need to have the support of you all and pard in that regard to get the best use of the building and as a park and recreational facility as we discussed the last time. And the best way to serve our young people. The flag football program and our after school program are perfect examples of this is geared mainly to the children. Of course we have the adults with the groovers and all those other programs, but the thought keeps crossing my mind that the children we're serving there, some of those children somebody may be sitting right up there. This is where the future leaders of the city come from. But they're not going to be there if they're out on the street because the center is closed. So ear just asking your assistance getting in center to remain open and then helping us after that to get it marketed to the right degree to serve the citizens of the university hills community and surrounding communities also. Other than that, y'all have a really great afternoon.

Mayor Leffingwell: Thank you. Dan con will you.

It's my luck that I would have to follow such an endearing speaker. I am the volunteer person for volunteer needs situation and would be willing to lend our support to do what we can to help house park as well. We do view ourselves as a partner with the city, and by no means competitive to the programs that are being offered there. But in november 2010 the council unanimously approved a resolution to provide waya with a one-year co-sponsorship agreement including optional renewals for up to 10 years. And dairy say I think you got it right. It has come to our attention that the current draft of the budget excludes fund-raising, however, for the next year and after only one year of funding, the resolution, we are here to request that you consider to continue. In the resolution the council noted that availability of a wide range of recreational activities is important to the quality of life of austin residents and that there are areas of the city such as ours that are currently without city owned recreational centers for austin's youth. Public and private partnerships with the city benefit the public by providing extracurricular opportunities to the youth of austin in a safe environment, teach youth life lessons through sports and activities, promote the wellness and help lower the rate of childhood obesity. We want to thank you for over 30 years of collaboration with waya and request your consideration to continue the funding under the resolution of the co-sponsorship. Thank you very much.

Mayor Leffingwell: Thank you. Do we have someone here from parks? Sarah? So what is the (indiscernible) of exercising this option for the second year?

\$82,000.

Mayor Leffingwell: Is there some specific rainy other than posterity?

The reason is it was a one-year. We requested that amount because it wasn't in there last year. We worked out something last year to finish out the year to pay for it and we just sort of had to absorb the cost. And so we requested it this year, but it was listed as an unmet or unfunded item. So then it just did not get funded or recommended for funding. So that's where it stands.

Mayor Leffingwell: Okay. Thank you. City manager, I very likely will be offering an amendment to include the second year waya funding. Councilmember tovo.

Tovo: I wonder if you could give a couple of line summary of what kind of activities were funded under that \$82,000?

This is actually just a funding for their programs and activities for everything from cheerleading to youth volleyball, basketball, all sorts of recreational activities that they offer. This was the amount of money that was agreed upon to help them in assisting with their programs. The biggest part of it obviously was that there is no recreation center on that far west side of town. In an effort for the city department not to is to look at building or constructing or anything, this was an agreed upon partnership so that our community members in the west part of the community would have a recreation facility. And this really does go to support that facility and programs. So you have the gymnastics, cheer leadings, all those programs.

Tovo: Thank you for that explanation.

Mayor Leffingwell: Sarah.

I would say this goes exactly to what we're trying to do with a lot of rec center facilities in the parks department, public-private partnerships. For that reason I'm going to be looking to try to continue this.

Thank you.

Mayor Leffingwell: Dick callerman. Dick has three minutes.

Thank you, mayor and councilmembers. I think the austin finances are seriously inequitable and unfair. I'll mention some major problems I think that go along and also make a suggestion of one way i think we might correct it. We give generous tax breaks to high income individuals for historic designations. We subsidize urban development with free roads and very, very cheap water/wastewater hookups. We low ball valuations on commercial properties compared to valuations of residential properties. 70% Of the travis county budget comes from the city of austin. And we maybe get about 10% of that back. We have a regressive water rates, low users pay more per gallon than high users. Where the budget money comes from is also unfair. We have a regressive sales tax. The highest pro -- a higher proportion of low income people pay their disposable income and sales tax. We have a residential property tax. Every year the tax rate goes up and it seems to me the tax rate goes up more than the rate of inflation. But even worse than that, the property valuations go up every year. It appears to me to just be out of control. Mine is anyway. Over the last four years it's gone up seven% every year and I'm sure I'm typical in the city. So between the tax rate and the seven percent increase, it's a 10% property tax every year. And that's on residential properties. Obviously with the low ball valuations, commercial properties don't have that much of a problem. So we have a 690-million-dollar budget. I think there's a simple test for inequity or equity if you have it. I would ask the city budget office to lay out sources of that \$690 million that are most equitably distributed. In other words, we get the \$690 million and the most fairways possible. Once we have that combined we can compare line by line incomes and a fair way against the current level of income. And I think we'll be very clear where our areas of unfair -- [buzzer sounds]

Mayor Leffingwell: Thank you, dick. To summarize --

Mayor Leffingwell: Your time has expired.

I'll say that the powerful get more than their fair share while the least among us pay the bills.

Mayor Leffingwell: Jennifer mcphail. [Applause] welcome. You have three minutes.

