



Zero Waste Advisory Commission

Meeting Minutes

February 9th, 2022

The Monthly Meeting of the Zero Waste Advisory Commission convened through Video Conference on Wednesday, February 9th, 2022, due to COVID-19 Disaster Declaration for all Texas Counties. The following are the meeting highlights. For detailed information please visit: <https://Austintx.new.swagit.com/videos/154297>

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Acuna called the Commission Meeting to order at 6:05 pm

Board Members in Attendance: Gerry Acuna, Cathy Gattuso, Amanda Masino, Jonathan Barona, Ian Steyaert, Melissa Rothrock, Ethan Myers, Albert Swantner, and Kaiba White

Board Members not in Attendance: none

Staff in attendance via WebEx: Ken Snipes, Tammie Williamson, Richard McHale, Amy Slagle, Gena McKinley, Andy Dawson, Donald Hardee, Dwight Scales, Jason McCombs, Brent Paige, Blanche Quarterman, Victoria Rieger, Amy Schillerstrom, Shana Riviello, William Purcell, Carina Hanson, Marcus Gonzalez and Bill Huck

Chair Acuna opened with comments,

1. APPROVAL of the October 13th, 2021, Meeting Minutes

Chair Acuna entertained a motion to approve the October 13th, 2021, Meeting minutes. Commissioner Ian Steyaert made the first motion for approval of the minutes. A second motion was provided by Commissioner Jonathan Barona

Item passed Unanimously

2a. 2022 ZWAC Proposed Meeting Schedule- Gerry Acuna

Chair Gerard Acuna entertained a motion to recommend to approve the 2022 ZWAC Proposed Meeting Schedule. Commissioner Melissa Rothrock the first motion for approval, A second motion was provided by Commissioner Cathy Gattuso

Recommend unanimously by the Zero Waste Advisory Commission on a 9-0 vote

2b. ZWAC FY22 Board Vacancies- Gerry Acuna

Chair Acuna discussed Board Vacancies and potential barriers to getting the last two seats filled on the ZWAC commission. Chair Acuna thanked and welcomed the two new members of ZWAC for joining.

2c. Proposal in ARR Wage Increases- Carina Hanson

Carina Hanson Austin Resource Recovery provided an update on Austin Resource Recovery (ARR) Recruitment and Retention Proposal. Carina stated City Council approved Resolution No. 20201001-061, directing the City Manager to review current compensation and training practices and explore opportunities to improve ARR operator retention, compensation, and satisfaction. Commercial drivers are in high demand and many industries are suffering as a result, especially solid waste. Cities such as Dallas have had to delay solid waste collection services due to driver shortages. Austin Resource Recovery is submitting this proposal to avoid the enactment of similar service cutbacks. Austin Resource Recovery is proposing the following plans to address CDL Driver employee shortages. *Commissioner White asked, these hourly rates, I'm wondering how these hourly rates were determined and, I guess just as a kind of statement they still seem very low to me. I say that because I see like, you know, I'll go restaurant like hiring for \$17 an hour and, that to me seems like easier work than being out on a, you know, a garbage truck. and I'm not saying there are no other benefits to being a city employee, but I'm just saying the early rates still seems low to me. I also was trying to do some research on what the actual living wage is now, and it seems that it is higher than us. If you can speak to what went into these numbers and all that, and I appreciate it. Carina replied, there was a lot of dialogue, and a lot of collaboration with, compensation, the compensation team at the city of Boston, we had put forth a number of proposals and we had benchmarked ourselves with cities that were similarly sized to us, but we also benchmark ourselves to agencies that we lose our personnel to cement, Tesla, there's a number of agencies that are popping up, within the greater Austin area and there was a lot of back and forth, and this is what we were able to negotiate. I don't know if that completely answers your question, but we had targeted 22 to \$23 an hour for starting. Ken Snipes Director ARR replied, we agree that these numbers are a bit low, and we propose that we will continue to push the numbers, we want to continue to survey the landscape to make sure that we're being as competitive as we think we need to be as Carina Hanson said, we need to be in that 23 to \$24 an hour range to be competitive with the market. As you know, right now we have a critical staff shortage where about 50, drivers short, or just under that right now and we're working hard to try to close the loop. We've identified that pay is one of the major factors one of the major reasons that, is contributing to this gap. So, we'll continue to work hard to close this gap. the rest of the way as we continue to work, to get more drivers on board. Carina replied we did get it passed and it will be active on this pay stub for new for employees. So, they will see this on February 18 pay, statement, over, let's see over, let's see how many 58 employees are going to benefit from an \$80 stipend per paycheck. That is something, it, it, it makes some debt for those employees. We're actively using their commercial driver's license, a which is a highly coveted, license. So, there are some other initiatives that we've been trying to push. We pushed for the, the stipend used to be for the class, the commercial driver's license when you received it. It was a, it was a very small amount, so we pushed that up to a dollar amount. again, we do have a way to go. We instituted a safety incentive as well. We want to try and be as creative as we can. So, every quarter, we issue \$125 for our operations employees, and that impacts approximately 321 drivers. There are a few things that, that we are attempting to do while we're still working to Get that entry pay at a higher, more acceptable rate. Chair Acuna replied, Can I like to ask you and staff*

