

Public Utilities Committee Meeting Transcript – 5/16/2016

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>> Garza: Good afternoon, I am Delia Garza, chair of the public utility commission. We are meeting in city hall, works. Thank you councilmember pool for -- thank you. Councilmember pool for joining us today. The first item is to approve the minutes. I'll entertain a motion. All those in favor say aye? That passes 3-0. Second item is the citizens communication, and I see we have one speaker, Mr. Hersh? Are you here? He has three minutes. >> Test, test. Chair, members of the committee, my name is Stuart Harry Hersh and like most of Austin I rent. I want to talk about two items that are not on your agenda today, but I hope will be on a future agenda. Last year at this time we had a conversation about changing the way drainage fees are calculated. If my memory is correct, most homeowners like the fee change you proposed. Most of us who are renters did not. Because we feared that once our drainage fees were no longer charged to us, but were charged to our landlords, that would be one more reason to raise our rents to the exorbitant rates that they are already and beyond. We're not saying that caused it, but it certainly contributes to it. It's been a year. The fee change has been going on for a certain amount of time and I'm hoping you will put on a future agenda an examination of how much revenue is now being generated as a result of the drainage fee changes and the relationship of that to what's happening in the rental housing market. Point number two is.

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Came to you a couple of months ago and to other committees of the council to talk about the water utility and its fee waivers, specifically as it relates to the controversy around pilot knob. And I was hoping that by this time we would be able to appear on an agenda item on this committee so that those of us who think that the water utility has been behaving in a way that's in conflict with city ordinances that have been in place since 2007 could finally get a hearing. There was a conversation about waivers, as I understand it at the water and wastewater commission last Wednesday, but those of us who are stakeholders on the opposite side were not explicitly invited so we only learned about it at the last minute and therefore didn't participate. So I'm hoping those will both be on your agenda perhaps after you return from your July break and then we can have a conversation about both of those because they obviously relate to the decisions you will be making on budget by mid September. Thank you very much. >> Garza: Thank you, Mr. Hersh. And I don't have any other folks on this list. Did anybody sign up and think they were going to speak? Okay. The next agenda item is 3, discussion and possible action on the final report of the flood mitigation task force. And let's see if we have any speakers on that one. I'm not showing any speakers on that one. Does staff want to go ahead and start the report? Are you a speaker? >> I wrote the -- I'm chair Matt Renstra with the committee and I thought I was going to be presenting to you. >> Garza: Okay, sure. >> Pool: Madam chair?

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I was just looking for a copy of the report. Maybe there are some extra copies. There's one here. Thank you. >> Can you hear me fine? Okay. Madam chair, members, my name is Matthew renstra, I am the chairman of the flood mitttation task force. -- Mitigation task force. By resolution we were created in June of last year and our first operational meeting occurred in September. And during that time we broke into three working groups that focused on capital improvements, the buyout and variances and operations and maintenance. As you also know, October 30th we suffered another significant flooding event in the onion creek watershed, and so just before that and after that we took a lot of citizen input regarding what had occurred there. We heard tragic stories of people that were displaced by the flood, that were still undergoing the buyouts and now had suffered a new flood and caused a lot of pain and hang distinguish. And so we heard about -- anguish. So we heard about those people and the issues ongoing with attend the buyout program and how they were somewhat frustrated and angered because it was taking awhile to get done. We also heard from people in other parts of the city that had also suffered from flooding events, but were not subject or buyout programs weren't available to them. And their specific concerns arose because of local flooding that was caused in

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part because of old, outdated drainage systems, drainage systems that had not been cleaned in awhile. Impervious cover from development above them that had caused local flooding. So with all that in mind we started receiving over the next 17 meetings a lot of great information -- 16 meetings a lot of great information of staff. The working groups did independent work and heard from staff. And as a result we've come up with this report. I want to say first one of the recommendations that we have made is that group be continued or made permanent. This was a very, very involved project. As you can well imagine it doesn't just involve buyouts, it involves working on plans about infrastructure and involves a lot of money. Staff tells us anywhere from two to four billion dollars. As we all know, projects of that size, while having that number, always grow once approval is given by a city to go forward on it. So it's difficult for the task force to say with any certainty what the impact is going to be on affordability. As the last speaker mentioned, all these different fees that are out there, be they the drainage utility fee, the regional storm water management program, those costs are passed on to a buyer and the citizen will have to be recouped some way. We came up with recommendations. There are a lot of them. There are 196 recommendations and that brings me to that first point about continuing. We started down hoping to come up with some policies for you, but because of the onion creek situation and also just getting into this, it's difficult at this point

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I think for us to really come up with some overarching policies except which is noted here in recommendation 1-a. Adopt a citywide prioritization policy based on loss of life, general health and safety, property damage and other criteria to prepare and mitigate flooding. All subsequent policy and budget decisions should be evaluated through this framework. This is a critical thing that's been ongoing. We've been flooding here in Austin since 1832. Back then when we were known as Waterloo. And now we have had significant events for quite awhile. The watershed protection department has identified I think 20 projects. I think the top two party one and priority two if you didn't change anything, are going to be in excess of \$500 million at least. I know onion creek is slated for something in the neighborhood of I think 167. I don't even think we got around to looking at shoal creek and I'm

under the impression that there's a tunnel being considered. We thought we simply need to know what the Numbers look like. We think we need to set goals to reduce the number of habitable structures at risk for flooding based on all risk mitigation tools. Right now we have approximately 2200 that are in the 100 year storm floodplain. 2200. If onion creek, Williamson creek tell us anything, if we were to have to do another buyout program because we didn't look at something, get after it, we're talking some serious money. Not that any of this isn't serious money, but much

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greater. We need to continue to update the flood early warning system equipment and software due to the reliance of many of our departments and the emergency operation center and the general public. Those are the top three I thought I could bring to you with a limited amount of time. And if you tell me I'm going on, I'm gladly stop for you. Another group was the floodplain variances and buyout program. That one was interesting for me because the chair of that, rosemary clee, went into the evaluation of that. She is a noted engineer. Wondering because of all the things we were hearing if the program was -- the variance program was out of line, biteout programs were out of line. And she and her group did a wonderful job of really drilling down on it. And their basic recommendations that we've kind of adopted are to continue those policies that we have, although when y'all do these city council variances, make it a requirement that there be public notice given so that neighborhood groups and potentially affected adjacent property owners are put on notice that something could be changing, give them a chance to weigh in. Because right now it goes through an administrative process and doesn't seem, at least from my memory of this discussion, a whole lot of involvement by the public to say, hey, wait a minute, I don't know about putting that big plant above me. With respect to the buyout policy, the policy is one of the many strategies that we have to have as a city and a county. If people are in harm's way we simply have to -- it may

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be one of those items that has to be addressed. The way we wrote the recommendation it says a buyout program has shown to be a viable mitigation tool and it should remain a strategy although not the first option. I want you to know that we put that there to stress that we want to make sure that the department never thinks of it as the first option although we never received information, at least I never heard any information that led me to believe that watershed considered it the quick solution to all problems. They do a very thorough analysis before they came up to any decision as to what ought to be done. But where buyouts have been identified is the optimal flood mitigation solution expedite the implementation of that. A lot of people really stressed out because of the length of time it takes, but again, it's public monies, they have to be looked at carefully before they're done, and the population is under stress. And continue the buyout program for primarily a voluntarily program except where there's a threat to life and safety and where eminent domain is a condition of funding. Within this group of recommendations we have one that I know is interest and that is to initiate the upper onion creek buyout program with initial focus on those homes that were substantially damaged in the 2013 and 2015 floods. In going around upper onion creek as part of my personal tour of these areas M folks are really at wit's end. They are living on the second floor of their home or they're living in a trailer home next to their house. They're not sure what's going on. They don't know how to proceed. Their homes have been substantially damaged, the permitting process, flood maps are constantly being moved around.

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So the committee or the task force approved that recommendation. With respect to lower onion creek buyout projects, expedite these buyouts so we're finished with this program by the end of 2016. I know that Pam is doing a herculean effort in this regard. We're just asking that that be expedited to get a resolution for them. And then also develop a program for purchasing structures that have been catastrophically flooded by a rainfall event, including development of a method to prioritize individual flooded properties. We saw information that there are -- outside the clusters, there are these outliers and it may be that we need to just remove that property as a habitable residence and not only save our first responders, but get the people who might be at risk out. As you heard from the gentleman that spoke before, we looked at the duff. We did hear the same sort of things. He was the speaker that spoke about the duff, and looking at it again, -- we asked that you continue to analyze that if you're not already doing that. Consider gathering more public -- get more public involvement on that. We also believe that the duff, that currently stands at about up-until dollars, is not enough money in itself to do primary operations and maintenance and capital improvements. So we are recommending that you look at issuing a series of debt instruments. Personally I think they ought to be debt obligation bonds because I think the public should look at that and have -- and weigh in on that. Every five years until these

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major creek mitigation capital improvements are completed. That will free up money for operations and maintenance which can go to channel clearing, creek clearing and other types of activities that will reduce the impact of floods when they occur in the creeks. And in that I want to point out number 5, and this is important. In relation to our very first recommendation, which was closed out with all subsequent policy and budget decisions should be evaluated through this framework. Number 5 under buyouts and under the duff, flood mitigation is a public safety responsibility and the council should consider reducing spending on nonessential projects that do not improve public health and safety until the flood mitigation and deferred maintenance activities are caught up to the point where they align with the water protection department's -- water protection department's asset management program. We think the program should be scrubbed before we head down a path of further debts, but in the meantime that's something that can be done by our budget folks in the financial department. As I started my comments this was a very large resolution and frankly the three working groups did not have enough time to really drill down on b-1-d, storm water system operation and maintenance costs. But in that area we did have two recommendations. We actually have four, but I'll highlight two. Before increasing fees or calling for bond elections, council should undertake a review of the entire city budget. Specifically items related to priorities to keep the citizens of Austin safe and make difficult decisions about how we prioritize spending and about funding

