

Economic Opportunity Committee Meeting Transcript - 2/8/2016

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>> Troxclair: Okay. Welcome to the meeting of the economic opportunity committee. It is 2:17 and we have a quorum so we're going to get started. The first item on our agenda is the approval of the minutes. Have you a chance to -- have you had a chance to review the minutes from the January meeting? >> Houston: I have and I move approval. >> Troxclair: Okay. There is a move to approve the minutes. And a second. All those in favor? All right. The minutes are approved unanimously with councilmember Casar off the dais. We do have a citizen signed up to speak for citizens communication on something that's not on the agenda. So Mr. King, if you will go ahead and come up. While he's up, just a scheduling note, I think we are going to start with item number 6 today and then move through the items on the agenda in their order, but we're going to start with item number 6 if that's okay with the committee. >> Pool: Chair, I will have to step -- I will have to step away around 3:30 to take a call, but I will be back. >> Troxclair: Okay. Great. >> Okay, thank you, chair, vice-chair and councilmembers. I'll be very brief. You know, we've been talking about the inequity in Austin, economic inequity in Austin. And I'm really glad that we have this committee to help focus on those problems. I know it's one of the toughest problems to solve. If you had a magic wand you would have already waved it and sold that problem. But, you know, we're talking about affordability and they all relate to each other. They all tie together. To me one of the biggest drivers of your affordability problem is the fact that our incomes are so slow and they've been

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stagnant and that's really what's exacerbated this and made this such an acute problem. And such an impactful problem on our community. So I just wonder if we're using every tool we have. I know maybe we look at other tools as well to try to attack that particular problem because if we can solve that part of the problem then I think that can really make some good progress towards making Austin more affordable. And you know, so a minimum wage. I know we're looking at minimum wages for our own employees in the city and is it possible to set a minimum wage for the city itself. Say if you're going to do business in our city, then we're going to set a minimum wage, a liveable wage. And I use \$15 has been the number that we've talked about a lot, but that doesn't fit every family situation in terms of making it liveable and affordable. So I would suggest that we look for ways to can we intact a minimum wage in Austin? Or is the state law doesn't allow us to do that? Or is that just not politically viable? I don't know. It seems like we should try for that. If we could do that with our city employees then why can't we do that with the whole city and set a liveable wage for the city? If you're going to do business here we want you to pay a liveable wage. And the other thing is we're talking about making Austin more affordable through densifying the city. And, you know, that sounds good, but if you look at the data, the data does not back that up. Every city that has densified its urban core has become less affordable, not more

affordable. I think if we're looking for strategies to help solve that problem, densifying is not going to get us there. I'm not saying we shouldn't densify. I'm not saying that. I'm just saying that's not the way to make Austin more affordable. It didn't work in any other city. Demography, which is an international organization, has done a study and they studied this problem in

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every large city in the whole world. And every large city that tried this they got less affordable, not more affordable. Cities in the U.S., Europe, China, as far as I can't, all the large cities that have tried this, it didn't work. And densifying didn't stop sprawl and it didn't effect the greenhouse gases. So -- greenhouse gases. These rationalizations for density are not valid. [Buzzer sounds] Anyway, thank you for your attention to this problem and for listening to my comments. >> Troxclair: Okay. We're going to move on to item number 6 and hear a presentation about the spirit of Austin initiative and hear about the quality of life in east Austin. And we do have a public speaker so I will take her first. I'm sorry if I'm not saying your name right. Is it nala? >> [Inaudible]. >> Troxclair: You don't want to speak. >> [Inaudible]. >> Troxclair: You want to speak on the fashion industry one? All right. >> Good afternoon, councilmember troxclair, pool and Houston, I'm Ashton Cumberbatch. This is [indiscernible]. And we're and we're here to give you an update on the spirit of east Austin. Councilmember Casar, how are you? So I want to take a little time just to give you -- remind you a little bit

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about the background of the spirit of east Austin, how it came about. When times when people talk about the spirit of east Austin they talk about the September 12th event, the community event that took place out at the exposition center, but it's more than that. It's an initiative. And it came about in part because of many of the conversations that many of you had when you were running for your position and the words you were hearing from some of the constituents out there about the importance of affordability or the lack thereof in our region. So to culminate it, with the forming of a working group, councilmember Houston, councilmember Renteria, pool, troxclair and the mayor looking at affordability out of a proposal that came out of the golf course in colony park area and wondering whether or not that was the best use of the land to spur economic development in an area that had been historically underdeveloped. And that's what the spirit of east Austin is about. It's about economic development, but not just economic. It's about holistic development and it's about an equitable level, sustainable level and transformative level. Those are three key words when we talk about it. Trying to address the fact that the eastern crest, and we say that really talking about the Travis county boundary east of 35, but we call it a crescent because we recognize that the Rundberg area, which starts west of I-35 is also part of that area that has been historically, intentionally underserved or as a result of policies and practices underserved for a number of years, also benign neglect and something need to be done to stimulate holistic development and accelerate development. So that's the focus of the spirit of east Austin. There have been quite a few opportunities for the community to give their input on development, particularly the populations

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of color. So we've had in years past the African-American quality of life, the hispanic quality of life, Asian quality of life that spoke to a lot of these issues as it relates to recreation, health and wellness or housing, economic development. But we felt that there is a need for another opportunity or fresh opportunity to hear from the community. So hence the meeting in September of last year out at the

austin-travis county exposition center. You all were there with along with 450 to 500 other folks looking at a variety of topics that were 14 basic themes. I won't list them all for you right now. Before we leave we'll mention the website where people can go and get a review of that presentation. But the themes dealt with mobility, affordability, cultural competency and inclusion, health and wellness, things of that nature. There were breakout sessions around those particular themes and after they heard some inspiring words from the city manager and the mayor and others have some conversations around those things and give their input and answer questions such as what's working in your neighborhood, what's not working? What are the gaps, what are your suggestions for improvement? And their input was collected down at 1990 stickies and that information was not just thrown away, but it was actually captured. And I want to give some kudos to the city staff, Pio and notification department and those working with us on the spirit of east Austin initiative. And I neglected to say that the spirit of east Austin

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initiative is really a strategic partnership between the mayor's office, the city council and the city manager along with the staff to do this work that I've described. It was head by a team of social science activities led by the city's office of innovation, an analysis was put together, over 1800 slides and that information has been put together for the public to look at and that website is bloomfire -- it's either spirit of east austin.bloom fire.com or bloom fire spirit of east austin.com. And they can get that information and each and every one of the stickies that was left on September 12th can be viewed at that website along with some qualitative analysis about what those stickies say, our understanding of those broken out by the 14 themes that I've talked about. Since that day we have worked with members of Pio and the innovation team to talk to the various communities to make sure we understand what it was they were saying. So we met with the montopolis communities, the dove springs communities, central east Austin communities. I think I said dove springs community. The colony park communities, the rundberg communities. Have I left off anything? Is that it? And we have on our calendar to meet with the del valle communities as well. We took the presentation and broke down and did a presentation just about their particular area. So here's one. This one is about montopolis. And hopefully I can do this

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right. How did I scroll up and down on this? All right. So I won't go through the whole thing, but one of the first things I want to do is just ask them -- we met with the folks and we met to the meetings that they were already having so we went to montopolis, so to one of their community meetings and just made sure we had an understanding of who was there, who was at the September 12th meeting and what their experience was or how they experienced that forum. Then we gave them an opportunity to react to some of the things that we heard and read about that forum. And we recognized for instance, that one of the things was the need to build trust. I'm sure you've heard that in one of your many meetings. We've heard that there were a lack of resources and a perceived lack of accountability. And folks were saying that they didn't think they had a meaningful recourse when dealing with the city and trying to develop their neighborhoods. We've talked about the fact that trust equals reliability and intimacy and self-orientation. The importance of residents having an opportunity to determine their own purpose and their own future. That we needed to listen more and we've attempted to do that in our various community meetings. It wasn't about us going there and telling them, but listening to them and then verifying and confirming what it is we thought that we heard. Again, the whole idea of collectivism, working together in a strategic plan, the community along with the government. And that we needed to have some empathy. You can see the second sticky here. Wow, there is a lot of pain and

sorrow here. Sorry about that. Today. And it's released to hear us, maintain the conversations that are started. And so you heard folks saying we don't want this to be a one-time event. There's a lot of pain in

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this room. You're hearing that. Please continue the conversation. And we have endeavored to in fact do that. And here are some specifics. For each one of the attendees we asked them when they made their comments if they would to include their zip codes so we can geographically group them. Here are some of the folks from 78741 and some of the comments they made. Talking about the struggle to stay in the community. Again talking about affordability. Feeling that they were pushed out by economic pressures. The economic growth was fast, but community resources did not come along with the growth. I'm going to give kazaki now to talk about the interactions we had with some of the community groups. >> Good afternoon. One of the exciting things about this project has been the time that we've taken, Ashton and myself and others from the staff, to go out to the actual community to hear some of their feedback about some of the information that we presented to them. And some of that feedback was quite passionate. We heard some anger and frustration. We also heard a lot of enthusiasm. Enthusiasm about this opportunity. I think generally Ashton mentioned the issues around trust so I think that and there are a lot of questions. I think what Ashton and I did when we went out to the community was do things that were recommended. Spent a lot of time listening, hopefully less time talking, hearing what their concerns were. Themes were emphasis on equity. Everything we do is done in an equitable way. Giving community more say in what happens so when an idea is being presented it's the way they've been approached and be a part of the process, who should be involved. But also having not just more of a say, but having some type of

