

# Health and Human Services Committee Meeting Transcript

## 8/23/2016

Title: ATXN 24/7 Recording

Channel: 6 - ATXN

Recorded On: 8/23/2016 6:00:00 AM

Original Air Date: 8/23/2016

Transcript Generated by SnapStream

=====

[2:02:32 PM]

>> Houston: Good afternoon. My name is Ora Houston, and a quorum is print. So I'm calling this meeting of the health and human services committee of the Austin city council to order on Tuesday, August 23rd, 2016. We're meeting in the council chambers, 301 west second street, Austin, Texas. The time is now 2:02. And I want to thank my colleagues for being here on time so we could get started. The first order of business is the minutes. There are three different minutes that we need to approve. The first one is of the committee held on may 24th. That was a regular meeting. Then we had a Friday, June 17th meeting to recommend to central health board of managers a candidate. And then on Wednesday the 22nd we took action to add two Travis county appointees to the animal advisory commission. Please take a moment to review those three and then I'll entertain a motion to approve. And while people are looking, if you've come in and parked in the garage, if you would go over here to your right and get -- make sure you get your parking ticket validated before you leave, I would appreciate it. And we just had notice that as you leave the garage is being switched to exiting and entering on the Guadalupe side. So you won't be exiting on lavaca because of the event that's occurring over there. You will be exiting on Guadalupe. And it gets confusing, trust me, so be careful. Do I have a motion to accept

[2:04:32 PM]

the minutes? >> Tovo: Chair, I would like to move acceptance -- I wasn't present at the one, but I would like to move acceptance of the 17th and the 24th. >> Houston: And I'll move acceptance of the 22nd. >> Garza: I'll second both of those. >> Houston: All right. There's been a motion to accept and a second to approve all three agenda items. All those in favor let it be known by saying aye? >> Tovo: Chair, I will just abstain on the 22nd. >> Houston: So that's two votes for on the 22nd with councilmember troxclair off the dais, and unanimous on the dais on the other two minutes. Do we have citizens communications? I need to look on the computer here. While I'm getting the computer up can you tell me who the first person is on the sign-up? >> We may not have general citizens communication. Nobody signed up? So no one wants to speak to citizens communication? I'll offer this again in case -- I understand there's a lot of traffic and so since no one signed up, I'll just offer that again if people should come in and

[2:06:32 PM]

want to speak to that. So now we have discussion item number 3 is the discussion and result of the spay and neuter and possible action. I want to state for a minute why this is on the agenda for today. Do you

have it? The issue of stray dogs has come up repeatedly in our city, and the issue about managing the intake at the animal shelter both at la vander loop location and the town lake location. And of course I appreciate all the discussion we've had this past year and a half with director Hammond, but this issue started in August of 2015 with a referral from mayor Adler regarding discuss and obtain information and public input on strategies to reduce animal shelter intake. And so since that time we've had a meeting in January at this committee, January 2016, and then it was on the agenda at the animal advisory committee in both February and March of 2016. I also appreciate all the emails and letters and phone calls that we've received regarding how do we manage the intake at the shelter. Individuals are saying that they've been turned away from the shelter when they attempt to bring a dog in that they have rescued or for whatever reasons that they need to relinquish control of that dog. So they use the term close intake when they talk about those issues. There have been individuals who have provided comments

[2:08:33 PM]

during citizens communications at the council meetings and at the monthly animal advisory committee meetings. The issue is that the stray population, especially medium to large dogs, we need to do something other than education to be able to control that intake. We need to be both/and kind of effort to do that. So this is an opportunity to have more conversation and a public forum about what those concerns are and what we can do to reduce the number of animals that are admitted to the shelter. So today this meeting is to provide a venue for this issue and I look forward to the results of the pilot study that director Hammond has been -- initiated and maybe has completed, and also hearing from citizens communication. So that's why we're here today. And I'd like to call up the first person is David lunstead. >> Good afternoon, councilmembers. David lunstead, animal advisory commission. I would like to about give you a brief timeline in regards to this topic as it relates to the animal advisory commission. >> Houston: I was just saying you have two minutes. >> I brought this topic to the commission in February and at that time we had a discussion and staff requested a month to gather some data, which they did. That data was brought back to the commission in March and I believe that the results of that data led staff to request that we do the six-month survey. And just for the record, I was not initially in favor of that and I actually forced a vote on the actual ordinance change, but that

[2:10:33 PM]

item failed, which I don't take necessarily as a repudiation of the change, more endorsement that the commission wanted to see that study. So I support that decision and I 100% support the study. I mean, it's not a study, it's a survey. Because I think we'll find some interesting data out of that. I'm very interested to find out why a person would refuse a free spay and neuter and essentially pay a 150-dollar penalty to get their animal out without that service. So we received an initial briefing in June, which leads us to today. And I want to point out that this survey is ongoing. It's not due to be complete until September. The animal advisory commission has two agenda items in September. One is a staff briefing on the survey and another is an action item where we will again take up the topic of spay and neuter on first impoundment. What I would ask today is that you table this, allow the animal advisory commission to present our work and then we can present a recommendation that this committee can either take up again or if we have enough discussion today, you four could take it straight up to council if it's something you approve of. So I'm here if anybody has any questions, but I just wanted to make that request that you allow my commission to finish our work. [Buzzer sounds] Thank you. >> Houston: The microphone was off. I was saying right on time. The next speaker is Kristin dellabert. Is that close? >> Hi. I'm Kristin chelber, a

[2:12:34 PM]

veterinarian in the city of Austin. And I also wanted to second what David lunstead said that the animal advisory commission is taking on this issue and there has already been some spirited discussion and there will continue to be more after the survey, the results are published. The city of Austin city councilmembers and the mayor chose the animal advisory commission for their expertise and we would -- we can have public commentary there as well. It's something that we've taken on and I would hate for that hard work to be lost already. So I do think it would be better for us to go ahead and address that in the animal advisory commission. As a veterinarian this is not something that should be taken lightly. It's an elective procedure that could potentially result in a septic abdomen, someone bleeding out and it's not being done at their own personal veterinarian. This is something we should really look at. And we have already started that process, so I would ask that you let us do that. Thank you. >> Houston: Thank you. The next person is delwin Goss. And Jane Sullivan is donating time? So Mr. Goss, you have four minutes. >> Good morning, councilmembers. A number of years ago the Austin neighborhood council passed a resolution asking the city of Austin to draft and pass an ordinance which would require the owners of a cat or dog over the age of six months with some common sense exceptions to spay and neuter their -- to spay or neuter their pet or to pay an annual intact animal registration to own an intact animal. Last year the ANC renewed its support for that concept. The ANC, the Texas federation of animal care societies, the south Austin Democrats, the tejano Democrats, the capital area Progressive Democrats, the

[2:14:35 PM]

citizen led Austin safety partnership, a number of neighborhood associations and a number of animal rescue groups wrote letters of support for that. There's also a petition of support for that ordinance that gathered over 10,000 signatures. Mostly in east Austin where we have roaming packs of dogs 24/7. That previous council failed to listen to us. That's what brings us to where we are today. At the very least the city needs to implement spay and neuter on first impound and create more spay and neuter initiatives. There are a number of reasons for asking for this. Over time the reasons have become much clearer and everything we predicted six years ago would happen has happened. Costs to maintain the current no kill policy have increased much more than was predicted. Originally the ANC was told that putting a no kill policy in place would take a one time shelter budget increase of \$650,000. That cost has increased by over 1,000 percent and it's still climbing. The cost of operating our city shelter has increased from \$5.2 million to over 13 million a year and the cost is still climbing. We predict our shelter would become overcrowded. So far by allowing Austin pets alive to use the old city shelter to house overflow from the new city shelter, we've more than doubled kennel space. It hasn't been nearly enough. Under the last city council the city voted to build 60 to 80 additional kennels. The day that vote was taken the shelter was short 163 kennels. The projected costs for those new kennels is roughly six million dollars. Judging by what we've seen with wastewater treatment plant number 4 and the waller creek tunnel project, that cost may more than double. That's above and beyond the current shelter budget increases. We've had over 40% increase in dog bites in just the last five years. That's far and above the 15% increase in Austin's population growth. Under no kill public safety has taken a back seat to maintaining an under 10% euthanasia rate. In six out of 10 of our council districts, loose dog complaints are in the top seven complaints to 311.