I'm jennifer mcphail with adapt of texas. We support the budget for sidewalk construction. We are concerned, though, about a new design that we're seeing go up all throughout the city of austin. If you

look in the packet of information you will see a couple of pages back there are some pictures. And predominantly those designs of curb ramps are seen in the downtown area. And you will see that there's a physical barrier that's erected. And it was smaller when they first constructed it. And we complained to public works in our various meetings and said look, it's a trip hazard. Somebody is going to fall and break their face. And what they've decided to do is make the barrier bigger and put trash cans in the way. Now, to me this seems like something out of a three stooges short. They're funny, but they don't need to be designing our sidewalks. So I don't know if there's some sort of internal problem between the departments with watershed protection and development review and public works or something, but something is wrong. And there needs to be a policy that that stops. If the problem is with tdlr's review, if somebody from the state told them they had to do it this way, there are multiple ways to design sidewalks. You don't have to choose the worst design. So to move on, we also support affordability for very low income people in affordable housing. We want affordable housing units that are integrated in the community that are accessible for everyone and actually comply with federal law. One of the concerns that we have about the budget is it's our understanding that you've cut fund to go the austin tenants' council. And they're a very valuable resource for enforcement of federal law. There's not enough enforcement, but they do a great job. They have a volunteer program where they train people to go out and be testers for discrimination, and they found that the most common form of discrimination is disability related. So if they have been slated to be cut, please restore that funding to at least the same level as last year because it's extremely important. Over and over you see articles and reports from hud that disability-related discrimination is going up, not down. So we have a responsibility in our community to make sure that we enforce those laws. And affordability, we understand that these are tough times, but it's tough for the lowest income as well. And if in the future you can find ways to supplement the loss of federal funds, then please concentrate those funds to the very lowest income in the community because that's where the greatest need is. The other thing is to fund the abr program. The abr program is the architectural barrier removal program. It's a very valuable service to people who need renovations done in their homes.

Mayor Leffingwell: Thank you, jennifer. Your time has expired.

Thank you.

Mayor Leffingwell: Thank you. Councilmember tovo.

Tovo: mcphail, would you mind reminding us where this photograph was taken?

I believe it's on congress, just outside here.

Tovo: Okay. Thanks.

Mayor Leffingwell: Dot henson? You have three minutes.

I'm here today to talk about water rates and their relationship to water treatment plant four and the long-term financial health of the water utility. When we were debating water treatment plant four a year ago, I -- some of you may recall, the six of you who were on the council, I came up and I authored a report on behalf of the save our springs called a perfect storm estimating very high residential rate increases as a result of the new debt load that the city was taking on and the water sales estimates that they were telling bondholders they needed to sell in order to pay off all that debt. The city said that rates would increase about half that. Well, here we are a year later and they've proposed essentially residential rate hikes at the levels that I had suggested a year ago. And it's not rocket science why. They had told their bondholders we have to sell this much water in order to do this and we're not selling that much water, so now we have to raise rates more. Even -- so I'm not surprised, frankly, at the level of water rate hikes we're seeing. What I'm shocked at and what seems even more like a bait and switch than doubling the residential rate increases is the unbelievably regressive nature of this so-called orwellian named stability fee that is being suggested. I say it's orwellian because it actually is a fee designed to cover for an

unsustainable business model where the city suggests that they can just sell more and more water add infinitum. It doesn't matter if there's no water in the lake. Doesn't matter if conservation is keeping you from selling those high numbers. The city has estimated to its bondholders we're going to sell this much water. When they don't, the only thing that can happen is for rates to increase. And to put it all on low income folks, on the folks who are either conserving the most, using the least water or the least able to afford it is just unconscionable. And it's exactly the opposite of all of the conversation pricing that we've been told for years is how we ought to be pricing our water so that the people who were using the most, the michael mccauleys and lance armstrongs of the world are paying more for their water. That's nuts. That's absolutely nuts. You're doing this on the backs of the poor and it's unconscionable. Rethink it. Then rethink water treatment plant four. [Buzzer sounds] anyway, I won't repeat what else has been said elsewhere, but thanks a lot for your time.

Mayor Leffingwell: Jean hughes. Thank you. Brandon mathis. Mathis has three minutes.

I'm here to talk about the austin energy solar program. I think I just found out today, via email, austin energy has proposed, I think the way they do it, to drop it by about a million dollars. And so I guess for me it's tough because I'm one of those contractors and I'm not up here asking for money, but I think the way it's been done and the timing of it is sort of indicative of an issue that some people have with the way the solar program has been run. So here's the public hearing. Y'all be voting soon. First I've heard of it and I've been doing solar in austin for 10 years. You know, that goes back to stuff that I've discussed before up here and other people have that it's really -- we have this subsidy, but at the same time I'm trying to plan to run a business. And so are other people. So it's understandable because you guys are looking for budget cuts I think is the way that austin energy put in their slide deck. So it looks like the city has to do it, so it's a subsidy and I understand. At the same time I totally disagree with it. I don't think it matches at all with the city's goals towards solar. And specifically towards distributed generation. Not webberville. That's a whole other issue. So the no warning thing, we had these monthly meetings. I've been here before about monthly meeting. We talk to austin energy every month. How can I plan for next year? Which starts in october, right? So interpret si soon. For me it's a question of -- y'all's commitment to the dg program. The solar in general, your goal. But I'd like to give a quick example of some of the thinking that may or may not be going on at austin energy. I hope I don't run out of time. Recently y'all, the city, signed up for like a two megawatt purchase of solar panels, right. So you locked in this price. We sell that price per watt. \$1.80 A watt, give or take. Two megawatts, I think that's \$3.6 million. If anybody has a calculator, help me out here. So right now y'all are -- y'all are committed to this. Right now I can get one solar panel equivalent for \$1.40 a watt, right now. It's going down everyday. This is just like webberville, right? Sign it in 2008 right before an historically predicted drop in price of solar panels, a precipitous drop, and y'all know about that if you're on the council before and what happened. So it goes back to this of what's going on with this program? I think you have a resolution or something that talks a little bit to this. 40 a watt is \$800,000 that you could put back into the rebate program there. I think with the way the city budgets this stuff you don't actually have to spend the money on a year over year basis.

Mayor Leffingwell: Your time has expired.

In some cases you continue to like webberville and potentially cases like this.

Mayor Leffingwell: Thank you.

I gave you guys my card in case you want to talk about solar.

Mayor Leffingwell: Albert metz.

Albert metz is not here. Okay, I'm sorry. Didn't see you. Go ahead. You have three minutes.