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access to funding and so these are just kind of general themes that came out. Again, the areas that Ashton mentioned, there were colony park, rundberg area, central east Austin, dove springs and montopolis. But just to say, we also met with groups like la rasa round table. We met with a number of other community leaders to again get their feedback and input about different ideas they may have. And then earlier I mentioned -- we also received a list of almost three hundred projects that the city is working on to see which areas might be a priority for the spirit of east Austin. Because one of the main emphasis of the spirit of east Austin is to really how do we jumpstart or fast -- what's the word I'm looking for, fast track the process because again, I think some of the things we heard is that we have a lot of good ideas out there, but they'll take too long for them to develop. How do we really fast track some things again that the community feels like they really want to support. So that's why we've been spending a lot of time reaching out to community to see what their feedback would be. The city is in the process of coming up with another web page. We'll condense the information so it will be available. The the idea is we always want to be in the process and be transparent as possible, also giving and receiving information. You want me to city speak on the next steps? When we talk about next steps we spent a lot of time collecting information that's being quite daunting at times. It's been good information to receive. I think the next steps is really putting those ideas together we've been playing around with a number of 10 projects, but we really don't want to willow it down to the 10, we want to have a larger list of projects that we will go out to the community and say this is what we received from across the east Austin. These are the ideas that we're hearing about. Again, give us if some feedback about what they highlight. And I'll give you an

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example. Every community we talked to talked about equity, but they wanted something that was concrete. So the conversation that's been happening around some type of equity assessment tool, the funding that went toward the equity officer, those were the conversations, how can we apply that to the spirit of east Austin in general? So that's been one thing that has come out every time we talked to someone about this project. They're enthusiastic, but have a lot of questions about how it will be implemented and how to make the project more effective. >> Before we talk about next steps, any questions? The other thing we mentioned is talked about the working group. We look forward to scheduling time to come to the working group and share in of the ideas we've heard from the community, et cetera. Don't be concerned about the three hundred item list that we talked about. We are whittling that down working with city staff to come up with something less than 20 as far as potential projects and ideas et cetera to bring to you for your consideration. And again, it's -- we're mindful of the fact that we, again, equitable, transform tif, transitible. And we would like for every idea to be a homerun, but we know it's not just the homeruns that are important. Sometimes stringing singles together is very important to get someone home. So it's about yes those big ideas. When we look at things like a grid of effort and impact. So low effort, high effort, low impact, high impact. And how does each proposal work out along those quadrants. So it may be some of the things we're talking about are stringing together the projects that by themselves maybe seem small, but when strung together and put into the larger lens, if

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you will, actually give us the impact that we're looking to have. So those are some of the things we're behindful of as we -- mindful of as we vet the various projects. Any questions? >> Troxclair: Any questions, members? Councilmember Houston? >> Houston: Thank you so much for the information. I guess this is the first time that I've been -- I'm only a freshman. I've just ended my freshman year, but this is the first time I've had mayor's staff come and make a presentation instead of city staff. That's a first for me. I was wondering where -- is it Kerry o'connor is? >> She is in Toronto right now on city business. Otherwise she would have been here with us. >> Houston: So we got the B team? >> You've got the B team, yes, ma'am. >> Houston: I was at one of those community meetings in east Austin and there must have been 80 people maybe, 75, 80 people there to talk about the spirit of east Austin and the outcomes. And one of the things that somebody brought up that I thought was interesting is that we had several themes, multiple themes. There was not a theme about economics. So could you explain why with all the themes that we had, why we didn't have a breakout group that talked about the economy? >> You're right, I don't think there was a separate one for specific economic development, but it was included in at least one or two of the other ones. Certainly as we've gone around and talked to various groups and individuals and organizations, economic development is one of them. So we talk about, for instance, I think we had one on maybe workforce development. We had one on jobs. So we know those are all parts of economic development. So et cetera not a topic that got -- it's not a topic that got lost, but it's included among some of the other subsets of what we call economic development, which we

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think made it easier to actually digest as opposed to the large umbrella of economic development. >> Houston: Thank you. >> If I may ask also something that was -- it was actually present, but we have as much of a presence as we hope was education. Education is part of the economic engine that we want to see in our city. Even though there wasn't the kind of representation I think some people expected, I

know I've been in contact with the -- whether it be the superintendent, folks on the trustees board, different professionals to make sure they're part of the conversation about schools in east Austin. And so the point is that we've made -- we try to make sure that they're part of the process as far as when we look at economic development in east Austin. >> Houston: And I was very appreciative that historic preservation and culture were also themes there because I think we sometimes forget as we become the most innovative, most prosperous city, that there's some cultural and historic anchors that if we're not careful we will lose in our prosperity. So I was very grateful that you all had that as a theme. >> Again, we see that as another key to the holistic development that we're talking about. >> Pool: I know that there are a lot of large developments springing up in the eastern crescent. How has that -- how have those changes intersected with the work that you're doing in talking with the community, with the spirit of east Austin? >> Are there any particular ones that you have in mind? >> Pool: Any of them that are -- whisper valley is one. And Indian hills. The ones that are springing up around Decker Lake and along 130. >> I think at some point in time there's a proposal that's bubbling around that would include that area and it's more holistic and comprehensive than what has been talked about before. So it talks about that area, which talks about residential, but making

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sure mixed income residential housing in that area and that we do have some workforce development components if any development goes out there and job development and recreation department for the folks who live out there now. Not just the ones that are coming later. And education. Kazaki talks about pre-k to high school to past that. We're looking at holistic again comprehensive development out in that area to take advantage of some of the things that are coming along. >> Pool: Do you feel like you're getting enough input from the different school districts besides the Austin school district? >> I would say yes, but there's still more work to be done reaching out to them. >> I would say I've definitely reached out to Manor and Del Valle. >> And Pflugerville? >> And making sure we're in contact with them. They're very excited about this. A good example of this is out in the Del Valle area, I believe 90% of their teachers don't live in that area for a number of different reasons. So how can economic development be in the way that benefits the folks who live there, but also attract folks who live there so you have more of your teachers living locally. A lot of teachers would like to, but for a number of different reasons they're not because this is how the whole area has been developed up to now. When we think 10 years from now really having a vision of not just the areas, but what other others will look like. We mentioned economic development on areas. I think we all know it's going to happen, but how do we do it in a way that's fair and equitable, that we would be mindful of the needs of other parts of the community, particularly the indigenous communities that have been there for a number of decades or generations. >> Pool: I know when we were first talking about having the big forum on the east side that -- the idea with the school districts was to give them an opportunity to start thinking in terms of if they have to expand and build new schools, that they should be on a search for parts of town and parcels of land that would suit their needs.

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And I don't know if that's a discussion that you know that they're having if you could encourage them to think along those lines. The land is disappearing pretty quickly, it looks like to me, but we will need schools east of 183 certainly. >> Yeah. Definitely, to be honest, I sent out another row that I have on the committee working with another trustee, his name is -- >> Gordon. >> I'm sorry, I'm having a senior moment. Ted Gordon. And speaking specifically about what is -- what does education look like in his district and looking behind the old arguments about school closure, but looking at where is the district --

the district and particularly his area going? And so when we look at will it be Mueller, were we talking about other parts of that, even that one district, being very mindful, looking at mixed use, the ideas have been put out there already about how to use land in collaboration with the city where you're making affordable housing for teachers and other educators. So being really creative about how we go about having a plan and also getting buy-in from the community about those kinds of plans. That's definitely a conversation that I've been a part of on that note. >> Pool: That's great. And on the health care side I understand there is -- St. David's I think is collaborating -- there's a clinic that's coming in, and is it with one of the schools out there. Councilmember Houston, are you familiar? >> Houston: The one I'm aware of is through community care and it's at Turner Roberts recreation center, one day a month during the times most people are working, but we're trying to get them to do it from 9:00 to 3:00 or something. That's the one I know about. >> Yes, that's the one I'm aware of. And there is a coalition that's focused on health

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in east Austin in that area and that involves Shannon Jones, as you know, the director of health and human services here, Sheri Fleming, her counterpart in Travis county, Judge Miller at community care, the CCC, Cap Metro is involved, Seton is involved, David Evans, People's Community Clinic. We just had a meeting earlier this afternoon. So that's a focus. And that group just started up the latter part of last year looking at it. We're tapping into the -- the spirit of east Austin is tapping into their work so we don't have to reinvent the wheel to utilize their work to utilize outcomes for the eastern crescent. >> That's good. It's really important too. And dental clinics as well. And the fire stations issue was also something that we talked about last summer, whether we had adequate or any really -- what our response times are on the eastern part of our city, and whether that we need to be thinking in terms of finding property for -- to co-locate maybe a fire station with E.M.S., something like that. In that part of town that's going to be growing pretty quickly. >> I appreciate that reminder. It's not something that's been on our radar yet, but we will take a look at that. >> Pool: I think it's also pretty key. Thank you. >> I mentioned earlier that we were very appreciative of the team at Pio and Laura Frost is ear, Doug Matthews back there and chief of for the city manager is on this and so we've appreciated working with them on advancing this. >> Pool: You've got good folks working with you there. >> Troxclair: Councilmember Casar. >> Casar: Thanks so much for coming down. My first question is maybe a little long-winded, but pretty