and Carina, what can we do as a commission to keep this process going? I mean, what can we do to make sure that we get the urgency out there? Make sure that, you know, I, I guess that the council and city management understand that how sure of is truly. I mean, I think there's support for what we're trying to do in terms of, raising awareness that, you know, we need to appropriately pay the staff that perform this work is very hard work. Ken Snipes replied I think there's support for what we're trying to do in terms of, raising awareness that, you know, we need to appropriately pay the staff that perform this work is very hard work. It's very difficult work, is what we really need is just that support and to continue to help us move the move, the envelope. Commissioner Kaiba White replied wondering what the timeline is for further adjustments? Ken Snipes replied We're working on them right now we just finished the rollout of this phase of it, and we're going to continue to push forward again, we have a target in mind and we tried to create, several other opportunities through the things that you just heard about, which were, which included the, the safety bonus, the referral bonus and, and those, those types of other things. But our goal is ultimately to move the bar on the base pay rate because, that typically is what entry-level people or people that we're trying to represent ourselves to is a great organization to work for that's typically what they look at so those numbers, or what, you know, help people down the road because they actually count towards their retirement long-term and so we really want to continue to push the bar. Like I said, our goal right now is to get us probably in that 22 to \$24 an hour range. We think that is the range that we will need to be at to make us competitive and, as Corina mentioned, we've, kind of looked at as some of our peer cities. I'm asking now that we not only look at our peer cities that are here in Texas, but that we also look at cities that have a similar cost of living. In that space where we're now looking at Portland, Seattle, dc, Boston, and cities like that, that would help us better understand what the cost of living should be, and what an appropriate pay rate should be, in this locale for this body of work. Commissioner White replied There's a lot of elements there that you're working on, but that you're, it sounds like you and I are in the, have the same opinion that, that, that base pay rate is the most important one so sorry to ask again, I just, didn't quite, it sounds like you're, you're in motion already on that, but there's kind of no set timeline for making another decision, is that correct? Ken Snipes replied That's correct. No, not right now, but we are actively working on it and continuing to put information together and working right now, actually with some of our partner agencies who are also struggling with getting staff and so I think that's part of the effort going forward, is to, to kind of figure out what we can do across the board, but also making sure that we maintain a keen focus on the specific body of work that we're responsible for performing. Carina replied two things to add one, I'm going to take it from something Ken had spoken to and another conversation, and that is emphasizing how you can help, you know, promote ARR. A lot of agencies don't look at ARR as an enterprise department, as a utility department, but our services are very much in line with utility water, energy, and there's the same questions are not asked of water and energy when they go to increase pay that are asked of us. So I think if individuals can start viewing this agency more as an enterprise that is definitely going to help push the needle, as it relates to timeframe, typically what happens whenever we propose something to compensation is they want us to be able to come back with demonstrated statistics of how it's either not helped or really not helped and so that's what we'll also be pulling together is demonstrating we did make this increase. We're still not seeing the needle move as it relates to the employees that we're getting to join our department and to stay in our department. Chair Acuna replied If I'm not mistaken, I think the, TCEQ and the Texas Department of Health consider garbage collection, a health and safety issue, if it's not done, there will be some health and safety challenges coming down the road, as we have learned in previous experiences. Commissioner Rothrock replied along those lines of, reiterating Kaiba this sentiment about, it seems like we're all on board with advocating for a higher starting pay for these employees. So, I'm not sure if city council had just waited that amount of funding for the hires, or if there wasn't enough cinema to validate the reasoning, to have it to be the \$23 an hour starting but, it seems like if we need to have some sort of validation for having that \$23 an hour, instead of the 17, it could be like a hazmat qualification. These people are dealing with hazardous materials. This is you know a difficult role that is physically demanding and I'm not, I'm not sure what the barrier is for, bumping it up to, it seems like a level that we all agree upon is fair and equitable for them. Chair Acuna replied I think it's budgeting and that's not, correct? Please correct me. But a budgeting is a very important thing. I mean, we set our budgets. In fact, our budget conversation begins, I think next month it will not mistake. So, this would be something to consider when we're looking at our proposed 20, 22, 23 budget. I mean, how do we, how do we bring a wage compensation to par with the private sector and

