

Economic Opportunity Committee Meeting Transcript – 10/10/2016

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>> Houston: Good afternoon. My name is Ora Houston and I'm the assistant vice chair of the economic opportunity committee. We have a quorum now and so we will call this meeting of the committee together. It's Monday, October the 10th, at 2016 and the time is 2:26 P.M. I want to remind everybody that councilmember troxclair is not here today because her daughter is about five weeks old and we wish her well and say hello. The first item on the agenda is the minutes. Do I have a motion? Councilmember pool, councilmember Casar. All in favor let it be known by saying aye. Carries unanimously with councilmember troxclair off the dais. Citizens communication, as far as I can tell we have none. If there is someone who didn't sign up at the kiosk, raise your hand. I don't see anyone so number 3, discussion and approval of the nominations to the visitor impact task force. As many of you know, on August the 18th, council passed resolution 2016-0818-075 which created a task force which will be charged with evaluating existing uses of the hotel occupancy taxes and exploring potential new uses for those funds which total around 90 million dollar. The resolution tasked this committee with nominating five members, one from the special events industry, one from hotel industry, two community members who represent the tourism task force and one representing the restaurant industry. Are there nominations?

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>> Pool: Would you like a motion? >> Houston: We have a list of people who we would like to recommend to serve in this capacity. For the special events industry, Julie nianhoff, for the restaurant industry Steven sternshine. The hotel industry, Sheila -- Shelly shadock. Tourism workforce Ashland katalia. And for the tourism workforce Mary Davidson. >> Pool: I have a question on Mary Davidson. She is not a city of Austin resident. She is in Leander. So I they -- >> Houston: We could get a waiver for that if that's somebody that you want on the task force. >> Pool: Do we already have one of those in place? >> [Inaudible] >> Pool: So when we make the recommendations to council, then that will be part of the recommendations that we waive the requirement for residency. Okay. Great. Thank you. >> Casar: My only question about this and maybe you all can answer, somebody on the dais can, I think Steve sternshine represents the red river merchant and -- I'm not sure if restaurant industry is the best place to place him. I'm very supportive of having him on the task force, but while you can get food at some of the locations on red river, I think it's -- I wouldn't want to run into trouble by it not being very clear -- he's just not -- the restaurant industry I don't think is their main focus. >> Houston: I'm not sure who made this recommendation. >> Pool: I'm looking at the backup on him and he has been

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on the music commission. He is managing partner of empire control room in [inaudible] >> Casar: Again, I'm very support I have I have -- supportive of their work. >> Houston: Hold off until I recognize you instead of us talking over each other. Councilmember Casar. >> Casar: I think he's got a great resume. He haven't spoken with individuals from the restaurant industry, but I would suspect Steve is more of the tourism, special events music world than specifically restaurant. >> Pool: He does say he represents -- >> Houston: Councilmember pool. >> Pool: Thank you. Hundreds of hospitality workers in the red river district. And from his experience with hospitality and tourism. Do you have a different -- do you have another name to offer? >> Casar: My preference would be move him into either tourism or special events industry. I think that would be more fitting. >> Pool: Do we need to shift around someone to another -- >> Casar: That would be my preference. >> Pool: What do you recommend? >> Casar: I do not know Ms. Davidson or Ms. Niehoff so I would ask you all what your preference might be. I just don't -- I don't have a suggestion for restaurant industry. I would like to appoint Mr. Sternshine, I think he would be great on the task force, I just don't think this is the right spot. He operates and advocates largely for music venues. >> Pool: So I think that the thinking was the merchants association could apply for restaurants. I think that might have been the thinking at recommendation.

