

Open Space Environment and sustainability Committee Meeting Transcript –5/27/2015

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[2:03:15 PM]

>> We'll start momentarily as soon as we have a quorum.

[2:06:23 PM]

>> Welcome, everybody, I'll call this meeting to order of the open space environment and sustainability committee. It is Wednesday, May 27, 2015. The time is about 2:08. And we are meeting in Austin city hall on the boulevard. My vice chair is on maternity leave. She had a little girl a couple weeks ago. Lordes is her name. We're happy that went well. We look forward to her return in joining us on the dais. Today we have a couple chairs from our citizen commissions, Mary are the environmental board, the chair, and Jane with the parks board, and she's the chair. So we'll begin our meeting. Would somebody like to move approval of minutes?

>> So move.

>> Pool: Councilmember Zimmerman moves. And a second from the mayor pro tem. All in favor?

>> Aye.

>> Pool: That passes unanimously. Before we move to citizen communication general - - and I have about seven speakers signed up, everybody gets two minutes, if somebody could help time with that -- I would just like to note one small change in the order on our agenda. Item six is the briefing on the community climate plan, and item ten is consider and develop recommendations for a resolution. I wanted to pair those two up. I was originally planning to move six down below nine, but councilmember Zimmerman may be leaving. Do you want to be here for that conversation?

>> Zimmerman: That would be good.

>> Pool: So what we will do is move item ten up to be right after item six. And I think I told you it was going to go the other direction, but we'll shift that around.

[2:08:29 PM]

And I think there was some interest in . . . Okay. All right. So, let's go to citizens communication. And first up is yuke Meyer. I think these microphones are live. Welcome. Wherever you'd like to be.

>> All right. Will this work? All right. Hello, chair pool.

[Chuckling] Mayor pro tem tovo, councilmember Zimmerman. Can you hear me?

Okay. Let's try this. I'm proud to be in this room with all of us here that live in the city that is committed to fighting climate change. In 20 -- well on our way to meeting that goal. In April of last year, city council adopted a new innovation to have no green house gas emissions -- and it's stated that emission reductions sooner are better. And it requested the city manager in the office of sustainability to develop a plan with city departments and a lot of community stakeholders, some of whom are here in the room. And now we have our first plan, the 2015 Austin community climate plan. With this plan, we maintain our leadership position and set immediate goals for every ten years from now on. We commit to over 130 actions dealing with how we make and consume our energy, how we got around town, how we deal with materials and waste, and how we make things. We will create a local offset market to help each other, and create a climate impact statement to guide council. We're not alone. Acting both locally and collaboratively, cities are having a meaningful global impact in reduces emissions and climate risk, flooding, for example.

[2:10:38 PM]

I have planted over a thousand trees for the children of my brother and sister. Doing so will make them what I call carbon-positive. Their lives will result in a net removal of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere. From birth, they are not part of the problem, but they are part of the solution. I wish for Austin and all the cities of the world to do the same. And I ask you to take action today and to recommend to council to adopt the plan in front of you. Thank you.

[Applause]

>> Pool: Thank you. Sharon Blythe, and then after Sharon, will be David king. Y'all can come up and grab a seat here. And then David, I see you want to speak on items ten and seven. That would be two minutes on each of those, and eight. Heidi, Mike, and that's it. Okay. Sharon.

>> Pool: And Sharon, you have two minutes. Do we have somebody watching it? Okay, great, thank you so much.

>> My name is Sharon Blythe, representing Austin parks memorial cemeteries, a concerned citizen about the cemetery master plan. I passed out a map of the proposed exit out to north land drive, putting the rec center visitors at risk, down shoal creek, back to the cemetery. This is where the contractor is pulling all of his equipment.

Currently, as you can see on the map, along Hancock drive, he only has a few feet to drive his equipment. Now he has 1.1 miles to drive his equipment on busy roads. And it is unnecessary.

[2:12:41 PM]

There are many, numerous, numerous citizen comments requesting that that north access not be approved in the cemetery master plan. It makes it dangerous for the cemetery visitors, as well as the north recreation center. And in fact, it takes health and safety code 1713.011 spells out the city's responsibilities regarding cemeteries, which includes you need to assure that people visiting the cemeteries are comfortable. This absolutely is contrary to the state law. It makes people feel uncomfortable having a north access out of the cemetery. There was completely a staff recommendation, not one citizen recommended it. Many citizens are opposed to it. So, when the master plan, you need to understand this. Because I know a lot of boards and commissions aren't reading and understanding it. So, when it comes before the city council, maybe they need to understand and read it, too. Thank you very much.

>> Pool: Thank you, Ms. Blythe. David king? Hi, David. And you're going to speak on three items? You can be -- wherever you like. You have six minutes.

>> I'm not going to take six minutes, but, thank you very much for this opportunity to speak to you about item number 7 regarding the amendment to the parkland dedication code. I think this is a good change that needs to happen as soon as possible. I would just ask that because Austin perceives itself, rightfully so, as being a leader in having open green space and great parks, that the amount that's being proposed, you know, although it's good and we need to move in that direction, I think we should go higher than that so that we can make sure that we have enough funding for our parks. We already see the urban core of Austin growing, a lot of density occurring in our urban core, and more folks living in our urban core, yet we have a finite amount of green space for them.

[2:14:50 PM]

Let's up the ante more and look forward, and look to readjusting these fees on than an you'll basis. We look at them and see if we need to make adjustments. Regarding number ten, on the climate plan, you know, I think that's great. I'm glad this plan is before your committee here, and I hope you will support it and all the steps necessary to implement this, as well. We jus went through a big rain event, as we all know. I'm not sure it's over yet. We do need the rain, but it is the most rain that we've had since 1829. It's the most we've ever had on record in may. My point is, because of climate change, we're seeing these kinds of rain events where the rain events themselves are heavier. There's more rain in a short amount of time. When we look at climate change and our development, our growth, and how we do growth, especially with impervious cover in the urban core, we need to connect those together and consider that. We've seen flooding here on Lamar that is surprising to some folks, despite all the work that

was done to help mitigate flooding like this. We see even more flooding than before, even with the investment we've made on shoal creek and flood mitigation in that area. And so, it is the impervious cover, the increased density that's really contributing to more runoff and more flooding. So, I really think this is important for the long term of our city. So I really hope that you will implement this plan. Thank you very much for your time.

>> Pool: Did you want to speak to item eight? I think you also had put in a card for that.

>> Yes, well, I was not sure about the -- asset. I hope there's some connection with our parkland, and that the connection is consistent with what's happening in our parkland.

[2:16:52 PM]

And I know we have a parkland events task force, that's another item on your agenda today. And as it relates to that, there might be folks that think that that's a great place to have outdoor events. But, you know, it is right next to a downtown residential area, too. So we have to be careful about that and what uses we're going to allow, and how we're going to build that out for public use, but also be consistent with surrounding neighborhoods and the parkland that's adjacent to it. Thank you very much.

>> Pool: Great. Thank you, David. Heidi -- hi, Heidi.

>> Can you turn that on, please? Just hit the button.

>> It's nice to be at the same level as the microphone. Thank you for having me, chair, mayor pro tem, committee members. I apologize. This change to the parkland dedication fees started in the process before I joined rica, I'm a little late to the game. I wanted to let you know that I think rica members understand the value of parkland and the value that adds for the development's residents, but we are concerned about the compounding effects of all the additional regulations and fees that are ultimately affecting the cost to homeowners and renters in Austin. I didn't quite understand that when I was a council aide for councilmember Spelman. It didn't make sense to me. But, I've since had time to talk to our members about that. And it has to do with investors. There's another place to get the money. Also, want you to consider the fees don't take into account other open space and green space fees that are also assessed. We're looking at transportation fee increases, development review fee increases, potential density changes, and all those would potentially displace costs to renters and homeowners.

[2:18:56 PM]

Also, the proposal in front of you is based on an idea from a very small Texas city. And the peer cities that are listed are actually not peer cities to Austin. There's no clear information about where and when staff would prefer land dedication over park development. The changes don't aim to increase the number of projects like Mueller that have wonderful and highly valued public parkland, and which the city is not

required to maintain. We know the city can't afford to maintain the parks that we have. This fund cannot be used for maintenance, it can only be used for development and dedication. And a surplus of parkland that's not used by residents doesn't benefit anyone. The goal of a walkable park for every Austin resident is laudable, and we want to work on a reasonable solution.

[Beeping]

>> For reference, we sent a letter to staff with more specific concerns about the agenda item. And that's in your backup, as I understand it. Thank you for having me.

>> Pool: Thank you so much for coming. And the next speaker is Mike canati. Welcome.

>> Welcome. Thank you for having me. Good to see you, councilmembers. I'm with the Barton springs conservancy. I want to introduce the group to the parks and open space committee. We will be doing fundraising to benefit the Barton springs area. There is a \$2 million bond package that was passed in 2012 directed towards renovating the bath house. We are trying to bring private funds to help supplement that and complete that project. And the Barton springs conservancy will try to focus on other projects, the environment, historical preservation, education and outreach. We have asked to meet with a number of the councilmembers, we would like to give you an update. We would welcome your guidance on our path forward.

[2:20:58 PM]

I wanted to introduce you to our group. Thank you.

>> Pool: That's great. Thank you. Chair?

>> Tovo: I have a quick question. Is the Barton springs concertscy different from the friends of Barton springs?

>> Yes, we've tried to bring as many of the Barton springs stakeholders together and get their input on what we're doing. So, friends of Barton springs is one group. Save Barton creek association is another group. Hill country conservancy, we have a representative from the sos community, up until recently. I'm trying to think of the other groups. Preservation Austin, Austin parks foundation. We're working closely with city staff to try to make sure this works well with the master plan that's already been approved for Barton springs, but we're trying to create a new group that lets all the stakeholders hopefully work together instead of, sometimes, they work at cross purposes. But, maybe this will be a way to cooperate with all the people that love Barton springs, even if in slightly different ways sometimes.

>> Tovo: Thank you for that explanation. There's a little crossover in membership between those groups. Thank you for explaining the structure.

>> It's a little confusing, but, lots of people love the springs.

>> Tovo: Yep. Thanks for all your work.

>> Pool: All right, thanks, everyone. We'll move into our ten minutes of education. And today, the trail foundation executive director Susan Rankin -- restoration plan.

Welcome, Susan. Thank you for coming today.

>> Yeah.

>> Yeah?

>> Okay. Thank you, again. I'm Susan Rankin, executive director of the trail foundation. What many people don't realize, and there's somewhat of a background to talk about trailwide conservation work is the Colorado river was a free-flowing river until 1960, when it was impounded by the city of Austin to create cooling water for the polypower plant.