literally with some of the other departments, how do we, bring us to an equal level as that? Ken Snipes replied just say commissioner and chairman, budget's always a concern or a consideration that we pay Close attention to but, one of the things that you know, it makes the process for moving the bar, a little bit more incremental and, and, you know, it happens in steps that the city has to review the, , wages and salaries across the entire enterprise and so there's a, a bit more caution and review and study that needs to happen to move the bar, , you know, a significant amount and so, if you kind of look at it from the standpoint and we were at \$15, , and to go from 15 to 24 is a huge jump when major impacts across the entire city. So, I think the, the apprehension is to make sure we really know what the final cost is going to be to move the bar, across the entire enterprise, understanding the impacts on rates and rate increases, for not just the, the body of work that ARR performs, but all the functions across the city. Commissioner Ian Steyaert replied that all makes perfect sense, and it seems like at some point it could be that there is a policy that has a formula to do with, you know, what the rates look like in other comparable cities, et cetera, as has already been mentioned and make it less of a, well, we feel like it should be higher discussion. More of, we need to pay people equitable amounts, given where our city sets, where we said compared to other cities where this job fits within that scale and then, we have to, you know, then we get rates in line, , in terms of what people have to pay in order to give pay equitably and kind of just take it out of the hands of, an emotional thing and more formulaic. It seems, I'm not sure if there's an action item there, but it'd be great if we could get in that direction. Ken Snipes replied One other thing I want to highlight that we're looking at as well is understanding the issues with affordability in our city and the fact that most of our entry level workers can no longer afford to live in the city. So as a \$17 an hour wage increase or \$2 an hour wage increased to \$17 at this point, is realized completely differently when you live in, say colleen or in San Antonio, which is where some of our folks live and they commute to Austin, you know, to work for us, but they're having to consume quite a bit, , in terms of fuel wear and tear on their vehicles. So, we really think that we have, the need to pay our people more and we should be paying them more and, and that's the goal is to figure out, you know, how do we do that, while still protecting the entire enterprise, but making sure that we do have a focus on what the real need is. And we think that's to appropriately, you know, pay people. Chair Acuna replied And I think there was a resolution presented with this that hopefully the commission commissioners had a chance to review and any questions to that, or any additions to this resolution, please feel free to add those or comment. Commissioner Rothrock replied regarding what Ian had just mentioned about the housing, that's something that I was thinking about during the presentation is if they're struggling to retain employees and the pay is not on par, then how are they dealing with the housing? Is this something that could be offered if we can have this bump from 15 to 17 with, is there any sort of like housing benefit that we could offer them as well that the city could offer as part of like a hiring package? Chair Acuna replied It's ironic you, you're asking that, the director and I have been back and forth reviewing some of the potential opportunities, such as housing. We have some great parcels of properties that are in Austin. We've got a main facility on eight 12 that is gone through closure. It's been closed for 20 years. It's given, it's been given the green light and as a result could we, could we hypothetically develop that and, and provide some, some housing as well as you know the eco industrial development that we've talked about in the past. Can we also put a housing component on this, on this property? And if we could, is it feasible to provide some housing to City of Austin employees, not just AAR, but the entire spectrum of city employees, who, again, don't probably make the same as a computer analyst over at, Facebook or google, but still doesn't deserve to be driving in from clean or San Antonio to s to work. So, our, our conversation conversations are there, I should say now they were going to carry, hopefully cover that in April at our, April meeting with some, with some presentations and thoughts on that. Ken Snipes replied just a quick note to answer your question, or at least highlight a couple of things. we have done some preliminary inquiries about housing and housing support for staff, as you know, the city is broadly reviewing and considering, affordable housing, across the entire city and preliminarily, what we heard is, anti-discrimination laws would prevent us from reserving housing, just for city staff. So, city employees could live in that housing, but we couldn't carve out say, you know, a hundred, homes or units for just city employees. So as the chairman mentioned, we have had conversations about what we can do on properties that the city owns but it will be problematic to reserve those dwellings just for city personnel. Commissioner White replied can someone from ARR tell us approximately the percentage of the workers who are involved in the collection that are people of color? Carina replied to the percentage of workers who are involved in collection a collection of trash, correct? It

ranges between three 50 to 360 employees as an okay We, yes, we have temporary positions that range anywhere between 50 and 60. So those individuals are called upon to collect trash, but then as far as our regular positions, we, we usually have been between three 50, 3 43 50 employees. Commissioner Masino replied I would like to know what we can do to, help staff in this. What, what is the message that we can amplify, not just with this resolution, but maybe in other ways to make this happen as quickly as possible, understanding that there is a process et cetera, but, but what is the, the avenue that will get us where we need to be as quickly as possible? Ken Snipes replied, I think the support that we would need and would appreciate is just helping us call attention broadly to the issues so that we received the support that we need to, you know, pay people on our staff more this is likely to trigger a rate increase if we go much more than we have already. And so where the rate increase comes a lot of consternation sometimes from, you know, different you know, people and so we would just appreciate support and addressing the concerns and call attention to the need and the fact that the city is growing at an exponential rate and we need to be able to grow Commissioner White replied we might be able to add another, whereas, I just know that at least the folks serving my street are generally people of color and it looks like hard work to me and so I think that we should call this out as a racial justice issue and I think we could perhaps also consider calling this out in a certain extent, maybe a climate issue cause hearing that people are driving in from Killeen you know, if we're trying to reduce our emissions and trying to have a more equitable city, it seems like we are utterly failing. If our compensation is forcing people to drive for, you know, great distances from outside of the city, to work at what would essentially be poverty wages here. So, I think maybe we could add something to that effect. Commissioner Masino replied I don't see any objection to maybe making a reference to wanting to reduce commute times and, and climate impact, on the racial justice implications. I don't know that we necessarily need the specific demographics of the city employees to make that, to include that kind of language. I would want to be clear that we're talking about pay across the board for all the employees, regardless of whether there's a personal racial justice impacts for them. Commissioner White replied so talking about this as a sector where there may be racial justice implications, I'm super comfortable with, but in that broad sense, right? Not on an individual level where we're talking about, different, different impact for employees who are people of color versus not. So that's the only thing we want to be careful, but in the phrasing, I believe. Carina replied So currently those were in collections for garbage recycling, trash. They represent people of color represent 97.6, 4%. Commissioner Rothrock replied the language makes me a little bit hesitant with e and I completely agree with, it's ridiculous to think we're making any impacts on our climate. If we're having our employees for the city drive out of town to come here and pick up our trash, but I don't want to dissuade people that need a job from traveling here from out of town that want to work here and I don't want the language to imply that we don't want them, you know what I mean? So, and I don't want it to be to where there is a, there's a preference selected that if they're out of town, then they don't have a chance to get hired. and I just, I'm, I'm a little bit hesitant on that, on that regard. Is there a way we can word it to reflect that probably a number of these people might've lived in Austin at one point, and now don't live in Austin without addressed that concern? If they, if they're being pushed out of Austin due to due to not having the financial means to stay, but they still want to keep employed then, I think that that language holds true. but I, I do wish that we could keep them here, rather than having them get pushed out and then having language that keeps them from staying employed. Well, I certainly, wasn't trying to imply that we shouldn't employ them just more the, if we aren't paying people enough so that they can live here, then it's not sustainable. so let me try again, maybe something more along the lines of, whereas low wages, low wages are a primary factor that forces people to move outside of Austin that's increasing travel distances and, and greenhouse gas emissions associated with travel, which was not aligned with the Austin climate equity plan. I like that and I think it puts the onus on whenever we revisit this, the next time we have a budget talk, I think this line item will reiterate this, the sentiment and make it more, strengthened to be able to push for a higher wage or than to keep them here.