I'm albert --

I'm going to pick up where jennifer left off. The abrp -- the abrp is a very important program. I've used two times so far. For those of you who don't know what the program is about, I had an apartment that wasn't really accessible. That program came in and made that apartment accessible. At no cost to me. It was a ramp to the front door and the bathroom and the back door so that i could go out in the backyard. Thank you.

Mayor Leffingwell: Jeff (indiscernible). Correct me if I'm wrong. You have three minutes.

Good afternoon, members of the council and all of you here today. My name is jeff (indiscernible) and I'm the director of the austin scrabble club. It was founded in 1984 and we were one of the oldest officially sanctioned scrabble clubs in south america. For nearly all of that time we've been matching wits with each other on monday nights on the recreation center. The budget proposal before the council calls for the arc will be closed, its programs terminated and staff reassigned before september first. We believe that is miss died and would take away many valued programs and services. It is the contention of the council that the facility is being underused, it sure doesn't look that way to me when I arrive there each the after school program meets in the room i use and I know they're busy because I have to move the kids' art projects. The adults are plenty busy too. There's many activities, a buzzing hive of activity and that's just on mondays. The arc is located near the heart of austin. When they heard that the city was planning to close the arc I wasn't so much ceshed for our group. We will 65 in any case. But I certainly wouldn't say that for all the activities the arc houses and I'm particularly concerned about the youth programs. These programs provide a safe, nurturing, positive environment for a lot of kids often while their parents work downtown. What will happen when that environment is taken away. I understand the times are tight. The efficiencies must be found within arc itself and within the broader parks and recreation system. If fee increases are necessary I suspect that most of us would benefit of what it has long provided, we'll work with you. It stuns me to think that the city would close the facility out right. The location is not a ghost town. A few months ago a skate park opened. The arc has been renovated in the past year with a new roof and air conditioning system. We should be looking to move community programs into the arc and making better use of its central location and capacities. This isn't a problem, but an opportunity and I'm at a loss to explain why the city would want to forego that opportunity to save some money in the short run that is minor in a city of surely anything would be better than the prospect of a facility sitting unused. When I talk to other people from other cities about our scrabble club, the reaction often is t makes sense that something like a scrabble club would thrive in a city like austin. We have an active, creative, unique culture which we're rightfully proud. I submit to you the community resources like the dac do much for the liveability of the city and every time we do away with one we lose a small part of what has given our city the esteemed cultural reputations that earned. I thank the council and all of you for your time.

Mayor Leffingwell: Thank you. Is nelson here, jennifer?

Mayor Leffingwell: All right. Come on down, nelson.

I'm nelson (indiscernible) with adapt and I do want to thank y'all for supporting the sidewalk budget. It's looking good. And also we need more affordable, accessible housing, integrated housing. And the arb is a great program. We need to keep it. And thank you for making austin one of the safest, most accessible cities in the world. I appreciate y'all.

Mayor Leffingwell: Thank you, nelson. Richard hallfin.

He has three minutes. Welcome.

Thank you, mayor, city councilmembers. I have been thinking about what to say to you today and do you know what? I know just about everybody up here on debit as. I know every one of you

councilmembers and I've worked with many of you, not the new byes, but the older people for over 30 years. I want to tell you today I've listened to these good folks and I'm hearing -- I'm really surprised because you guys are opportunity people. You're not problem people. And yet the budget is a smorgasbord of all these cuts, terrible cut, painful cuts. Cuts that will hurt a lot of people. You know that miss cole, you know the people that will be hurt by this and so do the rest of you. I wanted to talk to you today about our vulnerable populations and spark a dialogue that will come up with solutions. I think you're a solution oriented council, not a problem one. I think you're an opportunity oriented council versus a cutting council. Solutions I mean investing in vulnerable populations so they can become part of the solution, councilmember martinez, instead of part of the problem. You have seen whole neighborhoods transformed by putting at risk young people to work building affordable five star homes. We should do more than that. It saves money and lives. We ought to do this as a philosophy that turns into action. Councilmember riley and i were on the downtown commission together. That whole commission came up with a recommendation for you which I don't think any of you have ever seen, which says provide a percentage of all capital improvement projects that will go into investing at risk and vel nar rabble citizens to teach them job skills and put them on the path to becoming participating citizens who have a real living wage salary. I don't have time to get into all of the projects that I want to talk to you in three minutes, but I urge you to create a panel. Austin smart city investment panel. In between now and the next six months I urge this panel under your direction to come up with brilliant ideas that turn the city of austin into more of the potential that it has. This can be the smartest, greenest city on the planet. We can be building four and five star buildings alone. When chris and I were on downtown commission, many developers came with gold and platinum marked plans. Remember that? A lot of folks came with plans with a one star. We should have been able to say to them, no one stars. Two stars or three stars. Four or five star developments only. You can do that. You have the power to direct policy so that high quality projects and construction projects like that are being built here. You can make this city with your policies a city that invests in its -- and invest in what is true. You can be the leaders in the green revolution. I know that buzzer is going to go off any minute. [Buzzer sounds]

Mayor Leffingwell: You're right.

And I know the mayor will say richard, your time is up. But don't give away and don't give up on these ideas.

Mayor Leffingwell: Thank you, richard. Craig nazzar. He has three minutes.

