

Health and Human Services Committee Meeting Transcript – 02/13/2019

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>> Garza: Good afternoon, I'm Delia Garza, vice chair of the health and human services committee, it is 205, I'm calling this meeting to order. We are at city hall. Our new chair will be councilmember harper-madison but she is under the weather today, so that's why she couldn't join us today. The first agenda item is approval of health and human services committee meeting of Wednesday, December 12th and the special called meeting of Wednesday, December 19th. I will entertain a motion to -- to pass the minutes. >> So moved. >> Garza: Is there a second? Moved by councilmember kitchen, seconded by councilmember tovo. All in favor please say aye. >> Aye. >> No opposition. Item 1 passes 3 to 0. Second agenda item is citizens communication. Do I have a list? Did anybody give me one? I don't have -- is it on the -- okay. Gus Pena. And these are for -- for each speaker gets two minutes to -- to address any things that are not regarding any of the items posted. So Mr. Pena, you have two minutes. >> Thank you very much, Gus Pena, native east Austin night, co-founder of veterans for progress, born because of the atrocities to us veterans, lack of housing, lack of proper doctor's issues. I want to say this, I'm going to keep it short. I know that we talked about the arch, but let me -- I've

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had two people already during the council meetings -- one testified, they are red to testify about the problem at the arch. It is very dirty. The toilet, there's a lot of feces on the floor, et cetera. Word to the wise, Mr. McCormick, let's get it cleaned up, I'm going to have the health inspectors out there. I have spoken to senator Cornyn and Lloyd Doggett and H.U.D. Carson and Robert will key, I went to Washington regarding the H.U.D. Voucher. This is a veteran supported voucher. Us veterans can use it to purchase a home. Whereas before you had to -- to be, you know, willing to accept whatever the department was, it was not good enough anymore. So you can purchase a home. There was a good -- there was a good count for the homelessness. Unfortunately a lot of veterans you are not going to count, they don't want to be counted. They are over there in dove springs encampments, rundberg and St. John's wort. I'm not going to tell you where it is, because I'm not going to compromise my position

with them. A lot more people than were counted, now they have a good true blue count of 7 knew plus. I want to say this to y'all, to the health and human services committee, I thank Stephanie Hayden, the director of health and human services, she's done a darned good job, she's to be commended for it. But we have a lot more to improve. I will leave it at that. You I want you to know we are working hard housing the homeless veterans. Also the purchasing power with the va voucher now. [Beeping] Thank you very much. >> Garza: Thank you, Mr. Pena, marum must. Sorry if I didn't say that correctly. >> Good afternoon,

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councilmembers and congratulations, pro tem for your appointment. I'm actually just going to speak briefly. First of all my name is [indiscernible] You appointed in me to the board of central health almost two years from now. I just want to reiterate the value of the appointment and how much it matters to our community. The decisions that we make heavily impact people's lives on a daily basis. And beforehand, when you interviewed me, you probably said in terms of time commitment, but I just -- about 15 hours, approximately, a month. I just want to go back and assure that time commitment we spend are probably double that amount of time it takes. So for whoever you appoint, make sure that they realize the time and commitment. And beyond the board of -- okay the board of central health is not a regular appointment. Rather being as we really work hard to be good stewards of our tax dollar money, addressing the health inequities in our community. The value that it brings to our community is tremendous. At the same time, the value of the appointees is important as well, in terms of education, skills and knowledge of the health ecosystem in Austin as to how complex it is. Unfortunately, sometimes we are put in really difficult positions, but to be aware of the dynamics of how the system works here is quite valuable to our board. And thank you for the opportunity to serve and to continue on serving on this board really -- really has been a true humbling experience that we are able to make a difference in our community. Thank you. >> Garza: Thank you for your service on the central health board. I believe we have one more speaker, but he's signing up right now. So let me see what the -- what the third agenda item is. We might be able to -- I will allow him to come back. We can move on to the third item agenda and then take