[2:23:01 PM]

Until that time, the city of Austin kept the trees out of the river. They thought it exacerbated flooding. So, let's see. I can't see. There's some historical pictures, just to kind of put it in perspective. And then you can see, if you look at that 1950s and 1957 images, you see there aren't a lot of trees there before they impounded it. And then, impounded in 1960. And, again, if you look east of I-35, you see, where are all the beautiful oak and pecan trees? They weren't there. They weren't planted until then. In the meantime, while all of this was going on, the trail itself started to become much more used for running, walking, exercise, nature, all those kinds of things. And the trail, in fact, has become quite a gathering area, quite a community place. It's where everyone goes for health and fitness, nature, you know, building personal and business community. What a lot of people don't realize is that people do come from all over town. This is really an addition to people's neighborhood parks. People come an average of 6.75 miles. A group did a survey for us. So, over time, the trail's infrastructure declined as city funds were less in lean times for parks and libraries, just like they always are. So the trail foundation was formed in 2003 after the founders went to mayor Wynn and said, you really need to spend some more money. The amenities and infrastructure are falling apart. He said there's not money, maybe you should raise it privately, so they did. That was the beginning of the trail foundation. Fast forward and for the last -- since about 2003-2004, the trail foundation has been planting hundreds and hundreds of trees. We always do it in collaboration with the forestry and parks department.

[2:25:05 PM]

They love that we have volunteers that provide the manpower. Sometimes we work with UT groups like on the left, sometimes corporate groups, sometimes children. It helps people have a little bit more sense of ownership on that. And we've even funded American youth works. We really don't have the data, the baseline data and the metrics and the long-range plan that we need. So, about nine months ago, we decided to go ahead and do more of a long-range trailwide urban forestry and restoration plan to guide our work, and also to gather data, metrics, about all the trees -- parks department. What you see up there is this work. The assessment and gathering of the data was for the full ten miles. It adds up to 199 acres, if you look at the associated woodlands. Some places the trail is narrow, some places it's not. We got a lot of input from the parks department, as well as watershed protection. We divided -- our

contractor divided the trail sections. It's in the bottom, in the small print there. It's divided into 16 geographic Zones, because each one is really different. As part of this process, we incorporated all the city plans that have already been done, such as the citywide forestry plan, the citywide invasive species plan, the -- by seaglow, with experience in geographic information systems, too. It's all mapped. This is just a little bit of the data, but we have individual tables on all the tree species out there. We identified everything.

[2:27:07 PM]

Like about 6100 trees were inventoried and gpsed so that we and forestry can continue to gather metrics over time. In the end, we're going to have a very detailed plan. It will address the ongoing work such as the ecological restoration work that we're doing at blunt creek. It will address things such as the grapevines. You may not realize, when you see those out there, the grapevines that climb all over the trees do break branches and cause problems. They're beautiful, so we just cut them back, usually with volunteers from either Texas conservation corps, or a group like that that's licensed with using that kind of equipment. We focus on areas that are outside of the formally landscaped areas, more of the naturalistic woodlands. We came up -- came up with recommendations by the 16 Zones we created. If you'd like examples, I can give you an idea of the things that are a high priority for all the Zones, like mulching existing trees, adding compost to the soil, doing things like increasing the area in the areas that are unused by people, creating a more diverse canopy and things like that. I don't want to take too much time. Do you guys have any more questions about what we're doing here? Usually we work with Sara on this kind of thing. I'm glad you're interested in this. This is great.

>> To a larger group here at the council. The work trail foundation does, this will also help to educate the community that y'all are out there for those who may not know, or the extent of the work that you're doing.

[2:29:07 PM]

Could you maybe touch briefly on the work you're doing on the north shore, just before you get to the next American cultural center? There's some bridgework. Is it the underpass under congress that you are doing some restoration on?

>> Yeah, I didn't bring any images. Just so people don't get confused, we just finished a bridge by the hostel. The idea is to keep the lake front so you don't have to go on the street, which is increasingly busy. We know about the gentleman killed under Lamar here about three years ago. What we're talking about now is, under the north side of the congress avenue bridge, you might know the area that's about this wide. It's wooden. It looks kind of Indiana Jones, third-world. We hired a big engineering firm to do an assessment to make sure there's no fundamental reasons we can't do this. We have input from watershed, parks department, public works. What it'll do is add about 180 feet of overwater -- barely curving overwater trail that will have -- be supported by

concrete piers. And minimalist railings and provide a little bit of a pull-off area for the people that are looking at the bats. It's going to take a couple of years.

>> Right. That's some improvement to the trail there that y'all are doing. And you W an organizg effort for the boardwalk, is that right?

>> Right. We started advocating for that about in 2008, because it was dangerous to -- for the many people that crossed the freeway, and it also meant that a lot of people didn't use the east side of the trail. It's really transformed that area in terms of use forth transportation and recreation. And if you go out there, especially in the evenings or weekends, you see families out there. You do see a lot more, anecdotally, I see a lot more diversity out there.

[2:31:12 PM]

It's actually happening.

>> Pool: It helped connect up the trail into a complete route. So, thank you for all the efforts that you do in the community. Any questions?

>> Thanks for your support.

>> Yes.

>> Pool: Yes.

>> Ms. Rankin, I did have a question. I know that the park suffered some damage from the recent flooding. I wondered if you had any idea if you have to take any special efforts towards the trails.

>> You know, I don't think so. I've only actually gone about four or five miles, plus the mile down toward the dam. The boardwalk sustained no damage, because it was designed to withstand this kind of thing. The western part of the trail has erosion in areas you normally see it after rain, and deep erosion troughs in places I've never seen it before. And I walked over the shoal creek peninsula area, where watershed protection did a project about two years ago to address where shoal creek flows over that peninsula there. It totally withstood it. The limestone blocks didn't move a bit. There's a lot of erosion. There's a lot of work to do. I'm sorry. And what the intention was, was to keep shoal creek from cutting through that peninsula. Does that help?

>> Yes, that's good news.

>> The river rose over the trail, but that happens about every two years, anyway.

>> Thank you.

>> Mmhmm.

>> Pool: Any other comments for her? All right, thank you so much for coming. Appreciate it. We will move now to staff briefing and possible action, item number 4, discuss the nomination of three members to the parkland events task force in accordance with resolution number 2015-0305-0205. And committee members, in your backup, you have -- I believe you have the names of the people who are being recommended.

[2:33:24 PM]

I took . . . So the three names are Bobby Garza, he's general manager of transmission events, James Russell, executive director of the Trail of Lights Foundation, and Jeff Smith, who is a resident and founder of Opinion Analysts, Inc. And our goal with these three appointments we were asked in this resolution to make three nominations from this committee. And we were looking to balance the membership of the Parkland Events Task Force and include some people who are direct permitted users of our parks. And so transmission events does Fun, Fun, Fun Fest, and, of course the Trail of Lights Foundation. And then Jeff is . . . He is a founder and president of a small business in Austin since 1980. He does polling and research services. He's worked in city issues for more than 35 years. His family has taken advantage of Austin's many parks over the years. He's actively participated in many of the major events that occur in the parks. And he has a statement, he says he looks forward to helping formulate policies that will protect the park system and the neighborhoods for future generations. So, this item is offered up for discussion and action. And the plan would be to forward these names on to our boards and commissions appointments that would then be approved by council at the next available meeting. Mayor pro tem.

>> Tovo: Yeah. I'd like to move approval of those nominees. And if I get a second, I'll speak to that.

>> Pool: I'd be happy to second. Is there any discussion?

[2:35:26 PM]

>> Tovo: I wanted to say, when we -- when I brought forward the resolution to create the Parkland Events Task Force, one of the commitments I made that is very important is to make sure that we had multiple voices involved in those conversations. And to make sure that we ended up with a balanced task force, one that represented not just the interests of the neighborhoods that are adjacent to the parkland, but also that we had individuals there we were very familiar with events and could speak to those activities and interactions with the park, and what it's like, what did you call them?

>> Permitted uses --

>> Tovo: To be on that, and as event promoters. So, I think those will be very important voices in the conversation. So, I'm happy to make that recommendation. I would suggest, if it's possible, to put it on tomorrow's council agenda, if we have a boards and commissions item, which I think we do.

>> Pool: Great. I'll make sure it gets to staff for that if we -- I guess we can take our vote now. And then see what we have. All in favor of the mayor pro tem's motion, say aye.

>> Aye.

>> Pool: Any opposed?

>> Zimmerman: Abstain.

>> Pool: And one abstention. Okay. Item -- the specifics get to our agenda office to be included on tomorrow's council agenda for labors and nominations. Thank you. All right. Let's see. Item five, discussion and presentation on benefits of proscribed burns as a land-management technique. I know we have Billy from the canyon land plan staff, and

. . .

>> And Matt, assistant chief, Austin fire.

>> Pool: Hi. Hi, chief. How are you? Thank you for coming today. Gentleman? We have about 10 or 15 minutes for presentation.

[2:37:30 PM]

>> Good afternoon. I'm Willie, the environmental policy program manager for Austin water utility. Again, chief Ford is here with us from the Austin fire department. We've been asked to talk to you a little bit today about the proscribed burning program. There's going to be an overview and discussion of the policies. I want to talk a little bit about what proscribed burning is. I think we have a powerpoint somewhere.

>> I received no such powerpoint.

>> Pool: Well, I think we may have it.

>> Do you have the handouts?

>> Pool: Can you put it on the screen? I'm just going to put mine on. While we're doing that, feel free to start.

>> I'll go ahead and proceed. There's been some discussion publicly recently about why the proscribed burning was actually considered a firefighting activity. Here are some snapshots over the last four decades of proscribed burning, why it's discussed. It's been a practice that's well-established for land management for quite some time. And it's never really been considered a firefighting activity. More specifically -- Texas proscribed burning law describes it as a land management activity. More importantly, you don't see it in your presentation, but the water quality protection land management plans that were adopted by city council in December of 2012 say this." Proscribed burning can be described as the systematic planned application of burning to meet specific management objectives." Why does Austin water utility used proscribed burning?

[2:39:30 PM]

Most specifically, we use it to restore and maintain healthy, resilient ecosystems and landscapes. Today, we manage our lands and native species and habitat to provide optimum levels of clean, high-quality water to recharge aquifers, and to avoid risks from wildfire and promote public safety. Why we do that is, ecologically speaking, we manage succession. Historically, fire was part of our landscape. It's what helped shape the landscapes that we see today. It helps us deal with encroachment of invading wooded species, and maintains the vigor and diversity of our plant communities. Today, we also use proscribed fire to help us manage fuels for unintentional fires. We use it to burn slash from mechanical brush treatments, and to help us manage the reinvasion of woody species. Why does Austin water conduct proscribed burns in stead of Austin fire department? Let any just start by saying our land managers really know and understand the ecological processes we're dealing with. They also are very intimate with the landscapes we work on. They know these places. Our land managers are

proscribed burning professionals. They have extensive experience and training that allows them to understand the fire behavior and how it helps us reach the goals and objectives for this land. And finally, and most importantly, I'd like to say that we don't burn instead of Austin fire department, we burn in collaboration with Austin fire department. We always have. Since 2001 when we did our first proscribed burn, we did with Austin fire department, and we've done so ever since. Just a little bit about how prescribed burning is done. I just want to emphasize, it's really not the process of planting.