Chair Gerard Acuna entertained a motion to recommend the Resolution Commissioner Commissioner Kaiba White the first motion for approval, A second motion was provided by Commissioner Amanda Masino Recommend unanimously by the Zero Waste Advisory Commission on a 9-0 vote

2d. Discussion and Action: Trash/Water Wheel on Lady Bird Lake Update-Kaiba White

Commissioner Kaiba White stated for new information for some of our members who have joined since then, I think I would have to look back again at the date and the resolution, but almost two years ago, we passed a resolution, asking or consideration of a trash wheel or wheels on Ladybird Lake. These have been used in other places and they literally just sit there and turn and pull trash out of whatever body of water, and also to look at what it would take to have sufficient staff to be pro litter problem in Austin under control so what I'm looking for as a follow-up really on that resolution that we already adopted as a body, and specifically around the trash wheel, you know, has a technical feasibility study, you know, conducted on, on, would that work in the lake here? Are there specific places, would it that it would work or not work? What would the cost be to purchase or install what's the operation look like? Do you have any information on those things? Watershed representative Ramesh Swaminathan replied I think you had asked about a resolution, which I believe, perhaps somebody from ARR or some personnel sort of, what are we in concept? The only place it could work in city of Austin would be ladybird lake because it requires a certain amount of debt, and we did look at it awhile back and we determined at that point. It's not a very good match it kind of works in a very large system where the strong driven trash floats around a lot, but in the native wood lake, what happens is that it's relatively narrow and flash quickly moves to the, to the margins and downstream. So, it's difficult to put a trash to kind of be floating so that they cannot go and pick it up and discharge it into sort of what happens is there's a boat kind of structure were discharged just takes it. So, we don't really have a place where it, it works very well for, except for lady bird lake and even there, we found out that it doesn't work and furthermore, I think in lady bird lake, we have other, other issues led to the biology, the natural ecosystems of the free-floating garbage and the other things that are there. So, the wheel could sort of uproot and sort of possible damage to the vegetation in the lake itself. That is also not very desirable. One of the reasons we decided was, that was not a good option for us. We did look at it at a different location for the walnut creek panel at the end, but even there it's a relatively smaller pond, so we don't have a location to install it. It used to be a good discharge. It, we have, management systems at the inlet itself where the water pushes the degree to a mechanical bar screen, and we have systems to pick up the trash. So that's how we, we landed doing that. I will also share with you that Ladybird Lake and Washington section, we do have a crew that meets and most floatable's from Ladybird Lake and having a produce manager is junk. If you can offer more data on what the crew sizes and when we stretch, we pick up model performance measures are, if you, if you want it but just to answer your question, the water beans, we did look at ladybird lake. No, we didn't do like this full-fledged study or anything, but just based on preliminary evaluation, it said it's not a good choice for us. Commissioner Rothrock replied regarding the volume of, of trash, that's been accumulating and, in the lake, since the back ban was the bags, since the camping ban was reinstated, has the volume of trash been reduced? That's been cleaned up and the, and the lake? Ramesh replied I don't know if we have points at the data with the, with the camping ban and the, the trash accumulation in the lake, but it also shared that a lot of that also coincided with the covid issue. So covid has impacted our staff in a very significant way so we have been unable to provide the level of service that we would normally put in the lake because a lot of our staff have been back at the covid and we've had literally lean workforce because of covid and that has probably has a bigger act on the lake rather than the camping ordinance but I can, for a fact, in you with the camping ordinance by itself, doesn't increase trash in the lake. If that's what you're asking is that, oh, yeah, I was just curious if since then, the volume of trash, if it's been, if it's come down or if it's increased. Commissioner White replied, I appreciate that you looked into this at some level, but I have to say given that it was now two years ago, cause I looked back and it was February 19th, 2020 that we took this action and, that was before, I mean, technically covid had started, but there wasn't staffing issues because of covid back then and we only took action because it was already a significant problem then. So, I don't think we can, you know, say that it's, you know, covid or, that is causing the problem. I get that, that, is a factor in, in perhaps addressing, addressing the problem. Granted so just wanted to say that, but also, I guess I would like to see if what it is that y'all looked at, cause in terms of the feasibility, like, you know, what depth is needed, how deep does the water wheel expand? What, you know, I mean, I hear you on the ecology. I want the ecology of the lake to be intact too, but you know, how much trash could it take out versus maybe one small area, not having as much stuff growing in it? You know, these are the questions I think that should be considered as opposed to just, it's not the perfect spot for it. So, we're not going to do