I believe the proposed water utility rate structure is a bad idea for austin. First it raises rates on the lower end of single residential customers. This contributes towards making austin a less affordable city in which to live, particularly for those of us who are sacrificing a high salary to live here and pursue our passions, such as careers in music or dance or other areas of the arts. The sustainability fee is also unfair as it is very aggressive. But another reason that i object to these proposed water rates is that they give little incentive to the largest water users to conserve water. This is a particularly bad idea because I do not believe that there will be enough water for austin with our current per capita water consumption rates in a future that includes the global warming that is overtaking our present gridlocked corporate culture of scientific denial. Here are a few quotes from the (indiscernible) published in 2007, which is a scientific document concerning what we can expect from global warming. Quote, recent climate models simulations indicate that by 2010 to 2013, year-round temperatures across neark will be outside the range of present day natural variability, warming will be 7 to 5 degrees fahrenheit. This is average. Late in the century, projected annual warming is 3 to five degrees fahrenheit. The projected warming is greatest in the summer in the southwestern u.s. Warm extremes across north america projected to become more frequent and longer. Annual mean precipitation is projected to decrease in the southwestern u.s. Simulations of the edward's aquifer in texas under average recharge project lower or ceased flows from springs, water shortages and significant spriermt al impacts. The behavior of people and systems in north america largely reflects historic climate experience which has been institutionallized from building codes, flood management infrastructure, water systems and a variety of other programs. citizens have invested in systems designed for acceptable performance under historical conditions. Decisions by community water managers account for historical experience, but rarely

incorporate information about climate change. In general decision makers lack the tools and prospectives to integrate future climate, particularly in events that exceed historic norms. In north america, information about climate change is usually not mainstreamed or explicitly considered in the overall decision-making process. This can lead to actions that are maladaptive. Water managers are likely to use climate forecasts even when they recognize the vulnerability unless the forecast information can fit directly into their everyday management decisions. This is all a quote from a scientific document. [Buzzer sounds] after a summer like this one it is time for austin to wake up to the new reality if we hope to keep a austin as the city that I love.

Mayor Leffingwell: Thank you. Councilmember Spelman.

Spelman: nasser, did your climate to logical projections have anything to say about inflows of the colorado river and flows to the colorado river?

These are not my projections. This is the ipc --

Spelman: You're just quoting it?

The ipcc doesn't specifically address the colorado river, but it does the edward's aquifer, and that's a study. This is -- this document is online and that study is documented. So if you're interested i could get that. All of the general projections right now, and they can't get any more than general, is that the flows - the rainfall is going to decrease in the southwest and temperatures are going to rise, which means that evaporation lakes is going to increase. Well, be less inflow and hotter temperatures. I wonder if anyone had an estimate for how much and how soon?

No. But in 2012 or 13, the next -- the ar 5 will come out and there will be much more advanced probes in there. That's all really closed at the moment until they vet that.

Spelman: Okay. Thank you. I look forward to seeing that.

Mayor Leffingwell: Becky hallpin. Welcome. You have three minutes.

Thank you very much. I'd like to sort of talk about the same thing and i think the summer has given us kind of a black swan event, that is a precursor to what we'll be seeing more and more of in terms of great heat and less water. And if the water utility may not be projecting that, my neighbors are. I mean, people's lawns are dead. And a lot of people are not going to plant turf grass again. People are going to go to and are going to very low water tolerant plants. They're not going to put their lawns back. And I think people that have rental property, rental -- residential rental properties, are doing the same thing. They're fighting a losing battle. People are not going to be buying as much water for their lawns, but you will be wanting to sell more water to pay off your investments in these big water treatment facilities. [One moment, please, for change in captioners]

my name is roy whaley. I'm the chair of the austin sierra club conservation committee. nasser for his comments, specifically since he is also on the conservation committee here for the sierra club in austin, and for the other speakers that have spoken so well. And of course we're concerned about the effect that this budget will have on the environment and the citizens of austin. Low through the water and wastewater commission budget, a committee proposed budget. I'm not a math magician, but I've talked to points that said compared to austin energy's, this was a project that was put together sunday evening when it was due on monday morning. So what I would like to talk about is the uncertainty that we have, and the concern that we have moving forward with this budget when we have so many unanswered questions, and that would be specifically to water treatment plant no. 4. And what we get into as we move forward with the uncertainty or the endanger species that's projected out there. And then the audit process. Cape coral in florida had an mwh also as their contractor at risk, and there were a lot of

questions out there. Kessler did an audit. In conducting this acquirey kessler encountered issues that it believes requires systemic reform within the city. Some of the issues have already been addressed implicitly. These include taking steps to guard against future deception of the taxpayers. It further says, from questionable bidding practices to obstructing authorized fact-finding efforts pervaded this engagement, suggests serious and systemic management failure. It does move on to say that kessler acquire discovered grave discrepancies in the record-keeping systems, particularly to procurements involving hundreds of millions of taxpayer dollars, these discrepancies pose serious concern. And I hope you-all are concerned about it. The city should also reexamine its policy relating to allowing vendors complete control of projects without adequate city oversight and determine whether changes need to be made in these policies to ensure that future multi-million-dollar contracts were properly supervised and taxpayer funds are properly spent. The conduct of certain employees in the context of this engagement is also very disturbing, all the more so since the most egregious conduct was committed by persons in positions -- your time has expired, roy.

Of substantial reliability and leadership. Thank you for your time. [Applause] tom smith. Following tom will be karen has hadden.