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that gentleman up. Item 3 is the nomination of candidates to the community development commission. Last year council passed a resolution that asked for housing and planning council committee to appoint three public sector and one private sector commissioners and for the health and human services committee to appoint two public sector and one private sector commissioner to the CDC. My office has been working with councilmember Casar on this item, the chair of the housing and planning committee, as well as Natasha Harper Madison who is now the chair of this committee. We have been coordinating so we don't appoint the same people. Yesterday they nominated councilmember Renteria and Casar or they can appoint an appointee when I believe they plan to do for the mayor. The public sector was

chavon [indiscernible]. Questions about the service area. I wanted to clarify that the service area for the commission is the county. With said the resolution passed by council stated that the councilmember will represent the interest of both the district and the area. So in front of us we have the -- this drafted resolution would appoint councilmember Natasha Harper Madison and myself, Delia Garza, as the two public sector representatives and the private sector representative would be Karen [indiscernible]. So is there any discussion on this item or questions? >> I move passage. >> Tovo: I did have a question, is it your intention to serve or appoint a representative? >> Garza: I intend to appoint a representative and I believe that will be on one of you on next council meeting agendas. >> Tovo: Thank you. >> Garza: So moved by

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councilmember kitchen, is there a second? Seconded by councilmember tovo. Any discussion? Gave all those in favor, aye? That passes 3-0. The gentleman that wanted to speak, is he back in the room? Steve Harrell? Mr. Harrell you have two minutes. >> Good afternoon, how are you ladies doing? >> Garza: Good, how are. Of. >> Good afternoon. >> You can go to the podium sir, if that's okay. >> I need a [indiscernible] I just don't understand you guys the way you are doing the [indiscernible] Not enough case managers. I'm on a waiting list, but meanwhile I'm tired of telling my stuff. It's a small portion. There's so many lawsuits open at the arch right now. You guys don't have lockers outside the arch, no locker around the city. No storage areas for the homeless. It's hard carrying our stuff. I can't get a job carrying all of my stuff. I have my stuff stashed in bush, trash cans, everywhere. Why don't you guys open up lockers. Beyond case management. You guys are focusing on case management. I'm on a waiting list for case management, but meanwhile why can't I get a locker? You got 100 lockers open upstairs on the third floor. That's not being used. Bed bugs are gone. Let's use those lockers. Women don't even have lockers. What are you going to do about the women? They need lockers, too. So there ain't enough storage area. Have you guys figured that out? When it comes to April and if I'm not on case management, where do you want me to sleep? On your streets? You guys don't have another shelter ready yet. Last week was super cold, so we let everyone in. When you go into this -- into this case management, are you going to let people in when it's super hot, when

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it's super cold or are you just going to let them stay outside so we get tickets for sleeping and camping. It just don't make sense. I just need a locker, that's all. Thank you. >> Garza: Thank you, sir. For coming down. With these very valid concerns. I would ask if there's any city staff that could speak with Mr. Harrell see what we can do for help, thank you for coming. >> I appreciate it, thank you. >> Garza: So we will move on to item -- so we're going to save item 4 for executive session. That's the discussion and possible action regarding recommendations for an appointment of members to the central health board of managers. Because it a personnel issue, we have to take that item up in executive session. And after executive session we will come out and announce if we have decided to -- to move to the interview

stage we will come out and announce who those individuals that will be moved on to the interview stage will be. Then we'll work with the clerk to schedule a -- a special called meeting for public health to have those interviews. So then we're going to move on to the briefing, which is no. 5 and it's an update on Austin resource center for the homeless. Do we have staff here for that? >> Yes. [Indiscernible]. [No microphone]. >> Garza: Oh, okay. Is she the same staff for item 6? >> [Indiscernible]. >> Tovo: I was going to explain that I requested that the arch be added to today's agenda prior to the passage of our contract. It wasn't clear at that time whether it would be postponed or not. So I'm sorry I didn't realize it was going forward -- I never saw the draft agenda, so I didn't realize it was still on there. That was the intent of having it on here was to have a conversation prior to the contract. So -- so certainly if the staff are prepared or have new information, that would be great. Otherwise, I think we've had an opportunity to review some of it at our last

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council session. >> Garza: Nothing new? Okay. >> Kitchen: I have a few questions. I want to make sure that I understand the timeline. I think what we approved at the council meeting was I think to negotiate and execute. Can you just give me an idea of the timeline for -- for when the new contract goes into place and when some of these changes are expected to be made? >> Most essential. Good afternoon, Adrienne [indiscernible], Austin public health. So we are on track to execute the contract to begin April 1st. >> Kitchen: Okay. >> And we realize that the implications of the redesign will have some effects that we're still trying to plan and mitigate. So it will be a phased approach. Initially, we will have -- we will have the national consultant come in and do the Ta for the new model, the training for the staff and to help with the hiring of the staff and the implementation of the new job descriptions. And as we get the new infrastructure in place, and figure out what we will do with the overflow, if they intend to reduce the capacity back to the original design to figure out what the plan will be for interim shelter services. So we will mitigate the displacement. >> Kitchen: Okay. So there's -- there's sort of a phase-in period, but you probably don't have the specifics of the timeline for that or -- >> Not -- >> Kitchen: Training, hiring, that sort of a thing. >> Right. That would be the first phase. Hopefully by September, we will begin to see some of the changes in the service delivery. But it really will be predicated on the completion of the training, the hiring of the new staff and then again finding what the alternative solutions will be so that the arch can have