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basic, since I can't be part of the working group because of our rules, which are good rules and I actually think it's good to have councilmembers who represent areas outside of this area being on that working group, so I appreciate getting to work on this in public from outside the working group, but that means some of my questions might be a little more basic so I get caught up to speed. It seems that the first thing that comes to mind for me and I'm sure you know this and feel this, is that it seems to be big. You've got probably half the city just in this meeting you've been asked about fire houses, tracking, housing projects, economic development, jobs. I mean, just the whole gamut of issues. And you've got areas within this sort of crescent that are gentrifying or those asking for new development in services. You've got areas that have concerns about schools being underenrolled, other areas where the schools are too full. You have the whole gamut of issues. So since this is something that we're working on every city department and boards and commissions, these sorts of issues we've discussed today, can you sort of succinctly add for me how you are targeting your works so you feel like a valued I'm sure you can be, but it seems so big that are you doing evaluation of the work that needs to be done and doing surveys of what you need to be doing and doing it first and coordinating action or shaping new action. If it's all of

the above then it seems to me that it's -- I know y'all are amazing and accomplished individuals, but two of y'all, it seems to me that's what the whole city government should be working on. Help me understand from y'all's perspective what it is that -- how it is y'all are going to tackle such a big project and add something that isn't already occurring at the city. >> I think that to your point that one of those

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reasons that it has to be teamwork, and so it's talked about working with the city council, working with the mayor's office and working with the city staff, is an importance to that so we aren't reinventing the wheel. Two primary things we are doing. One is hearing, considering new ideas that haven't been shared before. And vetting those. And vetting those with the appropriate folks. At the same time then looking at some of the proposals or plans that the city already has. And hence that list of 300. And seeing which one of those are something that fit under the spirit of east Austin and maybe need to be accelerated or facilitated in some way to move them past where they may be stuck currently. I think those the primary two areas that we're in. Not trying to duplicate, not trying to do city staff's job at all, but just to sort of move past for those existing projects a place where they may be now and not moving as fast as we all might like. And seeing what may have them stuck. And then giving a venue for folks who may have some new ideas and hearing those and vetting those and seeing if they're something that we should be advancing. >> Casar: So you see your primary role as doing that listing and evaluation and then working with folks that are working on good ideas that you hear or evaluate and then connecting them to staff and to the council so that we can unlog jam things that you think are -- could be wins, be they singles or doubles in your view. >> Correct. >> Casar: That's helpful. And then speaking towards some of the issues in district 4 in particular, I think Mr. Prince noted where we have certain parts that are west of 35 that are sort of included in this crescent and I would just note that just looking at the number of sticky notes presented in 78758 and 78753, which are the very populated zip codes, primarily are the

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neighborhoods along the Lamar and Rundberg corridors, that there were less responses than they were in West Oak Hill from those areas because I think part of it is not quite -- understating that there are certainly demographic similarities to lots of parts of east Austin, but not quite understanding ourselves as east Austin because it doesn't make any sense you're not east of I-35. So I think that -- I'm very, very anxious to continue working with y'all as I can within the quorum rules to make sure that folks understand that these are resources coming from the innovation office and the mayor's office to help move existing quality projects along even if we don't quite consider it east Austin because it's not, but the needs in that area are important enough that I think that everybody has been kind enough to understand that there are reasons to move projects along there too. So I'm willing and able and ready to help with that stuff. >> Thank you very much for that offer. We will take advantage of it. I think what you point out, though, is the importance for us meeting with those folks in your area as opposed to waiting for them to come to us or since they didn't come on December 12th they don't count now that we've been proactive to be reaching out to them and we will continue to do that. >> Casar: Thanks. >> Troxclair: I know this isn't a short process and that it's important to kind of move the process along, but at the same time do your due diligence and make sure we're having meaningful public engagement, et cetera. So what are -- what kind of timeline -- you said you would be coming back to the working group with a list, kind of a pared down list of projects that would be good to focus on. When would that -- when would we expect to have that meeting or to have that list? >> So without having a specific date in mind, I would say within the

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next 45 days we'll look forward to coming to you with that. Maybe less than that. >> Troxclair: And then what do you see the project looking like after that? After that meeting? After we've kind of identified what the projects look like. I know part of it might be what kind of projects there are identified, but what is the process after that look like? >>Ic there's a combination of with direction from city council to city staff, coming together and seeing what steps need to be taken to actually implement those recommendations that you all have chosen. Does that make sense? >> Troxclair: Okay. So you intend that the working group would -- >> Let me back up. I think I said something inside that I didn't vocalize. I imagine that the working group makes recommendations to the full council and then the full council gives direction to city staff based on the recommendation that the full council makes. And as far as coming up with ways to implement what the council decides. >> Troxclair: Okay. And are you in a place yet where you can give us an idea of what kind of projects might make that kind of priority list or is that just really still being finalized? >> I think it may be a little premature right now to -- I can just tell you again it's holistic so we're touching on things such as gentrification was mentioned. Looking at ways on how to reduce folks being displaced as a result of gentrification. Looking at ways to scale up projects that have to do with workforce development. Looking at ways to scale up projects having to do with increasing employment opportunities. Looking at ways to build sustainability into increasing our affordable housing stock. So those are the type

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things. I think it was councilmember pool that mentioned health care. As I mentioned we have a side group working on that, but ways to increase access particularly to areas that are disconnected from quality -- health care resources. >> Troxclair: Do you imagine that a lot of these projects could be completed or pursued with community partners, whether it's private businesses or non-profits or do you think the focus based on your conversations so far are really going to have to be kind of the creation of new city programs. Programs? >> I think if we're going to move the model then it's going to have to be partnerships, public and private partnerships. So I imagine that those -- there will be some projects that absolutely will include that. >> Troxclair: Okay. >> If I may add, your question earlier, councilmember Casar, about the largeness or the grandness of this project, I don't think we could get any of the things we're talking about without the collaboration of multiple entities. We've emphasized community input from the citizens, but we've also talked with other folks from different constituents because this is not going to happen otherwise. And so I think once part of the challenge we've run into is that takes time to gather all that information, but I think we're coming closer to the point where we can do some of the things that you're talking about as far as next steps. The question that people do also ask is, you know, when this is done, whatever that looks like, what do you expect to happen? What does move the needle mean? I'll be Hobb nest, I'm not totally leer on what it is, but I know one of the things I've talked about over and over is equity. I think there's a large swath of people in the the community who feel like development in Austin has not been equitable. People have been left out. Whether it's jobs, whether it's affordable housing, all the different issues, I think we may not be able to tackle all those issues, but I think people -- they have some sense that this somehow allowed us to face the east as the city manager and the mayor talked about, to put emphasis

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on some of the issues and people feel like we're working on things that are important to them, then I think we partly have achieved our goal. I know that's a little vague, but I think that's what people are

asking for. Whether it's the persons asking for more sidewalks in their community or more job opportunities, making sure that what we're doing is reflective of the things that are being asked of us specifically from the community. Those are things that I think will reflect our success in achieving things that we're wanting to achieve. >> Troxclair: Thanks for that clarification. Members, any other -- councilmember Houston? And welcome to the mayor. Thanks for joining us. Go ahead, councilmember Houston. >> Houston: I forgot. Oh, thank you for being here. One of the things that I was interested in is will you bring back to the working group things that are short-term, things that are mid range, things that are maybe way past the time that I'll be here on? So will we have something to kind of gauge -- >> Thank you. I think I glossed over that. Yes, I imagine you will have a range of proposals. Some of what we might call low hanging fruit. Maybe short-term. And then you have those that about will be, as I mentioned before, high effort, high impact that will take some time and -- time to implement and take some time to produce some fruit. >> Houston: And you said in about 45 days then you'll get back to the working group. >> Certainly within that. >> Houston: Within that time frame. Okay. Thank you. >> Troxclair: Councilmember pool. >> Pool: Just one more question and it goes to cost of housing. Do we have any ability to ensure that the costs of the new building that's going on on the east side is going to remain affordable? And when I say that I mean under 200,000, for

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example, or less. I worry that, frankly, with all the -- the the other side of the coin is we shine a really bright light on this part of the city and a whole lot of things begin to happen, economic development begins to happen. And then it starts costing more to live there because that's how the market works. And I haven't yet been convinced that we can provide enough units for people to live in in this town and any reasonable period of time to see the cost of them coming down because developers are not going to discount the prices of their -- of their units out of the goodness of their hearts. Right? I mean, that's not - they're in business so they're going to charge as much as the market will bear. And one of the nice things about different areas of town is there are still some that are a reasonable amount for a teacher to live in without having an additional programs and knowing that the state is not going to do a whole lot to fund public education at the level that it ought to be. So we're in this vise, it's a real it's a real tight rub. So that's a lingering concern that I have. We're shining a light on a part of town and doing important work over there, but I'm concerned that one of the unintended consequences will be that in fact the very people that we are hoping who will find a home there still won't be able to afford to live there because it will be a hot area for development and the costs of those single-family homes or apartments will be at the same level that they are in the more central part of town where established neighborhoods are finding -- like my neighborhood is finding it hard to keep their homes. So the gentrification we have talked about that's visited on the near east side is actually moving further west to some of the older used to be suburban neighborhoods but are now urban core and it goes the other direction with the newer building. Long question and maybe only