Mayor, members of council, my name is tom smith, better known as submity, I run texas office the environmental consumer group here. I want to raise problems we see with the budget on the electric utility side and also answer councilman spelman's questions about water in the colorado river, both which go to the fundamental question. One of the issues in this budget for the lek utility is we're rudding the amount gone to energy and solar, 2 million on energy, and we request the urgency of that and would suggest you check the economic development fund austin energy has at its disposal, which has been used often to recruit large employers or new commercial development. We as a city have made a real commitment to becoming the most sustainable city in the nation and in doing so said we really want to companies and we've done so. We have 34 now. When we started this we had three that employed four and a half people. Our economic development plan was to recruit people in the clean tech industries and we have done so. And this gives the wrong message. Now, to go to -- to cut this back, at a time when we're still putting economic development money out to do these kinds of projects, and so we'd like to ask you to reverse that decision and pull the money out of the egso program and perhaps consider expanding those solar programs. I'll remind you that san antonio has now gone out for a 400 megawatt solar bed which they're planning on announcing shortly, and just before I came over here i got a message on my email offering solar cells at \$1.14 a watt. The cheapest I've ever seen t this is a time to be expanding, not contracting our solar programs. And councilman spelman asked the question about, well, what's going to happen to the colorado? Lcra did the study about two years ago that projected that there would be somewhere between a 13 and 34% reduction in water available in the colorado river due to global warming by 2030 and perhaps up to 48% reduction in water availability by 2050 if current projections were at hand. Just last week they said we're going to pass on a 20% reduction in water availability to all firm users next year unless it rains and rains a lot and fills the reservoirs back. The projections we have seen for 2050 in terms of the number of 100-degree days we've had this year. The problem we're having is we may not have enough water to run our existing generator facilities on the colorado river, and so wrapping back to the solar and energy efficiency pitches, this is the wrong time to be able to cutting back those programs that can help us save our way out of a generation crisis that we may have because we don't have enough water. Thank you all for your time. [Applause] karen has hadden. Hadden. Then theodore wicker stam.

I'm karen hadden here on behalf of sustainable energy and economic development coalition, and I'd like to echo a lot of the statements and comments made by tom smitty smith. We share concerns about the cuts in budget for the solar rebates and for energy efficiency and hope that you will not only restore that but increase the funding for those programs. 6 million was not transferred to egso, the economic growth and redevelopment services, there would be plenty of money for energy efficiency, solar rebates and expanded low-income programs. You heard from brandon mathis with the solar community organization, and I believe other solar companies share his concerns, from my brief contacts recently, it appears that all of the solar companies in austin are incredibly busy right now. They've got a september 30 deadline where there's an especially good rebate program and people are calling on them and they

are booked solid. Austin energy has been very successful with these programs. We have now support 1200 customer owned solar energy systems, 100 commercial systems, 37 municipal projects, 32 school installations and six libraries. These programs have been fully subscribed. They're incredibly successful -- subscribed, they're popular and we've produced 4 -- we have lots of rooftops, lots of covered parking areas that could have solar on the roof. We can diversify our energy generation and have a cleaner city through these programs, and I hope that you'll restore and enhance the funding. Thank you. [Applause] thank you.

My name is Todd Wickersham, Theodore Spleg and I'm here speaking on the cuts in the solar program as well as cuts in the energy efficiency program. I work for an organization called Businesses for an Energy Efficient Texas, and we've seen -- we'd like to reiterate some of the many benefits of energy efficiency for the city. The programs have small investments up front where you pay year after year, particularly in low-income communities, they actually generate -- they actually generate money in savings that goes right back into those communities, into those local stores and helping that local community. For businesses they cut costs which make those businesses more competitive and encourage them to stay in Austin and invest in more jobs here in the community. The solar also has the air quality benefits as well as job creation, which we've already heard about. There's also water savings associated with these energy savings, and the reduction of energy from the solar cells. So I'd just like to add my support for these two programs and ask that the funding be continued in it. Thank you very much. Thank you. Karen Cress? Karen, you have three minutes. Follow-up Karen will be Arog Baker.

Mayor, city council, thank you very much. My name is Karen Cress. I swim every day at Barton Springs. I have a vested interest in seeing it's maintained properly and I'd like to point out a couple of things about the great crowds that have been showing up this year because of the heat. There have been unusual revenues and I would like to see all of those funds going directly back into the pool as opposed to going into the general fund. I also would like to add my support to the people who have spoken previously about directing more funds, not less, to solar energy and energy efficiency, and I'd also like to speak out against the water treatment plant and all of the way the cost of water is going to be thrust on the people who can least afford it. With what time I have left I'd like to mention that I'm about to leave this meeting to go to a meeting I wish I didn't have to go to of the joint committee overseeing the renovations of the Barton Springs pool grounds. This meeting is a repeat of one that occurred last week, to which the public was not clearly invited, so they're having a repeat tonight and I'm going to go to it. I'm just looking over the plans for the pool. They are massive renovations that involve changing the location of the south gate, and I see no need for that. I believe that it's all part of a plan to build a bathhouse on the south side and a bunch of other construction plans which were all part of the master plan for Barton Springs, which was never fully approved, only short-term projects were. And last week the city council, I understand, approved a resolution, or there was a resolution put forth by the friends of Barton Springs pool to push the long-term plans through and get money for them to set up a -- what do you call it, a bond at the next election. And this whole master plan thing is just crazy. There's so much money being poured into unnecessary development at Barton Springs pool, I would just like you to pay more attention to what's going on there. It's the crown jewel of the city. Everybody loves it. Please visit the web site that I personally built at Barton Springs publicprocess.com. I try to keep the public informed about the pool conditions there because the city's web does a really poor job of it. I was just looking at the pdf about the plans that are going to be reviewed tonight, and they are really illegible. You cannot zoom them so you can read the fine details. I can't find any bike racks on the north side. So those are my interests. Thank you for your time. Thank you. [Applause] Council member Morrison. Karen, I just wanted to mention that we did approve a resolution about the Barton Springs master plan, but it fully recognized our previous resolution where you correctly noted that we were not adopting, you know, the long-term projects, it was acknowledged that there's a lot of work to do to find out what we really needed to.

I would hope that the council would do a real look at how much money has been spent so far on the master plan, whether it's been well-spent and how the public has been invited to participate in the conversation.

Morrison: thank you.

Thank you. airog baker. Airog baker. Not in the chamber? Is this meant to be roger baker? Okay. It's spelled airog, e-r-r-o-g. E-r-r-o-g.

Go ahead.