[2:41:38 PM]

You need to do an evaluation of the fuels, the topography, the different factors that affect the burn, as well as things that are adjacent that we might affect. That's probably the most intensive part of the process, is preparation. The construction and maintenance of the fire lines, management of fuels adjacent to those fire lines so we don't have fires escape, and then the staging resources. The park you're probably most familiar with is just the execution of the burn itself. That's a fairly intense process. But one thing that most people don't realize about it is the followup to that is the monitoring and mop-up after the fire. We typically spend the last part of the burn day extinguishing burning things that are within 200 feet of the fire line. We also typically spend anywhere from two days to two weeks monitoring that site and extinguishing burning materials until everything's out on the fire. This process I've just described is about two to four weeks long, sometimes even longer. Then, we also follow up with sound management to make sure that we don't lose the benefits that we gained from the prescribing burning. It's also important to note that prescribing burning is not simply a standalone process. These next few slides are just going to be an example of what I'm talking about. This is our little bear management unit in Hayes county. We acquired it in the spring of 2009. We missed a slide there. But, the slides that you have in your handouts show the area with a moderate infestation of juniper. This area was treat in 1990, but had no followup management. The first thing we did is we went in and we removed the juniper. Any juniper less than four inches, we cut down. And we compressed the fuel to get it to a lower stature.

[2:43:42 PM]

We let that rest for about -- these slides aren't working well at all. But, we let that rest for about a year. Let the grass recover. And then we went in and burned. We followed that burn with seeding of some native grasses, as well. We let those grasses establish. And after three years we looked at it again, and decided we hadn't reached management goal of 15%. We still had wooded fuels on the site. In 2014, we burned it again. And with the last slide, what you do see up here, that's what it looks like this year. That canopy is about 18%, very close to our overall goal for the landscape canopy there. I will admit, though, it's making me look like a pretty good manager sometimes, too, good rain does. So, in closing, we'll talk about the prescribed burning process. I

just want to emphasize that prescribed burning is facilitated through highly coordinated written plans. We identify our optimum conditions for the tree and plant species to burn so that we can achieve a safe, beneficial result. These include things like temperature, humidity, winds, moisture, and smoke dispersal conditions. We talk about the resources and staffing we need to have in place. Then it's really a process of, you can see, we look for conditions that meet the description. We get very few days during the year when we can safely and effectively burn. That's it for my presentation. I'm going to turn this over to the chief, who will talk to you about the policy side.

>> How does the Austin water utility collaborate with fire professionals? First, they employ a national wildfire coordinating group burn boss type 2, who has -- the current one has over 700 burns.

[2:45:47 PM]

Highly experienced professional. And as Willie mentioned, intimately -- familiar with the land they manage right now. Another way they collaborate with the fire community in central Texas is through our mou with the often fire department, which requires each time there is a prescribed burn done in the city, fire, AFD is there to provide holding. Initial attack resources, and holding resources there, too. In addition to Austin fire, we have over a dozen emergency service districts in Travis county that also collaborate to - with these prescribed burns. After all, this is a wildfire community. And while it may be kind of hard to -- imagine that with the rains we've been experiencing this month, the reality is, we have many areas in this region, in this city, in this county, that are in the wildline urban interface. So, this is not just an Austin fire department issue or an Austin water utility issue. This is a regional issue. So, with that, we have to bring in all of our partners. One important aspect is that all burn -- unified command. So, as Willie mentioned earlier, a prescribed burn is project work. So, the determination that's made that, hey, something has gone out of hand, is done at the unified command level. Okay. Next slide. Continuing on, as Willie mentioned earlier, Austin water utility has extensive experience doing this since 2001. Since then, Austin fire has been involved. They also work closely with Texas forest service, along with the U.S. Fish and wildlife.

[2:47:52 PM]

I'll keep repeating this, it is very important. It's imperative that when we have these, everyone is involved. Not just AFD, but, U.S. Fish and wildlife, tfs, Texas forest service. As a little side note, last year, during the wildfires in the state of California, there were a few of those fires had over 3,000 firefighters involved. Here in Austin, we have just a little over 1,000 firefighters. So, there's no way that we would be able to sustain anything of the magnitude which was experienced in California last year, which is why we're highly dependent for this wildfire community which includes a lot of players. In conclusion, you know, water utility has been in this for quite some time. They do it safely. It's an ecologically effective management tool. They're professionals. And basically, they have the most intimate familiarity with the land they oversee. That's all I

have. Any questions?

>> Pool: Members, any questions? All right. Thank you so much, gentleman. Appreciate it.

>> Thank you.

>> Pool: We will hope that the continued damp will help us from having big fires this summer.

>> Chair pool?

>> Pool: Yes.

>> I would just like to say that I've actually been out on the water quality protection lands after prescribed burns. When we did reseeding, the land that had been burned. And so what Mr. Conrad showed you as the last picture in April of 2015, you can see that because of the burning, they were able to get natural, native grasses and plants back where it had just been rocky and barren before.

[2:50:06 PM]

But, there have been volunteer efforts for a number of years out there reseeding after prescribed burns. And it's a great way for people in the community to participate in the wildland areas. And so I just wanted to put in a plug for you all, because I think you do a great job.

>> Thank you.

>> I have a question, too.

>> Pool: Councilmember Zimmerman.

>> Zimmerman: If I could ask you to estimate how many acres of land that's now owned by the city of Austin, how many acres you have that we have are probably at risk for wildfire, and how much prescribed burns are being done? Are we doing 10% of the land with prescribed burns, 5%, half of 1%? If you had to take a big wild guess, what do you think it would be?

>> Well, we manage a total of 42,000 acres. About 16,000 of that is through conservation easements where we don't actually own the land. And so, you know, today we probably actively manage 26,000 acres. We have land management plans that propose prescribed burning for about 10,000 acres of that 26,000. And we typically burn -- our goal is to burn about 2,000 acres a year. We're successful because of the limitations in weather conditions. We typically burn from 5-600 acres a year, to 17-1800 a year, depending on the conditions. Our goal is to burn most of the sites that receive other treatments, brush control, things like that. A cycle of about five years in order to maintain healthy grasslands and prevent the reinvasion of woody species.

>> I wasn't quite clear.

[2:52:08 PM]

There's maybe 26,000 acres total that would be under --

>> Management.

>> Zimmerman: And that would be the water utility and the parks, and all the city

bureaucracies, when you say "Our"?

>> I can't speak for other agencies. Austin water utility manages 42,000 acres. Of that, 26,000 receive active management from our staff.

>> Pool: So that's about half.

>> Yeah. Last I heard, park manages in the neighborhood of 20,000 acres. That includes everything from nature preserves to recreation centers, things like that. So, again, I can't speak to their operation. I'm not directly involved with it. There are other open spaces, areas that are set aside from development agreements. They call them conservation easements. I'm not totally familiar with those. Planning development and review sets those.

>> Zimmerman: You were getting that many done per year?

>> Yes, sir roughly.

>> Zimmerman: About 1700, geographically located where, all over the place or concentrated?

>> Mostly on the protection lands. So, basically, south of highway 71 all the way in Hayes county.

>> Zimmerman: Okay. That's helpful. Thanks. So I actually live on that district ten and district six, kind of behind the 3M building, south of concordia university. Large area in there. So, how much of that has been managed in the last 20 years, either some kind of prescribed burn, or, say, in the last 20 years, how many acres has been treated?

>> We don't do a lot of prescribed burning on the preserve. Again, keep in mind, the bcp is primarily a habitat for endangered songbirds. We do a little bit of burning, just a few acres for habitat restoration.

[2:54:17 PM]

Warblers need closed canopy. So is, prescribed burning, we don't try to eliminate the woodlands there. Prescribed burning would not be an effective management tool there. Those fuels are really not very -- fire doesn't move fast through them. Typically, to conduct a prescribed burn there, we'd have to do it under such extreme conditions. It might destroy the habitat. Two, it would be difficult for us to conduct a safe prescribed burn to try to manage those kind of fuels.

>> Zimmerman: It is very rugged out there. There's a lot of topography. There are no roads. There's a lot of rocky area, a lot of cliffs. But at the same time, because it's not being managed, it looks to me like it is a very, very serious risk of accidental ignition from a lightning bolt or something. If something starts in there, we wouldn't have a wo stop it.

>> We are in a fire-prone ecosystem. This ecosystem became what it is because of fire. But if you take a look --

[beeping]

>> At the Austin Travis county wildfire protection plan that was completed with Austin fire department, Austin water and fire two years ago and look at the descriptions of the fuels in the oak/juniper woodlands, those are some of the safer fuels because the canopies have very high fuel moisture. It makes the plants difficult to ignite. Fires move

very slowly through those types of fuels. What you'll find is there's about five or 6% of the time conditions like we had in 2011 when those fuels are very dangerous. Some of the things you might see that we've done, though, we've used data from the cw parkland pp, as wells previous data. We went into places like jester, other sites around the gcp and put in shaded fuel breaks.

[2:56:22 PM]

Those are the best management practices that were recommended to us to help protect that wildland urban interface from wildfire. So, we've done extent work in those communities, and we continue to do so. We just reevaluated the data based on the 2013 structure mapping that was released by the city last month. And so we're continuing our work in collaboration with Austin fire department to put in those fuel mitigation practices with communities that are neighboring to us.

>> Pool: Thank you. I wanted to take the opportunity to mention to the public at large, we will have the canyonland continues version plan coordinating committee meeting on June 26th, the last Friday of June, 10:00 A.M. In council chambers. The public is invited and welcome to attend. Are there any other questions for Mr. Conrad? Mayor pro tem.

>> Tovo: Very quickly, thank you very much for that helpful overview. And for the illustrations that demonstrate the effectiveness of your work. I hope that you might be able to just tell us what the status of the legislation is?

>> We heard from the office today that hb 2070 is dead as a bill. It needed to be heard on second or third reading prior to today. It hadn't made it out of committee. We're still watching it, I guess there. There is some risk that it could be attached as an amendment to another bill, but we've been told that's not real likely.

>> Tovo: Thank you for your work and for that update.

>> Thank you.

>> Pool: Thank you so much. We will move now to item six, a briefing on the city's community climate plan. And for those who with respect weren't here when we started, we are going to move up the action item, item number ten. It's listed under items for committee consideration, consider and develop recommendations for a resolution related to the 2015 Austin community climate plan and steps necessary to implement it.

[2:58:23 PM]

So, we will take that item directly after we have the briefing and discussion on the climate plan. Welcome.

>> Thank you.

>> Pool: So, we have the sustainability officer. I'm not sure I know your name. If y'all could introduce yourself.