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>> Casar: I just think there's a good chance we would hear from folks in the restaurant industry they would want a representative, and while I'm sure -- I wouldn't want Mr. Sternshin to not line up on this because we put him in a box he doesn't quite fit in as well. >> Houston: So -- just a minute. So would it be better to -- to hold off on that or do you want to move him to five, to tourism workforce? >> Pool: That's Mary Davidson. >> Houston: That's what I'm saying, but that would be somebody in tourism that we don't have to get a waiver on. But she's a small business owner so I understand why she is there, or special events. I don't know who suggested Julie Niehoff, so -- >> Pool: I guess what -- why don't we go ahead and send the names that we don't have any questions about forward and then hold on Steven sternshine and see if there's a better person, unless you are coming with somebody to recommend. >> Casar: No, my preference is to move Steve sternshine in either special events or tourism workforce. If you would like, I can -- or we can -- I understand that your preference is to have either Julie Niehoff in special events or Mary Davidson in tourism workforce. I would like Steven to be in either one of those two slots. But if you don't think it's appropriate for us to change either of those two recommendations, we may just have a disagreement. >> Pool: Can we swap? >> Casar: I don't know enough about Ms. Niehoff or Ms. Davidson to know if they would fit into the restaurant industry slot. >> Houston: It appears Ms. Niehoff is special events industry. >> [Inaudible]

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>> Houston: Oh, are they here? Would you like to come up and help us figure this out, please? >> Pool: Great. >> Houston: Ms. Nihoff, if you would come up, please. As you are coming forward, you've heard the conversation. >> Yes. >> Houston: So could you tell us a little about your background and where you think that you would fit on this visitors impact task force? And would you give us three minutes, please? Thanks. >> A little about my ground? My name is Julie Niehoff and I come from the events and meeting industry. I at one time worked at the Dallas cvb as director of interactive marketing to manage all of convention sales, tourism marketing and outreach to visitors. Left the Dallas cvb, formed a consulting firm that then sold that same system called the destination business system in Austin, Houston, Cleveland, San Diego, many tier 1 and tier 2 cities across the world. Now use the destination business

system that I created in Dallas including Austin which still runs that system behind the cvb system. I then went into the -- the marketing end of my career and -- and educated small businesses on marketing so I've been for the last ten years director of education for constant contact which is a marketing company, email market ago company and managed their global network within worked bought with small businesses including restaurants in Austin teaching them marketing and how to use I don't know line tools and technology to get their message out. And now I have my own firm, distance learning media, and I teach marketing at the college level.

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>> I'm Mary Davidson. >> Houston: Hold on just a minute while he gets your mic on. >> Could I add one other? >> Houston: Sure. >> The predominant overreaching piece of all I've done is in the events industry managing special event promotion and management and setup, not just in city but citywide events across the country. >> Houston: Thank you. >> My name is Mary Davidson and I'm a small business owner, local business owner here in Austin. The business is actually in Austin and has been operating in Austin since 2003. Although I do leave out of the city in Travis county in the E.T.J. What my business is a sightseeing tour company. We promote Austin so there's -- our tour is a tour of the city of Austin, but it gives me a lot of opportunity to interact with people visiting the city and to see what they are looking for and what they want in viewing area visit and so I feel like I can bring a lot to the task force by the fact I have that experience with that industry here in Austin. >> Houston: Thank you so much. Are there any questions for either of these two ladies? Thank you so much. Glad you were here, too. So we're back up on the dais to find out if -- if we can move some people around so that we can ensure that we have someone from the restaurant industry on the task force. >> Pool: Sure. >> Houston: Ms. Pool. >> Pool: Sounds like mosquitoer is interested so maybe we could talk to him. >> Houston: Mr. Miller, can you come up? Can you talk to us about

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whether or not you want to serve on the visitor impact task force? >> I do want to serve on it. I actually and I apologize, I had filled out the application a couple months ago and filled it out again today because evidently it was not received. So I'm very interested in being on the task force. I've worked on many issues as being president of the greater restaurant association in Austin for four years. I've worked on at least 16 different ordinances that we've had that had positive impact for both everyone in the city as well as anybody in the hospitality industry. So I feel like owning the county line restaurants for 40 years I've got quite a bit of experience in how the industry works as well as the rest of the hospitality industry. >> Houston: Are there any questions? Thank you so much. >> Thank you. >> Houston: Councilmember Garcia -- I'm sorry, Casar. >> Casar: That's okay. The mayor mixed me and councilmember Garcia up the last meeting. My preference is to have Mr. Miller on the restaurant seat, but to keep Mr. Sternshine and while I really appreciate both Ms. Niehoff and Ms. Davidson being here we only have five slots. So I leave it to you all to think through maybe how we make that work. >> Houston: Five of them. >> Pool: According to this, it looks like we have -- it looks like we can appoint two people who have tourism workforce background. Am I reading this right? That way we would be able to keep Mary Davidson on and put Steven stern is also shine in the other spot.