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the things we must do to keep our residents safe. And item number 4, the city should consider forming water coalition partnerships or flood control districts in select watersheds such as onion creek to develop and fund regional flood mitigation strategies. This is, I think, very important as all of you know, onion creek doesn't start at the border of hays county. It starts actually in blanco county. Flows primarily through a big section of hays county and then comes roaring into onion creek area that is of issue for our city. There is a lot of development going on in the hays county area and I think it's important that we work with our hays county colleagues to see if we can't do something in that area that spreads the effect of funding out over a large demographic and geographic area, number one. And number two it creates regional solutions that everybody can buy into. Anna Geary did excellent work on to provide

means under 1-e of the resolution. And awesome effort on her part. She really drilled down on trying to make -- on all these recommendations to keep them as concise as possible, but the big ones are, I think, to provide information in a multilingual format. To educate our residents on registering their phones and the use of the integrated public alert warning systems through the office of homeland security and emergency management. So when we do have a major event, for instance we heard from a man in upper onion creek who left Austin I

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think on October 28th, went to North Carolina, he's retired military. He was over there visiting some fellow officers. Sees the rain is heading to Texas in this area on Thursday. Friday morning receives an alert that his home's going to be missed. And within about half an hour, I believe his testimony was, things changed. You've got to get out. Fortunately he had a neighbor nearby that could go and get an animal out, but he still suffered some flooding. Not as much as others did. But it happens so quickly, as we know. Flash flood alley, there's no warning about these events. You one thing that Anna found out is that our aid campuses might not be completely up to date with their emergency preparedness plans. And we think that that's important that aid be on board with having a plan. For instance, we heard anecdotally parents during the event of October 30th are trying to get to the schools and they're being blocked by rescue and fire. They are of course anguished by not knowing what's going on. And I think some of our schools, at least one of them, is in the 100 year floodplain. I was surprised that that was the case, very surprised. But the same sort of thing should be in place for our charter schools, our child day care facilities and our nursing homes, anywhere that there is a vulnerable population. Obviously we think in the education area we think that we should get -- we should get more of the United States geological surveys, flood hardened rain and flood stage gauges. That is that. Standard green and infrastructure. Under our planning and recommendation, we don't believe that we need to wait for codenext if our

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watershed department see areas of regulation need, those ought to be done immediately, not wait for codenext. And one that's of a rate cell area is that the maximum amount of total impervious cover for flood prone neighborhoods must be considered prior to issuing building permits. Where areas are to be annexed the potential for flooding concerns and improvements are identified prior to annexation. I'm not sure we would annex lower and upper onion creek now. That's the reality. We've spent a lot of money there. And where flood problems are severe, don't issue permits in flood problems are mitigated or the following conditions apply. The developer provides a certified engineering study that proves no adverse downstream impact or on-site mitigation is included in the development or downstream infrastructure is improved by the developer. Strengthen the code regarding flood mitigation requirements for new development and redevelopment. Green infrastructure in and of itself will not solve everything, but it is a way that we can get citizen buy in to do their best to reduce the amount of runoff coming off of their property and we think that that's a good thing and we believe that we should incentivize on-site retrofit, flood water management measures. And we should consider -- there are multiple recommendations in here, but consider offering one time discounts to the city teenage fee for flood detention facilities that exceed regulatory requirements. And one of the ideas that we saw demonstrated by staff that seems to be doing really well -- the gray infrastructure, which is an

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integration of green storm water infrastructure with your standard capital improvement solutions, it can really do a great job in those areas that are somewhat in the northwest of downtown. Obviously, I know the resolution we were asked to identify available funds, including federal, state, local sources. As you all know when you go to feds or go to state there are a lot of requirements and the department does have a good job of identifying those funds that can help. And you have enough information on those I think before you obligate us they work hard to get grants and we should continue that. And we should have budgetary requests of projects less critical to public safety. And the number one consideration is that we should again issue debt consistent with recommendations in this report. And by debt I believe that we're talking about general obligation bonds. I was somewhat surprised at the amount of money that went through the certificate of obligations, but that's probably more because of my ignorance on the subject and not because of anything that anybody did. But I think that the public should weigh in on these projects before the city takes on the substantial amounts of money that are required by this recommendation -- by this report and by what we saw. With respect to onion creek, ken Jacob looked at that and wrote a very good report. The recommendations that have come to you for mediating the flood risk in onion creek are to clean and regularly maintain the

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creek. And that comes from freeing up some money from the capital improvement projects that are typically flowing out from the budget of watershed protection, which is driven mostly by the duf, and putting more money in o&m. Immediately expand the studies for upstream detention facilities. In looking around along with other members of his group, ken looked at that floodplain, and onion creek as it expands up into hays county, and besides doing detention areas, there are several quarries that may be an option as may be problematic, but the study can look into that. Reach out to hays, Travis, bastrop and blanco county to address the problems and solutions, including contacting centex, dripping springs and the rattle snake falls ownership. Convene a regional task force comprised of all potentially interested parties. The city should take the lead on that. Under item 6 of the resolution, we strongly suggest that you collaborate with not only other jurisdictions, but agencies and including Texas general land office, parks and wildlife, the university of Texas, Texas A&M. And again, we reiterate form a regional flood control district to focus on flood mitigation and storm water management so as to fund these mitigation projects. This resolution presented a huge challenge for the 22 members of the task force and they all worked very, very hard. It was a pleasure working with them.

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I also enjoyed meeting the members of our watershed protection department. They did a lot to provide us with good information. They were always nice to us and answered our questions. And with that, thank you. >> Were other members of this panel going to present or just resources? >> Should I identify them. >> Garza: I mean the ones sitting up here. >> These are watershed protection. >> Garza: Y'all were just here as a resource. >> [Indiscernible] And Matt Holland. >> Garza: I know them, but I just wanted to make sure that they -- I wasn't skipping over them and a presentation. Does anybody have any questions? Councilmember kitchen. >> Kitchen: Oh, I just want to say thank you very much. And I think that you had started to see other members of the task force. Can you point yourselves out. >> Ken Jacobs, Lola Matthews, Roland mcfrey. That's all we have right now. >> Well, I just want to -- I'm not alone in this, I know, but I wanted to thank the members of the task force and thank you for your leadership on the task force. This is a huge undertaking and we were fortunate to have an excellent staff to work with you every step of the way, and so I know that you guys just did an amazing job wrapping your minds around a very difficult subject and I want to say I really appreciate the way the report is put

together. It's very easy to look through. It's complicated so there's a lot to it, but it's easy to pinpoint how you related the recommendations back to what we asked you to do in the resolution so I want to thank you for that. So I would just -- I have a

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few questions. I have a few questions and then I have a resolution to bring forward today that's only a small piece of this. Let me ask the staff if there's anything that you all would say with regard to this. I think that it's a very good job of going through and giving us the highlights. Is there anything you all would add in terms of -- or what would you say what the number one -- not so much in each individual recommendation, but just sort of from an overarching view, what would you say about this? >> Sure. Joe pantalion, director of the watershed department. And thank you for the opportunity to address the task force report. First let me just acknowledge the task force. These are 22 members of the public who donated their time over the last nine months, who spent hours upon hours listening, learning, and talking amongst themselves and most importantly really listening to our stakeholders and to our citizens who have been impacted by floods. And they were very compassionate and really took everything that they learned and heard from, our citizens, and put it into this report. I think the biggest policy recommendation here is for us as a city to really take a step back and look at from a very broad perspective where flood control fits within our city services. You know, we talk about affordability. You talk about all the things that a city has to deal with in providing services to our citizens. And really they were trying to put in the context of flooding within that broader picture. So I think it will beg a lot of future discussions. I think this is really the start of a deeper discussion about flood control and how we address flood control in

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the city of Austin. I know that a lot of times as we go through the budgeting process we're looking at affordability and equating to really maintaining our rates where they are. And when you look at accelerating flood control services that many of the recommendations do look at either expanding or accelerating services. All that comes with a price tag and so I think it's going to be a very interesting and worthwhile discussion as we move into the future and talk about those services and their corresponding costs. >> Kitchen: I can bring this resolution forward in a moment, but if you want to have other conversation first. >> Garza: Councilmember Zimmerman? >> Zimmerman: Thanks. If you could go to page 21 of the report. There's a graph there that -- that I'm trying to understand. Obviously urban development is impervious cover and impervious cover makes the runoff happen much more quickly because there's no opportunity for any ground saturate the water before the water starts to run off. I'm struggling to understand what this start is telling me on page 21. Can somebody put it on the overhead maybe? >> Would you like me to take care of it. >> This is a chart that has two different hydro graphs. One is the urban, the one that kind of peaks on the left. And then an undeveloped hydro graph. What this is trying to show on a time scale and runoff rate access basis is as you go from undeveloped to developed, there is a change in the hydrology, hydro logic condition of that land surface such that with more impervious cover you have more run off so the volume goes up and that's why you