>> I'm Zack, climate program manager.

>> Pool: Nice to meet you.

>> Thanks for having us here today. A month ago, on April 27th, the office of

sustainability was briefing the full council in a policy workshop .

>> As a part of that session, we were talking with you about extreme weather that is being experienced as a part of climate change. We touched in that session about how the city can think about how to plan for severe weather and how to respond to it. That is known as climate adaptation or climate resiliency. Today, we're talking about the other major aspect of how cities are dealing with climate change. This area deals with actions to take to reduce greenhouse gas and climate change. This is known as climate mitigation. The report you have here in front of you is the result of the past year, a lot of people were working really hard. And it has been contributed to by many, many staff and community members have spent hours -- I will talk to you about the process. I want to publicly thank some of them that are here with us today, both staff and community members. I wanted to thank the three co-chairs of the steering committee. Al with the sir era club. Another with ai Austin and another person you heard from come citizen communication. And the leads, Doug Iuen, Matt Russell, Carla Taylor, woody rain.

[3:00:28 PM]

I want to thank Zack Balmer that has done a yeoman's job with the sustainability. Today we'll talk about the background of the policy direction we've been following to undertake this work. We will talk about community greenhouse gas sources, how we developed the plan so you have grounding in that. We'll talk about what we refer to as phase one strategies and actions and then a little bit on the next steps.

>> Do you have the presentation, just hard copy in front of you? So I don't have to wait to see if we can get the slides up? Great. Slide three is where I am right now. I'm sorry for those of the rest of you that can't see the slides.

>> Tovo: Hold on.

>> In terms of the background of the climate resolution and policy, I want to step back briefly to provide the context on the original 2007 climate protection resolution, which was adopted under the leadership of mayor will Wynn at the time. That resolution had four major components. The first was for the electric utility and that resulted in the generation plan. And then municipal operations municipal greenhouse emissions from our city operations. The third section about the energy use of buildings and a fourth section that dealt more with what we are talking about today which is community planning and programs. So if you go, then, to the next slide, slide 4.

[3:02:39 PM]

Recap further to the left, that set a goal of net zero operations by 2020. That was followed by eight couple of other resolutions that show up on the time line. They're below the line and dealt more with the resiliency topic, of how do we respond to changing claimant? In 2014 and again in 2014. The resolution set in motion the plan before you today that shows above the line, community climate plan resolution that set a goal of net zero community greenhouse gas emissions by 2015. That is to give you

the context of the official policy that has been set by council over time that we have been working to enact. Most of us agree that there is disagreement among the council on climate change. I want to give you the information on the direction that we are coming from. I want to talk about the most recent resolution that said reach net zero communitywide emissions by 2050 to achieve that as soon as possible. So it could be sooner, potentially. Although that is a challenging goal, as we will see. The resolution directed us to create an action plan for each major sector, and we'll talk about what those are and talk about interim targets starting 2020. What are the incremental goals to get us to the end goal of net zero by 2050. Go to the next.

[3:04:48 PM]

Zack will walk us through the technical information about the configuration of the community greenhouse footprint.

>> The first question to develop a plan on how to reduce communitywide emissions is where are the emissions coming from? We did a carbon footprint or greenhouse gas emissions for the whole city of Austin. The boundary is Travis county, that is because of the varying data sets and trying to have consistent data across the whole Ven Ven. So basically, we did this inventory in 2007, 2010, which is the data you will see here. We will do it again for 2013 data. 50% of the emissions from the community come from electricity usage and industrial and commercial residential usage. Small%ept for natural gas usage. 35% come from transportation and mobile sources. All of the driving, trucks, movement of goods and serves. A small part from material and waste management or landfill and 7% from industry process emissions. It is important to do this with 14.5 emissions every year. What are the type of activities austinites are taking every day? What are we doing to affect the emissions? How can we divide up the work and create plans and actions to reduce the emissions over the long-term?

>> Next slide, slide 7. So after we had that inventory, we set forward last June to start working with stakeholders to create this plan. The first thing we did was create a steering committee. The steering committee was made up of 15 members from the community, that were knowledgeable, interested passionate in the climate change issue and helped guide the process. Many mentioned and are here today. We met with the steering committee, basically every other week between June and March.

[3:06:50 PM]

So over a nine-month period. People from the community came to meetings, worked through all of the issues. Sort of helped us digest and distill and create the plan. The other big piece was the technical advisory groups. Based on the Ven of where the emissions come from, we broke the plan down into subsequent pieces to develop plans to affect the sources. Electricity, natural gas, which was co-lead by an energy efficiency group, Austin energy staff and members of the community. Another group that was led by Austin transportation staff with community members, cap metro and other groups. Materials management, which was lead by Austin resource recovery with many

stakeholders in the materials management sector. Finally, industrial process, which was made up of members from semiconductor manufacturing community and Austin white line. These members -- these groups all met together, worked together over the course of the nine-month process to basically work and cocreate this full community climate plan. Next slide, slide 8. So the next thing. The next thing in the advisory groups we had a lot of community input. We had a climate survey where we had over a thousand respondents. Two held two sherrets. When we had -- carrets. We had a lot of publicnput overall idea of the community plan over the creation of the plan. Next slide, slide 9. What does net zero mean? This is a very visionary plan, a very visionary goal. This is thinking about the long-term.

[3:08:51 PM]

First of all, think about 1980. That was 35 years ago. Planning out to 2050 is 35 years into the future. In 1980, cars got 10 miles a gallon. Cell phones were barely viable. There were no personal computers. The amount of technology, the world is a different place. When we imagine 2050, the world will have drastic changes, with information technology, a lot will be changed. This chart shows the Ven vent we talked about of 14.5 met rec tons. This is projecting into 2020, 30, 40, and 50. This is setting glide paths. 2050 net zero means 90% reduction in direct emissions into the air in our community. Then some portion of emissions will likely be left that is sort of impossible or too expensive to alleviate and we have some amount of offsets to alleviate the missions. So long-term visionary, we have to think about. So then the creation of the whole plan is then connecting right now. So plans and initiatives that are in place and this visionary future of 2050. Next slide, slide 10.

>> The good news is -- even though this is an ambitious goal, there is a lot of work the city has been undertaking to dovetail with this goal and actions underway to attribute to meeting the goal. The point of the slide is to talk about the fact we looked closely at all of the existing plans that are currently in place that do contribute. And I think, looking at things like imagine Austin, the motorcycle master plan, on the transportation side of things, looking at Austin energy resource generation and climate protection plan and zero waste planning from research recovery.

[3:11:04 PM]

I think what we have is a nice constellation of forward-looking strategic plans that do get us started towards meeting the goal with many of the actions identified in the plans. We have a lot of momentum already underway. I think it also points to the fact that climate change and greenhouse gas emissions, it is an integrative kind of concept, which touches on many different things. That is the intensive collaborative process with multiple partners and stakeholder groups. The other thing we looked at is part of the plan -- we don't have time today to go into all 130 recommendations that you will find in the plan, although we will hit high notes. One of the other things we wanted to look at is what other kinds of benefits could be provided to our community through meeting

some of these goals? We're not just working towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions for the sake of reducing greenhouse gas emissions. A lot that are delivered to the community. If we reduce traffic congestion, for example. That is not only good for business, but it improves our air quality, which in turn, it has associated health benefits and better air quality can result in lower asthma rates for example. If we reduce energy utility bills, that contributes to lowering greenhouse gas emissions, but it also contributes to lowering the cost of living in a more competitive business climate. We looked at, you will find it in the report sort of typical austinites from a variety of different backgrounds, whether those were college students, business owners, people living on a fixed income. Renters. We tied back the recommendations to which ones would actually provide a benefit to those particular stakeholders. Next slide.

[3:13:08 PM]

We're going to spent most of the rest of the time talking about the results, from a high level and more particularly in phase one, what can be done within the next year. Some are already underway or in motion but it was felt they could be leveraged or benefit from a boost or additional support. So we're going to go over those at a high level. If there are recommendations that are further out, we will not talk about those today. Next slide.

>> So on this page of the full plan, we outline the recommendations of moving forward with the immediate sort of focus and implementation of this plan. So the first recommendation is to move forward within the first year with basically three actions and three -- in each of the three major sectors. The first seconder is electricity and natural gas. As we know Austin energy has many programs that they're implementing, generation plan, energy efficiency program, solar programs. These are three areas where the whole group felt that more action could be put in the near term. The first one is buildings and integrated efficiency, looking at more ways to leverage financing to implement business and energy efficiencies in their homes. The next one is behavior change. Trying to work on more efficientives to enable the use of technology to help homeowners understand the cost of using energy, and how to reduce that energy usage. Finally, resource technologies. As we know, the smart grid electric vehicles, distributed energy on homes is evolving quickly. Putting more energy and research into the evolving resource technologies that affect Austin resource energy. The next slide, slide 14. This is the three top recommendations for electricity and natural gas. The next one is transportation and land use.

[3:15:09 PM]

Easy we know, traffic congestion, air quality issues are a major issue in Austin. These three focus areas align directly with those areas, and focus that are in place. The first one is demand management. The first is demand management trip reduction. Doing everything we can to get vehicles off the road during peak times. The second one is first and last miles. So engaging in further efforts to engage in the first and last actions

that get people on public transportation and enable the use of getting out of single-occupancy vehicles. The final one in transportation is vehicles and fuel efficiency. Enabling and pushing forward more initiatives for electric vehicles and alternative fuel vehicles that get us off of fossil fuel that move us around in our daily basis. These three areas, as I said, these will help reduce traffic, improve air quality and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

>> Slide 15.

>> Three major initiatives to move forward at local landfills to make sure all landfill gas is collected and destroyed. Procurement, moving forward with sustainable purchasing programs in the city of Austin to make sure we're leveraging our multimillion-dollar purchasing power to keep sustainable options. Finally, recycling and organics. The recycling ordinance, get us moving in the right direction. Make sure those are fully implemented for multifamily and businesses over the next few years. Next slide, 16. In the recommendations there are four other major recommendations. The first is develop an implementation plan and public plan by 2016.

[3:17:11 PM]

So within a year look at over 130 actions proposed in the plan. Take a much closer look at the actions proposed. Identify budgets, schedule, figure out what it will actually take departments to move forward with the actions as well the community, businesses, residents and how they take action to connect with us.

>> Can I add on that point, too, I forgot to mention it earlier there are actions that require partnership with organizations outside of the city. Capital metro was a partner, Texas gas service. We also have to work with the other external partners to figure out how to move forward.