anything? Are you willing to share more detailed information with this commission? Ramesh replied I have shared all the information I have, and I will share with you with that. The, what are, what have, what has informed me so far is a lot of work being done and we have not done a detailed, visibility of it. Other than that, we looked at it, we determined the lake would not be a good choice just because the way the trash, based on our experience, maintaining the lake, the debris tends to go to the shores, and it does not stay in the middle of the middle of the lake. So that's what we've done, but I guess I would, I can take that back as a homework item to see if we can be on a spirit but, at this point I have shared with the only permission.

Commissioner White replied you know, I think we have a real problem here in Austin with dealing with our garbage aside from diversion issues and I have also kayaked downstream of lady bird lake and seeing the horrendous amount of plastic and other garbage, but plastic stands out that is all along the shores and up in the trees from flood events so it's, you know, we are contributing to the very serious plastic pollution crisis that is now the global issue, almost unskilled with climate change and that's why I'm bringing this back up at this commission so that we can come up with solutions and maybe it's not trash wheels. I don't think that that is the only solution for sure, but I think we must do something. Chair Acuna replied I want to believe we're in agreement with having to do something now, what is the solution that gets, us a clean lake remission would love to have some additional information if we could go back and look at, you know, some other options. I don't know if that would be watershed protection or would that be Austin resource recovery, but if we can figure out, you know, some additional solutions and, and commissioner White, I must echo your sentiments. I mean, I am hanging out down at town lake and I see the, you know, after big events, flood events and or after a, a festival, or a busy weekend, you're going to find a lot of the trash that is collected and floating in our beautiful Ladybird Lake. Now, is there any way to, to, to solve that and to, at least to remediate that I'm sure there is what the solution is? I don't know, just yet.

Ramesh replied we do have a crew within our field operations division, which does go up on the boat into, go into the lake like I said, I have a, you know, a division manager or cs don't own operations. name's John Beachy, division manager with the watershed protection department that oversees downtown operations, including our lady bird lake maintenance crew. I'm just a little bit of background on the maintenance crew itself has been an been in existence for over for over about 20 years and so we have a large depth of knowledge of the, of the trash situation out on the lake and what are some solutions that work and what are some that are a little bit more challenging? , one of the things that kind of pointed out was our focus on some of the ecological concerns for that and historically our numbers, , going back earlier in the decades of we were able to pull out, we were, , collecting debris in the magnitudes of, you know, a couple of hundred tons of a year in the mid-2015, we made the decision as a department to kind of shift that debris collection from, any type of logs or things like that, organic material to solely focus on the trash and once that happened in the about 2016, we moved down closer to 16 tons and then we had some years after that, that had been impacted for various reasons currently to this year, we're about six tons of debris removal, and we use all methods of doing this. So, we, the things that we have found most effective, unfortunately isn't the mechanical means or technology advances, trying to get the trash out of the lake is, labor intensive. and so, it was really using the elbow, greets, putting people in waiters, deploying them with a series of boats. We have, we have different sized boats to use for different size locations, you know, smaller boats to get under the boardwalk and those types of things. We have six full-time employees that are dedicated to addressing the concerns on the lake and we have an additional temporary employee, currently, and then we also utilize citizens. So, this, this week we have a partnership with KAB is we are included as, as part of that and we have six cleanups a year, 2020 and 2021 was impacted with covid and so a lot of those didn't happen, but we have one of those, this coming Saturday, or we kept up where's up a ton of trash on there. it's 13 miles of shoreline that we look to do this. We've segmented it out in 22 segments with the focus on some of the more higher visible areas, but we are aware that there's a significant amount of trash, but what we have found in the past when we've used, tried to, , utilize some or mechanical equipment, we had a, a skimmer boat, , in the late nineties, early two thousands that would drive around with a conveyor belt that you could use to try to grab trash and then we had a trash boat that kind of, you can drive around as a stranger in income. It sucks it up both of those things we have found were, were less efficient than just doing it manually and we would figure the, the water wheel would be a similar approach. and part of the challenge is, is when you put something in there, it's indiscriminate of a plastic or log or a vegetation and so you've