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see a higher and wider hydro graph. Also because impervious cover serves to very efficiently convey water from point a to point B. Think about a parking lot or a roof. It transports water faster than say a grassy surface so that's why you get a peak that's shorter or it peaks faster and that's why that peak is, I

guess, farther to the left on this chart. So if you were standing in a stream, downstream of a site that just got redeveloped, what you would see is water coming at you faster, more water coming over a greater length of time. >> Zimmerman: So looking at the tail end of the curve there, I guess you're saying that the runoff event ends sooner. If I have more impervious cover? >> That's true. And actually what you would see under an undeveloped hydro graph is that water slowly percolating and showing up as base flow and the water moving slower across, say, a grassy field as opposed to a parking lot that again if it rains on a parking lot and it's on any type of slope, all that water will runoff the parking lot very quickly. >> Zimmerman: Okay. The other interesting thing is we -- I think people don't understand -- what people don't understand very well is the retention ponds, what the retention ponds do is they simulate the absorption you would get out of pervious cover land. In other words, once the pervious land that doesn't have any impervious cover. You have just regular land, once it gets saturated, doesn't it become the same as impervious cover? Because if it can't soak up any more water, pervious

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cover and impervious cover are the same, both can't absorb any more water once it's saturated. >> Once pervious cover gets saturated, yes, you would get runoff from the pervious area, however the water would continue to percolate, but not as fast. It would simulate the impervious cover. >> You would also have in a kind of rougher natural environment you would have much -- it takes a lot longer for water to actually move through even if it is completely saturated so there's a longer time of concentration with a natural condition on saturated. >> Is that the so-called coefficient of roughness, I guess? If you have, you know, a concrete surface it's just perfectly slick and it's going to fly along, but if you have grass, brush, anything, any natural surface for the same amount of water, it's still going to move more slowly convey across that? >> Yeah. It's definitely related -- the roughness coefficient is more about the channel and then the time of concentration is more about the Overland flow piece of it. >> Okay. But even that, doesn't it depend on how serious the rainfall is? If we get jumped on with an outrageous downpour of water and we've got several feet thick of water and we've seen this before, right, you've got two or three feet of water coming at you, it doesn't care whether there's concrete under it or grass. Right? You wouldn't know the difference for the real serious flooding. >> For the storm events you would say that do you get that area saturated with the runoff and some of the lighter rainfall events you might not get any runoff. >> Zimmerman: I'm talking about the big ones. There's not a lot of difference between what's three feet under the flood water, doesn't make that much difference. >> Well, not once it's

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flooding, but again, pervious area does provide its benefits, especially early in the storm it soaks up a lot of the water that would otherwise go into a stream. >> Zimmerman: On page 17 there's an interesting idea here about page 17, a point about painting the curbs blue. I really like that. That's the most interesting idea I got out of here. Paint the curbs blue. It starts raining, pay attention to this area. But one of the more frustrating things that I found, it's on page 12, recommendations and number one, before increasing fees or calling bond elections council should undertake a review of the entire city budget, specifically items related to priorities, keep citizens of Austin safe, make difficult decisions about how we prioritize spending and about how to keep the citizens safe. That's a talking point from my 2014 campaign. >> I'll be sure to tell the writer that made this that they looked at that from a speech. But that came from us. This is a report from the committee, not from the staff. >> Zimmerman: Okay. Well, stuff we already know, right? >> Well, we're just emphasizing it to make sure that that's done. >> Garza: Councilmember pool, did you have a question? >> Thank you, share. I wanted to really compliment the

citizens who worked really hard on this and also staff for the support that they brought. I think that there's no question that this is a really important thing that we're looking at, and I understand that the approach you're taking here is trying to be as broad as you possibly can from educating the community on things we may or may not know and especially new people coming into town so they can

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understand what we deal with here in flash flood alley. I happen to live in an area that gets flooded not with the number of deaths that are happening in lower Williamson and onion creek, but shoal creek had some early in the '80's when I first came to Austin, we had some problems there, the famous '81 memorial day flood really kind of kicked all of this conversation off I think in our community and it has continued on for decades. So I had really high hopes and expectations to get the recommendations from your report so I could help digging into the things we need to look at. I never in my wildest dream told you would have nearly 200 recommendations. That really speaks to the level of diligence and concern that everybody brought. And I think I see Dorsey Twidwell here. >> He stepped out. He is also one of our committee. >> Pool: We have had a number of conversations in district 7, there was a committee called the red zone committee that was looking at the new FEMA maps. So the level of concern is heightened in our community and I don't have anything in particular to ask or to sponsor today, but I wanted to be here to hear this report directly from the people who wrote it and also to indicate my sincere willingness to work with my colleagues here to affect the decisions and the -- get the plans set for future years because clearly this is something we can't ignore and we need to be very intentional and deliberate on how we address it. Thank you. There's a lot of meat in here. >> Troxclair: Thanks. I'll echo the comments of thanks from my colleagues. I know that was a lot of time and energy that went into this. I'm sure it will take us

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awhile to kind of digest all of the results and figure out the best way forward, but we appreciate the recommendations. My question was I know you brought up a couple of times the -- your suggestion that more of these projects are funded through -- or the appropriate way to fund a lot of these projects is through general obligation bond where the people of Austin get to be educated and have a say. I was curious if that was your thought or if that was discussed at the committee and was kind of the general -- >> I think it's generally speaking that the general obligation bonds were preferred over the Co's with respect to these large, lengthy projects because of the buy-in that will be required of the public. We just saw with waller creek, which I thought was a great idea and I still think it's a good idea that brings 26 or 28 acres of land back into use and it done under a tif, but we have several different areas that are going to require significant monies. And these are big projects and they're not just health and safety, they're infrastructure projects. I expo with a former mayor -- I spoke with a former mayor in September back at a campaign event and Austin is growing. This whole area is growing and we need to be ahead of it. He told me that the very first underground tunnel was proposed by the city of London in 1868. That's when they started that transit program. And we're going to have to look really far out. I think to get buy-in from the public you have to keep it affordable, you have to be real, but you have to spread it out over a long time. In our neighborhoods there are people that come and go, work for tech companies.

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They can absorb for awhile, and then they move on, then the next person comes in and absorb and they move on. Some people stay forever. I went to school here, but I had to leave, but most people come and

go and so that's how you fund I think in a responsible way is to move these projects out over a lengthy period and try to fund big projects over an area. >> Troxclair: And I appreciate your emphasis on the very first recommendation about having a citywide prioritization policy. I just wonder if on -- I'm curious to follow up with the staff on that point. I know we've talked about it several times at council. Are we any closer to having a citywide policy? >> If it's in regards to their recommendations as far as a citywide policy on funding decisions I think that speaks really to decisions between different city services beyond simply just watershed protection. I know that when it comes to the watershed protection department, we have a very mature prioritization system citywide that was adopted by council and recommended as part of a stakeholder group, not unlike the task force back from about '98 to 2001 that really focuses on providing services to those areas most in need. It's really focused on problem severity. Those with the worst problems should get addressed first. We've been following that since 2001. I think when you look at the areas that were most impacted in the 2013 storms, 2015, those areas are at the top of our list for a reason because they are the worst of the worst and we've been working on those for quite some time. I think when you look at the need and the use by previous councils of Co's as opposed

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to G.O. Bonds, what I can say is that I think -- well, I can't remember in our history where we've had the number of large storm events we've had in such a short time. If you look at the Halloween storm of 2013, the memorial day flood of 2015, the Halloween storm of 2015, these are all tremendously large storm events that really impacted our community and created a need of immediate response, flood response. I think that's why council reacted to provide relief and a recovery mode as opposed to, say, what chair renstra was recommending doing projects over a long time to mitigate in a kind of preventive fashion. I think we have this kind of luxury to prioritize and methodically build projects but when you have three large storm events in less than three years it really forced you to be a bit more reactive and issue those Co's because they're needed right then and there. >> Troxclair: Right. And it is a multifaceted issue and I guess my question is more about the -- how we're going to move forward with the buyout because it seems -- it still seems like we're kind of doing a patchwork. And you're right, I understand that we've been put in a situation where we have to be reactive, but at the same time it seems like we're not doing everything that we can do to make sure that we're being proactive. But that's probably a better question for the real estate office. >> Actually, watershed does prioritize the buyouts and our real estate department does implement the buyouts and actually administers the buyout process, but we have had a buyout program for many years and we've been buying out homes for several years. In fact, we had purchased and Pam, correct me if I'm wrong, about 325 homes even before the 2013 flood in lower onion creek. We identified that area, it rose to the top as part of

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our problem prioritization process. We started working with the corps in the late '90's, early 2000's and pursued those matching funds at a 65 percent core federal share, 35% city share to be able to purchase homes in anticipation of somebody there being 100 year storm event. Unfortunately we had the Halloween storm of 2013 and 2015 that impacted that area, but we have been proactive and we have been applying that citywide prioritization of addressing the worst problems worst even for our buyout program. >> Garza: Yeah. It's an interesting conversation about whether to use G.O. Bonds or Co bonds for big buyouts like this. Your comment about most people come and go is also interesting because I would say there's a good majority of this community that's born and raised here and they don't plan to come and go or they're not going to come and go and they prefer to stay. It's an affordability issue that's creating them having to move away. Because the report does point out fact that it is about public safety

and then also gave a recommendation that when buyouts happen they need to happen fast and that was the whole point of -- that was the reason why the Co bonds. It came as Co bonds and not G.O. Bonds is because these were families who needed to get out of harm's way as quickly as possible. The other thing that hasn't been addressed is when you have a voter issue it becomes a campaign issue and who is going to -- who is going to be the voice for the people who are the low income families, who were buying homes in floodplains that didn't know they were buying homes in the floodplains? Who is going to take on that campaign. So it is a very fully faceted, but it's important to understand the conversation that happened during these buyouts because I saw it of the it was a special called meeting by the council whether to do a