>> The next one was determine the feasibility of a carbon impact statement for major city council decisions. As you know, the city council approves many large expenditure, improves capital improvement plans, the idea is if city council had data and information on the climate change, council would be more informed to make the more climate-positive choice when they're approving different budget items and plans. The next item, the second to last is determine the feasibility of a local carbon fee or trading in invest program. The idea there is it is not always simple or easy for every business or organization for a city to reduce emissions in the same amount. For some it is easier, for others it is not. If there is a way to transfer funds or move money to reach the lowest cost reductions first and sort of spur more action in this area, that would be a positive. The final one is to continue climate research and resilience planning efforts. As Lucia said there are directions to staff to look at climate change, how it is affecting the Austin community and how the infrastructure in the community is vulnerable to climate change. Continue those researching and planning areas and continue to study the evolving science.

[3:19:11 PM]

>> So to wrap up the presentations to get to questions and discussion, there is an outline that has interim updating of the plan. We talk about technology will change, things are rapidly evolving. We know we will have to update the plan. It is considered a living document, it is not static. But the recommendations more immediately that we wanted to bring forward to you today -- and I know we have a draft resolution that is immediately up for discussion right after we finish this portion of the agenda, but even if that draft resolution wasn't already out there, we as staff would be bringing this plan forward to you and recommending that city council adopt the community employment plan, first of all, and second, in terms of oversight, in addition to this city council committee for boards and commissions oversight, we are recommending that this plan be under the purview of an additional input of a new joint sustainability committee. The joint sustainability committee has not been formed yet. There was a recommendation that came forward from the city of Austin board and commission task force. That recommendation listed a number of existing boards and commissions and the recommendations said that there would be -- the recommended representation of one person from each of those boards and commissions named in the report that they would sit on this joint sustainability committee. We're recommending to move forward with that. We thought given the new appointments to the boards and commissions, the chance to get all of the bodies together and have a chance for them to get going and maybe give a month or two of the meetings before they would actually select who their representative would be. Those are the recommendations to you today.

>> Pool: Thank you, Ms. Athens.

[3:21:13 PM]

We do have a res rehere. Why don't we take up item 10 to talk about the resolution. Since we've got --

>> We do have staff as well from the other key departments in case there are questions about the other specific recommendations or actions.

>> Pool: Great. My understanding is this resolution proposed will adopt the 2015 Austin community climate plan. Its goal is to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. It will direct the city manager to take several actions including implementing the recommendations that are in this, and you did a high-level touch on some of the more important ones. The information will be included in the upcoming budget, so I'll ask if what if any budget implications might be at least in the first year. It looks like it may be minimal because we're looking at developing relative performance metrics to measure progress. And look at 2015, establish a joint sustainability committee with 10 members from city boards and commissions that are appointed, as you mentioned from respective board or commission. And mayor pro tem tovo may have question on possibly including an additional board there. And then establishing the committee an authority and mission including relevant city policies and procedures. Promoting cooperation among council, departments, boards, commissions and other stakeholders, advising council, city manager and office of sustainability and other stakeholders. Making recommendations to this committee. Open space environment and

sustainability. And establishing advisory or working groups as should be necessary. And then finally, authorizes the mayor to continue Austin's official participation with C 40 on behalf of the city council.

[3:23:13 PM]

Ms. Athens can you touch quickly on what C 40 is?

>> Yes, I would be happy to do that. The c-40 is the global organization of the 40 largest cities in the world working on working on global issues. We're not one of the top 40, but we're a cohort because of the action we have taken related to climate change. The organization is composed of mayor representation and staff from the respective cities. They meet on a semiperiodic basis. They have a working committee on a variety of different issues which are of interest to the city such as smart grid or electric vehicles so forth. They are -- we have been participating. Since I have been here, over the past five years in the C 40. They're formalizing the structure more now and asking the city to sign a memorandum of agreement that says that the mayor wants to participate and that we agree to participate in some of the working groups. It is fairly simple. That is c-40. If you have other questions I can answer.

>> Pool: Mayor pro tem.

>> Tovo: Thank you for that explanation. What participation -- you said it requires the mayor's participation and participation, I assume from our staff and the workgroups. But what type of time commitment is required and is there a fiscal impact to participating? Does the memo of understanding come with a familiar commitment as well?

>> My understanding is no formal financial commitment. Future precipitation will be similar to past years. The c-40 has provided funding for travel for the mayor plus one staff person to go to the meeting that happening every other year.

[3:25:14 PM]

Other than staff time itself there is no other financial outlay. The working groups that I expect for us to be participating on as we have been, are related to things the city is already working on continue so there is a little bit of time, you know, to participate in conference calls but there is no other significant cost. We learn from what is happening from other cities around the world, benefit from that and they can work together here in Austin.

>> Tovo: The working groups happen primarily over the phone, and it is consistent with the work you're already doing, just furthers it.

>> It is. We can select from a fairly large group of working groups, whichever ones are most aligned with what we are trying to do.

>> Tovo: Thank you. I have a few other questions for the resolution but that covers it for the c-40.

>> Pool: I note the resolution talks about members representing a broad diversity of stakeholders to include large companies, employers small business owners, nonprofit

leaders, renters, families, suburban cities and families. It gives this committee the opportunity, if we determine that a greater diversity is needed to ensure adequate stakeholder representation. This committee can appoint up to three community stakeholder members. Mayor pro tem, did you want to talk about the joint sustainability committee.

>> Tovo: I did. It sounds like this came from this itself. I notice the parks board is not included among that list. I wondered if you could provide some explanation of why particular commissions were selected for representatives?

[3:27:20 PM]

>> In terms of what it says in the previous report. I don't know that I can give you the entire context. For example, I don't think the sustainable food policy board was included in the report. Although I don't have it in front of me. I was suggesting adding it there. The resource management commission is not listed. My understanding of that is the original recommendation from the transition task force recommended the discontinuation of the resource management group. And then this would have to some degree taken the place of that because it cross cuts multiple resource areas. The parks board was a fine addition. It was perhaps an oversight.

>> Resource management commission should probably not be included on this list if they're no longer continuing. We might give a combans to the others.

>> I wasn't sure what the status of that recommendation was.

>> Tovo: I think it was approved.

>> Ok.

>> Tovo: I guess my only thought about this list, how often is this group envisioned to meet, the joint sustainability committee.

>> My recommendation is this group would meet quarterly. Because these members are all serving on other boards and commissions they have a significant time commitment. My proposal is the group meet quarterly try to be expeditious with the time. There would be [audio skipping] In addition to the community employment plan to bring forward to them. If the office of sustainability is staffing that group, which makes sense, my proposal is quarterly to be respectful of their time.

>> Tovo: That is great, I like the idea of a joint sustainability committee and the efforts makes good sense, on the other hand when you have planning commissioners who are already meeting twice a month for planning commission, and other committees, serving on this is once a month and may not get the participation needed once a month.

[3:29:29 PM]

Quarterly seems reasonable.

>> Pool: I will go ahead and read out loud the groups tagged and included in the resolution so the public can know. The task force has recommended to consist of membership from the environmental board, electric utility commission, zero waste advisory commission, urban transportation commission. Water and wastewater

commission. Planning commission, economic prosperity commission. Community development commission, sustainable food and resource commission. We're looking at adding the parks board. Could I ask Ms. Rivera if that is something your membership would appoint to?

>> Absolutely.

>> What do you think about participation by the environmental --

>> Oh, definitely. We already have an air quality committee that has gotten established recently. So yes, absolutely.

>> I think what reminds me about what we love so much about Austin and the folks we work for and with is how robust our community involvement is. Stakeholders are wide and widely varied and come together over a long period of time and are sustained in their support. This plan is not something that was coming just from one or two minds but from a collaboration of a really wide array of folks. It shows that Austin, the body politic, the body community supports this work and wants us to move forward on these goals. We will go through the list and make sure all of the commissions are indeed continuing. I did read in a task force report from last summer that resource management was DI commissioned and the sustainable food board. I may be wrong.

>> The sustainable food policy board was slightly reconstituted to have more members.

[3:31:30 PM]

So it had broader representation from the county. But it still exists.

>> Pool: Oh, good. Great.

>> And the office of sustainability staffs that and Edwin Marty is our policy energy.

>> Pool: Good. That's an important element in this, the resilience and sustainability. So with council member Zimmerman having left, we are not able to take action on this today, because we don't have a quorum to do that. But I have some thoughts about how to reconvene, we will have a special-called meeting to address this and see if vice chair Garza can join us and Mr. Zimmerman as well. It would be nice to have the full committee way in on this with their opinions, support, opposition or abstention.

>> Tovo: Councilmember pool, if councilmember Zimmerman is able to return, we might holdover the possibility of having a vote before then.

>> Pool: Sure. We do have a hard stop at

[audio skipping] Or earlier if we finish our business. I will table the vote. It is possible he might come back, but may not. Anything else on this side? All right. Great. Thank you so much for the presentation.

[Applause]

>> Pool: I want to thank all the community members who came here today in support of this item. We vanish much appreciate all that you invest in the work that the city does and hope that we are carrying out the vision that you have for the city. We will now take up parkland dedication, the proposed amendments to the parkland dedication code revisions in accordance with 2014-1211 --

[3:33:41 PM]

[audio skipping]

>> Thank you madam chairs, mayor pro tem.

>> Pool: Please introduce yourself.

>> I'm Randy Scott with parks and rec. Laura Wright and Carlo Weis.

>> Pool: Welcome. Nice to see you.

>> Today I will give you an overview of the parkland dedication program. The past directors, proposed new ordinance and next steps in order to adopt the ordinance. What is parkland dedication? That is a local government requirement imposed on residential development. The purpose is to ensure that new development accounts for the impacts on the existing park system. Let me remind the committee that the parks department has not -- is that too loud? Thank you. The parks department has not updated the ordinance in the last eight years. The current fee is a flat fee of \$650 per unit. The land requirement is five acres per 1,000 residents. In order to revise the parkland dedication ordinance, staff reviewed parkland dedications throughout the country, developed a methodology for calculating parkland dedication. Parks department also consulted with Dr. Crotchton who is known for his work in national parkland ordinances inspect is a chart of peer city comparisons. You can see Austin is located on the far right side. The 650 is the lowest among the state and country. The new fee would move us towards the middle of this chart, just below Portland, Oregon.

[3:35:49 PM]

Current downward trend. The current ordinance is not keeping pace with the cost of land and park development. The city of Austin goal is to maintain 2020 acres of parkland for every residence. That is the green line across the screen. The members on the bottom is time period from 1984 to 2020. The blue line is the average -- the acres per thousand and you can see how around 1994 we hit a peak of 29 per thousand. Under the ordinance the city of Austin will have a 5,000 acre deficit by 2020. Staff held a series of five stakeholder meetings, began in October 2014 and went through January of 2015. A listing of invitees includes the Austin apartment association and the others list. Great feedback received during the meetings. Staff has incorporated some of the suggestions into the new ordinance. On August 7, city council passed a resolution to direct parks and recreation department to analyze and make recommendations for the adjustment of the parkland dedication fee. October through January 2015, staff held a series of roundtable discussions with stakeholders. November 19, 2014, staff submitted to council the parkland dedication fee methodology report. That outlined the new methodology. December 2014. Council passed a resolution to adopt the fee methodology and initiated a parkland code amendment.