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that reduced capacity without displacing folks from services. We don't want folks like Mr. Harrell to feel like as of April 1 they will be without, so we are trying to take that into consideration with our planning process. >> Kitchen: Okay. >> Any other questions? Go ahead, councilmember tovo. >> Just a comment, really. I know this is a part of the conversations that have taken place at the arch itself, but the area underneath where the parking lot is, I know it's not called out here for under the design considerations. I still think there are really strong opportunities to create capacity for locker use. There are quite a few

lockers there. In light of our speaker's concerns that he raised, I would like to see that area receive some attention. I think the council several years ago allocated money to do just that and then -- then I have forgotten now what happened. Maybe the redesign specific cases came back at a higher amount so we haven't spent that money down there. But again I think there's a lot of opportunity to use that space that allows people to get off of the street and out of the heat in an area that's more attractive. >> Kitchen: I missed what you said, which area? >> Tovo: The garage, courtyard area, lockers. I think that area -- >> We have looked at that with front steps and the city staff and other departments to see if we could do just that, add additional locker space or add spaces for cooling or water in the inclement weather. So that is part of our planning process. >> Tovo: That's great. I hope it takes into account some of the previous planning processes. I think there were some outside architects as I recall who offered input into that process. Since it is a capital expenditure we have funds that might not be have a I believe for services that might be brought to bear on

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this one. I hope when the redesign moves forward I know it might not be the highest priority, I hope it will receive attention. Thank you for all of your work on this. >> Thank you. >> Garza: Thank you. We will move on to item 6. Which is the update on status on budget funding for the cleanup of end comments for the homeless population. >> Thank you. We are here to give you that briefing on the initial steps we have taken in regards to campment cleanups in our creek areas, culverts, under bridges and whatnot. First of all, issues of concern are health and public safety. As you can see from the pictures there, this is the level of debris that are inside these culverts where the homeless reside. That can increasingly in a flash flood become a risk to pedestrians and the homeless themselves. We try to communicate that to them when they are in an unsafe condition as well. Environmental impacts are given, lack of sanitary services in these culverts and -- and it is a huge impact to not only watershed's resources but city wide an impact to resources. The dumpsters at the bottom there are a major cleanup in happened in south Austin, upwards of 50, \$60,000 just for that one cleanup alone. Then there's a cost to our employees as well. As you can see here, they are entering with safety wear equipment. Confined spaces, they have to be engaged and plan out logistics of entering such a cleanup area. Morale itself, constantly to be coming back to these sites over and over again,

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bus the homeless return within months. Our response was to budget \$250,000 per year for four years. We wanted to increase that capacity of those cleanups to assist our workers, such of those that you just saw before. And we are intending right now to pilot nine hot spots that we go to over and over again. And we have looked at best management practices throughout the country and we want to model those and see how they work here in Austin. But the main thing is we want to take a service-oriented approach. Services first approach. We want to hook up the -- the -- the individuals that we find in these encampments with services and we are working real closely with those professionals that deal with the

homeless on a daily basis. Nowhere is this evidenced more in our operations than in the waller creek district. Our waller creek tunnel facility maintenance crews encounter just about any maintenance activity they do, they encounter the homeless almost every time. So I want to introduce [indiscernible] The managing engineer of that facility who has taken a lead of our internal interdepartmental team. We gathered a bunch of technical professionals to tackle this homeless issue and he's going to go over the specifics of how we are using our funding in this pilot program and then beyond. Ramesh? >> Thank you, good afternoon, my name is Ramesh [indiscernible]. We have created a cross functional team within the watershed, but also an interdepartmental team, working with pard, A.P.D., Austin resource recovery, [indiscernible], ems, we have been working on this for the past six months. We have worked with the provider, which is basically world quest, previously called Texas institute of the blind and handicapped. It's a contract similar to what txdot has been doing for their underbridge cleanup. What we have done is we're going to start and do a