ended up on a ratio of about eight to, getting organic material out of the lake with those type of applications, as opposed to a trash and so then you're dealt with, , having to, , manage a bunch of, , wet, , organic material that actually provides an ecological function in which, , and then it, then it adds to the waste stream if we have to haul it, because once you combine them, you can't get them separated. Those are some of the concerns when you're talking about a mechanical system, like a waterwheel, you know, w we looked at, some of the applications that in like the Baltimore harbor and stuff like that, it, it just adds to some, some challenges that we feel is better handled just with more hands-on hands-on approach. Commissioner Masino replied to A quick question, is there any way to, to pilot this technology, test it out? things may be very different now, compared to those boats from, several decades ago. So, is there a way to, trial something or, potentially look at what the ratio of organic to plastic is like in other cities that are doing this? Like what were, or I don't know any others, I guess you mentioned Baltimore, you know, we could Ramesh replied I think john described, some of those issues that are sort of the very sort of the very principle of these devices are they are, they're not selective in what they pick up. They go by size. So, when they pick up something, they'll pick up trash and they will pick up logs, they'll pick up weeds, they'll pick up islands of Glenridge station. I mean, they'll just pick up everything and we really don't want them to do that, which is why we have decided to do sort of making a man will be, so we would select to become, we can definitely look at technologies, which are, I mean, we just know innovative technologies that are very selective in saying we just pick up plastic, trash versus not being able to plant or any floating medication. So, it's, it's essentially, they just pick up everything. We don't want them to become just a trash can we should look at it to see if they're out there. I'm not sure full finished pilot is something we can come into at this point. Commissioner White replied I, I just want to acknowledge that, you know, it, it might not be the solution for, for our application here. I would appreciate it, you know, if you wouldn't take another, you know, kind of, , maybe closer look, since it sounds like there was some pretty kind of preliminary assumptions made and maybe they're correct, but maybe it's something that can help, but let's assume that that you're right and that it's not the application, , or in, you know, it's not the right place for something like that. Then I guess it kind of goes to the other piece of this resolution that we adopted, which is what is the level of staffing that is needed and whether it's ARR funded through the clean community fee or Watershed, you know, what is the, what is, what is needed to make it? So, our waste from Austin is not heading down the screen, whether it goes into the lake, or if you're over on the east side, Like I am, it might not even hit the lake. It should go straight from the stream into the river and so we don't even have the chance to get it out of the lake before it goes down but it's still causing a problem even if we don't see it in the lake. So, I guess that's kind of the other question and I'm cause I'm hearing from y'all, but all right, it's just, you know, people power that is most effective at four. If we take that at face value, how many more people would be needed to really do this job? and I realize you probably can't answer that here tonight, but that's, you know, I think what was the intention of our resolution Ramesh replied absolutely So the clean creek has something maybe cannot speak to so when we look at ladybird lake, , what should protection we made in all of open waterways and lady bird lake is a very big part of it. So, we look at trash and things of that nature across the board, not just make a big lake. So, any kind of colonization we look at staffing for that we'll include all of them, not just a little bit like so we are looking at doing some work on that right now, what it said is looking at, during the study that they have done the study and so the results of that is not complete yet, so I think work has been done on it. So, I think the results of that is going to come back and you'll be back into study, will inform us on some additional details. Ken Snipes replied so recently we established a crew of folks that would take on cleaning the creek areas throughout the various drainages throughout the city of Austin and went back to the pay issue again, but we've had trouble hiring and filling out that team of, of folks but we have been performing the work. and the goal there is to prevent the materials from traveling down the creek drainage's to the river, to the to the lake and a lot of the work that we have been doing has been centered around cleaning and camp mints that are in those creek drainage's and in those, shared areas and I mean, it has been effective, but there's a lot of ground to cover the work is still fairly new, so we haven't yet had a chance to really assess how effective it is across the entire city. So, we're still in the infancy of, establishing that team, filling out the team to fully staff it and understanding the benefits of what we've been able to clean from the work that's been done so far. I would imagine somewhere closer towards the end of the year, we may have a bit more data send at that time we can have a better assessment of maybe, in terms of, you know, what we're seeing and how effective it is at