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rhetorical, but have you thought about how we can ensure that the affordability that will ensure that our workforce -- with the salaries that they earn will be able to find a home to live in these new areas being developed? >> The short answer is yes. >> Pool: Great. >> We have thought about it. >> Pool: You don't necessarily have an answer. >> But obviously -- I shouldn't say obviously, but that is one of the top concerns that we have. And so we're looking at verse tools that may work. We're looking at some of the best practices in other cities. Of course we started here in certain areas whether it's land tools, the question about public-private partnerships, I think that may be another area to bring in public-private

partnerships to make sure that we do have -- build in some sustainability along with the affordability. The whole idea we're not looking to develop this area for folks with higher income but to preserve for folks who are there and create some space who are working class folks. >> Pool: And I think that is hugely important and we need to keep talking about that. >> Part of it is not just providing affordable housing but creating a sense of community where people want to stay. One of our challenges [inaudible] Afford, but if everyone around me, oh, I don't feel that sense of connection to the community, if I can't afford it, but there is no community for me to connect to. It's about using creative minds to create affordable housing but also how to create community so people want to be part of the community and that's one of the challenges as well. >> Pool: That's where the

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schools and the health care provision and the parks are all key because they will ensure that people will want to put their roots down and stay there. >> It's a holistic approach. >> Troxclair: Councilmember Houston. >> Houston: I just want people to know that many years ago the urban core of central Austin was extend to do highway 183. All the land to develop [inaudible] To be able to do this [inaudible]. And so talk about the urban core as far as 183, it's almost mind boggling when you realize they are in the urban core. But there would be land [inaudible] But that was a different kind we've got sprawl but it's poor people. You never hear us talking about sprawl anymore. I just wanted to shed some light on that. And we have our first grocery store going up. I just passed by it the other day on the corner of decker lane and Loyola. None of the big companies did but somebody came in and said we'll put in a grocery store so we've got that going so it's beginning to move that way. >> First steps. >> Troxclair: Okay. Well, I know you'll have spent a lot of time and energy on this project. I know that all the committee and the councilmembers as well as the community thanks you. We'll look forward to getting an update on the progress in the future. >> Thank you very much. >> Troxclair: Thank you.

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[Applause] We will then get back on track with our agenda and move to item number 3 which is a briefing and discussion by the economic development department regarding the Austin fashion industry. And we did have a public speaking -- public speaker on this item. Nila. I wrote it down so I wouldn't forget. Niela, yes, if you are ready to speak. Oh, there's a few more as well. >> You need to go first. That's what I thought. >> Troxclair: I'm sorry. I didn't have that memo. >> Thank you, councilmember troxclair. I'm the assistant director with economic development department and I'm here today just to give you an update, a brief update on the progress that we have made with moving the fashion industry forward in Austin. Not that it doesn't exist, but just some concepts and ideas that we are working on. As a reminder, on August 7, 2014, the city council adopted resolution 20140811 which directed the -- for future growth of the fashion industry in Austin. Economic development therefore engaged txp to assist with stakeholder meetings, public input. Surveys and to conduct an economic impact study of the fashion industry which was distributed to you guys earlier last year. In response to that

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collaboration, EdD definitely believes that there is growth for fashion in Austin. As part of the fy 16 budget we submitted a request for \$15,000 as part of our unmet need, but it wasn't fulfilled because we had a lot of needs back then, but that didn't stop us. Also as part of the recommendation we were going to explore public-private partnerships to possibly operate the incubator, explore funding option and connect creative entrepreneurs with professional education. Again, even though the department didn't

receive funding, I am pleased to report that we are doing some things. We within our small business program are still continuing to provide one-on-one counseling service and business planning for fashion entrepreneurs within the area. As you are aware I think east partner in our art place America grant which we received in '14 of over \$400,000 think ease has committed to provide maker space in future development so we're very happy about that. And finally one exciting piece of news that will be coming back to the council in late March is that we are in negotiation, preliminary negotiation with a institute of higher learning to actually develop a fashion incubator that's going to encompass not only makers but designers and some skilled training and workforce development and it's an exciting project. So I just wanted to let you know that even though we haven't received funding we have been receiving calls. Designers situate within the -- we will be coming back at the end of March with a proposal for interlocal. Agreement. And as farther of our presentation, we wanted to invite stakeholders that were part of the process to give

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you their view and what they are doing in the fashion industry. So we have even invited niela sencofa, a designer, Alice with the institution, and Sam Alexander who has some thoughts on where the fashion industry is going in Austin. So I'd like to bring them up in that order and answer any questions you have of us. But let you know that the lack of funding has not stopped us from making progress. >> Troxclair: Okay. Great. So you wanted niela to come up first and who after that? >> Allison and then Sam Alexander. >> Troxclair: And then Sam Alexander? >> Yes. >> Troxclair: Niela. >> I have to go back to work. >> Troxclair: Thank you for being patient. >> That's okay. Thank you. We're glad to get to talk about this in this realm. My name is niela sencofa and I'm a multi-disciplinary artisan, community 5:00 time sensitivity vision -- activist and director of a boutique fashion industry training program. So -- and I wanted to say that because I don't people to think I'm just speaking from this one perspective. And yes, the resolution was passed last year and we're grateful for that and happy that that happened, but since last August [inaudible] We've had a lot of developments take place throughout the fashion industry, some very positive and that illustrate growth on the individual level to the group level to the overall

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industry level as well as we've had some setbacks. And those setbacks primarily are we've had, you know, designers that have left Austin. We've had [inaudible] Which are vital to the fashion production of fashion. And Anand apparel tech means anyone in the process of producing garments and some goods, pattern drafters, folks who do specs and not just the designers and the stitchers, okay, which are also very important. So from that with us losing apparel techs especially is setting us back. It takes about 10 to 15 years to train a stitcher, a really good, and with the way things are we don't have that much time. We need to be training folks now. We need to be training people five, ten years ago. And so this whole aspect of, you know, all the other agenda items directly touch this fashion industry's initiative which is, you know, drop training and development and workforce development, having workers -- manufacturing garments also affects this growth of a middle income community. That's not going to happen if -- you know, we're taking two, three years to even look at this issue.

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And one of the most important aspects of this initiative is a fashion incubator or a fashion evening you base, not just one but incubation in general. Supporting our -- not just fashion events because fashion shows and fashion don't necessarily create income for designers. They create pr and marketing and

wonderful entertainment for folks in the [inaudible] But doesn't generate as fashion production does so we need to be bringing in here but also developing industry that's currently here and taking advantage of the folks who are already here as a workforce as opposed to bringing industries or companies, manufacturers who might bring 500 or 1500 employees to Austin but not training anyone that's already here. So we're running into issues that the tech industry has faced and this domino effect that's happened. We -- we need the city to also help with getting the word out about this industry and what we're doing. In my everyday life just general outside of fashion, I mean so many people who have no idea we even have fashion designers in Austin. There are people who don't know that we even have an Austin fashion league or other fashion shows outside of something that might be a part of a sorority's or fraternity's event or a fundraiser event.

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We, you know, this needs to be a part of -- this industry needs to be a part of the educational curriculum and programs within our high schools as a vocational as suspect and not just an academic one because everybody is not meant to go to college to train to be a CEO or a psychologist and so on. We need folks who can do, you know, labor jobs and this is -- you know, this is an industry that supports labor. We -- we want to know -- and I specifically want to know what might the city do to move us forward to this, you know, having an incubator, having even city facilities to support our events or programs. Like we have our boot camp program coming up, but we still don't have a site, you know, for that. And many of our students are going on scholarship and we are doing all these free workshops to train people to be better designers and apparel techs, but yet there is not one space in the city that's available for us to use to support this program. And there's others that are going on too. It's not just what we're doing. Right, yeah, and it's -- yeah, and black designers that are -- and folks in the industry who are in east Austin and we're struggling to stay in east Austin just on a daily basis like the phenomenal con year Kirk who is here. But it goes beyond all ethics commission -- beyond all ethnicities. >> Troxclair: And that's exactly why we're having this conversation today as part of the committee and thank you

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for helping to enlighten us about the challenges that you are facing. >> Very brief. What I have to say -- [inaudible] In Austin as far -- four years ago Austin was labeled as number one racist city in the state due to gentrification, segregation very serious concern, we are not growing. We're down to 6.7%, which is the lowest. So that means even our artists, I am a professional jazz and blues singer, composer, author, arranger and producer. And very little is offered [inaudible] Opening up and have to sustain and maintain ourselves. So the black artists here, our culture is diminishing. Fading away. But we come together because I marched in my first civil rights 67 going on 68 in June and segregation has gotten worse in Austin. It should have been gone. It should get better. We are all living here, we are all united persons living in Austin and this could be [inaudible] In the world but it's not right now. You have been tagged with this bad name. We need to work that. It's affecting our artist community. We're leaving. Young blacks are leaving and the gentrification of our homes, and so we need to sit down together -- [buzzer sounding] -- As a united voice and work this problem out. >> Troxclair: Thank you.