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G.O. Or a Co and that council said that it was important to do the Co because it was a public safety and expedient thing that needed to be addressed. But I want to add also that I really appreciate all the work that this task force husband done. I know it's a difficult issue and really hard to do a blanket policy. And even going forward it will be hard to do a blanket policy, but I liked your comments about how it's brought this confidence to where it -- conversation to where it really does need to be because where we have the conversation about affordability and whether supply affects affordability, we also have to think about how unfettered development affects flooding and people's safety. Thank y'all for -- for staff and the task force for all the work that you did. And I think councilmember kitchen has some questions. >> Kitchen: Yeah. I'm going to bring forward a resolution on Thursday and I wanted to go ahead and just talk about it briefly at this meeting because it is one of the recommendations out of the task force. And this is recommendation number 5 from page 8 that is initiating the upper onion creek buyout program. And so you will see from the resolution that what we're talking about here is those homes in upper onion creek, a small limited number of homes in upper onion creek that were impacted at the same time that we were able to move forward with the buyout program for lower onion creek and Williamson creek. At that time when we were moving forward with those much-needed bonds, we also discussed the fact that there was damage in upper onion creek, but there was a need to first do an engineering study for the upper onion creek area. And then consider buyouts after that. So that engineering study was completed, a month or two ago. And so now there are some engineering solutions around midgation for the upper onion creek neighborhoods,

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but there is also a need to move forward with the buyout for a limited number of those damaged homes in the 2013 and 2015 floods. And so it's now timely to bring that forward. And I would say that this is an example of a way in which we can bring forward buyouts that does take into account first looking at engineering solutions. So the dollar amount we're looking at here is much smaller than what we needed to do for lower onion creek and also for Williamson creek and the estimate is no more than five million dollars. The resolution that I have on the agenda for Thursday is to direct the city manager to identify potential funding sources estimated at no more than five million for the acquisition of flood-damaged homes in the vicinity of a particular area in the upper onion creek. And so I'll be bringing that forward on Thursday. I think it's timely now to do that. It is -- it will impact homes that folks that have been living in trailer homes or whoever otherwise not able to get back in their homes that were damaged during the previous two floods so I think this is very timely now to bring forward. We're not voting on it today because we don't have this specific item posted but it is posted for Thursday so we'll move forward with it then. I might also say that that engineering study is very -- it's going to be very helpful for the entire onion creek watershed. Should be helpful for lower onion creek as well as upper onion creek because

there are recommendations in that engineering study that could relate to mitigation of the whole onion creek watershed. There's additional work obviously that needs to be done on the engineering study which I understand is ongoing and can include in the fall or perhaps after that because there's more work that needs to be done before we can

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consider funding that engineering study but we do know it's timely to move forward with these initial -- not initial but with this limited buyout program. So I'll be bringing that forward and I wanted to give everyone a heads-up on that. So -- >> Troxclair: Thanks for bringing this to the committee so that I can have a heads-up. What is the -- >> Before we get too deep in discussion about this I don't know if we should be talking about this because this specific resolution, I know it came out of discussion of the task force report but it's not been posted for us to talk about. >> Kitchen: I'm pulling it for work session tomorrow also. I'm pulling it for work session. It is a specific recommendation in this report, recommendation 5 on page 8 and that's why I was giving you a heads-up but I did pull it for work session. >> Troxclair: Heads-up for tomorrow, my question was going to be if you had an estimate about how many pumps that a million dollars -- >> Kitchen: We can talk about the specifics tomorrow. >> Zimmerman: I was going to say if you pulled it so is there an item on Thursday's agenda regarding this? >> Kitchen: Yes. This resolution is on Thursday's agenda and so I pulled it on work session for tomorrow. I'm just giving you a heads-up today. So to give you a little more time to think about it. I would also say on this report itself as a whole, I don't know how you normally proceed with reports. I think that there are a lot of recommendations here, some of which we'll need to bring -- be brought forward during the budget process. Some of which could be perhaps begun without additional resources. So I'm prepared to move forward with the document in the final properties that something that this -- report if that's something this committee wants to do. >> Garza: I'd ask staff, is this going to be -- is there a presentation before other boards and commissions?

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What is the time line? >> Let me introduce Matt Holland formally. Matt was the task force lead facilitator for watershed and he can talk to you about the schedule. >> Garza: Okay. >> Thank you, Joe. So it's all happening very fast. You guys are meeting today. On Wednesday evening there will be an environmental commission meeting at 6:00 P.M., and then there will be public comment at that time. And they'll discuss this. Actually, there's -- we hope a meeting tonight by the task force, we'll meet at 7:00 P.M. In our building and they will finish -- we believe they will finalize their executive summary which you don't have yet here here, which will be helpful for the final, and then Wednesday they meet with environmental commission and Thursday they come back at 10:30 to brief council, the full council. >> Kitchen: Okay. >> Then that will conclude this -- their work. >> Kitchen: I'd also add, there are a lot of really good, solid recommendations in here and I imagine I'll be helping to bring forward a whole range of them. I did want to speak to the regional task force concept, which we talked about a little bit earlier. I think that's going to be very important for the entire onion creek watershed, what's happening in hays county regional area. So I'll work with my colleagues to put that recommendation into action. >> Garza: All right. Thank you for your work and your presentation. The next -- we're going to take the next one out of order because I believe the last item is a staff -- staff needs to -- has some limited time so we'll go ahead and take the briefing on the Texas gas station pending rate case.

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. >> Garza: Let me see if we have any speakers. It's a briefing. I don't think we have speakers. Okay, thank you, councilmember pool. We don't have any speakers. So Mr. Graham. >> Garza: Sorry that was loud. Hit your button so the little red is on. >> All right. Good afternoon, Larry graham with Texas gas service, and my colleague, Nicole Simmons is here with me. Texas gas service, we are going to be filing a rate case with the city of Austin later in June, and we -- in the spirit of transparency we just wanted to come today, spend about ten minutes giving you a little briefing on what a natural gas utility rate case is, kind of what the city of Austin's responsibility and authority is in this, and kind of tell you how it's been handled in the past and, you know, have some time to answer questions if you have questions about the process. So, again, we want to do this in about ten minutes or so. We don't want to take up too much of your time. I guess I will advance the slides. All right. So real quickly, I think we've been here before, and you know a little bit about us, but we're a natural gas utility with 640,000 customers and key point is about 94% of our customers are residential and we are all across the great state of Texas. We're in about 100 different

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cities, including about ten cities here in central Texas. And as you can see, we have about 37% of our Texas customers here in the Austin area and about 75% of our customers are either in Austin or El Paso. So as we've talked about before, 49 other states handle natural gas utility rates with a statewide corporation commission or public utility commission. So we have two sister urologist one in Kansas -- utilities, Kansas, handled by the Kansas corporation commission and in Oklahoma the Oklahoma corporation commission but here in Texas we have home rule so state law gives cities jurisdiction over natural gas utility rates which is why we're here today to give you a little background. So real quickly, cities have jurisdiction over the rates in cities. The railroad commission has jurisdiction over customers or citizens that are in unincorporated yours and then in addition to the railroad commission is the appellate so if a city denies a rate increase the gas utility can appeal it to the railroad commission. So as of a month ago, we had 238,000 customers, and of those here in central Texas and of those 213,000 are in the city limits of Austin. And so those are the customers that y'all have authority over their rates. And in addition we have 4700 customers spread out among some suburban cities and the last couple years we've been adding customers in cities that are in the area but are must to us. We've been expanding service in lakeway, bee cav, dripping springs. A lot of our growth has been out southwest, out 77. In addition we also have 20,000 customers in what we

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call the unincorporated Travis county. When we file the rate case in a few weeks we will have to file a rate case also with the railroad commission and they will have the jurisdiction over those 20,000 customers. So this is all you've ever wanted to know about natural gas utilities and then some. So I'm going to pass it to Nicole. She's going to talk just for a few minutes a little bit more about what happens in a natural gas utility rate case. >> Good afternoon. Can you hear me? I'm going to go over the high-level regulatory process. Two of the main objectives of rate making are to provide the utility a fair -- the opportunity to earn a fair return on its investment, and that's done by looking at our expenditures and making sure that they're prudent and also setting the rail levels sufficient enough for us to attract capital to make those investments. And the second is to ensure that consumers have a fair price for the service that we offer. And this is done hopefully with the intent that our price is not of that just a regulated monopoly but as if we were in a competitive market and that the rates should be just and reasonable and nondiscriminatory. When establishing rates in a rate filing the company calculates a rate of revenue reimbursement and it's made up of the following that allowed return on investment that I talked about

recoverable operating expenses, and I say recoverable in that there are expenses, such as civic contributions and donations that we do not seek recovery on, other taxes, such as property taxes, depreciation and amortization on that investment and then our federal income taxes. All of those make up our revenue requirement. As I mentioned before, we the company have an opportunity to earn a fair rate of return on

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investment. But one of the challenges we face are regulatory -- as a regulated entity, as a regulatory lag. So from a time a project starts it can be one month to a year until that project is in service and then we prepare a rate filing. That rate filing goes under city review if it's denied that could go to an appeal at the commission. And then it has another review process at the railroad commission that Larry mentioned. From the beginning of a project it could be over two years before the company sees a return on that initial investment. One of the statutory programs that we have to help us with this regulatory lag is grip, and you may be familiar with that. We are probably -- we were here last may to talk to about our grip filing. And grip stands for the gas reliability infrastructure program. This program allows us to file annually to recover any increases in investment that we make to keep our systems safe and reliable. The requirements of this rate -- of the grip program are that you have a rate case within the past two years and then you file annually every five years. Which is why we're here. We have made five grip filings for the central Texas area and now we're required to file a rate case. So our primary mechanism to -- that we utilize is the generate case and during a rate case there are five areas that we -- that are upped and subject for review by the regulator and that's rate base, which is all the investment that we've made, the amount and the treatment of our expenses that we're seek recovery on, the revenues from our test year, and that allows us to determine if there are revenue deficiencies and then that return on investment that we're allowed, and rate design, which allocate costs to the classes