[2:16:40 PM]

Humane treatment of a significant number of Austin pets as has also taken a back seat no no kill. Current version of no kill is great for those animals admitted into the club, but a disaster for many others in Austin. It's easier to surrender custody of a child than it is a cat or dog at the animal shelter. The reason the state passed that law about surrendering unwanted children because they realized that very bad things can happen to unwanted children. It's beyond me why people can't make that intuitive leap to figure out if very bad things happen to unwanted children, can you imagine what happens to an unwanted cat or dog? This has led to animals being dumped out in the county, turned loose on the streets, sur reasoned to high kill animal shelters, let somebody else do our euthanization for us and we're bringing about the loathization rate. These impediments to owner surrender has leds to animals being dumped on the street, in the county. Having people taking people to the high kill shelters outside of Austin. The current version of no kill has become a code word fiscal year euthanasia by proxy. Euthanasia by nutrition, disease, parasites, predators or euthanasia by letting another city shelter do our dirty work for us. I'm not sure why so many people seem to be proud of euthanasia by proxy. >> Houston: Thank you so much. Liz carcross row? Is Liz here? And next will be will Mckinney at this mic over here. >> Colleen is going to donate her two minutes to me if that's okay. >> Houston: Who? >> Colleen. >> Colleen Summers. >> Houston: Okay. Thank you. You have four minutes.

[2:18:42 PM]

>> Thank you. First of all I want to thank you for listening to the concerns regarding the Austin animal center. I reside in Austin and volunteer as a dog walker for the shelter dogs at Austin animal center and also spend time advocating for our shelter pets and am an animal advocate locally and internationally. You clearly understand the importance of public engagement when it comes to any issues pertaining to this city. As you recently witnessed and as you discussed in council regarding the stray hold of dogs whereas councilmember Houston varyfide it was not written opportunity for public discussion in the committee nor through the animal advisory commission. I am here to fully support allowing the shelter director to spay and neuter on first impoundment. I'm asking all of you to please support a change in the city code to allow spay and neuter on first impoundment as it is currently second and it is not being enforced. This is not a mandatory spay and neuter. Volunteering at the shelter one sees a number of animals in need of homes. It is obvious that there's still not enough homes able to adopt the dogs our shelter currently keeps. And by not spaying and neutering pets impounded and allowing them to leave intact will only add more unwanted litters to the pets today. If we implement the city code you will be addressing our current crisis, making it manageable for the near future. If we maintain the current ordinance we may never be able to alleviate the city of unwanted pets regardless of how many more kennels we add to our current facility. Spay and neuter saves lives and saves them humanely. It is less expensive than adding staff and building more kennels. Records indicate that currently the Austin animal center is allowing pet adoptions for intact animals which you can read in the outcomes report. If you remember, attorney Ryan Clinton clearly stated that it is the law in Austin that all animals have to be spayed and neutered before they are outcomed. So if the city shelter will not follow the current law regarding spay and neuter outcomes we need to

[2:20:42 PM]

implement changes somewhere. In February and January of this year 12 unaltered animals were allowed to be adopted and 70 pets were returned unaltered to their owners. If we look at statistics of how many unaltered animals breed and reproduce and we continue with our current practice we will keep the Austin animal shelter at capacity and in crisis for years to come. Again, I am asking for impounded animals to be spayed and neutered upon first impoundment and I am not advocating for a mandatory

spay and neuter ordinance. Many cities and towns want to follow suit of Austin's no kill status, however they have not done that in a humane and ethical way they have reported to mandatory spay and neuter ordinances. However, because it is harder to compare other Texas cities to aaahh I am including San Francisco as an example of how implementing and enforcing spay and neuter initiatives have worked. In January 2006 San Francisco passed a mandatory pit bull sterilization ordinance. At that time pit bulls filled three-quarters of the shelter. 18 months after the passage of the ordinance, pit bulls impounded declined by 21%. Shelter occupancy rates fell and pit bulls euthanized dropped by 24%. A spay and neuter ordinance accomplished what adoption efforts had not. Carl Friedman, animal care control director of San Francisco was quoted as saying fewer pit bulls are being abandoned to the pound because fewer are being born thanks to the spay and neuter requirement. If this study has proven to work for one breed, it can work for any and all animals. Another example is set forth in the city of Lawton, Oklahoma, where due to stricter spay and neuter fifth street, the number of pets euthanized decreased talkly from 2006 to only 49 in the year of 2012. I am a no kill supporter and proud of how far Austin has

[2:22:43 PM]

come. However, limiting intakes and closing our doors to the pets to make numbers look like they are going down is the wrong thing to do. If we can save endangered species through action that is across international borders -- [buzzer sounds] -- We can stop the number of pets being born right here. >> Houston: Thank you so much. After Mr. Mckinney, Wendy Murphy at this podium right here. Mr. Mckinney. >> My name is will Mckinney. Over the past four years I've been a volunteer walker and foster with Austin pets alive. I have fostered three dogs. All three had hit litters, all three came in as strays and came intact. Two had multiple litters before arriving at aac. The wear and tear on their bodies, but they were resilient. Despite the neglect by humans, they were two very affection gnat dogs, both brought a lot of joy to me and the lives of others. I'm thank elf they were cared for by Austin animal center and Austin pets alive. I'm also thankful that their owners ever tried to claim them. I can't imagine them being released unspayed to have more litters of put.s. Leaving them intact causes many momma dogs to have to endure having litter after litter without their bodies having time to recuperate between pregnancies. Even organizations like the akc discourage having litters more than once per year. We need to protect dogs like these two of being baby factories. We need the opportunity to spay and neuter dogs when we have the perfect opportunity to. It's not compassionate or responsible to let them back into the community unfixed. A friend of mine wanted to -- I wanted to add a story a friend of mine told me. She was unable to make it