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[Applause] Okay. Is Allison ready? Hello. >> Thank you so much for having us speak today about this issue and this topic. My name is Allison and I'm the program coordinator for the fashion program at the art institute of Austin. Whatanted to talk with you all today about is just giving you a overview of what

we're doing at the art institute and would they be able to pull up the presentation? I promise it will be fast. Great. Thank you. I just wanted to give you a little bit of background about what we do at the art institute and I realize there are other institutions [inaudible] Not only in the fashion design but also in the fashion business. Designers making their product is definitely a skill set and brings in the labor and the jobs and also behind that is who is selling and promoting it, who is doing the other side of the business and make it a viable industry. And two different programs at the art institute, one in fashion design and the other in fashion retail management. This gives you just really brief overview of what each program develops and the focus on both. But a breakdown of what the different courses are that the students take at the school, fashion courses but lots of business. How to be a viable business leader within their community once they graduate from the programs. These are both bachelor degree programs, bachelors of fine

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arts and bachelors of science on the fashion retail side. There is a -- that we do require the students to get out in the community to complete an internship experience. Just recently I did an article for an online publication about educating fashion for website called worn through and I was exploring the economic impact of fashion industries, but fashion education. And if you look into the collaboration and the value of the internship experience, you [inaudible] Economic impact within that because we're training these students to go out and find a connection while they are still in school. And so developing those community partnerships and collaborations is very important. What I've been finding is a lot of these students are looking at actually going outside of Austin to complete this internship experience. And that's been a large challenge with our students because they do have strong ties here, they love Austin, they love Texas, they want to stay here. So really looking at ways to provide that community collaboration and opportunity for them has been a strong focus of what I've been trying to do for these students. So some of the different initiatives that I developed to roll out in 2016 for our programs is increased collaborations within the classroom, not just through the internship experience for the students. So working with moxie fox a local womens plus sized boutique in Austin and encouraging students to consider this unique niche of the market but also from the business side and innovative approach to how they are doing business. Partnering and sponsoring Austin fashion week. This is a wonderful opportunity for us to get fashion out there on a national recognized scale and bring some pretty impactful leaders within the community here to Austin.

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Collaborating with other various events such as the swoon event, things like that. [Buzzer sounding] So I apologize for running over but thank you so much for your time. >> Troxclair: No worries. Do you have more slides or was that the end of the presentation? >> It was basically the end, I was going to speak about where the out growth according to where the bureau of labor statistics fashion will grow in Texas and the opportunity in the Austin market, but that is also available on the sites for you guys as well. >> Troxclair: I'm curious about that if you want to take a second and -- >> Absolutely. So if you look right now, Texas actually employs the third most fashion designers in the United States. We are use behind California and New York. We're actually expecting the industry through 2022 to decline by 3% on an average across the entire united States. However, if you look at at the breakdown by state, they are predicting that Texas will grow by 27%. And they are also looking at there's going to be a big migration away from larger cities like California and new York because of cost of living, because of difficulties of doing business within those states and they are seeing -- and they are pricket -- me districting they are going to be coming to Texas. Austin already employs about 5% of the state's fashion designers. We're

behind Dallas and Houston as two of the larger cities behind that. But because of the interest of Austin, the growth that we're currently experiencing, we're actually on the forefront of the ability to be one of the leaders within the national sphere of fashion industry within the next few years. That's if we take the opportunity that Austin is growing in popularity, population, industry, jobs, all of those things and really inputting into that because as we see that growth happen here in Texas for the fashion industry, it would be great if

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Austin was the place that that's really happening. By collaborating and organizing the industry here and providing the support and resources, the ability for global businesses to come in and set up their headquarters here, provide jobs, one that will keep my students from moving out once they graduate would be fabulous, but too we would be able to grow Austin to a global player on the fashion industry more than it is already. >> Troxclair: Thanks for that information. So to that point about -- I'm sorry, councilmember Houston, do you have a question? >> Houston: Could you tell me about the art bra collaboration? >> Absolutely. This is the second year we've had art bra to come in and speak to students. Art bra is an organization -- or an event that's hosted every year for breast cancer survivors. And so community members, students are encouraged to decorate bras to be auctioned off at a silent auction at the event. It will be in March. I can't remember the date off the top of my head. And the proceeds will actually go to supporting women that have been through the struggle or that are currently going through the struggle for battling breast cancer. >> Houston: And can you tell me how much it costs to attend the art institute of Austin? >> Unfortunately I don't know the Numbers off the top of my head. I want to say it's about \$75,000 for the degree programs. But like I said I don't know the exact number. I apologize. >> Houston: So your particular program is geared toward a specific class of people who can afford \$75,000 to attend. >> We are an accredited institution.% we do offer -- we do work with federal grants, federal loans, scholarships, things like that. >> Houston: Is it a two-year

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program or four-year program? >> Four years. >> Houston: Okay. Thank you. >> Troxclair: Is there -- to your point about helping to kind of harness this potential growth in the fashion industry in Austin in coming years and needing kind of organization and collaboration to do that, is there an association that - - in Austin that represents fashion interests? >> We actually have established an organization called textile global. I believe there was a handout, I don't have it with me -- okay. And Mr. Alexander will be also speaking on that organization in more depth for you as well. >> Troxclair: Okay. Great. Well, thank you. >> Thank you so much. >> Troxclair: Sam Alexander. >> Good afternoon. I want to thank you for having me here todayen a I also want to say I was kind of drug into this not by my own will. I've been a businessman in the industry for over 30 years. I've worked in collaboration with some of the major companies, Levi Strauss, Gloria Vanderbilt, I can keep going but I will stop there. My family was -- I was born and raised here. My family has been here since the mid 18 hundreds. After they were emancipated as slaves my family bought land here. I want to start out talking about highland mall. At one point highland mall was the largest job creator for east Austin and I think the heritage should be carried on in the future. At this point just to give you an idea what we're looking at doing, we've all gone together and the key focus of what we're working on right now is organization, collaboration, innovation and acceleration.

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The first thing we have to do is organize. One of the things that we've done is created a group called textile global which is for the basic industry, give it a place to come together and be able to address their needs and desires to how to develop industry. Another is collaborate. I've been working at the city and private industry to bring together collaboration on an incubator. The incubators that we're looking at doing will be an educational incubator to help bring up the level of education for the fashion industry here in the city. Right now just to give you some statistics on our industry -- >> Troxclair: Can you hold on one second? Can you take the presentation down? No worries. >> At this point in the global fashion industry we do \$1.2 trillion. Okay. 250 billion is spent annually in the United States. We at this point material engineers and testing. There's a broad range of other industries that have to be

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built around on our industry once you start it. The key to us really getting this industry started is being able to develop a nucleus. I feel what we're doing to put together this nucleus at ACC will help us expand the industry throughout the city. The opportunity we have with the partnerships of the junior college and the city and private industry is unbelievable. Our first private industry contributor has actually come in and actually aligned us with \$7.5 million on their first initial investment on commitment to this project. We have other people that are in line to come in and help us. The key to us moving this industry forward is not to think about tradition because there's no way because of the destructive nature of our industry that will ever be brought back to this country as it was in the past. We have new technology that are called infusion. Infusion technology, we have the about it to actually dye fabrics without using water. [Inaudible] We are looking at building a complete industry here from state level all the way through. There is opportunity for us in building this nucleus with the combination of the business partnership with the community college and the city that we can take and join forces and put our assets together and build a situation that will be inclusive to everyone in the community and not just a few. There will also bring -- [buzzer sounding] -- The community -- it will bring highland mall back to capacity it was at one point as the largest job creator in the city. It's time we all sit down and put our heads together because we have an opportunity and the opportunity is now. Most people don't know this but last month over 1100 factories were shut down in

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China and we are moving quickly back into a resource -- we are actually reshoring all of our production back here. Last year alone we had -- we were the third largest reshorer of manufacturing in the United States. We had 12% reshoring of industry, manufacturing back here in the United States in the fashion industry. We are at a point in Austin where we can capitalize this growth, create opportunity for everyone here and support the local industry to build to it a broader industry. We have university of Texas that has a fine school that's developing a lot of creative people but they don't have an opportunity to take their skills and hone in the city. If we start building together we can make Austin the capital of fashion. >> Troxclair: I have a couple questions. So the -- the connection with highland mall is that you envision highland mall to be the location of a fashion incubator? >> What we're looking to do is create a program within the ACC campus. This is all in preliminary negotiations so I want to make sure because I was told I would go ahead and say -- okay. And nothing is confirmed, but we are talking at this point and communicating about trying to work together and putting this project together. We're also trying to work with the city and talking about -- we're all just sitting in rooms and talking at this point but we are talking in that direction. I'm sorry, go ahead. >> Troxclair: That's how good ideas always come together. You have to start somewhere and normally sitting in a room and talking. >> And we have been talking over the last three weeks. It's been swirling over a year and we're looking to [inaudible] So those who

may not have the 75,000, we're seeking opportunities to retool and reschool those and other certified -- certificate programs. It's going to be a robust holistic system, not just the