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and ultimately determine the customer's bill. I'm going to turn it back over to Larry to talk through the process with the city. >> Thank you. So our last rate case was filed in, I think, January begun it was settled in may of 2009. So the way we've handled it in the past is we've made the filing and we work with the office of telecommunications and regulatory affairs so, generally speaking, that office is the one that kind of handles the business with the gas company, whether it be complaints or what have you, all the regulatory stuff. So last time and this time, they have hired -- Rondella Hawkins is the officer. She has hired an outside rate consultant to help her and the staff will have the filing. So last time -- and what we expect will happen this time is Rondella, her staff, their consultant, they work with the city manager, the law department, and we will work and answer questions on those five areas that Nicole just talked about and then hopefully welcome together with a settlement that we come to the council for approval with. So that's the way the process is working -- has worked in the past and that's what we anticipate will happen this time. So we were planning on making the filing June 15. The way the state law works is once we file the law says the rates go in effect in 35 days unless a city suspends implementation for 90 days, which really is pro forma. Rondella was concerned because y'all are not meeting in July and she was worried about getting that -- getting to the council to suspend within the 35 days. So she's asked us to consider changing the time of the filing. So it's looking like we're going to file on June 30 so that y'all will be able to do

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that pro Forma suspension at one of your first two meetings in August. So we're working with her on that. Like I said, essentially the way it works is the city gets under state law 125 days to work this without us. You know, in addition we have these other cities. Usually the city's consultant represents them, you saw before. There are a number of customers are just a small fraction of what the city of Austin has, but the idea is that we will end up with the same rates with all the customers, whether you're in Rollingwood, Sunset Valley or city of Austin and after the rate case hopefully the customers in the envier rates will have the same rates as well. We'll work with the railroad commission and generally speaking they'll approve the rates y'all roof. That is just like we said. We wanted to kind of let you know this was going to happen. Wanted to be transparent, give you a chance to answer questions now or during the process and, you know, we could spend hours and, you know, talk about depreciation rates and lots of exciting things or -- but we -- like I said we just wanted to come here, let you know that it's coming and see if you have any questions that we can answer. >> Garza: Does anybody have any questions? Mr. Zimmerman. >> Zimmerman: So I guess the first thing constituents are going to ask is, you know, what's happened to the price of gas? I know there's two parts to your billing, a delivery charge and the fuel charge, the gas charge for what you consume. And that's the first thing they're going to ask. The second general question, I mean, is what are the magnitude of changes that are contemplated? I mean, you wouldn't come to us for a rate case unless you had some idea of what you were going to be asking for. >> Right. >> Zimmerman: Yeah. >> Okay. Two -- good questions. So the first thing is I'm looking at actually a copy of my bill. So the item on the bill is

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called the cost of gas. And that is a pass-through for us. So each month we change that. Essentially what is on the may bill is the price that we paid for gas in June. Or -- excuse me, in April. So the good news is the cost of natural gas is low and we were looking at it the other day, I think it's the lowest it's been in 12 or 13 years so that's the good news. And it has mitigated the effect of the increases that we've had. I think when we were looking at the last rate case in 2009, on average for residential customer 60% of the bill was the cost of the commodity and currently it's closer to 40 because that has gone down so much. The answer to your other question we have not finalized the amount but we're looking -- what we're going to request be in the neighborhood of \$4 a month for a residential customer. It's not finalized. There's several things we're still working on. It's, what, four, five, six weeks until we file it but that's in the neighborhood of -- and just to reiterate what Nicole was saying, we've had these interim rate, these grip adjustments where we've recovered the cost of the investment, but we haven't sought to increase any employee we've add since 2009, any raise, any increase in fees that we've had for health insurance since 2009 we haven't recovered and that's what this rate case is about, is recovering essentially the majority of it is going to be our o&m costs since 2009, actually since mid2008 because that was the test year. So that's what this is about. >> Garza: Does anybody else have any questions? Thank you. One more question? >> Zimmerman: Yeah.

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The other interesting thing is the financial markets, as you know, the price of money is -- it's worth nothing. We have these historically low interest rates, right? And so utility companies like Duke Energy, right, there's a bunch of these utility companies that over dividends and it's true, right, that those dividends have dropped because return on investment for money in general is real poor. And so I'm going to guess that -- are the dividends that utilities are expected -- the return on investment they have to show investors or people that buy utilities those have dropped as well since 2009 or not? >> I'm going to let Nicole answer part of this. In 2009 he were part of a company called One Oak that had three

utilities and had all this midstream natural gas pipeline. So at that time the utilities were a 30% of the company. Of the earnings, something like that. We split apart two and a half years ago. So now we are just a pure utility. And people do buy the stock for our company because it does pay a dividend. >> Zimmerman: What is the dividend now? >> I'd -- I don't know. But I'd be happy to -- >> Zimmerman: Could you look that up? >> Sure. I'd be happy to let you know. >> Zimmerman: See where we are compared to other gas companies. >> I do want to say this and this is what I'll ask Nicole do answer. When we set the rates in 2009, there were certain assumptions -- there was a rate of return we were given and that is based on some other components that have changed and some of those are going to be reflected in this 2016 filing because the cost of money is less. You know, the cost of debt is less. Can you address that? >> Yes. So the rate of return, that's one of the five items that we talk about and evaluate during the case, and so we will bring that up to market, our cost of debt and requested cost of

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incorporate. So those -- equity so those will be lower than what they were in 2009. >> Which is one of the reasons we do -- we're required to have periodic rate cases, to kind of set this stuff. As you know interest rates go up and down and you can get locked into a scenario that could be, you know, favorable or disadvantageous depending on what happens so that's the idea. And there's certainly some things that are going to change for us that won't be as good. So. . . >> Zimmerman: Okay. Thanks. >> All right. >> Garza: All right it thank you. >> Thank you very much. Appreciate your time. >> Garza: Sure. Now we'll go to item 4, and we have some speakers. First speaker is Steve Shannon. >> Didn't know I was going to be the first. Is this summon. >> Garza: Yes, sir. >> Hello, my name is Steve Shannon. I'm the municipal marketing manager for Progressive waste solutions of -- I've been in the industry personally for 42 years. First ten with state, federal and local government. Progressive waste solutions is currently the third largest solid waste management service provider in North America. And about to become -- we're the fourth now. We're about to become third as a result of a merger that's occurring right now. We serve many communities here in central Texas, bastrop, wells branch, M.U.D., Johnson City, blanco, horseshoe barracks city of Taylor, on and on, many. We have in the past and me personally have worked with the city of Austin on various

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solid waste matters, including the long range solid waste planning task force that led to the zero waste plan that led to the universal recycling ordinance and other regulatory focus groups that the city has had. So we're very familiar with the city of Austin. I guess when we heard about this, I think the question has been asked by the private sector for a long time is, why doesn't the city privatize their solid waste services? And I guess the reasons to consider that would be the service. You're not getting the service that you want. Or the price is too much or you don't have the capital to invest in capital needs that you have. Garbage [indiscernible] The new ones are in the range of \$300,000 a piece, which you add c&g technology to them it makes it even more expensive. I think the city, from my observation, does a good job of service. The price, only one way to find out about that. There are -- I would like to say that there are many solid waste service providers that operate in and around Austin that you might call stakeholders that either provide collection services to the businesses and industries or to muds or hoas that are adjunct to the city or provide landfills or recycling facilities or composing operations, of which there are more than you might know, construction and demolition debris operations.

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So there are many stakeholders and companies that have been working with the city. Their payroll affects the city. The purchases that we make are local. That would deserve an opportunity for this. The city, it's my understanding, has approximately 190,000 residential units that they service. That's a lot. You might take a page out of the playbook of the palm beach county, Florida, solid waste authority, who currently has 97,000 residential -- 197,000 residential units. They divided the county at one point into 11 different service districts, bid that out. They have now backed off to where they have four of those districts. So there's about 35 or 40,000 residential units per service district. >> Garza: I'm sorry to interrupt but we allow three minutes and I don't think the timer was started because it's been a little bit longer. >> Timing start now? [Laughter] >> Garza: Feel free to finish your thought. >> Let me finish and let me say, ma'am, that I think there's ways to do this. We would certainly be interested in submitting proposals to the city. >> Garza: Okay. >> But there's plenty of room for many players. I think it's important to keep competition up and you can reward people for their service either through bonuses or through penalties if they don't do a good job. >> Garza: Okay. >> I think the city is certainly big enough to have more than one service provider. >> Garza: All right. Thank you, sir. >> Zimmerman: Before you go real quick. >> Garza: Sure. >> Zimmerman: One quick question. Two of my neighborhood areas, one of them is the Anderson mill area northwest Austin. >> Yes, sir.