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pilot for like nine spots to make sure that we understand how much it's costing us before we come back and increase the budget to a much larger contract. We have worked actively with integral care. Every time we go to a campsite, we will do an assessment and make sure that we provide the services and kind of try to -- to analyze the site before we make any kind of corrective action. So just kind of -- I'm sure people are already aware of this and just these are some real-life experiences from people experiencing homelessness and just to give you an idea of why people live in encampments. A lot of these are actual statements from people who have been interviewed and a lot of them are -- some of their comments about arch are kind of -- it's full of drug addicts, it's dangerous and that sort of a thing. This is just to get a perspective on why people choose to live in encampments and not go to a shelter. I don't want to spend too much time on this, but that's how we started kind of doing a complete deep dive looking at why this is happening. What we did was we -- when we started working on this, we created a team. We kind of reached out to all of the people who were actually working on it within the city. Pard is a critical part of this program because a lot of our properties are closely adjoining to watershed properties, so whatever we do impacts them and vice versa. We are working quite a bit with A.P.D. And downtown community court. The innovation team has -- innovation team has done quite a bit of work from the Bloomberg grant. We have taken the lessons learned from that. One of the things that came out of it, we are trying to meet people where they are. When we go and do outreach or integral care goes and talks to them, we are trying to discern their needs instead of trying to remove them from where they are. So what we came up with is -- as sort of a system that we feel for at least the time being, the pilot

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approach, we came up with like three different categories of encampments. There are ones that are requiring immediate cleanup. The one on the left most, which is immediate, that's a picture of an

encampment that was formed on the 8th street facility that is literally on top of the waller creek tunnel. That's a path that we will be using heavy equipment to go on and an immediate risk to both the individual there and to our staff because -- because we can't [indiscernible] The asset. That's something that we would act on right away. Many sites, such as the one on Riverside, the picture, the first slide, similar examples. So we plan to give them 72 hour notice and be able to work with the law department to see exactly what needs to be in that notice before we actually do the work. In this particular case, we engaged the host team and we were able to -- to really self resolve the issue and the person vacated the camp and we didn't have to bring in any kind of A.P.D. Or corrective measures, but that's the kind of stuff that we are trying to do. The second one is just a little bit south on 8th street under the bridge, that's an encampment that's been there for quite some time. It does pose some risks to our watered mission areas. There are a lot of -- there's a lot of stuff there, like couches and furniture and everything else is right next to the creek, the creek is being used as a bathroom, there's a lot of water quality issues. But that's an example of something that we don't have to act on right away. That's the one we are going to go with the 30 day notice and we are going to start the outreach right from that day fully knowing that at the end of 30 days we will be cleaning up that site. Then finally, there's -- there are sites that are what we feel don't pose an immediate threat to the mission areas, those are the sites that we feel are something we can work with the people there. Do like a sort of like a baseline cleanup and then we start doing some leave no trace type of piloting to educate the people there. I'm going to get into it a

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little bit. But that's sort of the criteria that we are going forward with on each of the camp sites. >> Leaving a trace, I think you've heard of it. It's what we use in scouting, leave nothing but your footprints. A lot of the principles used in leave no trace are quite applicable for the people on encamp.s. Once they figure out it's a did he prioritized site and we don't need to decamp them, we try to do engagement. The pard department has certified L and D people who can actually do education and outreach so we teach them things like how to dispose of waste properly, how to start and manage a campfire and how to be respectful of wildlife, for example, don't feed the wildlife. That's going to attract more attention from animals that you don't need, that kind of thing. So this is the last step that we are trying to pilot. And it's basically they are missionaries to protect our environment, but allows them to stay where they are while we work on providing them with services. Sort of mitigate the risk. So this is the criteria that we have and pard has created a system and they're a critical partner in this. You can see there are like different categories. And I would say that the categories that are number 5 are also aligned with the categories for watershed mission areas. So if we have stuff that's immediately flood risk or they're right in the middle of a creek or an outfall of a dam structure on are things like that, that's things we would be acting on right away. It's a sliding scale. It goes up and down. Our sweet the two spot is number two. If we can get to number two we can start working with them and try to do outreach while we work on permanent solutions. This thing goes up and down depending on who shows up at the camp site. So we are going to continue working with them. So here are action items. We had our main item was to place a contract which we do with now. We're going to start working on it in the next week or