[2:24:47 PM]

today. But she encountered a dog being hit at aac a few months ago. She walked over to the man to see if she could help him work with the dog better. She then found out he was reclaiming the dog because the dog had got out of his backyard. My friend casually said that his dog would be Leslie to escape his yard again if he was neutered. The man scoffed at the suggestion saying that he was going to make so much money off the dog as a stud. My friend kept trying to convince him to neuter the dog, proposing that maybe he neuter the dog after one litter. [Buzzer sounds] The man just laughed. Who knows how many litters his dog has created since then? >> Houston: Thank you. >> We need to protect our dogs. >> Houston: Thank you so much for your comments. [Applause]. After Ms. Murphy we have pat gordynamic. Gordike. On this mic please. >> Good afternoon. My name is Wendy Murphy. I live in district 4. I'm not a part of any rescue group, per se, but I've been doing rescue on my own in Austin for about 25 years. Dogs and cats. I don't know how many I've rescued. It's been a lot. I never, ever would

have considered -- owe took an animal to shelter because it would be better for me to get them adopted on my own, which I did, and I was very successful in doing that. I would never in my wildest imagination never considered not spaying and neutering those animals before I even let a person consider adopting them. So me it seems like a no brainer. I kind of don't exactly understand why it's -- you know, why it's being -- why it's not just being done. To me it just seems obvious that -- and I want to agree with anyone else who said today I think it's disingenuous of Austin to

[2:26:49 PM]

portray itself to the world as a no-kill city because anybody can be a no-kill city if you just -- if you don't allow the dogs and cats in in the first place. And anybody can be a no-kill city if you pawn them off to other rescue groups and stuff. One of the obvious ways is for us to truly be a no-kill city is to implement these spay and neuter initiatives that have been suggested. Thank you for your time. >> Houston: Thank you so much. Is Ms. Nordike here? And bill Meecham, if you would come up. Whichever podium you want to go to. >> Good afternoon. My name is pat nordike and I am the executive director for the Texas federation of animal care societies. We are a state side agency that provides resources, support and training for all animal welfare groups in Texas. And we strongly support a spay and neuter ordinance in Austin. It is not a magic elixir, but over a period of time if you have a spay and neuter ordinance in Austin and fund some low cost spay and neuter, your shelter will have fewer animals coming in and you're expenses will go down considerably aside from the fact that you would be saving lives. Is there anything about that that anybody can't understand? It seems like a simple solution for the spay and neuter ordinance, not mandatory, but spay and neuter, and people will flock to have their animals done. Waco put in an ordinance about two years ago. They funded it and their

[2:28:52 PM]

intake numbers have gone down by over a thousand animals a year. We can do this in Austin. Please keep behind a spay and neuter ordinance and back us on this. Thank you. >> Houston: Thank you. And Mr. Meecham, is Paul karajas here? Is he here? You've got four minutes. >> Okay. I don't need them all. My name is bill Meecham. I live in the south part of town. I want to speak in favor of spaying and neutering an animal on its first impoundment. I want to talk about using spay and deposit funds to provide spay and neuter resources to high need areas. I am not speaking for or against the no kill policy. I just want to make the point that if you want to avoid killing animals, a good way to avoid doing that is having the animals in the first place, which means spaying and neutering animals that would produce more of them. That's all. [Applause]. >> Houston: Thank you, sir. Is Mr. John Hubbard here? John Hubbard? >> [Inaudible - no mic]. >> Houston: Thank you. If he comes in would you give me a head's up? Aaron sfatell? You donated your time. Then pat valles-trellis. And who did you donate your time to? You have four minutes. >> Thank you. That was a good decision. Okay. First of all, I want to start by saying that I

[2:30:53 PM]

support no-kill. I do not want to go back to the bad old days of killing for space. So I very much support us trying to save every animal possible. However, I also think we need to do no-kill humanely and I think that humanely means doing a lot more spay and neuter than we've been doing now. Some people will tell you we're doing a lot of spay and neuter already and we are, we're doing spay and neuter through emancipet. We also used to do it through animal trustees of Austin. And there are a lot of rescue groups paying for spay and neuter out of their own pockets. However, we're not doing enough. And the way I

know we're not doing enough is because this summer we had to close intake for six weeks. The promise no-kill was not that we would close intake. The promise of no-kill was that we would find animals homes. So if we're turning animals away what we're doing is we're saying -- like other speakers have said, we're not really no-kill, we're just -- we don't know what's happening to them. They may go to other shelter that's a kill shelter. So we need to do it more humanely by doing it in a way that doesn't close intake. And I want to speak to one of those ways. I think we can do a lot more spay and neuter through the unclaimed spay and neuter deposits. [Applause]. I'm glad to have support for that. So when an animal comes to the animal shelter, either as a stray or as an owner surrender, and they're going to be either adopted or reclaimed by an owner that finds them, they are supposed to be spayed or neutered before they leave. But if they're not, the person can sign a contract and promises to get them fixed and they pay a fee. When that fee is not reclaimed, that means that that fee goes into an unclaimed spay fund and that's an -- an spay and neuter fund and that's an opportunity that we missed to spay an animal while we had him or her. If you miss that opportunity -- I'd rather you not miss that

[2:32:53 PM]

opportunity. I would rather spay and neuter everybody in-house as much as we can. However, if you do miss the opportunity to do it and the money goes into this donations fund, -- into the unclaimed spay and neuter fund, let's use that money to provide spay and neuter vouchers or spay and neuter programs or do something in the high needs areas. One high need area is areas that have a larger number of loose dogs. District 1, district 2, district 3 and district 4 have a high number of calls about loose dogs. That's where the problems are. Coincidentally we only have one member of the animal advisory commission who lives in one of those four districts. That's very unfortunate. So if we could get, you know, some spay and neuter vouchers or programs into those high needs areas, areas where we have a lot of loose dogs, areas where we have high intake, I think we could do a lot of good. The reason I'm focusing on this right now is not because I don't want to discuss spay and neuter on first impoundment, I do, but I have a feeling that with the request by David Iunstead that you will probably support that. I think we have the money to do it. We have money to do a lot more of the animals that are going out intact and we also have the opportunity to do a lot more animals that are in the community. If we're doing more spay and neuter and we're reducing intake, we're breaking the vicious cycle that we have right now. Right now when the shelter is full and you close intake you put more animals back on the street. When they reproduce the following year we'll have another problem with intake and with a lot of animals coming in from high needs areas. I'm here to ask you to do two things, support the use the unclaimed spay and neuter deposits for spay and neuter exclusively right now, and then -- [buzzer sounds]

[2:34:53 PM]

-- Later on when the time is appropriate, support spay and neuter on first impoundment. Thank you. >> Houston: Thank you so much. The last person is Reagan Kelly. Don't hurry. >> My time was supposed to be donated, but I can talk. >> Houston: You've got two minutes. >> Then let's be quick. I think everybody else has covered the math. They've covered Austin animal center's numbers, they have covered the San Francisco study, they've covered the emotional impact. I think the only thing that maybe hasn't been mentioned is I fostered for years, I've worked with everybody from Austin pets alive, Austin animal center, places outside the county. And one of my problems with the policies as they stand is in an effort to meet the no-kill mandate, Austin animal center has implemented a lot of policies such as they check, they ask you to agree that your animals are vaccinated, but they don't actually verify that and I've gotten in trouble as a foster if asking other animals are vaccinated. They mandate that you are supposed to be allowed to have an animal of whatever breed where you live before you attempt to foster it. They

don't check that. I do as a foster. I have gotten in trouble for that where I checked to see whether your apartment or living situation allows for the breed mix you want to adopt so it doesn't come back in two weeks later. These are all issues that come up as a by product of having too many animals that the last foster I had I had for nine months. I had 30 last year. The last one was a dog I had for nine months that was an animal cruelty seizure. And nonetheless, it would have still been returned to the owner it was seized from had they bothered to come pick it up. It was a pain that meant it went into the system in my home, not any actual