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>> Zimmerman: Anderson mill 183, ranch road 620, out in there, and another one, river place, out by 3M, 2222, 620, both of those communities are scheduled to not use city of Austin waste collection. So do you know, does your company deal with that or do you know who is doing those? >> We service the river place mud. >> Zimmerman: Do you? Okay. >> It's my understanding that in the annexation agreement that the mud would retain the current solid waste service provider I think through 2022 or '42. >> Zimmerman: That was my understanding too. Just wanted to make that point. And we had a recent mud contest, a mud election out there, the first one in 20 years. And the strategic partnership agreement is what you're referring to. >> Yes, sir. >> Zimmerman: And the the opponents -- or proponents cited trash service as one of the big advantages to the spa agreement. My position was I wanted the community to have a right to decide if they wanted to be in Austin or not through a vote. I just wanted to point that out, that was one of their big selling point for not fighting city annexation was they had superior trash service compared to what the city would offer. >> Sure. >> Zimmerman: Thanks. >> Thank you very much. >> Garza: Thank you, sir. Next speaker is Carol Guthrie and I'll start my timer. >> You would. >> Garza: Sorry. [Laughter] >> Good afternoon. I'm here to speak against privatization, and I'm just going to hit some highlights. But we know that in order to get a company to actually come

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in and do an apples to apples comparison you would have to be able to do that. Many, many years ago, the city of Austin went out for an rfp back before mechanized trucks. So we know that the cost of service has improved over that time. We also know that when you contract out you lose accountability. Right now, elected officials are held accountable because this is a public sector and as the public sector, you're not trying to make a profit. When you contract out to a business, their goal is to make a profit. And that's what keeps them in business. And that's another reason that we believe that this service should remain in the public sector, that it's provided to the community at the best possible price. We're not aware of any problems that are occurring right now where the city seems to be not in a reasonable area as far as what they charge for this service. We also know that when you contract out, must have to add the administrative cost and the monitoring costs to those proposals from the private sector to make sure you are getting the service that you should be giving. We also know that when a customer calls in

now maybe they miss the trash or they call in and say they didn't pick up my can, there are special visits that are gone to provide that extra customer service. You will lose all of that customer service because if you go with a contractor, they're paid on a per-item basis, and whatever is in the contract is all that's in the

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contract. Much like when we went through the floods we know there were many other people that got up there to help clean the floods. That would not be part of your contract so you would have to go out and forbid, add that in, and we know that it would be extremely costly. We also know that some of the funds may not stay here in Austin/Travis County because businesses usually have parent companies where they funnel those profits to you as well, and I just heard this gentleman talk about bonuses. As you know bonuses don't go into the base pay of an employee so they would never truly get some earning power. And I could go on for three hours. Is that my buzz center thank you so much. >> Garza: Thank you. Next is Rick, sorry if I mispronounce that, Brownman. >> Thank you so much. We had another person sign up and concede their minutes to me. >> Garza: Sure. Is Ryan Hobbs here? You will six minutes. >> I don't think it will take that long. Ryan is going to pass out a brief handout to you, and my name is Rick and I'm the director of sales for Texas Disposal Systems, a local company here started in 1977. It's a great Texas story with two local brothers that are still active and involved and one of their sons, Adam, is here with us today. I'm here because we were requested to present a rate comparison to provide both some local analysis and a more detailed education of the nationals related to rates for other providers and providers related to trash and recycling services for residential. So the first page is something that was put together by Austin Resource Recovery. I believe it was back in January, if I'm not mistaken, at a zero waste advisory

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commission meeting. It's an analysis of 11 cities, national and statewide. It says in here that they offer similar services and reflect the services are not exactly the same as ARR but are close enough to be comparable. So I wanted to start with this just to give -- we wanted to do research to see how this related. So the next page gives a breakdown of each one of those services. I'll start with my comments on the bottom right here. The thing was the most interesting in looking at this was the city of Austin service package, which is a 64-gallon cart is the standard size and the 96-gallon cart was the only service package in this analysis of all 11 cities. None of the other ten cities offered the same level of service so that was kind of unique. In fact, I know that ARR is talked about adding a recycling -- increasing recycling to once a week or adding a third cart for green waste or food waste and in fact each one of these other ten cities that they chose to compare themselves has either one or both additional services. You'll see the breakdown as you go through. Each one that's on this list either has once a week recycling already for the rates listed or they have a green waste cart or they have the food waste cart at the rates listed. Tucson, interestingly enough was shown at \$32 a month. It's actual \$16 a month. I have the information from their website that I printed out, talked a gentleman there today and Friday to go through that. At the bottom we listed some categories because we were trying to do some rate comparisons. This is the national rate, the piece behind this is local rates that -- one of the ones -- one of Steve's companies that spoke -- Steve's contract that spoke, some of them are ours, some are competitors. I want to stay on this national piece for now and we broke it down into categories and you can see at the bottom

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there's a 64-gallon trash service on the bottom left and the city of Austin is the only one in that category that offers the 96-gallon trash recycling every other week, excuse me, in the 64-gallon trash for 23.30. There's two other cities that offer the recycling once a week. There's one that offers the green waste, et cetera. On the column next to on the shows it shows 96-gallon services in the city of Austin, obviously jumps up to 4.85, as described by Mr. Geterate, more punitive in nature, not necessarily reflective of their costs but 13% of the residents based on the information available do still have the 96-gallon cart and pay those fees. It's interesting, when you look at this in some cases there's dramatically more service and other factors in the rates for national basis which include drive time and the last one on here that Seattle, west Austin, on their site said 11% was long-haul transportation from transfer stations to the landfill, which is different for each different community in different markets so each market has different market drivers. When you look at it on a national scale, we don't really think as the previous speaker talked about an apples to apples comparison. Our take was this was not an apples to apples comparison because every one of the cities offers more services for the same rates. So to look at -- if we put it on just one graph, the city of Austin would be the only one on the graph. If you look at the next page, this is what 12 different cities that we picked out outside of Austin, San marcos, Hutto, pflugerville, cedar park, beauty that, dripping springs, Leander, large, small, multiple different service providers, what their rates are. What you'll see that's a

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little bit different when you look at the rate is that there's two rates for most of these. A contractor rate and then a rate to the residents. So unlike the city of Austin that provides with their own employees, if it's contracted to a service provider, they provide a rate to the city. The city typically has an administrative fee. A lot of times they do the billing and collecting so they add an additional fee to that. So that's the difference in the two rates. If you look at the bottom left you'll see there's only one other city in this comparison that offers the standard service level that the city of Austin does of 64-gallon cart and every other week recycling with 96-gallon and that's the city of Hutto who charges \$10 less, roughly 13.94. If you look below that the city of San marcos is one of our customers and they have -- they've converted back in October to 64-gallon cart as the standard size, have the 96-gallon recycling every other week, just like the city of Austin, but we rolled out a green waste cart, 96-gallon cart every other week in October and you can see that their rate even with the markup to the city is less than what the city of Austin is paying now outside of the service fees. Was that my three minutes or six minutes? Okay. At the bottom of the page, there are -- there's a link, if you want any additional information. And we can answer any questions if you'd like. >> Zimmerman: So any Progressive said that they were servicing the river place neighborhood in district 6. And so you said that you were serving the San marcos area. Are there any neighborhoods in Austin that you're working with right now? >> Sure. We serve George town. >> Zimmerman: George town. >> We've had a contract with them for many years about we have about 30 communities, most of them are in the cities and about a hundred communities we serve, several muds that you mentioned, northtown mud, blockhouse mud that are up in the area that

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you spoke about. Buda, Kyle, San marcos, Georgetown are the largest cities we have in the Austin area. >> Zimmerman: So you've got a lot of experience and you are doing service now. What is your thought about some of the remarks that you heard earlier about -- maybe they're criticisms that accompany, like, tds has to earn a profit, as if that's a disadvantage four. I mean, how would you answer that? >> Well, it's certainly not a disadvantage. The city doesn't have to do that, but it drives you to be efficient and it drives you to -- you know, the other things that were mentioned, there was no mention about

efficiency and proficiency and productivity. I think if you look on this we tried to pick multiple service providers. You'll see that for a similar service level, the 96-gallon cart service level that's on the second page with the every other week recycling, eight cities, their average with the city of Austin, all average a lower rate than the city of Austin standard package for 64-gallon service. So just about every city in this area has a lower price than the city of Austin. So those things are important and efficiency drives those things. >> Zimmerman: Can you help me understand this really dramatic difference that you show here for 96 gallons, Austin is 41.85. >> Yes, sir. >> Zimmerman: For the 96-gallon. And you're providing in Georgetown 16.50? >> Actually, we're providing a rate to them for \$14 and then they mark it up to 16.50, yes, sir. >> Zimmerman: Wow. I'm struggling to understand how that's even possible. That we could be saving \$500,000 of dollars for constituents we were to switch. Could you provide a price like that for the city of Austin? >> I can't give you a price right now but I can tell you one of the things you're missing when you look at the local comparison versus city of Austin, you're missing the efficiency gained by having

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larger volume, a volume discount. So some of these cities are small. Georgetown is the largest that we serve but if you're looking at the number of homes that are on there, 20,000 and 59,000 population and city of Austin has roughly, what eight times, nine times that many homes, you would think that as you look at that it shouldn't cost more to do those services. >> Zimmerman: It should cost yes, thank you. >> It very well could. >> Garza: Are your employees full-time, the ones that do this work? >> Yes, we have a little over 700 employees. We cover just Texas. We go as far as west as alpine and as far as east as sealy but we have a few part-time employees but almost all of our employees are full-time, certainly all of our drivers and front-line service providers are full-time. >> Garza: Is there an average pay? >> Yes. >> Garza: What is that? >> I can't speak on that but if you want us to do some research and get you that information, we certainly can. We have to be very competitive because we can't keep contracts if we don't have good, you know, front-line providers and our drivers and our trucks and our mechanics to be able to make sure that we show up every day. >> Garza: Yeah. I'd be curious to know what the average pay is and also what kind of benefits package they receive. >> Absolutely. If you'd like, we can get some information and respond at some time in the future. >> Garza: Sure, thanks. >> Zimmerman: Thanks. >> Thank you so much. >> Sir? I would just add to that. I'd like to know what your minimum wage is, in other words, what your lowest -- not just your average wage but how does -- what's your lowest Paige wage? And do -- lowest wage? What your benefit package is in terms of health benefits in particular and whether it's available to everyone and do they have to pay their own or do you guys cover it, that sort of thing? >> We do have a full health benefits package. Part of it is paid by the