preventing materials from getting into those waterways. Richard McHale replied I just want, I kind of reiterate what, what Ramesh would say you know, a lot of this before we decide that we need to throw more most at this, you know, we, we just need to get back to our mainstream. I mean, if we, the bacon's degree that encode it, it's really impacted those crews, but also other crews. So, during this, over the past couple of years, because of the staffing shortage that we've also had to cut back on some of our streets we've been activities. So that also has led to release material and getting to be with those waterways. So, I think we're able to recover from covid and we get staffing levels back up, or we'll be able to get all these services back and running and at that point, then we need to evaluate, you know, what additional staffing we need to put towards that. Commissioner White replied I was just wondering; you mentioned the wage for the cleanup crew. What is the wage for those employees? Amy Slagle replied to an associate level or operator trainees, which is our entry-level positions in that believe that's a 16 or \$17 an hour. Commissioner Rothrock replied I think all of this is sort of solidifies why I even wanted to bring this up in the first place, because with the budget cuts, We can't necessarily rely on the increased trash pickup volume or the city staff to get it and because of covid and the status of our world at this point, we can't re really rely on community organization and volunteers to pick up the volume so I think what we really need brass tacks is some sort of structure, some sort of net our catchment system to pick up everything before it goes down to Bastrop and I don't know if the, if there's any sort of communication with the city of fascia, if a lot of our waste gets cycled down to them that isn't caught but it just seems like with everything that we've stated, that is an issue with why we have lower numbers of pickup with our tonnage, like in 2018, it was 16.7 times that was picked up based on this cake, an article and 2021, it was 7.4 tons, but that's only reporting it because there wasn't much picked up because of covid. So, there was still probably a lot of garbage that just was not picked up and pointed downstream. So, it just seems like this rate iterates, the whole point that Kaiba brought up this motion in the first place that we need some sort of structure in place. Commissioner White replied I am wondering why there is no place on the Austin, 311 app to report issues that, you know, require cleanup attention. I can report that somebody has their grass too high, but I can't say that there's like a pile of trash on my street, which literally happens because people come and dump things. Amy Slagle replied we, , had some discussions about that with Austin 3, 1, 1, and it is still a call and service report letter primarily reported through a street sweeping requests we would have to take a look and see if we could add to the mobile app, but that brings in a lot of opportunities for situations where people will continuously reporting, reporting camp mints and literacy associated with that, or maybe just the single plastic bottle. So, if it would cast a wide net and it could overwhelm a workload, so it's something we really need to take into consideration.

2e. Discussion and Action: Recycling Contract Processing Contracts Update- Victoria Rieger

Victoria Rieger ARR, is seeking a favorable recommendation requesting to authorize the negotiation and execution of our second amended and restated service schedule to the city's existing single stream recycling contract with Balconies resources in Texas Disposal Systems (TDS) on August 19th, the department informed this commission of the ongoing contract negotiations with both vendors tonight. Victoria provided a brief update on the results of those negotiations. Commissioner Masino I'm afraid it might be a long answer asking for potentially a complicated answer would it be possible to see a scenario that shows us what this looks like, for each vendor? So, like assuming, the same tonnage goes to balconies and to TDS then what would those numbers be like for the gross net market versus gross market? Like just kind of walk us through what that looks like for the city, from each one, because with the calculations being done differently, it is a little harder to track what the impact is for the city? Victoria replied I mean, the comparison is, is different and the single stream recycling revenue report, which we submit to you guys monthly, shows the impact and you'll see if you've looked at the backup material we've notated on there, that the two vendors are, calculating the revenue share with a different formula. So we tried to point that out, at, when we, when we evaluated, the award percent, we definitely took a look at, you know, ran lots of numbers, took a look at, , different scenarios, and, you know, based on their pricing proposals and we did, you know, runs in areas such as those that you described, if each vendor were to receive the same amount, what is this going to look like? So, we have, we have all that financial analysis as backup material you know, I can certainly come back at another time and kind of walk you through that if you so choose. Chair Acuna replied I mean, just to familiarize the commission on, on that process, but, in the interim, the last page of the director's report kind of gives you an idea of what we are looking at here and literally the return on that investment. When you look at that, I mean, obviously one contract is beneficial to the city when market conditions are high, and the other contract is literally beneficial when prices are extremely low. It literally just keeps us from, from paying way, way too much. My concerns were always the committed volumes that we were sending over to the respective vendors. I mean, I think in the initial contract negotiations way back when we had looked at maybe a thousand tons committed to, to each vendor, and then obviously the balance going to whoever provides the greatest return to, to the city and that again, that was a long time ago that ship has sailed. So here we are today. Commissioner Masino replied I think that's what I was trying to get at the, I would like to better understand the difference between when the market, when the recycling market is favorable and when it's not and so yes, appreciating we get the monthly report et cetera. I still don't quite grasp like where that tipping point is and, looking at the individual material pricing versus that sort of combined pricing, I think if we have time at a later meeting, I would like a little more detail on that to understand what's going on. Commissioner White replied Well, if somebody from Texas Disposal Systems (TDS) is on the line, I am wondering if they will speak to why they were unwilling to contribute to the education, be they're present here? Brent Gregory (TDS) replied to the reason we chose not to agree to that, we had proposed our pricing models early in the process. Then later it came several different requests, and we chose not to agree to a simple net change in the per ton value of a dollar 50. We did offer the city the option to for purposes of accounting and moving money into an education fee, charging a dollar 50 surcharge, and paying back the dollar 50. we've done that in the past with a facility fee but our processing fee and revenue share that was calculated very tight. markets go up and markets go down and, and that's the reason we chose to stick with our, our revenue sharing processing fee proposals, rather than at the end of the game. Just agree to another dollar 50 per ton. Commissioner White replied to Victoria, is there a way that those, some amount of those dollars can be used for education? Victoria replied that is what the customer, excuse me, customer education fee is designed to do, we plan to utilize every single, penny in, in educating our recycling customers. Victoria replied the, so the negotiation period on the contract terms has already come and gone. So in terms of, of, you know, an actual customer education fee, we couldn't actually assess that to them we couldn't take it out of what it is that they're paying us and call it a customer education fee you know, that, that the money that, that we receive, , which, you know, historically has, has, , not been actual, in the positive that would be able to contribute to, to our customer education efforts. Certainly, if the markets remain high, you know, we

are, we're going to invest, as much as we can into ensuring that our customers do the right thing and know how to recycle so that the city can continue receiving the benefits from them, the higher commodity values.