[2:36:53 PM]

guidelines to prevent that from happening. And once again, I had it for nine months. And I am someone who is -- I'm pretty proactive about [indiscernible], meeting people, flexible schedule, photos, training, you name it. It is just a more difficult dog to do that with. Once again the policies in place means it goes out to homeless people. I've had to make 311 calls myself for when I'm volunteering with the homeless community that have animals under the bridge that they're willing to have picked up, but I can't get someone out there. [Buzzer sounds] That's my time. >> Houston: Thank you so much. [Applause]. And I'm sorry, I missed Adele Quintanilla. And then I think I just saw Mr. Hubbard come in. So you will be the last speaker, sir. >> Thank you, city council. My name is Adele Quintanilla, and I'm exhausted and you know why I'm exhausted? Because I'm a small rescue here in the Austin area. And when we are not spaying and neutering animals that come in on first impoundment, they're are you producing and going in on the backs of our community. We're exhausted. We don't get vacations, don't get a day a it's so tiring. We have to spay and neuter our first impoundment. We have to require it because the three types of people that end up with the dogs that are reproducing, they are irrelevant response believe people, ignorant people and that's the nicest word I can come up with this. I end up with these dogs daily. I end up with these dogs all the time. Right now I have a litter of puppies that a guy bred because their dachshund rat terrier breed. They're now on my back. You know, they were full of disease and worms. They are they were all going to die if I hadn't taken them from this person. Please, please spay and neuter on first impoundment.

[2:38:55 PM]

Thank you. >> Houston: Thank you. Mr. Hubbard? >> >> Good afternoon. My name is John Hubbard. I -- in the interest of full disclosure, I am the founding partner of primarily legislative consulting. We do lobbying at the state level. We do not do lobbying at the city level, but I wanted to put that out there and let you know I'm here in my capacity as a citizen of Austin and not as a lobbyist. I'm here in support of councilmember Houston's proposal on permissive spay and neuter on first impoundment. I think there are a number of good reasons for this. One, of course, it is a vital step to make sure that Austin is a true no-kill city, something that I think we all agree is an amazing and worthy goal. I think it's also valuable because it empowers the city employees to use their discretion to allow for spay on first -- spay and neuter on first impoundment. Something that is already done on second impervious second impoundment. Lastly I would like to talk about the idea of using money that has been raised over -- dedicated to promoting spay and neuter and making sure that money is actually used for that purpose. There's a similar effort going on at the state level to make sure that money that is raised for a particular purpose is actually used for that purpose. It's my understanding that a substantial sum of money that has been raised for spay and neuter opportunities has actually been moved over to the contributions fund and not necessarily being used for spay and neuter. I think it is something that

[2:40:57 PM]



is vital for transparency for the taxpayers of Austin to know that the money that is supposed to be used for a particular activity is actually used for that activity. And if we can use that money to promote spay and neuter or tagging of animals -- [buzzer sounds] -- Then I think it would go a long way to making Austin a better place. Thank you. [Applause]. >> Houston: I'd like to thank everyone that came out today. Now we'll hear from director Hammond. Thank you for being here today with all the traffic. >> Thank you very much. My name is tawny Hammond. I am the chief animal services Austin for the city of Austin. I appreciate being with you today. I would have to offer some background information to still get us started. Earlier this year commissioner chair David lunstead asked the animal commission to vote on the proposed code language that and be changing it to spay and neuter on first impoundment. At the time I asked for time to conduct a six-month survey of stray pet reclaimed in which the owner declined to have the stray pet altered. The study began on March 17th and will conclude on September 17th. The animal advisory commission meeting will occur on September 11th and at this time I'm planning to brief the advisory commission with a recommendation. If you would like I can report on the results of the survey thus far. >> Houston: Would you please? >> So just to get into the meat of it, 96 owners declined spay and neuter on first impound over the past five months. And during this same time period approximately 6,000 dogs came into the Austin animal center system.

[2:42:58 PM]

And 200 left unaltered. Approximately 50% left unaltered for one of the following reasons: In some cases the dogs were at the shelter for bite quarantine, not a stray impound. And in other cases the shelter could not get an impounded pet on the surgery schedule in a timely manner and elected to send the reclaimed pet home with a voucher. And still in other cases the shelter vets determined the pet was too sick or elderly to be spayed or neutered and delayed the surgery. We're talking about approximately 200 going home unaltered and we're talking about 96 owners that actually declined on the survey to do spay and neuter, to put things in perspective. Of those who responded, that offered surgery and elected not to get it, about 27% were owner identified breeds or breed mixes that are still at risk or challenging to adopt at Austin animal center. 73% were identified as breeds or breed mixes not considered at risk or challenging to adopt. 30% of the respondents said they plan to breed is the reason they were declining. 19% identified age or medical reasons as the reason for declining. 15% of respondents identified they want the pet back today and they couldn't come back or didn't want to come back. And 36% declined one of several other reasons for declined, most commonly stating that they did not want to do a surgery. And that was the reason they gave for declining. >> Houston: I'm trying to get used to the newest fancy things. Mine's not this fancy. So how many -- in the three months that you've looked at, you had how many intakes? I'm sorry? >> In the five month period -- about 6,000 dogs coming in and about 200 that are leaving unaltered. This is first impoundment. And 96 of the owners had declined to spay and neuter on first impoundment.

[2:44:59 PM]

>> Houston: So the vast majority of the dogs that came into the shelter were not -- only a small percentage of them left the shelter -- >> 200. >> Houston: But out of several thousand that's a small percent. >> It's exactly 198. >> Houston: 198. >> And when we're looking at the survey, the six-month survey, the past five months, 96 owners declined to spay and neuter. >> Houston: So what happened to the vast majority of dogs that came in to the shelter? Can you tell us how many were altered already? >> I don't have that exact figure. >> Houston: So you're still in the study. It will be up in September, I understand. So as a part of that could you tell us how many were already altered when they came in?

And then how many we altered while they were there of that -- of the thousands or so that were on the intake. Any other questions, councilmembers? And you'll be able to report that -- you will be reporting this information to the -- >> Animal advisory commission. >> Houston: And what's the date of that meeting? >> September 12th. >> Houston: One other question, Ms. Hammond, is that what is the average length of stay for some of the animals that come into the shelter? >> It varies depending upon -- depending upon the animal, depending upon the pet. The longest stay would be our medium and large dogs. Puppies and kittens actually have been declining. Puppies have been declining and the length of stay is

[2:47:00 PM]

very short. They're very easy to adopt out. The older dogs, our medium and large dogs, tend to have a longer length of stay and we're seeing anywhere from -- it varies, but we're talking at least in excess of a month, several months. >> Houston: So if some of those dogs come in and they are not -- have not been spayed or neutered, do we go ahead and spay and neuter them while they're spay and neuter them for however many months they're there? >> Yeah. And I don't have the exact statistics for that. I wanted to talk about the survey, what you wanted me to address today. But I can certainly get more information if you want more information on that. >> Houston: But that would be part of the survey, I suspect, to find out do we in fact while they're there with us for four months go ahead and spay and neuter them even if they go to rescue or are adopted out or returned to their owners at some point? >> Only if there's a medical reason would we not do that. >> Houston: But you will have that information when you come back, right? Okay. Any other questions? Thank you so much. >> Thank you. >> Houston: So the issue for us today is that this is a growing concern in this community. The fact that we are a world recognized no-kill city, but if we don't take action to stop the intakes into our shelters, all of our shelters, then there's no way we can build our way out of this and we have to have both indication and we have to have some way to keep the intake down. So I have a resolution, and I know we're waiting on the information, but just to kind of take a look at it. It's a very simple