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employee, part of it is paid by the company. We do have contracts with the city of Austin and in those contracts we all are bound by a living wage or higher. So we comply with that and all the paperwork is in for that so that you have peace of mind knowing -- that doesn't mean that's what the lowest wage is but we comply with the requirements related to city of Austin's living wage. >> Kitchen: But not all your employees are paid at the minimum wage that the city of Austin has? That's the question. >> Of course not, no. Not at all. >> Kitchen: Okay. Thank you. >> Thank you. >> Garza: Next is Todd killig? Did I get that right? >> Hi, everything, thank you. >> Garza: You have three minutes. >> Thank you. My name is Todd killig. I work for the labor union. I work with these employees on a daily basis, these employees and their management. One thing that I find with them is they take a lot of pride in their work. They're proud to be public servants and they're proud to say every day that they're city of Austin employees. It

really is something that they all take to heart and a lot of them will start their careers right out of high school, you know, wanting to work for the city of Austin. Like I said they take a lot of pride in it. And working for a private contractor, the potential to lose their pensions, to lose some of their pay, to lose the just cause protection we just got them last year that protects their jobs, I believe all of these things end up causing a decline in the quality of service that the city of Austin and the citizens are going to receive. The employees, they will also lose the accountability to the city policies and the standards of conduct that we all hold them for. When flooding occurs, heavy storms hit our cities, these guys, they get out there and they work ten, 12 hour days, six days a week, and they do

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it a lot of times because they know that they're working for the city, they take pride in what they're doing and they go out and bust their tails to do a really good job, to respect the community, to pick up the trash, to do whatever it is that they're being asked to do and to do it professionally. Privatization will not only take away the city and management's authority to be sure that these cleanups happen quickly, professionally and safely, but it will also take away the pride these employees put into their work every single day. >> Garza: Thank you. All right. Did -- I believe this item was brought by councilmember zimmerman/troxclair. Does staff have a presentation or was staff just here as a resource? I wasn't sure. >> Yes. Bob Gerhart, director of Austin resource recovery. No particular powerpoint presentation but just a few comments will roughly about three minutes' worth of comments. I do oppose this proposal, and on the grounds that I don't see a due cause for the privatization conversation. Our customer service is one of the highest in the nation. Austin energy's annual customer service survey notes 92% high or very high customer satisfaction each year every time they do the inventory and an additional 6% that are satisfied. So you add those two together that's 98% satisfaction. The etc annual customer satisfaction survey that's contracted by the city manager, we receive the highest rating of all cities of 25,050,000 population or higher in that survey. 250,000 or higher. On the rate structures, clearly in my conversation on rate comparisons with the zero waste advisory commission I noted that any comparison to other cities was apples to bananas to Oranges to pineapples and so forth.

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There is no other comparison, and I clearly stated that in January. What the swac asked of me was to care like size cities and that's what we tried to present. It was clearly noted these were not similar services. The idea of comparison of rates is very, very difficult. We provide services that other cities don't provide. Example is the bulk and brush collection that some cities provide and some don't and is included in that rate. We provide storm relief. We have a landfill closure of a million dollars a year that's included in that rate. That would be a city liability whether it's contracted out or not. But that is included in our rate. We also take pride in our employees. We pay a living wage or higher. In fact the base pay for our drivers is significantly higher than the living wage that the city council has authorized. We have a very strong diversity in our employment and take pride in encouraging our hiring process to engage in diversity. We are a 2-chance employer, hiring those that have a difficult time gaining employment where else. We have a higher gender equity in our management than most city departments. And so we work very hard on our employment standards, and we take pride in our employees and our employees take pride in their work. So that concludes my comments. Thank you. >> Garza: Does anybody have any questions? >> Zimmerman: Thanks for finishing in less than three minutes. I was timing you. I appreciate that. Well done. Thanks for being here. >> Troxclair: So I guess you started out by saying that you don't see a compelling reason. I can certainly understand that you would have reasons to oppose privatization. But you said that you doesn't see any compelling reasons to

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pursue it. Do you think that the pricing structures and the significantly lower prices for seemingly the same or better services that other companies can provide -- do you not see that as a benefit to austinites? >> The primary call for privatization of city services is based on either rate issues or customer satisfaction issues. We beat and -- meet and screed customer satisfaction issues. We are -- one of the lowest rates of the top 20 populated cities within the united States, if you look at population base. If you look at cities within Texas, we're in the mid range. What you saw is an analysis of rates did not accommodate and pull out expenses from our rates that would be assumed by the city if we did contract out. There are significant expenses the city would incur that are in that curbside rate that would be encountered by the city whether you privatized or not. And so that -- a true analysis would reduce our current rate charge to our customers because we would still have that city liability on expenses. Our rate, two-thirds of our customers are in the \$23.30 monthly rate and we -- and many of those customers are below that rate with the pay as you throw, the downsizing of the trash carts. The 96-gallon cart rate is a rate that has been consistently raised by city council with the goal of phasing out the 96-gallon cart by 2020. It is in our master plan to phase that out by 2020. >> Troxclair: And I guess the proposal, if we move forward with the composing proposals those monthly rates will go up another \$4.10. So really we're talking about pretty soon here we're going to have rates of, you know, closer to \$30 a month?

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>> I would not say \$30, no, but we will have a presentation on Wednesday regarding those rates. >> Troxclair: Yeah. I mean, the compelling reason for me is just the significant price difference, and I do -- I mean, I do think that you provide a great service to the city and, you know, we have companies here who are saying that they already do -- the benefits that the labor unions bring up, like wages and complying with city policies, the companies already do all of those things. And there would be nothing stopping those city employees from applying for jobs with those companies who I'm sure would be eager to hire them. So I just see -- I see potential increase in service and a potential reduction in price, and that is compelling to me. >> Zimmerman: I ever a quick question -- or do you wanting to first? >> Garza: I had a question about was this issued before one of our citizens' commissions? >> It was brought forward to our zero waste advisory commission and that commission tabled it with a universal action of no need to pursue the conversation any further. It was tabled. >> Garza: Okay. Did you have a question, councilmember kitchen? >> Kitchen: Oh, I was just going to say I don't think -- if I'm hearing you correctly it's not clear whether it's -- costs less to privatize because I'm hearing that there's -- you can't -- there's a range in rates, you know, and for some folks it may not be less. Did I hear you -- is that what you're saying? >> Yes. We do a cost of service study every year and we segment out our costs to present to council the rates each year. Included in that is a closure of our landfill plus the bulk is and brush collection. Some cities provide that bulk and brush collection. Some don't. If you want a true comparison,

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you'd have to segregate out the services provided. Our services really do not mimic any other city that I have found. It's uniquely different. We are pursuing zero waste. We have a lot more customer engagement, public education and outreach than any other community that I'm aware of. We have significant amount of transparency as a government agency. Our budget is completely transparent as opposed to private sector. >> Kitchen: I guess what I'm saying is there may be an assumption that it

would cost less to privatize but we don't know that because we don't have any data -- and the kind of comparisons we have here don't drill down into enough level of detail to tell us that? Okay. >>

Zimmerman: I have a couple of questions here. So I'm referring to the table that was put up. Golden gate we could flip back to that, that would help. >> This one right here? >> Zimmerman: The Taiwan shows the spreadsheet. I think it was the second page of that. The one that shows the spreadsheet. There we go. I'll make a couple of points here. If we look at San marcos and Hutto, you'll see there's a very, very small difference between the price of the 64 and 96-gallon trash can. Do you see that? 22.44 in San marcos versus 25.44 for instance? Then if you go to the other cities here, pflugerville, Round Rock, cedar park, beauty that, west lake hills, Kyle, dripping springs, Leander, none of those even have a 64-gallon distribution that's right. >> Zimmerman: As an engineer who thinks for a living, that tells me that there's some operational efficiency of unifying on a standardized cart. So I haven't studied all this but it probably means from an operations research point of view that a lot of the cost is just getting your truck out there to the site. That's a dominant cost, right?