I'm glad to be here to talk about policies that homeowners are struggling to pay city taxes and fees. Everyone who hasn't seen it yet should look at the austin chronicle to a full page ad by a coalition of environmental groups like sos, sierra club and clean water action, urging us to shift to a budget focused on conservation and a water fee structure that helps the small homeowners instead of the big corporations and the suburb sprawl land developers. They're proposing to jack up the water rates for the smallest users by 66%, even though it was previously said to be much less. Our lawns are dying for lack of water now because you won't let us water while you're trying to build a giant billion dollar water treatment plant to serve suburb sprawl growth in the future. I oppose a budget planned as if there were no need to focus on water conservation for the big water users, whose rates would go up only by 7%. You gave away water breaks to giant corporations like samsung without putting the emphasis on conservation. True conservation means putting a high priority on fixing our leaky water pipes rather than the water treatment plant for future development. Global warming is real, despite what rick perry says. The climate scientists say that the colorado river is going to be increasingly affected by drought and the city needs to conserve water like san antonio, which is working much harder to do th witut imposing an unfair water rate structure. Another group standing up for city homeowners and against the special interests is change austin. Change austin is run full-page ad in the austin chronicle this week with an open letter I urge everyone to sign. As brian rogers pointed out a week ago, you're practically giving away our city water tabs without charging the fees that other texas cities charge. This amounts to welfare for developers. The city council needs to start listening to the side of the average working folks on your budget policies, folks like bill bunch, bill eeocy, roy whaley, brian rogers and pat young among others. Instead your city budget looks like it's written to favor the interests of the bankers, developers and land speculators, and they constitute sort of a shadow government, a developer bureaucracy run by the special interests that can afford to hire city lobbyists. Even worse you're planning to raise both electric rates and property taxes. Travis county is fixing to raise its taxes too, as is aisd. Everywhere you look costs are going up but city taxpayers are getting hit the hardest from all sides. thank you. Time expired.

Thank you. [Cheers and applause] next speaker is signed up as bill, bill, bill. Is bill bill in the chamber? We'll go to debbie russell. Debbie russell. Donating time is stephanie collins. Is stephanie here? Okay. You have up to six minutes.

I'm going to do the projector action here with de russell. I am concerned many things and as an example of something I want to bring to your attention that came up just this week, again, every year at budget time I talk about budget priorities and I don't see that we have developed as a community what our budget priorities should be, and as a sample of that, one thing not in the budget is something that dillon gosp brought to the attention of the anc list. Cooling centers. Many other cities have this, places where the homeless can go to get air-conditioning. We have the arch, it's available most of the time, not all of the time, but there needs to be more effort put into that. Again, it's about priority. We need to take care of the basics, keeping people alive I think qualifies as the basics. Budget priorities, we need to focus on an overall -- overarching theme of conservation, sustainability and progressive -- progressive stance when we talk about raising rates, taxes, fees, and we are not -- we are a terribly, terribly regressive city by all accounts. A couple of things I wanted to put up on the overhead right now is -- thank you very much -- council member tovo who -- I mean, sorry, shade, who asked this question. This was actually -- let's just look real quick at the unemployment rising in the city. We have unemployment rising, the people that are still in jobs are not getting their salaries increased. They're not making more money. Okay. Let's look at a couple other numbers. And thank you, council member cole. This is a great question. This is a forecast showing projected property tax and utility rate and fee increases for the

average residential customer through 2012 through 2016. As you can see we have some big numbers on this chart. Things are going up. We're not making more money. More people are getting laid off, more people are becoming homeless. Priorities. And we also -- just to jump over to police, don't get a lot of input on that, but as you know that's one of my fortes. I want to point out this chart, thank you, council member riley, for this question, which is not very much in focus. As you know, I've long been following this, that our violent crime clearance rates have been far under average, and they've gone down over the past three years, as you can see, and we're still under national average by about 6 to 8%. It wafers, the national average. We're getting more sworn police officers, that's great. What people want in the community, they want patrol officers. They're not patrolling. What people -- what officers are doing out there is making arrests on these lower level things, on nonviolent crimes, on things that are not actually affecting the public safety. We still have thousands of people going down for joints and small pot possession. This needs to change. Progressive, not regressive. Thank you very much, council member tovo, for asking for this breakdown. This is great. I just wanted to point out, of these new positions, we have one sergeant dedicated to burglary, and we'll have three detectives dedicated to violent crime, out of a force of nearly 1700 sworn officers, three seems like a really dismal number when we are so far under national average. And remember those numbers i showed you, that's arrests. That's not actually that they got the right guy or they got the right person in jail, but they can arrest anybody and call that a clearance, call that a cleared case. So we really need to progress apd and reup what they've been doing, focusing on violent -- more focus on violent, less focus on nonviolent things that do not impact the public safety. There's the highest per capita paid officers in our nation, and they need to be working for that extra money that they're making, that their colleagues across central texas are envious of. They need to be working hard, and they do work hard, and I recognize a lot of them do, but we need the chief to train more of them to be working on the things that will improve the public safety. 0 officers, thank you very much, council member spelman for this number. This number has no -- availability. We have a public safety that proves that and, in fact, apd themselves say many variable play a role in the workload and in general the changes are incremental over time. No one variable is expected to influence workloads so immediately. So even they recognize that 0 number comes from nowhere. I can't find it in policy anywhere, yet we cling to it like it is a priority, and it is not a priority that we have officially adopted. So -- and lastly as far as us being this liberal bastion in texas, if we're going to be raising these rates, we're going to be raising these fees and we're going to be paying the highest wages for officers who are going to be putting people in jail for pot, we are not a progressive city. We are not the progressive city we claim to be. We need to really rehash this, really work this out. Each time at budget we keep giving more money to the same things that are not making any changes. Thank you very much for your time. thank you. [Applause] studabaker. You have three minutes.