[3:37:50 PM]

The new methodology includes a fee in lieu of parkland dedication. Park development fee and land dedication requirement and requires an annual fee review process. It does

not include changes to the commercial development or timing of payment. In response to the resolution, staff prepared an ordinance with the following changes. A land requirement and a fee in lieu of land that is based on the several level of service, which is 9.4 acre per thousand. This is a change from what is currently required. The fee is based on a per person instead of per unit. The fee is based on per unit. Doesn't matter if it is an apartment complex or single-family, which has different number of family living in each type of unit. Also included a park relevant fee requirement or allows park development in lieu of this fee. The next steps. June, we'll plan on attending planning commission and have council consider the code amendment. In October, educational campaign for the internal and external stakeholders. Council will adopt new fee schedule. The parkland dedication will be part of the fee schedule adoption. January 1, the parkland dedication fee goes into effect. The grace period gives developers more time to incorporate fees into the projected performance. And that concludes the presentation. We'll be glad to answer any questions. Thank you.

>> Pool: Thank you so much.

[3:39:52 PM]

Members, any questions for staff. Cora, did you have anything.

>> No, thank you madam chair. I am excited that the staff have been working on this for some time. With the support of the council, receipt adoptions by staff, in moving this forward, this gives us the opportunity to begin to catch up with the cost of providing sufficient parkland and park amenities for what is one of the fastest growing cities in the country. And I think anytime you start out in this case -- I think Randy highlighted the fact we were at \$650 as a flat fee per unit for many, many years and we did not have the opportunity at the time the fee was established to really take a look at the cost of building parks and developing them. So this gives us an opportunity to really begin to catch up. Secondly, I really am very supportive of the idea of now taking the fees and incorporating it into the fee schedule, because he does the budget process, that allows to make adjustments wherever they might need, to depending on where the market is bearing. With that, I'm proud of the work that's been done. We were fortunate to have Dr. Crumpton from Texas A&M be our consultant on this. It has been an incredible experience. We're available for questions.

>> Pool: Thank you. Mayor pro tem.

>> Tovo: Thank you. I'm excited to see this move forward as well. I have a couple of questions. Has this -- so you're proceeding with the code amendment it will go to planning commission next month before it goes to council.

[3:41:56 PM]

It will go to the parks committee before it hits planning commission? I see that you got feedback earlier.

>> Yes.

>> Yes, council member, it had gone to the park's board -- before, we went to the

council with the report, it had gone to parks board for their support.

>> But --

>> That's correct.

>> The code amendment will go into planning commission?

>> That's correct.

>> Tovo: The issue I would like to discuss further, is the one about commercial development. I understand you considered it, the consultant reviewed it. What I would like to see -- to see is whether some other cities have parkland dedication tied to other development. As in particular as noted here, it is an important conversation to tie it to hotel-motel development. We have so much expansion in that area, and certainly those users, those individuals who are visiting the city do use our parks. It is a natural connection and everything. I would like more information. Again, it doesn't need to be now. Why the consultant recommended against including a parkland dedication fee for commercial use and particularly with use by motel, motel.

>> I think you just answered briefly. The consultant did recommend that on the end of parkland dedication, that it would not be defensible to charge parkland dedication to a hotel, hotel. There are a lot of cities that use parks dollars to partially fund the departments departments. It is a different approach.

[3:43:58 PM]

>> We are regretful Dr. Crump Dr. Crumpton is not able to be here. He's coming out of Brian, College Station, it was a travel risk to be here today. He was planning to be here, we will try to invite him back when we which to council. In the conversation with Dr. Crumpton, the whole spirit behind the parkland dedication ordinance is to really get to that council have also said and that is that there are accessible and quality parks for residents and that they're accessible within a reasonable walking distance from where people live. And while there might be other cities, I don't recall off the top of my head, but we will by the time we come to council, who have contemplated this, what I recall it is very difficult to quantify the amount of additional impact to a park system based on employees at their workplaces. Or from a commercial standpoint, you close the business at the end of the day or you have certain business hours. Of course, it brings people to their work centers during that period of time, but is that really above and beyond what the impact of the park system might be for residents when they then also go home? So I would invite him to explore that more with us. We'll continue to have conversations about it. But again, the spirit of the parkland dedication is about making accessible quality park availability to the residents at a neighborhood level. As opposed to the commercial compensating or mitigating the impact of parks from employment centers. We'll explore that further is what I am suggesting.

>> Sure, I appreciate that. I understand the point you're making, I know some of our downtown parks, the one next to the courthouse, for example, the square next to the courthouse, that is primarily frequented at least during the week by employees in there.

[3:46:09 PM]

So thank you, I'll look forward to that further discussion. Appreciate your work on this.

>> Thank you.

>> Ms. Rivera, did you want to speak to this from the park's board perspective?

>> Yes, the parks board supported the proposed park plan dedication fee. And we did not discuss the possible addition of any additional commercial, because we felt it was a more fair rendering than what we currently have.

>> Pool: Just run through real quick a couple of the differences between the noon 85 ordinance, 2007 ordinance and staff recommendations from this year. And I can make this two-pager comparison chart available to folks, probably try to put it up on the message board or somehow get it to committee members. Let's see. Is it online? So parkland requirement applicability does not change. It shows requirements applicable to all residential subdivision site plans with three or more -- more than three dwelling units and five specific exemptions. The dedication formula looks like it was unchanged in 2007, but it has changed to 9.4 well, this is a formula. So it will be difficult. Anyway, the formula changes. Density formula is unchanged. Payment in lieu of land, there is a tiered fee structure, low, medium, high. Those are where the three fees are. Those are the new elements you're introducing. The high is high-density, persons per household at 1.7, \$626.

[3:48:11 PM]

Medium is 2.2 persons per household at \$810. And low density, 2.8 people per household and the fee is \$1,030. Park development fee is also introduced. It is new tier fee structure. Low density, 521. Medium 410. And high 317. Annual fee review is a new element and this would be the recommendation is that council consider parkland dedication fee structure during the annual fee schedule adoption, which is what y'all were talking about earlier. Do you want to speak a little bit to the determination on the dollar figures that you are recommending?

>> Sure. Let's start with the discussion about fee in lieu of land. That is strictioned -- triggered when the parkland is already there. That is divided by the number of acres, which we were able to derive the amount of acres per people. So when you apply the average cost for the acre, which is about 39,000, we only looked at the neighborhood-size parks. Those are scaled at 30 acres or less. It is important that our viewers understand we're not configuring a cost of developing a metro park or district-sized park, merely a neighborhood park. So it is accessible to where people live. So dividing the average cost of developing the land by the number of people, we're able to derive a cost per person.

[3:50:11 PM]

And that is how we arrived at the development -- the fee in lieu of land, the low, medium, and high-density. The separate formula, in terms of park development, it is

one thing to acquire the land, it is another cost to develop the land. We had quite a bit of review of those same sorts of formulas, beginning with looking at the population and dividing it with the existing number of neighborhood parks to get a sense of the total number of people per development park. That is our current service level. And when you apply that average development of a park we can derive the low, medium and high value depending on the density. So again, it is the ordinance that gives the department and the city the authority to make the determination as to whether or not we need additional land or we need resources to develop the park, or both. It brings us current or brings us closer to meeting the cost of providing sufficient park resources.

>> Pool: That's great. All right. Any other questions? Thank you so much for coming and making the presentation. We appreciate it.

>> Thank you.

>> Thank you very much.

>> Pool: We have two more items to take up. The seaholme and onion creek master plan presentation. We're doing well in terms of time. We will be able to meet our hard stop of 5:00.

[3:52:19 PM]

>> Good afternoon, my name is Lynn Esterbrook. I'm a project manager with parks and recreation department. I'm going to give a briefing on the Seaholm intake facility and that project and process. Here we go. The complex in the industrial and architectural landmark in Austin is power arrived first in Texas capitol of 1885 after the Colorado river was first dammed to generate electricity. The seaholme seen in the picture was commissioned in 1948. It was built in 1950 and 1955 by the nationally known engineering firm of burns and McDonald. It had a generator building. Outdoor boilers, heating plant and the intake structure, which is closest to the water. It is a cast in place concrete building with metal lights and glass box. In 1960 it was named after Walter E. Seaholme that served the city as manager and director of utility. In 1989 the city stopped generating power at this site. There was an ordinance that turned the land into park land upon seizing -- parkland upon seizing of electric use. A number of planning efforts recognized the area for the significant and adaptive reuse, you see in the two pictures.

[3:54:23 PM]

In 2000, the district map and 2001, the master plan that came out of the process. This practice -- process started with the remediation plan and cleaning hazardous materials. It was cleared by the environmental protection agency and Texas environmental quality making seaholme the first to receive such designation. In 2001, the master plan was adopted and that process became strong stakeholder process, which included many stakeholders from the city

[audio skipping] The city requested proposals to redevelop the seaholme property, that did not include the seaholme intake facility. This picture shows the whole district as a

whole. In 2005, the seaholme power plant [audio skipping] Was the power LLC team to redevelop the whole site. In this picture, you will see everything in the district, including the green water treatment plant, to the west. The seaholme intake facility on the lake front. The site for the library. And future development of the black 24 and the - - the -- the green water plant has four sites.

>> I think the green plant was to the east of Seaholm.

>> Yes. The west is the gables.

>> Right.

>> So this picture shows a lot of things that are going on in the district. In 2011, the city of Austin and Austin energy transferred the property to the parks department for the first time.

[3:56:27 PM]

In 2013, the city of Austin participated in an eco district workshop to create opportunities for revitalization. In two you are -- 2014, it became part of a initiative with eight other cities including Atlanta, Boston, and Cambridge. The ecodistrict amplifies and accelerates regeneration and creates modeling for revitalization. It aligns well with the city of Austin's comprehensive imagine Austin plan. It includes things like connected neighborhoods, managed water resources, workforce and local business investment, and household affordability. As part of the Seaholm intake process, when the parks department began ownership in 2011, we then created a feasibility study. That looked at the short-term and long-term uses of the building, including structural integrity resources. The stakeholder meetings and involvement began in the winter of 2012 and continues throughout now. It included over ten different departments in the city, nonprofit groups, and multiple community meetings. Themselves for the first time. That process, then, turn intoed into a design ideas competition that created a national and international recognition. We were able to create a vision for the facility, shown here. The vision is that the project will develop the Seaholm intake facility as community public destination.

[3:58:30 PM]

The facility and site will be redeveloped to creatively address the needs of the public. The project will respond to the surrounding changing environment while engaging the trail park users and the lakefront. Here are some pictures from the design ideas competition. Following that competition, the parks department, along with the purchasing office, started working on a request for qualifications. In November of 2013, a council resolution was created to have the parks department work with the urban land institute to figure out, can we do this, and what will it take? In March of 2014, a technical advisory panel came from the urban land institute and created -- and came with renowned people from groups of all kinds, including the Bryant park conservancy group. As part of that report, in April, 2014, they had a three-fold process they recommended. They wanted us to create a private-public partnership with the city.