[2:49:02 PM]

resolution that indicates that we will -- again permissive on first impound. That's basically what it says. And let's have conversation about whether or not that's something that this committee would be -- we can't make the decision. This would be a recommendation to the full council. This wouldn't come up to the full council before animal services commission has their meeting in September. Councilmember Garza. >> Garza: I appreciate everyone who came to give their feedback on this issue. But my understanding is that there is a survey that hasn't been completed just yet? And so I would be more inclined to see -- and if the survey -- if it in any way reflects the number of people we just heard from, it seems like that would be the direction that the public is in favor of. I personally am not ready to forward a recommendation to council. I would be happy to forward something to council, but not as a recommendation. >> Houston: But again, they will have -- the animal services commission will have their meeting before this even comes up on the council agenda. This is not to say that next time we meet that this will be on the agenda, but this will be a placeholder for after the animal advisory commission is able to hear from the director what the results of the survey are, give us feedback and then we would move to send it to the council. Councilmember troxclair? >> Troxclair: I think maybe what she's suggesting is -- because we can forward -- we could forward this with no recommendation or we could forward it with the positive recommendation. So I think she might be saying that she would be okay with forwarding it to

[2:51:02 PM]

the full council with no recommendation. >> Houston: Or we could wait until we get a report back at the October meeting from the September animal advisory committee. Will you be back by then? >>

Troxclair: No. [Laughter]. >> Houston: So I'm getting a sense of the members of the community -- did you have something else to say? >> Troxclair: I had a question maybe for staff. Since it's permissive, what is -- what goes into a decision of whether or not to sterilize an animal? >> The way it is now is he could impoundment and the only exception we would give would be for health reasons. For the health of the animal. That would be only exception, the age of the animal if it was going to put it at risk, put the animal at risk. And so that is -- I think that's important to note that if something is permissive, just because it's permissive there still needs to be a standard and there still needs to be employed uniformly -- it could not be arbitrary. >> Houston: Director Hammond, before you leave, in your study are you calculating how many animals come in intact and on second impoundment that are sterilized? Are you keeping track of those? >> Yes. It's a very low number. I think it was -- you mean, that were impounded the first time and then came back a second time? I have it and I think the number six is in my head right now. As far as coming back the second time. I'm talking about over the past five months. >> Houston: Okay. So do you have any historical information to show how many animals are

[2:53:03 PM]

impounded the second time that we then do spay and neuter on the second impoundment, that you do now? >> We'll have that as part of the recommendation. My recommendation in September will include fiscal considerations as well as historical data and statistics as well as what truly is the challenges we're facing now. And I'm -- I'm still analyzing that and thinking about that, consulting with best practices around the nation. And I'll have a recommendation at the animal advisory commission. Truly to get it addressed what our concerns are. >> Houston: And again, Ms. Hammond, we've had some really good conversations. I also want us to address what the concerns of the community are because they're calling 311 on a daily basis talking about loose dogs. And if you look at the district representation, as someone said, I have the most and then all those in the eastern crescent are the next ones. So I know you have an emphasis on trying to get out and educate people about, you know, how they can have their animals sterilized. And we have a really good working relationship with emancipet, who everybody knows when they're out, it's just a matter of how do we get more dogs and cats sterilized so that we're not looking at them when we look at these high numbers of intakes. So that's what I think the community is asking. >> I understand that completely. My job is to give the facts and what our challenges are and then offer a recommendation, and the commission and the committee and the council can certainly do with that what they will. I share the same concerns I think as them. I'm also a constituent and live in this community. And I think the perception and then there's what truly is -- why we're at capacity or return animals. So I don't have an opinion yet. I really want to look at the next four weeks. We've been disciplined about it and doing our due diligence and research. But I'm listening and I hear

[2:55:03 PM]

the concerns and I actually -- I think we have a lot of similarities. We all have the same concerns. >> Houston: Good. I'm glad -- I heard you say you were listening to those concerns. I understand best practices and other indications. We're talking about the people who live here talking about saying there's a problem and we need to be at least attentive to and need to have some revisions in the way we handle our policies so that we can reduce the number of intakes coming in to the shelter? And it may be a few years that we see, as someone else said, before we see that reduction of intake, but again

fiscally we can't continue to build our way out of more and more animals. Okay? Thank you so much. So I'm going move that we take this up on the agenda at the October health and human services commission, and that's a motion. And I'd like a second. Second by councilmember troxclair. Any discussion? >> Troxclair: I guess, so you would prefer -- that's your preference, to take it up in October, rather than to have something out today and send it to council? >> Houston: I think that in consideration for director Hammond and the fact that she has four more weeks to go on a study that she started in March, that we have as much data as we can. I think we've heard from the community that supports spay/neuter, and hopefully by the time it gets -- her report gets finished, it gets to the animal advisory commission, and we can all watch or participate in that fits in the boards and commission room, or at the shelter. Then in October, we should be prepared to have another in-depth conversation about the findings and make a recommendation to the full council. All in favor, let it be known by saying aye.

[2:57:04 PM]

>> Aye. >> Houston: It's unanimous with mayor pro tem tovo off the dais. Thank you for coming out and sharing your concerns with the council committee. Agenda item 4 is a staff briefing on the application process for a joint appointment to the central board of managers. >> Houston: We're going to give them a minute to go out quietly. [ Chuckling ] >> Houston: So the central board of managers -- the health and human services committee has already appointed, or helped to appoint, with the help of the city council, two members to that board of managers. This today is a different animal, because this is a joint appointment. Kirk kirkendahl was appointed by the city county in June of 2013. And his time is up the end of this year. And so we would need to make another joint appointment to that board before the end of December, right? >> That's correct. >> So, Ms. Deena Estrada will walk us through that process. >> Okay. So can we get that powerpoint? Thank you. So then I'll just start on the third slide of the powerpoint presentation, since you introduced that quite well, chair. So, the Travis county commissioners court would like to consider the reappointment of their joint -- of the joint appointee, if the council wishes to do so. However, if the health and human services committee would like to hold an open call for applicants, Travis county is on board with that as well. So today we are requesting that

[2:59:06 PM]

the health and human services committee decide the following -- consider the possible reappointment of Kirk, or hold an open call for applicants between the city of Austin and Travis county and select a nomination process to select the top candidates in interviews. So, I can stop right there if you want to talk or discuss the -- whether or not you'd like to move forward with an open call, or the reappointment of the current joint appointee. >> Houston: Thank you so much. So, historically we've done an open call for -- and the person who's in the position now has an opportunity to submit their application during that open call. What's the pleasure of the committee? Do we need to take a vote to say that we want to do an open call? >> No. >> Houston: Okay. The health and human services committee still wants to do an open call. >> Great. I'll continue on. The proposed open call for applicants, if we -- well, now that we are going to have an open call, the tentative schedule is for the call to be scheduled from September 1st through the 30th. There will be a press release. Through our own outreach, the city of Austin web page, media outlets, as well as providing it to mayor, council, and their staff for distribution. A joint application has been compiled by the Travis county intergovernmental relations office and the office of the city clerk, and that has been provided to each of you in backup. And that will be provided to all of the applicants. Applicants who have applied prior to the call will be provided the updated application sent

out in the release. Applicants who apply through our board and commission management system process will be provided this application as well.