Hello. Good to be here today. I just basically wanted to overtouch just on what the council has been doing lately, and basically all of you up there I believe are democrats. I don't think we have any libertarians or anything up there. I'm a democrat and I think we're forgot fogging that. They stand for the fighting face and a commitment to helping the excluded, the disenfranchised, the poor by earning themselves a piece of the american dream. And right now raising bus rates, raising property taxes to try to make it fair for businesses by raising residential rates. I don't remember being fair for low-income families. I thought the point of being democrat was to make the playing field even, not unfair. We're gentrifying downtown by extending growth. We're extending parking meters, eliminating plastic bags, causing groceries to go higher. All this while we're not having any accountability in our current programs. All of this seemed like we're not supporting green business, we're -- or the environment like we could. We're having -- we have the highest salaries of the -- you know, of other texan cities, and it's hard out there. I don't think any of you are low income. I am. Okay. \$6 A pop per kid. You know, kid supplies, they asked us to do another 40 this week per kid for fees for the classrooms. You sit there and you say, well, \$3 isn't a big deal, \$60 a month extra isn't a big deal. If you don't have any money and living on a hundred dollars here and there, that's a big deal. And I don't feel like you guys are really focusing in on low-income families and the residents. You're instead going to the developers and the big business, and I would like you guys to start remembering that we do vote for you and we do support you guys, and all of you have great programs and i commend all of you for that, but I would like you to start actually focusing in on what you can actually tart doing to the community instead of starting to take

away from us even more. Thank you. [Applause]

christian ciano. And while you're coming up, christian, I've been asked by council member tovo's office for those of you who would like more, the electric utility commission 00 p.m. That's 17 minutes from now, at the austin energy building, 721 barton springs. So if you leave right now you can get there on time. Christian is this.

Mayor, I appreciate you making that announcement. We got some -- we provided core information to some folks and said it was going to be here in the council chamber. So I appreciate you getting that message out. So anybody who's here for the euc meeting can get to the right spot. Thanks.

Mayor leffingwell: good. Thank you. You have three minutes.

All right. Well, I appreciate the opportunity to speak here. I believe that earlier bill bill was called and i believe that was directed towards bill bunch. He's -- if possible I'd like to devote my remaining time to him, if he could -- if he still wishes to speak. you want to donate time --

whatever remaining time i have. I'd like to keep my comments brief. I'm here as a citizen, but i work for the state agency that is in charge of regulating rates, utility rates statewide, and so i have some familiarity with water rates, and I just wanted to comment on the water rates and the rate structure very briefly. And it appears that the water rates encourage -- encourage higher volume usage and arguably depend upon it to cover -- depend upon higher usage to cover the costs that are meant to be costs, and I think that given the drought and the water restrictions that are in place, that may not be the best economic approach to financing higher expenditures. Conservation is a great way to produce more water. It's worked for the city of san antonio and I will just encourage you-all to examine that very closely. If the city chooses to move forward with the water treatment plant, I encourage the city to explore other options for financing that, such as impact fees and having new development to cover those costs. And I reserve my remaining time for bill bufnl, if he wants that. -- For bill bunch if he wants that. you have one minute left. So if we can -- assuming that bill bill is bill bunch, is that correct?

[Inaudible]

mayor leffingwell: okay. I'm sure this is meant to be bill bunch instead of bill bill. So you can correct that, please, clerk, and you have three minutes plus one minute donated. So you have four minutes.

Not showing anyone donating time to you. Perhaps we can get that corrected wildfire you get through. -- Before you get through, but right now you have four minutes.

Thank you, mayor, members of council. I'll try not to repeat too much from last week. First I want to also reiterate karen creps' point. With the incredibly high traffic at barton springs and the heat and drought, the grounds are just taking a beating, and this is about priorities. We need some priority funding for day-to-day maintenance, taking care of the place. We need to put some of that money, that extra revenue back to the facility, and we need it postpone or completely set aside projects that involve paving the south side. That area should be -- natural area should be enhanced rather than degraded with more development. And funds should be reallocated to protecting spring flows, both quality and quantity. We're facing -- this is a -- this is a climate denier budget that we have on the table, with the water utility and with our parks and our preserves. To my knowledge the city is doing nothing to try to protect the quantity of flows in barton springs in light of climate change and drought and increased pumping demands on the springs. So why you think about spending millions and millions of dollars building new facilities there when the springs themselves could disappear in the next few years, it doesn't add up. On the water utility, again, it's shamefully unfair and unjust and contrary to conservation to load up those people using the least amount of water with a 66% hike on their bills, with those using the most seeing less than a 7% hike. The water utility says we have this -- you know, the steepest increase in block rate structure. I don't think they're combining both fees and rates when they make that calculation, but even

if it's true, the answer has to be so what? It's not steep enough to discourage people who are rich from wasting way too much water. It needs to be a lot steeper. When we're seeing 20% of our water use in that 30,000 and 60,000-gallon a month block rates, that's way too much water in those high-level uses. I have to apologize to paul robbins. I took his phrase, "a rogue agency" in referring to the water utility without giving him proper credit. It's an accurate statement. I don't use it lightly, but we have example after example after example where they're not telling you the truth, they're not telling the community the truth, and they're hiding the truth. You heard a quote from the coral investigation about hiding simple factual information about the auditors the city had hire. We're seeing the exact same thing today. If you haven't seen it yet, you got sued today by the austin bulldog under the texas public informati act, for failing to answer an information request that was due more than 20 days ago about critical information on water treatment plant 4. They're still hiding the contracts. They're still hiding the bids. Does anyone on this dais know how much mwh, the construction manager at risk, is getting paid to manage this project? Does anybody have a clue? Can you even guess within 5 or 6, \$10 million? What does that tell us about what we're doing? and that is your time.

Thank you. [Applause] leslie king. Leslie king. Following leslie king is craig adare. You have three minutes.