They wanted the design process to facilitate a nonprofit participation, and streamline the process, including creating a fair and revocable license agreement of a minimum of 20 years. We did all those things in the request for qualifications. So, the request was issued in October of 2014. In January of 2015, the first phase was due. Those -- that team of internal reviewers is comprised of 15 members from over ten different departments. The second phase is due June 4th, an evaluation process will continue after that.

[4:00:34 PM]

As part of that process, the top teams will be able to create boards and present them to the public in -- on the speak up Austin website, as well as be presented in the council hall atrium outside. The public input will be tabulated through the end of June and part of July. We hope to come back to the sustainability community in June with also meetings to the concessions and contracts committee, and the parks board. And we hope to come back in August for a full council recommendation of the final development team for this facility. Any questions or comments?

>> Pool: Members, any questions or comments? Remember, following the idea for the uses, design ideas competition. That was fun, seeing all the different innovative things folks were interested in having there. It's my understanding that it's going to involve some places for kayaks and water, like, standup paddleboards and stuff to pull up to the entrance?

>> There are a number of things that were required in the request for qualifications from the development teams. It included recreational uses as a high amenity I, and also an area for the public. It included boardwalk access, creating safety and separate from ped and runners versus bicyclists. We're hoping to really improve that area of the park.

>> Pool: All right. Well, one other thing I'll say. I have a special attachment to Seaholm. I was on the Seaholm advisory committee back in the late '90s, which was the first effort by the council to save that building as an Austin energy plant. It was scheduled for decommissioning, and there was a conversation happening at council about selling the land and councilmember Beverly Griffith spear-headed the saving of that facility.

[4:02:50 PM]

There's a report, it would be great if you could find it to add to the historical documentation. We did an extensive stakeholder and outreach process over a considerable period of time. We worked in collaboration with a lot of downtown development folks and citizens. And that was in the late '90s. I think Michael Knox might be able to help you get a copy of that.

>> We've worked very closely with the economic development office and a number of people from that department have really helped us on the way with this process.

>> Pool: Yeah. Some of the best projects in this town take considerable time.

>> Yeah.

>> Pool: When they bear fruit, it's really gratifying to see them. Any other comments or questions from folks? All right. Thank you.

>> Again, we have signed off on the project as a whole at the parks board, but we still have to have the presentation.

>> Pool: Okay. I'm not sure folks heard that.

>> I apologize, I have allergies, I'm sorry for the coughing. The parks board reviewed the concept and signed off on it. But we have not yet gotten the award statement. So, that will come to us.

>> Right. We're in the middle of looking at all the development teams right now. And so we hope to wrap that up by mid-june and come back to the parks board, and the concessions and contracts committee, as well, with who the recommended team ends up being.

>> Pool: That will be really interesting. Okay. Great. Thank you so much.

>> Thank you.

>> Pool: And the onion creek metro park master plan is our last item today. And thank you, staff, for staying with us for the last presentation.

[4:04:55 PM]

Welcome back.

[Laughing]

>> Is it up-side down?

>> Pool: I know this was a presentation that councilmember Garza was really hoping to be in attendance for. She may be watching us from a remote location.

>> Hopefully so.

>> Pool: If so, we'll tell her hello.

>> Madam chair, I'm Randy Scott with the parks recreation department, this is Matt, senior landscape designer with swa. Nelly Fuentes, landscape designer, swa. Manager, planning and development. Thank you for having us today.

>> Pool: Welcome.

>> The onion creek master plan, staff is requesting that the open space environmental sustainability committee recommend to the council the adoption of the metro park master plan. Green belt is 555 acres located in southeast Austin. The park is relatively flat. I'm sorry. I've skipped a slide here. The park is relatively flat with a large flood plain. The last land acquisition in onion creek metro park was made in 2000. We acquired 226 acres for \$2 million. That is less than \$9,000 an acre. Today's cost would be four times that. It would be over four times that. The parkland acquisition bond package in 1998 was \$41 million.

[4:06:57 PM]

The idea at the time was to acquire large tracts of parkland in the desired development zone ahead of development. We would then land bank it until development occurred, and then develop the parkland. In this area, we have a neighborhood just to the south

of onion creek metro park, which is developing proposed 3500 units. And it is time that we master plan this park for development. The legislature approved a municipal management district for the development adjacent to onion creek metro park in the 83rd legislative session. The city of Austin entered into a consent agreement with the developer in 2014. The consent agreement requires the developer to maintain the onion creek tax district can support the maintenance of the park. The maintenance cost is established at \$160,000 per year. The goodnight development also provided funding to the Austin parks foundation for the creation of this master plan. Part is to develop the initial phase, the requirements of the city with the consent agreement. They are to develop the initial phase of the park that includes 30 acres of irrigated lawn similar to the great lawn at zilker park, that is 45 acres of irrigated lawn. And have an additional 20 acres of improved land. Matt will now walk you through the master plan, including the public engagement process. It's that arrow right there. Oop. One more slide.
>> So, swa started the project in spring 2014.

[4:08:58 PM]

And a major emphasis was public engagement. So the first slide here, I want to talk about that public engagement process. And then the following slides will kind of go into the outcomes and design details for the park. So, the very first meeting was a visioning workshop, an introduction for us to the public, the public to us. And then just generally understanding the site. The second workshop, we did a total of four, we talked about the opportunities and constraints. We did a fair amount of site evaluation getting out on the site with consultants. And then talking to the public about sort of what those constraints were and what the possibilities were. The third workshop was in December, early December. And we broke out into groups with the public for more intimate discussions on specific items within the park and what their needs were. And then recently, we completed a final draft master plan presentation. And so, items that came out of those meetings. Generally, there is a horse group on the site right now. So they want to preserve, sort of, their ability to access the site by the trails and whatnot. There are off-leash dog areas to the north. The aeromodellers are looking for an alternative site, like a 30-acre site. Trying to fit that use into the park project. And then, probably the overriding public sentiment was maintaining the nature element within the park. So, with 555 acres, a lot of the park is within the flood plain. A lot of it is woodland, up-land woodland. People know it for the trails and the nature that they have right now. So, going to the -- actually, let me go back a second.

[4:10:59 PM]

There's also been a series of additional meetings. The last bullet point, April 28th there was unanimous approval by the parks and recreation board. So, moving on to the next slide. So, from our site analysis, it led to the small master plan that you'll see off to your right. So some of the main features were what we call the topographic ribbon, and I'll get to the forthcoming slide that explains that little bit further. But the idea was how

we connect people through the site. I think from our opportunities and constraints workshop, there's three schools immediately adjacent to the site. So is, being able to connect to those schools. There's also development to the east, and then to the south there's the in-district goodnight ranch. So, understanding where the populous is coming from, and where they're going to be entering the park. Another component is to the northeast, some of the buyout areas that are associated with the flooding issues, and being sensitive to the fact that the army corps is going to be working in that area and how our park responds to that. So, the park had a series of uses that we diagrammed out ranging from active to passive recreation areas. So, most of the areas were located to the southeast, where residential populations and school connections would be. Then, we're also connecting to the existing green belt that you find in the northern stretches of the creek, as well. And move to the next slide? So, the master plan, what you'll see here is what we've termed the green ovals are in the southeast area. And then the southwest areas, those, again, are some of the more active areas where you can imagine some sort of play fields, general open space. That's where the 30 acres of irrigated space Randy alluded to earlier would be located.

[4:12:59 PM]

The ribbon trails, you can't see them quite as much here, but there's a series of trails from the ribbon that goes east-west across the site, and then another trail that crosses the creek and goes into the green belt area. The Orange ovals on the plan represent more of an ecological restoration. We have a series of ecological restoration measures that we're proposed, ranging from preparing forest to meadows. The Orange ovals are more of the iconic meadow areas that you can imagine. And then, throughout all of these spaces, the trails wind between a series of what we call outdoor rooms. And so, along that ribbon would be a series -- the army corps project, they're proposing a bridge. We'd like to work with them to make sure our connections work with that. So, the series of forthcoming slides here talk about more specific areas. So, this is in the southeast area. We're looking at, if you know the roads, Backston. These are the play fields I mentioned earlier. There's two primary entrances. This is where the first phase, improvements for the park, would occur. It's a little hard to see, but there's a purple line that connects off of Knuckles Crossing and then connects off of Vertex. There's also things, programs such as fitness stations and playgrounds. We put a lot of thought into sort of multigenerational uses, from young children to middle age, to older generations, as well. And that's something we heard a lot through the public meetings. So, this is the site that's just a little further to the west along Knuckles Crossing. And this is the area where we imagined having sort of a great lawn, event center, if you will.

[4:15:04 PM]

If there's bigger gatherings, you can imagine this would be the location you'd have parking, you'd have structures, restrooms. It's a little further away from the residential area. There's a buffer between the in-district goodnight development and this site. So

it's sort of not encroaching too closely on adjacent residences. So, there would also be a picnic row north of that area, as well. This is an area just to the north of the community event space. And we heard this theme about nature throughout the community meeting. And so the idea came up of libraries, of education. And it became sort of the idea of doing a nature center. And this would be on one of the restored meadows. So you can see just to the right of the Orange oval is where that nature center would be located. So, there's an existing stream port that comes up to north-south flow through the site. This nature center would sit on that, so you get a repairing condition, a meadow condition, and then you get the forest condition. So it's a nice location for all those uses in education. So, there would be an amphitheater for learning, as well. This area is further to the west. It's off of bluff springs road. There's an existing high area, and then it slopes down towards onion creek. This is actually one of the last areas that we went to for a site visit. It's one of the more beautiful areas. Amazing wildflower displays, this would be a very passive use. We're suggesting you be able to have sort of nature trails, maybe a few shelters, but basically, preserve the nature that's there right now. There would also be a bridge crossing that would get you from the topographic ribbon to this area, as well. This area is just off of pleasant valley.

[4:17:05 PM]

So, sort of the middle-north portion of the site. And another one of the requests that came from the public were sort of more adventure sport areas, as well. I know in the army corps plans, they talk -- a location for a skate park. There's an existing quarry site that's already denuded, ecologically, so we could do something interesting there. The a romodellers are looking for a site, that might be a use adjacent to their boundary, so that's the area you see to the top of the page. You have to consider fly Zones. It's pretty complicated. Generally, that site works pretty well. It's hard to put it in other portions of the site. And then another entity that was well-represented at the meetings was the disk health community. You can see to the east of pleasant valley, we have space for a disk golf course. This would be -- the other component is Perez elementary is over there, we're looking at an outdoor education site, as well. So, with that, I'll turn it over to randy.