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designers but there's some technical certificate programs people can take advantage of and make a very good living. So again that's the information we'll bring back at the end of March on the full scope of the program. >> Troxclair: Okay. Great. Thank you. >> Thank you. >> Troxclair: Appreciate it. We have a couple other speakers signed up, I think, for this item. Is Lisa Miller here? >> I didn't sign up to speak. I just thought we were supposed to sign in. >> Troxclair: No problem. Belinda, do you want to speak? >> Also just supporting, not speaking. >> Troxclair: Okay. Great. That's all the public speakers and I -- I had a question for -- I was actually going to ask our first speaker raised the question of a fashion boot camp they were having problems finding a location for. Is that something that you are aware of or that the city could help with? >> Yes, we are aware of the need for space and we are also addressing some other creative space challenges. So we are looking trying to do the best we can on partnering individuals that have space, but we've explored with real estate the possibility of city facilities so none of those have come up yet, but there are other within the community we're trying to see if they would be willing to have creative space across the board. >> Houston: And I know that you've been looking at churches and other kinds of -- because mine is one of them. I know they've been trying to find some space. Space is at a people yum in -- premium in this town for all creative industries. >> Yes. >> Houston: I had salvage van guard, their lease went from \$4,000 up to \$16,000 and

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so they are looking for a space. Space is at a premium trying to have a boot camp. >> Yes. >> Troxclair: Okay. Well, thank you so much. Do you intend -- are you wanting to come back to the committee with your report or anything? >> [Inaudible] >> Troxclair: Okay. Great. That concludes our conversation on topic number 3 then. We'll move on to item number 4, the discussion by the economic development department regarding soul-y Austin program. >> Good afternoon. Councilmember troxclair, good afternoon, councilmember woods. My name is Christine Mcguire and the redevelopment division manager for the economic development department for the city of Austin and one of the exciting reasons about me joining the city given my background is just how robust the programs are for the city of Austin and the economic development department to really help businesses grow and thrive and then just thinking about this is a system I think as a way that -- and I think infused throughout your conversations today was we're better together. In talking about the spirit of east Austin. I think it was a quote from you, chair, that all the best ideas come from sitting in a room together. I think that's really true of our businesses particularly in our older commercial districts throughout the entire city. And soul-y Austin really focuses on helping organize businesses into business America -- merchant associations. What was interesting to me and we can put up the presentation

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and go to the second slide -- that when we talk about Austin, I know this is a very common slide you've seen from presentation to presentation. You have the three legs of the stool of community, right, the citizens, the businesses and the neighborhoods. One of the -- one of the things that is really strong is we have very organized neighborhoods. Businesses in terms of play space businesses associations, those are harder to come by here. They are not as readily apparent. The one thing about our services that even we recognize as city officials, you can have all the great programs in the world and we have the family

business loan program and half a dozen other programs, but they are only as good as they are getting into and used by the business organizations and conversely our programs are only as good as that formed by businesses and giving input to us. Solely -- if we can go to the next slide, or maybe I can go to the next slide, maybe that's what I can do. What soul-y Austin is, this is where the city of Austin staff assists businesses want to be organized, that want to have a voice together and be better together to help them organize into groups. And that would be giving them a common table, helping them to do strategic planning, identify common points of interest, and then help them access the resources in the city and really get information to do that. Into self-sustaining, vibrant organizations. My background is in community economic development and in working with Pittsburgh,

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Chicago, Houston, fort Worthen a lot of these major cities, those commercial district which have really grown up from being more economically challenged into a thriving business district as a whole, they originated as associations that were initially organized together to solve a problem or a series of problems and that's what we're hoping to do with soul-y Austin. And so the benefits of being better together are numerous and I know that I'm preaching to the choir, given the conversations that are infused throughout all the programs that come through this particular committee that you hear that an organized voice, a common point of interesting, a group of people that can go to -- present our resources and additionally that we gain feedback, how can we revise our programs and services to better serve and grow our small businesses. And by doing all of that and even helping identify through our ability to look at detail market analysis from the picture as a whole is help them answer the question why shop here, why here versus somewhere else. So really helping a district identify its sense of place, its uniqueness and bring in more foot traffic, and when you do that you help businesses grow with more sales, stronger bottom line. That's what we're trying to do. I'm going to turn talking more as a deeper dive of soul-y Austin to my colleague Nicole who will talk about more specifically the [inaudible] Been kind of her trial years. First year, now we have successes to mention to you as

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well as in the context of this program. So take it away. >> Thank you. Nicole, project manager of soul-y Austin. So Christine mentioned the key thing here is the formation of an America -- merchants association. We wanted to know before we put resources mind it. Minority chamber of commerces to start looking at businesses and asking them the key questions. 500 businesses were interviewed, surveyed, presented to or provided a focus group to garner this information. And what we learned is that businesses do see a need for organizing a joint venture. One of the more alarming things that we did hear though was a very small percentage of businesses actually talk to their neighboring business. When we asked the question of do you talk to your business, do you talk about co-marketing or parking issues [inaudible] Mad at my neighbor when their cars are parked in my lot or their trash is in my lot. It didn't give us a very good indication they were collaborating on many items. The other thing we learned is businesses didn't necessarily have a connection of the location of their business and the success of their business. So that stood out for us as if you are thinking about collaboration among businesses in a sense there definitely need 9 to be some education on that. Other common priorities for action, as many of you may have already seen in other presentations through economic development, and a lot of this rang true in the spirit of Austin presentation was safety within the district, bike and pedestrian friendly business environments, we need parking solutions. Looking at shared parking agreements and echo it again this affordability issue

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[inaudible] Tax increases. So soul-y Austin stepped back and invited some of these businesses to sit down with us to help us craft this program. What we came up with was a technical assistance program to walk them through the formation. Even if you are a franchise or a chain, you are welcome to sit at the table. And we did this so that we made sure everyone had a voice. It's a voluntary program so the city is never going to go into a district and say you must become a merchants association. We wanted to see the leaders rise and be part of leading a process. Eight to 14 months is kind of our facilitated process. As Christine mentioned this has been kind of a year pilot. Within ten months I will say one of our successes is the red river cultural [inaudible]. This particular program is available to brick and mortar areas so it does have to focus on commercial area. So a little about the district. These were self-identified businesses who helped us craft the program. Also said we would love to be part of this first initiative to start what soul-y Austin might look like. The red river cultural districts which extends from 6th street to east 12th street, 35 down to airport and manor road, I-35 to airport as well. These boundaries are [inaudible] Boundaries of that commercial district would be. A little about the red river cultural district, [inaudible] They had talked about things but this meeting that we held here where they were trying to

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talk with the formation of an association would look like. One of the first meetings we held basically consisted of we had an agenda we went in with but the majority of meeting consisted of folks shaking hands for the first time and actually meeting each other and realizing they were singing song as related to some of the issues in the district. Another that we had was a partnership with the Austin downtown alliance. The transportation department, our small business program and our music [inaudible] To get those red river district banners up. With a few financial resources from the participating departments, this really was kind of an activation project that the businesses really rallied around and got very excited to start putting a name to their district. Another great success was, as you know, two huge hotels are going up in the red river cultural district. Many of the businesses have been impacted by the construction. Part of who we brought to the table when we started the formation was inviting the hotels to participate and that led to the opportunity of the hotels to have a discussion with the businesses about co-marketing so people staying at the hotel can access the venues, the music right outside the front doors of those places and part of that was an opportunity to tour the hotels as a partnership going forward. We host add workshop with a grateful enough to go ahead and host it. Had 60 participants. This allowed us to have folks from the police department as well as the transportation department there so conversations could get started about what needed to be done in those areas of concern. We've reached out to 12th street and they are an active group. We have about 70% participation with this group. With activity taking place [inaudible] Was really powerful. Folks stood around and talked about if they had to predict

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what the headline news would look like in ten years with their business district what would it be. The powerful thing about this there was businesses that have held stake in that business 30 to 50 years and they were there telling their stories about what 12th street used to be like and how they would like to preserve it going forward. We've had tremendous participation from the nonprofit community, the religion institutions and they are really building relationships as part of this opportunity. Our other soul-y Austin district, this eclectic group of folks, the image that you see, the manor road flier was from a printing company that decided to help educate more of the businesses so they created a neat flier that

the businesses could go door to door and educate folks that that harder to get at the meeting. The last meeting we had three or four new faces there. And we actually have been able to engage the residential complexes along that district that are interested in engaging their residents because basically when you -- you've got activities and amenities you can access through there. So what's ahead for soul-y? We are taking on three new districts in 2016. As Christine mentioned we've identified this persian association formation and have quite the road show to offer. Everything from our small business loan program, incorporation of our cultural arts tempo program. One of the most fascinating things we've seen we're in partnership with a lot of the other city departments so we're seeing a current initiative within the city that we can link to one of the districts. We're making that connection for them so that they can take it from there. One of the benchmarks cities

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[inaudible] Has been successful in forming merchants associations is venture Portland and they are very interested in type of work we're doing. Facade enhancements and place seeking grants for these districts. Thank you. >> Troxclair: Councilmember Houston. >> Houston: Nicole, will you just leaving us? It was like bye. I'm going. >> I'm here. >> Houston: Thank you forgiving us this update. One of the things that I want to support the fact that even though some of our -- some of our business franchises, they are also small businesses. So because they have that franchise we should not and doesn't keep them out of this program. When I first brought it on the council -- started on the council, economic development had identified manor road as one of the pilots and they were -- when I talked about the fact that on 12th street we had people who have owned their own businesses 50 years, 38 years who were in jeopardy of losing those businesses and that I really felt it was important for our city to help those stay intact. And so that's how they were flexible to add the 12th street business owners to that. So I really appreciate that flexibility. Sometimes when you work in a bureaucracy you say, you know, manor road has hoovers and the salty pig or whatever that is called. >> Salty sow. >> Houston: Salty sow and so those businesses seem to kind of have it together and these