Thank you. Good afternoon, everyone. Sorry, I'm a little disorganized today. The law of capitalism has created an isolated society. Based on the principles that justify the conduct and practice of competition. By definition we must identify ourselves as separate in order to compete. However, we must work together as people, as a city, as a state, as a country for the world. We must work together on issues regarding a budget, on issues regarding water treatment plant, on kevinconservation, what have you. And our job as business people, as committees is to come present our views to discuss with you what our concerns are, and your job as our elected officials is to respond accordingly. We are in one of the worst financial crises we've been in in decades and furthermore one of the worst environmental crises we've been in in decades. The new york times has quoted the heat wave in texas as a natural disaster in slow motion, and if we don't do more to address that in the budget and to address things like the austin recreation center that are being closed due to budget cuts -- if we don't do more to address that together and appropriately reinvigorate the community through programs like that, we are all going to fail together. I ask that we work together to overhaul this budget, and I hope that since we have done our job in presenting our cases to you, you will do your job and reconsider everything you've put in the budget before you go to your final decision. Thank you. [Applause] craig adare. You have three minutes.

I will be very brief, thank you. My name is craig adare. I'm simply here to add my voice to those that would not like to see our city cut funds right now for the solar rebate program and energy efficiency. I work at the state legislature. I've seen a lot recently of penny wise and pound foolish and I hope we don't go down that road. The information I have is energy costs about 2 to 4 cents per kilowatt hour and that's significantly cheaper than the alternatives, so i hope we don't follow the same road in the state legislature. One of the things that makes me proud going around the country saying I'm from austin and that we have a great public utility that's been a national leader in energy efficiency and renewable energy, so I hope we don't lose that spot. I appreciate your leadership and hope we can set the right priorities. Thank you. thank you. Those are all the speakers that I have signed up wishing to speak. Jill carpenter is signed up not wishing to speak and andrew hawkins signed up not wishing to speak. Is there anyone whose name i have not called? So this concludes the public comment part of the budget hearing required by state law. Council is scheduled to vote to adopt the budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 on september 12, 2011. If council does not adopt the budget on september 12, action to adopt the budget may be continued to september 13 and/or 14. These votes will take place here in council chambers. 00 on monday, september 12, 2011, tuesday september 13, 2011, and wednesday, september 14, 2011. Is there a motion to close the public comment portion of the hearing and schedule adoption of the budget for september 12, 2011 to be continued to september 13 and 14 if necessary?

Cole: so moved, mayor. motion by council member morrison, so moved, second by mayor pro tem cole.

Is there any discussion? All in favor say aye.

Aye.

Mayor leffingwell: aye. Opposed say no. Passes on a vote of 7-0. Public comment part of the budget hearing is now closed. We'll take up agenda item 2 to conduct a second and last of two public hearings to receive public comments on the proposed maximum property tax rate of 32 cents per \$100 valuation for fy 2011-2012. The actual property tax rate will be adopted here in city council chambers on 00 after the council adopts the budget. And I know we have some speakers. I'll be calling you up as soon as I can get my screen set. Karen blight? Karen blight has three minutes.

I don't know if you-all are aware, sharon blythe's with austin rehab. I don't know if you-all are aware but there is a provision in texas statutes where you can add to your ad valorem tax a small percentage to be dedicated to city cemeteries. If you did that you would be able to have plenty of funding for all the city cemeteries here in austin. Just in the last couple days you received a letter from sarah hensley that i understand was crafted by the city arborist. Please ignore that letter because we will be responding to and giving comments back because there are very glaring comments in that letter as far as taking care of trees in the city cemeteries. One of the main problems is they say we're on track to spend \$100,000 of water on the city cemeteries this summer. That may be true, but whose pocket is it coming out of? The current contract says it's coming from the contractor's budget. He has not been mowing, weeding in any cemetery this summer. So actually that \$100,000 is probably offset by \$200,000 of his expenses that he's not had to incur this summer. So keep that in mind. But take that letter for a grain of salt. We'll be responding to it. But also I wanted to make your aware of the texas statute, health and safety code 713 that was passed in 81st legislature a couple years ago, maintenance of municipal cemeteries. You have to under this statute be responsible for the cemeteries to maintain them in a health, safety and comfort and welfare for the citizens. Do you want an 85-year-old to break their leg out there because they walk over a turf that has been allowed to crack because of non-water? Do you want dead trees to fall on these people? It is a health and safety hazard. Do you want, because of the ground not being watered, the stones to tip on he have over and crush some child? You need to keep these things in mind too. A parks director just told me that there's nothing they can do because they've got a contract with this contractor. Well, there is something they can do because the health and safety code 11 that was passed two years ago, and actually the parks people have told us in public meetings in front of a lot of people that they're not going to abide by that statute because there's no enforcement in it. sharon, you do have a few seconds left but this is public comment on the tax --

right, and I'm talking about the tax rate too. Please consider the -- the tax that is in the state law that you can fund city cemeteries. Thanks a lot. thank you. Next speaker is bill bunch. Donating time is robert corbin. Bill bunch is not in the chamber. Jen studabaker? is not in the chamber. Those are all the speakers i have signed up wishing to speak. Is there anyone whose name i have not called? So with that is there a motion to close the second and final public hearing on the city's proposed maximum tax rate? Mayor pro tem cole so moves. Is there a second? Second by council member riley. All in favor say aye.

Aye.

Mayor leffingwell: aye. Opposed say no. Passes on a vote of 7-0 and the final public hearing on the proposed maximum tax rate is closed. Council will vote to adopt the actual property tax rate for fy 20112012 on monday sept 12, 2011 at 9:00 a.m. In these council chambers, 301 west 2nd street after council adopts the budget. And those are all the items that we have on our agenda for tonight, so without objection we are adjourned at 5:59 p.m.