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>> Houston: We have someone else for tourism or -- help me understand the other -- the other boards and commissions. So does public safety commission, they have not nominated anyone yet, have they?

Do we know where they are in the process, environmental commission, planning and neighborhoods? >> [No microphone on] My understanding, although I couldn't be positive, is that public safety is going to take up their appointment at their meeting meeting, which is in October. Planning and neighborhoods, councilmember Casar, you are the chair, so his committee will have an appointment. I'm not sure about environmental commission or any of the other commissions on there. >> Houston: Councilmember Casar, would your commission, do you all have anyone that you are looking at? >> I think so and I think the intent from councilmember Garza and her amendment was more of your everyday neighborhood type. And so -- so my preference at this point if I was to make the hard call would be to keep Ms. Davidson from her sort of local business perspective, Mr. Katalia in workforce, Mr. Miller in restaurants and to have Steve sternshine in the special events slot. >> Houston: And so Ashland would go to a neighborhood slot? >> Casar: No, no, I think that's my current preference is to leave him and I think that from hearing Ms. Niehoff's testimony, while I appreciate her -- her experience, especially with cvbs, I think there's other slots that may fit in. We're talking six names and we've got five slots so that's

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my motion. >> Houston: Michael, could you come up to the podium again? Where is the Austin convention and visitors bureau as far as your nomination because she would be a perfect fit in that slot. >> Director tester my be able to speak to it better, but my understanding they were going to nominate new president Tom noonaan to the new acb spot, is that correct? >> Yes, they are planning on nominating Tom Noonan. >> I think they are ready and they've emailed to the appropriate staff member. >> Houston: Okay. >> Pool: Well, how about this? >> Houston: Councilmember pool. >> Pool: I will make a motion that we -- let's see. I'll just run down the list. Special events industry Julie Niehoff. Restaurant industry mosquitoer Miller. Hotel industry, shell lie shaddock. Tourism workforce. Ashland katalia and the second workforce Steven sternshine. >> Casar: I'll second that. >> Houston: It's been moved and seconded that -- let me see what you have there. That the special events industry, Julie Niehoff, for restaurant industry, mosquitoer Miller, for the hotel industry Shelly shaddock, for the tourism workforce, ashwin katalia and for the tourism workforce Steven stern is also shine. It's been moved and seconded. All in favor? >> Casar: I have one really

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quick last question about one person we haven't spoken about. I had some folks in the hotel industry reach out about Doug Manchester Jr. Who runs the fairmont, but I've not heard from Ms. Shaddock. If anyone on the committee had spoken with her, folks recommending her. I figured some other folks on the committee hadn't so I was happy to vote for it, but I just wanted to hear from you all because folks in the hotel industry reached out about Mr. Manchester Jr. Serving. >> Pool: I think Shelly will do a good job. >> Casar: I just wanted to make sure folks on the committee had spoken to her. >> Pool: She has some mwba builder background, which may or may not have been relevant, but good background. >> Houston: Are you ready for the vote? All in favor let it be known by saying aye. Aye. Opposed? It's unanimous on the dais. And I want to thank all those who came and offered their support. We hope that you will stay engaged in this process because it's going to be an interesting task force and I'm sure you will have a lot of things that you can share with us about this hotel occupancy tax and how we can do it in a better way. The only thing we need now is to discuss any items that need to come up on the next agenda. Are there any? Okay. I hear none. I entertain a motion to adjourn. We are adjourning this meeting at 2:46 on Monday afternoon. Thank you so much for your attention.