[3:01:08 PM]

And the applications will be shared by the office of the city clerk and the intergovernmental relations office with Travis county. Committee members will be provided physical and electronic copies of a spreadsheet listing the applicants, their district of residency, gender, ethnicity, occupation, employer, and qualifications, as well as copies of their applications. The following are three scenarios of how the health and human services committee and Travis county commissioners court will work together. And whichever option that the health and human services committee chooses will be presented to the Travis county commissioners court at their next meeting. So option one would be for the health and human services committee to review all applications submitted, a special called meeting will be held to interview the top five to seven candidates. And then the health and human services committee will provide that list of the three top candidates to the Travis county commissioners court for the full court to interview. Travis county will select the top candidate and approve it at their following meeting, and our health and human services committee will submit that same top candidate by Travis county to the full council. And then the full council be -- will approve the top candidate at their next scheduled meeting. Option two is the Travis county commissioners court and the health and human services committee will review all applications submitted, and each body will separately pick the top three -- their top three candidates to interview. The list of applicants become the full list to interview, all will be interviewed by the city and county. If the top candidate selected by each body is the same, then that candidate will be the nominee. If the top candidate is different for each body, the joint group of health and human services committee members and Travis county commissioners court members will select the

[3:03:09 PM]

candidate who will be nominated. Option three, the Travis county commissioners court and the health and human services committee will from the get-go create a joint working group consisting of two members from each body, because that's bound by quorum, we're a four-member board and they're a five-member commissioners court, so we're bound by two by quorum each. The joint working group will review applicants and select the top three. During the week of October 10th, both the commissioners court and the health and human services committee will interview the top three candidates and submit their top candidate to the joint working group. If the top candidate is the same, the health and human services committee will vote to send the recommendation to the full council and the same process will occur for the Travis county commissioners court. If the top candidates are different, then the joint committee will work together to select the top candidate to be nominated by both bodies. And here is just a spreadsheet listing out our current appointees and their qualifications. Are there any questions? >> Houston: Councilmembers, any questions regarding the process or any suggestions on option one, two, or three? >> Houston: It's in the packet underneath your book. I want to be as efficient with our time as we can, so is option two and three the most efficient? Uses of our time? >> I'm going to leave that up to the council to decide. >> Houston: Because we do them at the same time? >> Yes. You do it at the same time. I think the most efficient from everyone's time, but it may not be the ideal for the health and human services committee, would be option one, which would mean

[3:05:11 PM]

this body selects the top three candidates, but the top candidate would be then selected by the commissioners court. I think that would be the most efficient in terms of time. >> Houston: So that means we'd have to have a couple of called meetings between September and October? >> I think we could add the -- maybe just one special called meeting to interview the top applicants that you choose, maybe at your -- the meeting after September 30th, your October meeting, we could have -- we could add an item on the agenda to review the applications that you have and choose the top candidates, and then hold one special called meeting to interview those candidates. So at your regularly scheduled October meeting, we could just add an item to review the applications and for you to choose your top five to seven candidates, and then one special called meeting to interview those candidates. >> Houston: Councilmember troxclair. >> Troxclair: Okay. I'm still trying to look at the differences between the options. But I'm not sure that I am comfortable with option one just because it basically delegate the final choice to Travis county. >> Okay. >> Troxclair: And I think that that it would be important -- I would prefer -- it seems in both options two and three there's an opportunity for us to hopefully pick the same candidate, or if we don't, for us to come together to choose someone, because I . . . >> And if I may, the reason option one was added was because this was the original process

[3:07:13 PM]

for the health and human services committee and Travis county, where they would switch off. So during one four-year appointment, the top three candidates would be selected by Travis county and the top candidate would be selected by the health and human services committee. And then the following term, vice versa. >> Houston: That's interesting. >> Troxclair: No, that is interesting. It seems to me that option two makes the most sense. Both entities interview three candidates, and both entities have the ability to pick the person of their choice, or to at least have a conversation about who the final choice should be before the nomination is made. But that's -- are we -- do we need to make a decision today? >> On one of these options, or some sort of option to move forward, because whichever option the body chooses, the intergovernmental relations office with Travis county will be taking that forward to the Travis county commissioners court. >> Houston: Councilmember Garza, do you have a preference? >> Garza: I was trying to figure out the difference between two and three. >> Troxclair: It looks like three -- in option two, the entire health and human services committee and the entire commissioners court is involved in interviewing the initial candidates. And then option three, it's only two members of each body. >> Garza: Oh, okay. >> Troxclair: To do a working group that selects the top three. >> Right. And the only reason a joint group of the two entities would would -- come together in option two is if you selected a top candidate that was different. But with option three, that joint committee would already be set and you would begin working together immediately. >> Troxclair: So you said that

[3:09:16 PM]

basically, the person that's in the seat right now was picked by the health and human services -- the city council. >> Actually, I'm going to ask Julie wheeler with the intergovernmental relations office, because she was around when that occurred, so she would have more information on that. >> Good afternoon, I'm Julie, Travis county intergovernmental relations office. During the appointment of Kirk, that was conducted with a joint process through the commissioners court and the health and human services subcommittee. So, I've got to think back how we did this. We basically looked at all the applications, each entity picked their own top list, and we came up with a similar short list. They were interviewed separately by each entity. It managed to work itself out quite nicely in that instance. >> Okay. >> The joint appointment can be a little bit tricky. I want to thank Deena for laying it out. Just so you know, the commissioners court doesn't really have a preference. Ideally, we would just like to work jointly and as

swiftly as possible together. To clarify a few of the differences, with option three, what we're talking about is having a joint working group between the two entities to try to come together and bring a smaller list together sooner. If -- with option two, you're really working very independently of each other and hopefully coming up with a more similar list. So there may be a bit more of a cohesive end if you go with three, but it is the will of both entities in which direction you would like to take it. >> Thanks for pointing that out, because that's actually -- the full committee would still interview. It's just the joint working group just picks the three members to interview, but it's still a full committee of the health and human services or the commissioners court that does the interviews. >> On our end, it would be the full court that would do the interviews. And I guess that would be up to

[3:11:17 PM]

you all if you want to do the joint -- I guess your smaller working group do the interviews. But ideally when we laid this out, the interview process would go for the whole subcommittee, is that correct? So it would just be a select few of you who would be on the working group to pick, but then all of you together would do the interview. >> Houston: Separately. >> Yes, because of quorum and posting, it would be nice if we could do a giant commissioners court and health and human services interview panel, but we can't, unfortunately. >> Houston: Councilmember troxclair. >> Troxclair: Is it possible -- I know if a few of these -- or I guess in option two and option three, it says the top three candidates. We have historically interviewed more than three candidates, and I think sometimes been really glad that we did, because somebody who maybe wasn't someone's first choice on paper was really great in person, or vice versa. Is that -- is selecting the top three candidates something that's set in stone, or could it be five candidates, or however many? >> It can change. We just chose three at that time. >> We do it in an attempt to help manage your time. We try to start with that universe. And typically when we do look at the pool of applicants, you know, usually a smaller number rise to the top, and then there's sort of everybody else. That being said, we're not set with three. If there are four or five, that is absolutely an option. We were just trying to help condense it in some way for you guys. >> Troxclair: After looking with -- if somebody has a strong preference with any of these options, but it seems like option three is the best of both worlds. At least both bodies are interviewing the same candidates. And get to have input, so. >> Houston: You don't have --