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over here on 12th street need a lot of help to get it together and they were willing to make that exception and do a pilot there so I'm glad to see they are trying to organize and getting it worked out. The other thing is is that I hope on manor road, because that's really close to where I live, that we talk about parking more. Because I get calls every week almost from somebody complaining about somebody else parking in their parking lot. And they used to talk together, but now they don't and I don't know what happened. >> It's definitely on the priority list for them for the workshop discussion that we plan to have in April. >> Houston: Good, good, because we've tried not to in our neighborhood do residential parking only because it is so important that we keep our businesses open and thriving. But it's killing everybody so I think it's a good conversation to have. I just want to thank you because you worked real hard on this. >> Thank you. >> Troxclair: Can you remind me what the funding level for this initiative is? >> The funding level, the council approved \$362,000 for this fiscal year. >> Troxclair: Okay. Thanks. Very informative presentation. And I don't think -- we didn't have any public speakers on that item. Okay. Great. That brings us to our last item, item number 5, discussion regarding ws to support and encourage cultural and creative opportunities in Austin. Do we have -- I don't know how the -- do we have public speakers or planned speakers or city staff speakers or -- >> [Inaudible] >> Troxclair: Okay. And you are here as representing the commission. >> Actually I'm here as a community member today. We'll later in the year turn as a commissioner.

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But thank you for disclosing that. I am the chairman of the Austin music commission and I've been involved in Austin music for about 40 years, since the mid 1970s. But today I did want to address the music industry at large and the music industry's response to the presentation a few months ago. So as you were elected to city council because you have a track record of bringing together a diverse coalition of stakeholders, that's fortunate for today's Austin music industry in that this community is well aware of Austin's portrayals of inequalities in the music industry in essence mirroring that or at least that is some opinion. That's why the commercial music industry is eager to see you craft policies on issues critical to the development of the music industry. I'm also here to advocate for those in our music community who are invisible and marginalized and provide recommendations as a citizen and later as chair of the Austin music commission I plan to address. The goal is create a diverse and inclusive music community, indy, hip-hop, metal, classical, et cetera. A quick time line to review where we've been recently in music is the music and entertainment division of the city's economic development department commissioned the Austin music census in fiscal year 2015. That music census had nearly 4,000 respondents which could be utilized as a reference for Austin's policy makers on the commercial music industry's needs in Austin. Only a small percentage of minorities participated in the study for multiple reasons we

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could discuss at some point. The new Austin music commission represents the ten districts and the mayor's office and we sat for the first time last summer. One of the first tasks was address diversity, inclusive time sensitivity and that's led to genre development that we'll elaborate on. From the census there are three take-aways I believe you can address to benefit the greatest number of those working in the music industry while increasing economic opportunity for all. The first is central leadership. Second a commercial music hub, and the third market development, musician and venue income support. Taking the first, central leadership, the city could either create or support the formation of the foundational leadership structure that serves as the central advisory group of the Austin music community. This group would act as the vision keeper. The census pointed out we don't have an organization -- or we have a lack, I guess, of focus in the music industry. It's such a vast group of people working in it that -- [buzzer sounding] -- Again, opportunity through the music commission and groups like app and Austin music foundation to do their best in getting as many voices to the table as possible. But still it lacks something. So that divide in the music industry again mirrors Austin's segregation or self-segregation sometimes. It does not speak again with one collective voice as a music industry. Stakeholders of one group operate in one silo while silo and others work in another. This can be to address diversity and all others in the music industry and complement efforts with organizations who have supported and shepherded this industry. Unlike Austin music commissioners, members

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after central advisory group would be selected by industry peers and have that autonomy, of course, speaking in that collective voice. Your music and entertainment division of the city already plays an important role for the Austin music industry by facilitating introductions, communication and shaping discussions between music business operators who may not otherwise have knowledge of each other. So I believe the division could help council quickly create this essential leadership group. The second issue was the commercial music hub, respondents to the Austin music census strongly indicated that a centralized commercial industry hub building with a co-meeting space, working rooms and tools and

more is an important next step and one that is already happening in other key music cities. The Austin music commission has presented you publicly a resolution addressing the hub, the creation of a commercial music hub. In that resolution the commission encourages the Austin city council to allocate funds and explore all available means in order to create a commercial music hub that will provide music structure. What is the hub? It is a building or campus that houses a defacto permanent town hall meeting of the music industry. This is critical to genre development because it brings people of every ethnic back ground together and it act as a genre and element among many other benefits. And lastly the market development musician and venue income support initiative, the music census venue respondents agreed with musicians and music industry categories around some of the ideas proposed to potentially increase both revenue and branding for venues that feature local live music. So city should create programs that drive local and tourist traffic to local venues and shows, thus

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supporting local airports. The venues are the life blood of the industry. Musicians don't eat unless they're paid to play. The role of the music and entertainment division is critical here. The music census stated that easier permitting and streamlined regulation for live music venues, night life establishments was a critical issue. The music entertainment division likewise has two full time positions dedicated to daily permitting responsibilities. One said that he spends roughly 70% of his time on music permitting issues. The challenging part is that all this responsibility is mandated within city code, chapter 9-2, which actually makes this a policy discussion about what we want our music and entertainment division to be doing and what role they should have in the regulatory process. I believe the division needs to focus more on its mission. To serve as an economic development accelerator and centralized resource center for Austin's music industry. In a July 17th memo to city council responding to a resolution from the previous council, the music division recommended moving the sound permits for venues from chapter 9-2 to title 9, business regulations, to provide more administrative flexibility for a permitting process and eventually allow the cleanup of chapter 9.2, which is confusing to read. In this month's Austin music commission meeting the commission adopted a recommendation to council to move forward and instruct the city manager to create an entertainment license in the process. This action would provide the opportunity to streamline the current process. For council moves forward we would hope to have the conversation that would allow the music division to play a much different role in the daily process by writing the standards and rules and letting another city department issue the license based on the standards created by the music division. This would allow the primary function of our music division to focus

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exclusively or for the greater part on developing programs and initiatives that serve the entire music committee. Community. Those programs and initiatives would include music tourism and genre development, chiefly. Venues are seeing their consumer audience Numbers approaching a critical state, diminishment. We need to develop a marketing plan to increase first local attendance and venues, Emma less thannials and ethnic minority communities, then tourists. We could develop a public service announcement project, create a music specific website that becomes the Austin music community calendar. Build a distributed music program to promote Austin music played in businesses, et cetera. Generally we require a music marketplace where local airports can gain more visibility. The consumers are there, as music festivals flourishing are evidence. There's a growing trend around the world with governments and countries, including the UK, France and Australia, and cities to create export initiatives for their music communities. If we did something similar here in Austin it could provide solutions to our

music tourism and genre development deficiencies. Finally, similar to the cultural grants, the cultural arts division of the economic development department takes, if a familiar fund was created to provide grants to emerging small and independent artists and companies that could support their marketing and promotion from all genres this could have a substantial impact on our tourism efforts. We should pursue best impacts and do that for Austin. And that's my statement today. >> Troxclair: Thank you for that and for providing us with a copy of your comments so that we can refer back to them. Did I miss -- when you said that there was -- the transfer was being made from chapter 9-2 to

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title 9, that process, is that something that is coming in front of city council? Like where is that change in the process? >> If I could ask the city staff, don Pitts, from the Austin music division, if he's here, to comment on that. >> Troxclair: Okay. Before we do that does anybody else have questions for the speaker? Councilmember Casar. >> Casar: I think we both do. Thanks for coming by. Can you talk to me a little bit on the music hub, if y'all see that sort of being a private venture that the city partners with a private partner on or do you see that actually being a fully public facility or are we not even quite at that point yet where we're talking about who builds it and runs it? >> Well, I think the discussion hasn't taken place, but I think of it as not privately owned. I don't have more impact certainly. Because the music industry is such a large. -- If it's a city property or whatnot, but has thrived for many years, there are private groups that are under going the process of finding ways to finance similar efforts to this, but again, we could not influence the diversity ethnic makeup of those groups whatsoever as they would be privately operated. If we leave it to the music to decide -- I don't know what kind of faces of color you're going to see in these.