>> Thank you, Matt. Today staff is requesting that the committee forward the onion creek master plan to council for adoption. The next steps, June 2015, present the onion creek master plan to council for adoption, then hire an engineering firm to produce permit drawings for site plan submittal for phase one, park development. Then we'll enter into bidding contracts and need to complete construction of phase one by 2017, according to the consent agreement. That concludes our presentation today.

[4:19:11 PM]

Thank y'all. Here's a list of the project team.

>> Pool: Thank you, Mr. Scott.

>> Thank you.

>> Pool: Any comments or questions, members?

>> I'm just really pleased to see this. Because of all we've been through with the flooding down there, and the protracted process that we've had to go through. It's something to look forward to, and to really hope that we can get that in place at some point.

>> Thank you.

>> Pool: Thank you, Ms. Maxwell. Ms. Rivera?

>> The parks board voted unanimously for this. I'm very pleased to see that part of what's being planned is another park big enough and beautiful enough to take some of the pressure off of auditorium shores and zilker. I'm so pleased that we're being able to come up with this plan. Now the money comes next.

[Laughing] Goo right, thank you. Mayor pro tem.

>> Tovo: I agree, it's a very exciting project. And I particularly am keen on that kind of financial arrangement that allowed for the funding to maintain it. I have a couple questions. I love that the slides ended with the children. And I wondered if you'd had any outreach among the youth in that area, to hear what their ideas were for the park and the master plan for that area. Or if that might be integrated into some of the design process to come.

>> Yes. We -- they attended our public meetings.

>> Is your mic on?

>> Tovo: I apologize, you may have said that while I was out of the room.

>> Yes, we went through the public engagement process while you were out of the room. We conducted a series of five public engagements?

>> It was four. They were all located at schools within the district.

[4:21:12 PM]

So it was kind of fun to go to the schools and see the families coming and going, peeking in on the meetings. We had a fair amount of input from the younger generation, as well.

>> Tovo: Good. I apologize for missing that. It would be interesting to know more about their ideas and how they were integrated into the master plan. We almost -- we don't often include youth input into our master plans. So, it would be interesting to know how that shaped the master plan. I also wondered, I like a lot -- the ideas that you've mentioned within the master plan are all really interesting. I wondered if there might be an opportunity for something that's come up a couple times in the city, and that's -- the kind of activity that might take place in an adventure playground. Those are different in every area. And I know there are some cities that have them. And I know there are some liability concerns among other cities. But it's still an idea, I think, that merits consideration.

>> There's an adventure playground in the plan, actually. It's on the southeast portion located closest to the school. It's on the southeast. And part of the idea there was, there'll be a little bit of clearing work. You can use some of the trees to make really interesting adventure structures. To the north, we talked about the skate park and

some of the things up there. So, I think those are both adventure uses catering to different groups and different ways to play.

>> Tovo: I see the skate park noted. You said the other area is closer to the school?

>> Yeah, I'm not sure if it shows on your enlargement. On the bigger master plan --

>> Tovo: Will it have the kind of activities that are present in some of the other adventure playgrounds, construction equipment? And blocks? Things to move and build?

[4:23:13 PM]

>> Yes. Certainly. As far as the level of detail that we're at right now, we've done general recommendations about equipment. And I think the idea, having heard that this is a nature park, you know, the idea was to make it nature-based adventure play. You certainly -- there will be an element for traditional playgrounds, as well, but we wanted to focus on things like logs and sort of that style.

>> Tovo: Thank you.

>> Councilmember, I wanted to add, during the design and development phase of this, we certainly can engage more in more youth -- in those discussions. One thing I wanted to mention is, Blazier elementary, the one that's right to the southeast of the park, the principal and assistant principal attended all of our meetings, because they were very, very interested in doing a playground -- an outdoor classroom-type of theme that they want to incorporate into their curriculum. So, they were just very engaged in seeing how -- and they were excited that we were starting phase one right outside of their door, which is both palm and Blazier, but particularly Blazier. I just wanted to mention that.

>> Tovo: Thanks. It sounds like there will be three elementary schools with outdoor classrooms touching on it.

>> Yes.

>> Tovo: Pretty neat. Thank you.

>> So, I love this, as well. But I had a couple questions about the extension of pleasant valley road. It looks to me -- context for the plans there, and can you also possibly describe to me what level of a road it is, since it will be going right through the -- it will fragment the park. It'll split the park.

>> Yes, councilmember. I don't know a lot of specifics, but the things that I can share with you is that pleasant valley is an arterial in the 2030 plan.

[4:25:16 PM]

We envision that a good portion, at least with crossing onion creek, will be above, very similar to -- I mean, it will be a bridge over our parkland. And as it gets closer to slaughter lane, it'll flatten out. But our park road would go underneath pleasant valley. And --

>> Pool: It would look a little bit like what we have over at zilker, where we have mopac going over Barton springs?

>> Very similar to that.

>> Pool: I'd really like to see some sketches on that. I have some concerns.

>> Okay.

>> Pool: Significant concerns.

>> Certainly. Another one would be rosewood park.

>> Pool: Mmhmm.

>> I think that portion of -- weberville road that goes over rosewood, it would be very similar to what we're talking about. But, my part of the development team is here. She may have -- she is part of the goodnight development. And I think she's been more engaged with transportation.

>> Pool: Great. Sure. Would you like to come on up and maybe address the issue? Thank you. And tell us, give us your name. Tell us who you are. And welcome.

>> Hi, there. Thank you for the opportunity to visit with you. I work for land development. We are the developers of the goodnight ranch. I think ricardo did an excellent job of explaining, it's in the 2013 plan. Onion creek is a large creek that it would be an above-grade quaffing. Crossing. As far as sketches and details, I don't think the city has gotten that far in road design to even understand what that might be, or when that might come online.

>> Pool: Well, I think it has the potential of affecting the development of the park. And I notice on the schema, it runs right through the heart of the park. And so, maybe we can have a little bit more presentation on that specific.

[4:27:18 PM]

It's in the 2030 plan. I recognize that. So, at some point there will be some drawings.

>> Sure.

>> Pool: On it. But . . .

>> I do believe, though, that Matt and his team at swa really took heavy consideration into how that might work, and being very careful in where they laid out the trails so that there wouldn't be bi-section of the park. But I would leave that to Matt.

>> So, some of the design thinking along pleasant valley was obviously, we want to give some buffer distances so that as it's built, it's not changing dramatically what the park plan was. And so to the west of pleasant valley, where the existing equestrian facilities are, we talked about keeping that use within the park. We said, to the west of pleasant valley, those horse trails and facilities there remain. And there's some additional fields to the south of that area, so there's some flexibility there. To the east of pleasant valley, most of the active uses are biased towards the eastern end of the site. And so there's some flex landscape zone between the active use area and pleasant valley. Trail connections, roads, as ricardo had mentioned earlier, you can anticipate that it's not going to be graded. It has to be raised for a portion of it. Any of the circulation systems would be planned that they go under. Again, once this is built, we have a lot of clearance that any of those circulation systems would not be impacted.

>> Pool: So, generally, when you were planning for this, can you tell me the width of the road? I guess it's an extension of the existing width, or is pleasant valley

anticipated to be widened?

>> We conducted the master plan as if pleasant valley was going to be constructed in the future at the existing width of pleasant valley to the north of onion creek.

[4:29:23 PM]

>> Pool: How wide is that? About a hundred feet?

>> 120 maybe.

>> Pool: 120. When you say it won't be at grade, how high were you anticipating, or was the thought that it would be?

>> We thought it would span the entire flood plain. So, I don't know, does this map show the flood plain on there? It's shaded.

>> It's dashed lightly.

>> You can barely see it on this map. It's a dashed light blue line there.

>> I mean, from onion creek there's hundreds of feet back before you'd hit the abutment for the bridge. There might be columns, but, there's a fair amount of buffer distance.

>> Pool: Any other questions? All right. Thank you so much for coming and making your presentation.

>> Thank you.

>> Chair.

>> Pool: Yes, mayor pro tem.

>> Tovo: So, unfortunately, because we don't have a quorum, we won't be able to take action and recommend this item, either.

>> Pool: What I was thinking on that is, we don't have to take a vote on our support of it. But we can just send it off to council. Because I think there is some interest, timing-wise, to have this on the agenda. So, I would just, in my capacity as chair, say that I'd like this to go forth to council.

>> Great.

>> Pool: Yeah.

>> I think we had a few items of that sort today, so I hope they all move forward.

>> I was going to ask the same question of the previous item.

>> Pool: Yes, the same thing there. And in our committee report, we will indicate that the quorum had evaporated. And so we weren't able to take a vote. I can advise that I support both of these, and maybe the mayor pro tem could indicate her support.

>> Tovo: I do.

[4:31:24 PM]

>> Pool: My guess is, if we were able to take a vote, it would officially proceed. So we'll just leave it there, and ask that staff send it to the agenda office for inclusion.

>> Madam.

>> Pool: Does that help you all?

>> Yes. Just as a closing statement on this particular item, I didn't want to close

without acknowledging goodnight and Austin parks foundation. This is truly, I think, one of the new tools that we have for moving forward in terms of creative financing and supporting our parks, in terms of development and maintenance. So, the city of Austin and the parks department has really enjoyed working with goodnight and with Austin parks foundation who was instrumental in bringing on the consultants who have done a really great job. So we're excited about this, and thank you for the opportunity to present.

>> Pool: You bet. Thank you all. Appreciate your presentations. Members, that concludes our items for consideration. We were -- let's see.

>> Can I just?

>> Pool: You sure can.

>> Tovo: Since we talked about the wildhorse pid this morning, and there's been a lot of ongoing discussion about decker, I would just say that the financing mechanism that was used to develop, or will be used to develop the onion creek metro park, I think offers us some suggested tools for how we might approach that park, as well. So I hope there'll be some creative thought to whether any of that development taking place out there might be brought to bear to help with improvements at Walter E. Long park.

>> Pool: And I would just say, in addition to that, that I'm hoping would be part of the conversation that we'll have, that the mayor had Teed up as our last council meeting, about having a comprehensive development conversation on properties east of 183. And if I can circle back around to the climate protection plan, I would like to indicate my support for moving forward with the resolution that staff brought to us.

[4:33:32 PM]

And, again, we don't have a quorum, but, mayor pro tem, would you like to indicate where you are on that?

>> Tovo: Yeah, I'm certainly supportive of it. It's unclear to me how, in our new system, how those move forward. But I'm certainly supportive of all of the items we talked about today moving forward to the full council for action.

>> Pool: The other thing I contemplated was having a special meeting where we can officially take up these items. And I've asked my staff to check in with vice chair Garza's office to see if there's a opportunity for her to be available, and for councilmember Zimmerman to return so the four of us can act officially on it. So, I'll have additional information on that soon, I hope. All right. There be no additional action, I will adjourn this meeting at 4:35. And I thank everybody for all your efforts.