Director's Report

Commissioner Masino replied I did have a question about the *Lead Abatement services*. Is that where are those services being provided? It wasn't clear from the description in the report. Victoria replied ARR provides a remediation service, the brownfields remediation office within ARR does soil remediation, lead remediation as best as remediation and that's what that solicitation is designed to support.

Brent, do you want to add anything to that? Brent oversees the contract development, so he might have a little bit more detailed on that. Brent Paige, financial manager, budget, and contract development, essentially Victoria with Brent that what the patient is to assist our brownfield group within our department it's also to help support some of the revolving loan funds that we have, currently, those there, the brownfield group is looking at projects across the city, that need, these led, abatement services. Those could be, internal or external through the city of Austin. Currently, there are two internal projects for the city that we are working with, and the brownfield group is currently looking for external parties to, utilize their revolving loan fund with. Commissioner Masino replied I noticed it said no existing contract. So, it's this adding to the scope of what is under brown fields or separating out, led into a different contract where originally it was somewhere else. Brent replied So there are currently, any bad abatement is not handled internal to the city of Austin is not handled by, the brownfield group, contracted it out via a, a rotation list. And this is going to establish a contract with ARR specifically, to provide these services for specifically our brownfield. Commissioner White replied I was just wondering about the, *waiver*. What, what, kind of situations allow waivers or result in weight? Like what are the situations that result in waivers being approved? Gena McKinley, ARR strategic initiatives, division manager replied I believe we have Jason McCombs on the line, but I think Kaiba, you are asking about the URO and what kinds of things would qualify for waivers. Commissioner White replied I mean, I was specifically looking at the multifamily, but I guess for either that or commercial, I'm just curious, you know, what's an acceptable reason to not maybe sometimes have that. Gena replied I'll have Jason give you additional detail, but there are certain things like space restrictions and other things, and we'll often go out and do site assessments to evaluate the site and confirmed that there, there isn't space available and provide alternatives for complying with the URO? Jason McCombs ARR replied So as part of the, your submission there every year, there is an opportunity to provide waivers we do track them very closely. We review them closely every year its space is probably the biggest one that we say, just lack of sufficient space. but if we do, you know, when we run into days, we do provide education teams to go out there and talk to them and try to requite solutions. you know, sometimes lack of material, like, substantial materials. You know, sometimes we have businesses, for example, like ice vending machines technically fall under the euro. And so, you know, there's not the kind of a reasonable, you know, recycling outlet from, from a recycling bending building. So, it's things like that So, you know, there's, what does it mean? Alternative materials, capacity, and space? I think those are the big ones, but we don't want to prove a whole lot but like I said, we do, we do track it closely and we do get them in, and we follow up with education teams on pretty much all of them. Commissioner Rothrock replied I was interested in, finding out a little bit more about the beyond 34 and it looks like, it looks like Austin and Philadelphia were awarded some sort of benefit to help us reach our zero waste schools and carbon neutrality goals and it's going to allow Us a budget or, it just snowballs type of resources for education. that all is involved with the beyond 34 that was awarded to us? Gena replied this was an exciting opportunity, that the city of Austin was provided the us chamber of commerce has an initiative called beyond 34, the 34. and that title refers to the national recycling rates. So, attempting to assist cities across the country and extending beyond that 34%. and what it provides to us is an opportunity to work in concert with the chamber, as well as the city of Philadelphia, and have access to some resources, to create a strategy, and develop opportunity areas for circularity projects in Austin. and that's what that looks like is a yearlong agreement. So we're actively working right now with a consulting firm out of the Netherlands called metabolic and doing the initial phase of that process is really doing it heavy data analysis, or providing all kinds of data from our waste stream and other sustainability type data, water, data, energy data to the consulting firm, at no cost to the

city, this is supported through the chamber, so that they can do a technical analysis and then the next part of that process will then be to post public stakeholder meetings and really involve the community. It's something we'd like to extend an invitation to this commission to be a part of, and to have conversations and identify opportunity areas within the community and look at ways to support those. So, it's exciting. It provides us some additional resource and technical assistance support at really no cost to the city other than our time and helping to facilitate the effort. So that's a, that's a high level, happy to provide you more detail if needed after the fact.

Commissioner Rothrock replied it sounds exciting and looking through it with our partner of Philadelphia and the process, they have a little bit more of a stringent goal than we do, because they want to beat us by five years by being 90% zero waste by 2035, and they have uttered free attached to it. and I don't think we have that attached to our zero-waste school of being litter free doing. I mean, I would argue that we've, we would like to be literary as a city, but it's not something that's stated in our zero-waste goal is stated as 90% diversion by the year 2040.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Future FM 812 Landfill Potential (April)
- 2022 Annual ZWAC Retreat (April)
- Open Gov Demo (May)
- Keep Austin Beautiful Update (August)
- Small Minority Business Resources (SMBR) Future Opportunities and Involvement
- Budget Recommendations

Meeting Adjourned at 7:49 pm