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I do think they need prodding from city hall. >> Casar: My understanding, and I'm sure I'll get corrected quickly if I'm wrong, is the Austin film society is on the old airport, in Mueller. I think we're the landlord and therefore have some level of say even though that's a private enterprise. And as a lot of us know landlords usually do have quite a bit of say on what happens on their property. So I think that's a potential where you actually have somebody that isn't the city building or running it where the city could still have some say potentially on sort of the diversity of artists and musicians we have participating. Just as we keep thinking about it, your point is well taken that the public interest in it can help us shape making sure that things don't go straight where the market wants to go, which often times leaves out a lot of people. So I think your point is well taken that city hall potentially having something to do with it will help, but that doesn't necessarily mean it has to be a public building. >> That's true. >> Troxclair: Can I ask you a Claire clarification on that point? Yes, a private landlord has the ability to have a say in who their tenant is, but they can't discriminate based on race. That's not what you were implying. >> Casar: Of course, no. I think the idea being that when public land goes up for rfp or rfq, often times we can list the sorts of operations that we want to see on the site. And what we want to be done. So I think obviously if you're talking about multigenre development with all different parts community, that's sort of where the public input would go as opposed to just a private person buying land and doing what they want with it. >> As an industry what we're trying to obtain here is the music industry is vulcanized on not strictly ethnic grounds, but we call them genres. So the Latin music industry worked if its own silos, its own

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media, support systems. The African-American does the best it can, but it's been ostracized for 40 years, in my involvement in the music industry. But it's not just about people of color. Classical music and heavy metal and other genres of music that if they collectively had -- pursued one voice or a collective opinion, then maybe it could support an industry that is facing tough challenges. >> Troxclair: Thank you. Councilmember Houston. >> Houston: Thank you so much for presenting your statements today. I've had some concerns, as you know, since the music census came out. And people in my community said that they weren't a part of that conversation. And yet we've adopted some policies to help move that along without having a full range of voices at the table. And so I'm really curious about the central leadership and how you could envision bringing different voices to the table to help shape what the music industry might look like in the city of Austin. >> Well, that group would act as almost a congress. Again, a permanent town hall of voices tied to genres of music, but those genres are certainly identifiers of a culture, hip hop, urban, rap again, work in shadows in Austin for a lot of reasons. And I don't believe it's racism in the Austin music industry, it's just preferences, but there's also -- we're talking about stakeholders and the folks that have been stakeholders in the city have been there for a long, long time. And they're not going anywhere. And a lot of them have propped up the city's identity and worked without applause so this is not an indictment of history, it's just the demographics are changing. Ryan Robertson would be wonderful, our city demographer, to lay out what the city will look

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like in 50 years. If it looks like anything to mirror the city then of course we have an advisory group, but people in color in the genres of music tied to that, advising council, or advising the music commission and so on and so forth. That group -- I could see Austin music people and Austin music foundation putting together with the groups from the African-American -- again, choosing members to speak on behalf of genres and organizations and so on, so forth. So this congress of musicians and people involved in the music industry really could put things on one page so we adopt have, again, what you sensed in the Austin music census was the divide, the cultural divide where people of color, as you said, in the African-American community, for instance, just weren't participants. Not because we weren't engaged, but maybe historically they felt this is lip service and it's pointless. I know from the Latin music industry that was some of the response to it, which is unfortunate for both parties, both sides, once again. The hub would put them together by force. You're going sit together, we're going to work together around this table collectively. And back to that working group, that is something that could be done quickly, efficiently. And don Pitts's office, music division, has a real good handle on what is needed there too now. >> Houston: One other quick question. As Austin becomes more of a global city, we've got so many people here from so many other parts of the world that we we have not even begun to touch their music. I've got people from Korea and Ethiopia and

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Somalia and all of them have a rich culture that involves music, but we're not even tapping into those different groups. So that's something that would be interesting to make sure that we make this a more global -- not only venues -- is that what you called them? >> The music venues and the genre support. >> Houston: The music genres, but also as we become more global in nature we're going to have to try to be more inclusive of other cultural music. >> Yes, councilmember. And that was borne out by the Austin African-American quality of life initiatives, the hispanic quality of life and by the Asian American quality of life survey would say we are undersaying their population and music is very pronounced. So anything to approach resolutions is where we're at. Hopefully with the new elected council you guys, again, the track records of bringing together coalitions, building -- giving stakeholders equal voice, is what we're

hoping to hang this on. >> Troxclair: Okay. >> And councilmember troxclair, if you want to talk about the permitting process and where -- entertainment license. >> Good afternoon, don Pitts, music program manager. I don't want to speak for any council office, but it is my understanding that the entertainment license resolution, resolution pertaining to that is forthcoming in the next month or so. >> Troxclair: Okay. >> Casar: And the music office, I imagine, is generally supportive of going that direction. >> Correct. I think it coincides with our response in the July 17th memo. >> Casar: Great, thank you. >> Troxclair: And I don't know what council

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office that might be, but I'm happy to work with them on that if you want to pass along that information. >> All right. >> Troxclair: And I guess to another point about that he brought up about focusing on kind of permitting versus supporting and fostering the music industry in Austin, as a role in your department and how your staff time is divided, do -- I know we added two additional staff people to your division in this past budget to try to address that situation. Do you feel like that has been helpful? Can you give us an update on that? >> Yes, ma'am. Those positions closed up last week from the posting, so we'll be interviewing those positions in the next several weeks. >> Troxclair: Okay. >> But we think it will help tremendously. >> Troxclair: Okay, great. Any other questions? Okay. >> Houston: I'm sorry, I have to be quick with this group. It's almost 4:00 -- oh, it's after 4:00. I just had a question. I was at the asian-american chamber of commerce the other day and we were talking about, as we talk about how Austin is becoming more global, talking about trying to develop some kind of celebrate diversity through music and dance and culture. And they indicated that that is something that you all did last year. And I didn't hear about it, didn't know about it, so could you briefly kind of tell us what that was? International, multicultural festival? >> I wish I knew as well. [Laughter]. We would love to do one, we just don't have the resources to do one. I know that there was a couple of private festivals that we helped

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with permitting, but we didn't have any direct involvement with it. >> Houston: Okay. So that may be something that we can begin to think about because I think -- I think rather than -- again, Mr. Garcia talked about silos that we live in and work in and play it and educate our children in, but if we could have a venue where we could have a lot of different groups offering their music, then people would be welcome. Then you could go around and go to the trinidadian, wherever you need to go, the African group from Nigeria is going this and that way we could foster more of a celebrating our cultural histories kind of thing rather than we have the Asian American folks doing this, the blacks are doing this, the Latinos are doing that. >> Absolutely. >> Houston: You would be willing to help us figure out how to do that? >> Breaking down these silos and dealing with the fragmentation is probably we're going to really start on some initiatives in April of this year. So yes, I would be happy to. >> Houston: Good, thank you. >> Troxclair: So I know that this isn't related directly to our conversation, but I think it fits within our posting of encouraging creative opportunities in Austin. Since you've been here I've I've had a couple of events regarding south by southwest and the event application deadlines. Is that something that you can give us an update on? >> It is my understanding from a memo sent out last Friday that the applications that were told they weren't going to meet the deadline on Thursday and Friday afternoon were told that they would be accepted. There was applications in the system that -- from venues that didn't require for them to fill

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out an application so that number reduced -- dropped down to below the threshold that was set. So does that answer your question? >> Troxclair: So I'm sorry, so the people who thought that they were getting their application in on time, but were told that they had missed the deadline have now been accepted? >> Right. The challenge was that there was two deadlines. There was the 120 application threshold and then there was the February 5th deadline. A lot of the folks were planning on the February 5th deadline. So all those folks that came in that were in the press, that were initially told that they were declined, were told that they're going to review their applications. >> Troxclair: Okay. And so then they're not necessarily accepted yet, but the city is going to make a decision and get back with them? >> Yes. They have been notified directly. A lot of those events were repeat events for the last several years, so the review process should be very quickly. >> Troxclair: When will they be notified? >> There has been correspondence now so they're going through the Normal process. Some will be required possibly to come in to talk to the team and then some will just be -- just go through the regular process. >> Troxclair: But do you know when they'll hear a response? >> They should have already heard a response. They were -- >> Troxclair: You said you're reviewing them. >> I would say within the next two weeks. >> Troxclair: So there's a chance that some of those application wills still be denied? >> I don't think they'll be denied. I think the indication was they were given -- the correspondence from bill mano that we were going to proceed with the process with their application. And that's usually when we give them the signal that we're going to proceed with the process, in reviewing, that it's going to be approved with conditions. >> Troxclair: Okay. >> Houston: And then I have a question. Is there a problem in the ordinance? Because it says you've got a date deadline and

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then you have a cap. Is that something that needs to be cleaned up so that people are clear that once you reach a certain cap then you stop taking applications, even if it's before client? I'm just trying to help you not have to have this happen next year. >> I agree. I think that the challenge was offering the public two deadlines was problematic. I think code specifies specific deadlines for the applications. Each one has a different application deadline. Like a one-day permit is a 21-day application. There's a permit that you need to have the 10-day deadline. There's another -- so there's all these different lines deadlines and I think it may be ready -- in April to maybe come back with a conversation of addressing some code changes in chapter 9 that would prevent this from happening again. >> Houston: Okay. I'm sure that we would be helpful -- we would be interested in helping you figure that out. So it's either a cap or a date, but it can't be either/or. >> I totally agree. >> Houston: Okay. >> Troxclair: Okay. >> Casar: I want to let councilmember Houston know that I was at one of those international music festivals in district 1 last month, but the problem is it was a house party and I would like to get them out of your neighborhoods at night and maybe into a venue, but it was great. [Laughter]. It's happening in your district, I want to let you know. >> Houston: Yeah. And we sometimes go to the Sierra lounge on weberville and have really interesting, but it's not big enough to have all the different kinds of music and performance opportunities for people to kind of wander around like you do on pecan street. I'm certainly not suggesting pecan street, but I'm suggesting someplace large enough so people could have things to do and walk around and just experience other cultures. They may not ever get to Nigeria.

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Or Spain or Greece. So this would be a way to experience those cultures. >> Thank you. >> Troxclair: Okay. Well, thank you all for being here today. We will adjourn at 4:24.