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In other words you don't get any big efficiencies out of a 64-gallon versus 96-gallon, right? Most of the cost is your truck, your employees, your landfill? It's everything except the size of the trash can? Right? That's just what you would conclude from rational thinking on this. Now, we're going to -- we've had a lot of disagreements. I'm ashamed of government social engineering. You might be proud of it. Social engineering, you call it education. Whatever. But we have an affordable problem. In this city. So the issue of how much you have to pay is a huge issue. In other words, Bernie sanders would say, "Huge." It's a big issue. The motivation for going out for rfp, when was the last time we have an rfp to give the private sector an opportunity? Remember we write the rfp if we want pickup after a flood, whatever things we think that we have to have, we put it in the rfp and let companies bid with on it. So when was the last time we bid out? >> We asked our purchasing department to research that issue, and we cannot find any record of an rfp. There was a 1997 rfp for annexed areas of the city, primarily on the northwest side, but there was no citywide rfp. >> Zimmerman: Wow. I think it's time for an rfp and the items that you said are not typical to other cities, we could put those in the rfp and ask them to bid on those. See, right now, the advantage that you're talking about that we do extra things that other people don't do, other cities don't do it, private providers don't do it, how much does it cost? I don't think you could tell me that. So one of the benefits of an rfp is if you line item some of these benefits you're talking about, the private sector could price it so that we know how much it costs. And so if we present that information to our city constituents, they might say, well, nice to have that service that arr does, but at

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that price I don't want it, it's too expensive and they would be able to make that value judgment. I've got this benefit that you provide but if it's at a cost that's too high they might reject it and say, you know, I need a lower-cost bill. That's more important to me than zero waste. Zero waste has a cost. I don't think we know truthfully what the cost of it is. So I'm going to continue to push for an rfp. If nothing else, we would learn a lot from doing an rfp even if we weren't, as a council, convinced to do it, we would learn a tremendous amount by doing an rfp. I think it's way past time >> Garza: Would anybody like to take action on this item? >> Zimmerman: I think it was a briefing, right? >> Garza: Okay. >> Troxclair: One more question. >> Garza: Sure. >> Troxclair: Can you -- can you provide us with the information about the costs that you say aren't taken into account? I guess the brush collection and other things? It has to be possible somehow for us to get -- I understand if this analysis didn't drill down as far as you may have wanted, but it seems like we could get there. >> Yes. >> Troxclair: So do you have

that information? >> Yes. >> Troxclair: And then we could ask the providers how much it would cost for them to provide similar services and we can get to an apples to apples comparison. >> Our cost of service city does detail some. Detail it further as well. That may be in the annual budget process before city council. >> Troxclair: So you can't get it to me -- to us separately before then? >> Yes, I can, yes. >> Troxclair: Do you understand what I'm talking about? The costs that councilmember kitchen was -- >> I think on the physical expenses of our budget, we can show the allocated expenses that would not normally be covered by the private sector. We can itemize that. I think there's a lot of internal expenses that the

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city would assume as regular business activity that is not regular business activity by the private sector. An example is employment practices and that would be hard to segregate out. >> Troxclair: Okay. I guess I'm looking more for the cost -- you said there were still costs that the city would have to take over even if we did privatize the service and that's what I'm hoping to get to. >> Yeah. For instance, the landfill closure. I can segregate that cost out and identify that for you. And that's part of our rate structure and I can identify that cost per unit. My only point is there are other costs that would be hard to segregate out. >> Sure. I understand that. I guess the one that you mentioned again I am hearing the - a private company said they're already complying with those things. I'm not sure that there is an added benefit that an employee is getting paid by the city or there's an added benefit by getting paid by the city for the same job. >> Garza: This was posted as discussion and possible action so I just wanted to see what the intent was going forward if you intended to bring this back to this committee? Because I would prefer if there's going to be a vote we make it now. If you're going to take action rather than have all these folks come back again and have the exact same -- and say the same thing that they've said today, I'd prefer if there was any goal to take action today that it be taken today. >> Zimmerman: That's a good question and an objection was raised by Mr. Gedert about not having an apples to apples comparison. I think what accommodation councilmember troxclair said, if we're provided this additional information from Mr. Gedert we can get to an apples to apples comparison if we can get that additional information. I do want to bring this back once we have, as you say, an

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apples to apples comparison. I think we can do that and have another deliberation and possibly vote on this. >> My response is I can supply some data, but not other data and I don't think you will ever get to an apples to apples comparison. >> Zimmerman: We're not talking rocket science. We're talking trash. Trash appearing O, trash option B. We should be able to compare those. I insist that we compare them, right? Okay. Thanks. >> Kitchen: Chair, I appreciate your question. I don't think we got an answer to that. >> Garza: Is your goal to bring this -- to have this briefing basically again? >> Zimmerman: After we get the full information and get a apples to apples chair son, yes, they would to do it again. >> Garza: And if they can't. >> Zimmerman: The answer would be yes, they can do an apples to apples because we're talking trash collection not mystical rocket science. It's not that complicated. This isn't that complicated. >> Garza: But I believe the response was he couldn't do one. I'm trying to save everybody a lot of time. If you're going to put forward some action I prefer that we do that now rather than have this exact same conversation. >> Zimmerman: But the objection and the excuse will be now that we can't do this because we don't have enough information to know we want to go forward. And I think staff obviously does not want to do this. Mr. Gedert told us he has no interest in doing this. I think part of our problem is if staff has no interest in this item going forward they obviously have no motivation to provide the information that private companies need to make an apples to apples comparison on the

cost. >> Garza: I would say if there was a mechanism for you to bring this forward, if you can get four sponsors to bring before the council, but otherwise I would prefer not to rehash this in another committee meeting. If the response from staff is they cannot give an apples to apples comparison. >> Zimmerman: The response is they don't want to give an apples to apples, but they could. They don't want to. They don't want an rfp.

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They don't want any scrutiny on think and any opportunity for private companies to bid. We have an affordability problem in the city and this is one way we could possibly tackle that. >> Kitchen: I agree with you that we have an affordability issue which means you have to look at all sides. The cost to us for paying for trash is only one piece of affordability. Wages, pensions, coverage for benefits is another piece of affordability. And that's what is very difficult to compare here. We cannot look at just one side of the equation and say it's okay for some of us to pay less, but it's okay for our -- for the people that work for us to make less because you're creating a difficult situation for them, which ultimately costs us more as a city. So you cannot just -- it's not as simple as just comparing the trash rates. It's just that's way too simplistic. >> Troxclair: Did I misunderstand something from the company that said they were already complying with all of the city's living wage policies? >> Kitchen: That's not what they said. I asked them do they pay minimum wage for everyone and they said no, they can't. That's not -- I wouldn't expect them to. They don't. >> Troxclair: I think there was a misunderstanding that I saw when that question was asked. I guess I would -- I would be curious to hear your response. I understood your response to mean, no, you don't pay everybody minimum wage because you pay people more than minimum wage. And I think some councilmembers might have thought that to mean that you paid less than minimum wage. And I really want to clear that up. >> Adam Gregory can Texas disposal systems. Just to clarify, the type of employees that would be providing services under this type of contract all make far over, well over the city's living wage and our minimum wage that we've adopted. We have. >> As ricked to you, just over 700.

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We're at almost 800 employees. We have many different types of operations. So there are positions within our company that don't make as much as the drivers would, but as far as a contract like this, the employees that would be providing services under on contract like this, the market rates are above the living wage set by the city. >> Kitchen: So they would be making the same as we pay them? >> I don't know exactly how much the city is paying their drivers. >> Kitchen: Okay. That would be information we would need to know. And we don't know that. >> Zimmerman: That's what we're asking for, but that is known. The arr needs to know that and that's part of the exercise of an rfp is that we could learn what that is and we could say okay, here's the expectation, Austin resource recovery is paying this amount for these kinds of employees and then we could have comments from proposals from companies that do this already and we could compare. So I can't accept that you say we can't make an apples to apples comparison and have you say you can't or won't give us the data so that we can make that comparison because we have companies that can do this. They just need to have the information of what we're doing right now. Then we can have apples to apples comparisons. >> Troxclair: If I could say one more thing. When I originally asked the question you did say you could get back to us with some specific things that wouldn'ting covered, maybe by a private contract, but would still be an expense to the city like brush collection. So I think it would be helpful to have that information. And if you want to include a note on the response and say you also would have to take these other things into consideration if you want to make an apples to apples comparison. But it does sound like that there is more information that

you can and are willing to provide the council. >> What I can offer in the Normal budgetary process is

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some detailed expenditures down to a finer level and that might prove useful in that discussion. I have no ability to compare that to other cities and other communities. I would also say that there's other things that other private haulers may not incur if you move them over. And that's the difficulty in segregating out some of those expenses. The landfill expenses are easy to identify and that's what I was talking about there. There are other amenities that are reduced, for instance, the pension to the employees. Some of the hiring practices. We also provide an allocated expense that funds some of city's operations too to pay for our budget office and our budget information office and something like that. So there are other expenses beyond just picking up the trash. >> Troxclair: What I'm saying is it seems like it would be relatively easy for you to provide us with the information that you do have that is a specific dollar amount regarding the landfill closure and the bush collection and just include what you just said. There are other things that the council would want to consider and in making that decision. >> Garza: I think these are all great questions that can be asked through the budget Q and a I'm just trying to be straight with everyone that for the sake of efficiency and the comments from this committee, I do not think there is support from this committee for the committee to forward it to council. If a councilmember on the committee thinks they can get the support otherwise for the sake of efficiency, I'm just saying ask your questions, get your answers, but I don't see the point in bringing it back to this committee. But of course, you always have that prerogative if that's what you would like to do. >> Zimmerman: I think

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we've gone as far as we could today. >> Kitchen: I would also like to suggest that there's not -- I will not vote for this and so I don't think that there is -- but the questions you're raising are perfectly appropriate questions and I would suggest just bring it back to the full council. This is a budget-- ultimately a budget question and it belongs on the full council. So I would encourage you to bring it to the full council, the full council can consider it. You can provide this additional information to everyone and I think that makes more sense. >> Garza: All right. We'll move on. The last item would just be discussions of future agenda items. I think we just kind of had a conversation about that. But does anybody want to add anything to our next agenda? I think it's in June. I think we have a meeting next month. >> I don't know when, there are a number of items in the flood mitigation task force that I might be bringing forward, but I don't have that information right now. >> Zimmerman: There's one other thing. We've been working with watershed on a problem we have at whispering valley. There's a railroad bridge that has a small culvert that's been causing flooding issues, but I don't think we'll have anything in time for the next month or two. I'd just let you know we are working on that. Some kind of agreement with the railroad to have perhaps some kind of cost sharing to fix the drainage problem. But that's probably later in the year. >> Garza: Thank you for being here and we are adjourned at 5:11 p.m.