[3:13:20 PM]

>> Troxclair: No. >> I feel strongly for two or three, so that's fine. >> Houston: I think it's unanimous on the dais. We're going to try option three. And the person that suggested that is not going to be here, so we're going to have to find time for the other three of us to figure out which two have time to do this, but we can talk about that later. I think the consensus is -- consensus is option three, decide which two members meet with members of the commissioners court, and then develop a listing. And just not say as it is here, top candidates without a number, so that's good. Because we've had some great candidates and they were, like, number 6 or 7. >> Okay. So, yeah. >> Okay. So then I guess, action on my part will be to reach out to the three councilmembers who will be here to find out which two will volunteer to serve on this joint working group. >> Houston: Yes, ma'am. And we are also going to go ahead and do the press release. >> Right. This option is going to be taken to the Travis county commissioners court at their meeting. >> Next Tuesday we'll present this to the court. >> Houston: Okay. >> And then the -- call will go live on September 1st. >> Houston: And we need to make this appointment by the end of December, right? >> Correct. >> Houston: Okay. >> Thank you all so much for your time. >> Houston: Thank you. Thank you for being here. The next and last briefing that we have is on residential homes. And I'm going to hand out this history. Many people have been here for a while

and know that. So I'm going to acknowledge Ms. Joan who has been here since almost the beginning of when this house bill 216 was enacted, and has kind of been tracking this all the way through. As many of you know, there have

[3:15:23 PM]

been homes in our community that provide for people who use social security or veterans benefits, or ssdi, SSI, to pay for their housing. And we were given the opportunity as a municipality back in 2009 to begin to register and license -- to inspect and license those homes. And there was some things that we needed to do as a council to be able to get us to this point. And we think we are almost there. I can almost see the goal line. And so code department is here to kind of give us a briefing on where we are on making sure that rooming, boarding homes are being inspected and registered -- licensed. >> Thank you, madam chair, Cora Wright, interim director for the Austin code department. And while it is day eight in my new seat, I want you to know that I appreciate the opportunity to bring you an update. >> Houston: Congratulations on day eight. >> Thank you very much. So, with that, I wanted to let you know that the purpose of this presentation today is to provide the committee with an update on our progress concerning boarding and rooming houses that have not been licensed. And joining me for the presentation I have a team of people who have been working on this a lot longer than I have, and will call upon them as we might need. So today's presentation, really I'm going to cover four mayor areas at a very high level. Because we view this as part of our public education process,

[3:17:24 PM]

I'd like to at least highlight the applicable codes and amendments that pertain to this particular initiative. Also to highlight the city license process, reasonable accommodation process, and the progress and action items that are under way. So by the close of this, we'll be able to give you a summary of where we are in our next steps. So with a focus on single family residential areas, occupancy is a threshold issue. That is, what I want to specify here is that in a single family zoned area, if seven or more unrelated individuals are allowed to occupy a home as a result of a reasonable accommodation -- which we know that this committee is interested in -- then that home is a rooming and boarding home that must be licensed. So when it come to boarding and rooming houses, chapter 13 of the international property maintenance code stipulates that a boarding and rooming house is a building that is not a hotel -- it's not a motel or a bed and breakfast, or a short-term rental. However, it provides lodging with or without meals for seven or more unrelated individuals. And so you will hear me restate this throughout the presentation, because it is part of our public education. The emphasis on the fact that boarding and rooming houses are required to obtain a license. From a zoning perspective, by definition, a rooming and boarding house is not permitted in a residential area. Section 25-2-55 stipulates that residential properties are limited to six unrelated individuals, and is more restrictive in the mcmansion area, where the threshold there is less, or four unrelated

[3:19:26 PM]

individuals. We suspect -- and I know that the committee is already specifically, property owners -- are not really aware of these limitations or occupancy limits. Therefore, homes that are located in residential areas today are more than not effectively operating in violation of city code. It typically plays out this way. A complaint is called in about too many people living in a single-family residence. The code department is then activated, and we send out an inspector who conducts an investigation of the complaint concerning over-occupancy. This is something that we're very accustomed to doing. And so if



it is determined that the property owner or the property is over-occupied, the code department then notifies the owner that the number of occupants exceed what our code allows. The property owner in some cases may -- or an individual within that property -- may request a reasonable accommodation to exceed the occupancy limit. So if a property is allowed to have seven or more unrelated occupants, then it is a rooming and boarding house which needs to be licensed. And I emphasize that again. So when we consider the license process, something that we do all the time -- this is not new -- again, it's typically initiated by a complaint, and sometimes we have a property owner who will come in and inquire about how to come into compliance. The property gets inspected. And what we're looking for is to ensure that the property is compliant with our international property maintenance code. That is, we are trying to focus to ensure that the structure is sound and the conditions are

[3:21:27 PM]

acceptable for living. If the violation is found to be in existence, that property owner must correct those violations. I'm speaking structurally. And then once those violations are corrected, that particular property owner may apply for a license and pay a fee. When it comes to reasonable accommodations, the process that we are trying to hone in and make accessible to the public by way of just an update, the city has decided and is already moving on appointing points of contact for the public. I'm very happy to share with the committee that my colleague, David Andic, who is our city of Austin ADA coordinator, our designated citywide point of contact. We'll also, as a city, designate at least three department level points of contact. And I say that because we know that the Austin code department will play a strong role, development services will as well, and our planning and zoning department. But I would like the public to know, and the committee to know, that at any point moving forward, you will not be limited by any one of these points of contact. You can make your needs known by both the citywide coordinator and department level. We'll add points of contact as the need arises. The city will also design -- and I understand it's already -- the work is under way, we're designing an electronic request intake tool. This is really important to the work of making this accessible to the public, because what it will result in is having a very organized means by which to accept requests for accommodations, to move it quickly throughout the city, to share information among city departments, and to expedite a

[3:23:27 PM]

determination. So the city will design an electronic request intake tool. And there are provisions within our code that speak to making the determination. And depending on the time of problem we encounter, we will have a designated department director who will be responsible for reviewing and rendering a decision as it pertains to that reasonable accommodation request. So moving on to progress to date, I'm just highlighting three different areas. I really want to, on behalf of our staff, to really reinforce the fact that the licensing aspect of this is already under way. We have 59 rooming and boarding houses that are licensed. But I would like to also share with you that we have received no requests so far for a reasonable accommodation. Should we get a request today or tomorrow, we'll prepare to respond to that request as needed and coordinate so that we can move it swiftly across the city. We have an internal staff working group with efforts that have been -- under way for some time, including delineating staff and agency rules and spontaneous. We need to make sure that the right hand knows what the left hand is doing, and who's on point to handle which aspect of responding to the public. We've already mentioned that we have an ADA coordinator on board. A little bit about David, he has over 13 years of experience in working with reasonable accommodations. And in talking with him this morning, I understand that he also has had very direct experience in working with cities to implement reasonable accommodations in this vein. So we're going to pick and pull every aspect of his expertise to

make this run smoothly. We also are drafting reasonable request applications. I want to acknowledge our

[3:25:29 PM]

advising attorney, Trish link, who has been working with us on that. And we're going to finalize that process. We're designing, as I mentioned, the electronic workflow for accepting this information and sharing it. We have the support of our communications and technology and management department, and our innovation office working together to help us really streamline that. We're finalizing the public education and outreach strategy, which I think is probably the most important aspect of what we're going to do. Whenever there is a need to change or modify our approach, I think the citizens deserve to at least first be notified, and to get really good information about how to handle that. And of course we have many stakeholders. So we're spending great tension -- attention designing that. It will evolve over time. Staff training is critical, of course. I can't speak for David, but in my experience as a former Ada coordinator for the health department, that sensitivity training is extremely important. So we want to make sure that all of our professionals understand the needs of our population and are educated with the basic knowledge and understanding of how to communicate the needs and to expedite meeting those needs. And so I have the support -- we have the support of David, who will help us design that training for our staff. And then lastly, whatever we do we want to reduce it to a standard operating procedure so we can ensure there's consistency in the approach to work, and that our citizens can be assured we have predictable systems in place to serve their needs. We cannot be successful without the collaboration, communication, and working together with other agencies in the community. Namely, we are beginning to consult with the department of aging and disabilities, the

[3:27:29 PM]

adult protective services, the austin/travis county integral care, and other support agencies. The importance here is that first, we understand what everybody's doing, and what services are available so that we can map those and ideally streamline this so that we're speaking as one community, and we're minimizing duplication of effort across interagency. What little I've learned so far is that the department of aging and disabilities also serves similar individuals who are in group or rooming and boarding homes. But it's my understanding that they serve those homes that have four or more, so they are even more restrictive than we. So maybe we'll be back talking about the opportunity to revise our code so as not to duplicate efforts across. I'm keeping in mind, though, our ultimate objective is to ensure that our citizens are safe. So when I look at this, I just wanted to emphasize that the city has one goal, and that is to ensure that our citizens are living in safe housing, and that they understand what is available to them. But when we've considered this particular topic, we know while we have one goal, there are many perspectives. And in doing that, as we design our public information and stakeholder process, we know that there will be occupancy concerns. We know that property owners will have questions. There will be individuals with special needs, neighborhood concerns, and interagency opportunities for us to work together. So while we have one goal and we recognize that there are many perspectives, we are committed to implementing an integrated approach for our citizens. So with that, I will pause for questions. Oh. And one other slide which really is the crowning moment. I think that you are definitely interested in where we are. We just sort of put together a slide here that gives you a big picture. I have been appointed the

[3:29:31 PM]

project lead for this particular initiative. And I will work very directly with the city of Austin's Ada coordinator. My goal is to ensure that where we left off, we are able to move this forward as expeditiously as possible. We are beginning the work of organizing the training for staff and designing the public education and outreach so that we can launch in October. And we're continuing that long line that spans the slide, really is intended to indicate that we are continuing our inspections as they come in, case by case. In December, toward the end of this fiscal year, we're projecting and hoping that we'll have the electronic system ready to go -- if not, soon after. And then in January, or in the new year, we'll begin that very focused stakeholder outreach. Prior to that, you'll see things like news releases and means of contacting the various stakeholders. Thank you. >> Houston: I don't know how to do this. Thank you so much, Ms. Wright. This has been very informative. And all the people I see sitting over there in their nice suits and ties, and Mr. Elliot in the back, back there, have been working on this a long, long time. >> Yes. >> Houston: And so I am so very glad for the people -- >> Yes. >> Houston: Who care about the health and safety of people who live in their communities. >> Absolutely. >> Houston: We're finally going to be able to do something to help them help address these issues. Let me ask, Ms. Barts, if you'd like to come up and say anything. You've been working on this since 2009. Do you have anything you'd like to share? Okay. Come on up, Ms. Barts. We can't hear you.

[3:31:34 PM]

>> My name is Joann Barts, and my question is, what is reasonable accommodation? I don't find that designated or defined in any way in any of this information. >> I think that's a very good question. Thank you. I'm going to recognize our advising attorney, Patricia. >> Okay. >> Patricia, assistant city attorney. The reasonable accommodation that we've been discussing is the change or exception to city code that is required by the federal fair housing act to allow an individual with a disability to live in the housing of their choice. >> Okay. If I can ask, can someone put that in writing and get it to me is? Y'all have my email address. >> Houston: Sure. We can do that. >> I'm going to go back home and do some research. Thank you very much. >> Houston: Thank you. Do you think we're on the right track? >> In one regard, yes. And in another, no. That's what I have to do my research on. >> Houston: Okay. Do your research and get back to us. I do want to say how much I appreciate all the work that has been done over the last year and a half. This has been a real issue for district 1. And then rooming and boarding houses are all over the city. And everybody feels kind of helpless about what to do. And so we're beginning that process. And so I'm really thankful for all that you all have done. Councilmember Garza, did you have something to say? Thank you so much, Ms. Wright. We look forward to seeing you before we leave. We've got to talk about next agenda items. And next meeting is October the 12th. And we're going to have the spay/neuter back on the agenda for the 12th. And then there was an item about the recreation center bond project. Do you know anything about that?

[3:33:35 PM]

Okay. >> Madam chair. >> Houston: Yes, sir. >> Health and human services. That project is a capital improvement project that staff wishes to bring to your attention before it goes to the full council. >> Houston: Okay. So we'll put that on the list. And then what was the one about animal walking standards? I know there have been some concerns about not having enough walkers, and wanting to pay for walkers at both shelters. I thought we were using Maddie's fund, what is this about? >> Some of the folks in the committee want to bring that to the committee's attention, best practices, that sort of thing. They wanted to vet with a little bit with the committee some of the things that they've uncovered in their research. It was tentatively on for this particular meeting, but at the last second they decided to withdraw that. They hope, I think, to bring it back to the October 12th meeting, if that is what you would

like to do. >> Houston: October 12th. Okay. I think we have enough time. I try not to overwhelm the committee with something, but. >> And then I think we decided earlier in this meeting you want to bring back central health option three for October? >> Houston: Yes, central health is going to always be on the agenda. Yes. >> Garza: I had a request from the animal advisory committee for -- it's a recommendation from them from October of 2015 regarding training and control of animals. But I can get more details to choose to put that on the October. >> Houston: I believe that has to do with the bull hook ordinance. We asked why we were putting that back on the agenda, because elephants don't come to Austin anymore. And it was about a cruelty issue. And we have asked in the past if we could get some statistics from the animal services about cruelty and how many of those

[3:35:36 PM]

incidents happen. And we've not gotten that yet, so. >> Yeah, between bear and I we'll follow up and get those statistics for you. We can send that electronically. >> Houston: Would you please? That's why it's not come back. We're waiting on the response to how many actual instances of cruelty we have that we would put that language back in the code. >> Garza: So when could we get that information? >> Houston: We asked for it months ago, in February, I think. >> We'll try to get back to you as soon as possible so you can make a decision. >> Houston: We have a month and time to do that, so. >> Garza: Okay, thanks. >> Houston: If there are no other issues -- if there are, let us know, we'll put that on the agenda. We stand adjourned and the time is 3:36. Please be careful going home, and make sure you go out the right way. Okay? Thanks. Yeah.