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two. We work quite a bit with APD and law department to come up with the protocol for notification. One of the things that we are doing is we have learned lessons from txdot. They give out these bags. I'm sure most of you are familiar with these. These are the be seen, be safe bags. This was really created for them because there are a lot of people who cross I-35 and they get hit they give the bags to make sure they're safe. It gives them a safe harbor for them to store their possessions. So we in part of the notification, we are going to let them know what that are stays in these bags will be saved. So if we go to a camp site and start cleaning up, whatever is in the bag will stay. The other part is integral care through St. David's they provide the mental health first aid training which has found to be very, very useful. And we plan on providing this training to all the staff that encounter persons experiencing homelessness and even the contractor who was going to do the work and we'll follow more of the leave no trace principles to see how it's working out. We have one site that we are piloting right now. It's a remote site in east Austin and this is an example of why people go there. It was a remote site, out of site. This individual did not want to deal with anybody. Her support structure is the dog and her boyfriend. And we started working with her and we gave her the tools to clean up the site. You can see some of the bags that we gave and the dumpster bag are all work done by the individual at the camp site. Part of what we're going to do is provide these sort of supplies and we'll provide trash pickup services so that the camp site is kept in sort of a baseline clean condition. And then we provide the services. Since we start started working with them, they have a case manager, there's been a coordinated assessment that's been done. We brought health care to her. And of course the trash has been removed.

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And so obviously a lot of this saves money and effort, but the more important thing is that she's kind of - they're working with her to get her into the system. Going forward we're going to continue validating this program. Once we figure out how much these cleanups actually cost. Part of the issue is watershed cleanups are much more expensive or much more involved than cleaning up under an underpass. There are access issues, there are creek type environments that is harder to get to. So we're going to continue monitoring it and hopefully within the next six months we will be increasing the capacity of this pilot, the contract. And once we do that we're going to also study the -- sort of the 30-day notice thing. The 30-day number came from a San Francisco model, and it's been proven to be very successful so we want to try to see how that's playing out. And once we learn more about it and hopefully the end of it we would have less sites to clean up and we would have enough capacity to do the cleanup also. That's all we've got. I'm open to questions. >> Garza: Councilmember kitchen? >> Kitchen: I have a bunch of questions and I know others will to too so I'll just start and hand it off to others. Let me ask first, if I'm understanding correctly, there were the -- the sites were analyzed according to the criteria that immediate prioritize and deprioritize and then there were nine pilot sites that were chosen after that, is that right? >> Yes. >> Kitchen: Can you tell me if you -- which sites did you analyze to apply these

priorities to? >> So the nine sites we picked were -- >> Kitchen: No, no, that's not my question. My question is -- or maybe I didn't understand. So I was wondering if you

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looked at all the sites in the city or just nine of them? >> We didn't look at all of the sites. These nine sites are immediately -- it's pretty clear that they do need to be cleaned up. And -- >> Kitchen: So here's my question. That answers my question. So how did you -- what was the criteria for these particular nine sites as opposed to -- we have a lot of places in the city so I assume if I'm understanding correctly that there had to be some watershed intersection, is that right? >> These are watershed properties. >> Kitchen: Are these watershed properties or properties that impact runoff into creeks or the aquifer. >> All of the above. The one at 23 right on east Riverside is in the culvert and it will convey.com water when it drains. So every one of those sites are either in an infrastructure or closely adjoining to it. >> Kitchen: Then my question really is I had all the sites that had an impact on the watershed. >> If I'm understanding right we look at all the camp sites across the city on every watershed property. >> Kitchen: No, I'm sorry, I'm not being very clear. So there are some encampments on actual watershed property. There are every camp thes on property that there might be runoff issue related to the weeks or the aquifer. And then there are some encampments that are perhaps under overpasses that are not as directly -- although some of the overpasses have runoff issues. But there are some that may not be directly related. I'm just trying to understand the scope of the-- I'm not saying it should be done one way or the other, I'm trying to understand the scope of the analysis that led to you picking the nine.

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>> We definitely didn't look at every site and I'm sure there are many, many sites of what you described. The reason we picked these nine sites were because they were pretty clear that these were sites that would tell us how this contract is going to play out, how much it's going to cost, the lessons we wish to learn. These sites are going to give us those data. There are plenty of sites that are out there which I'm sure like you described there are many, many sites, but we didn't go to look at every sites in the city. >> Kitchen: So there isn't a set of sites that you looked at that are outside of this nine. In other words -- >> There are multiple sites that are out there and -- which some of them are slightly -- like, for example, the site that is described on eighth street under the bridge is an example of a site that's not on our -- that's on the prioritized sort of 30-day kind of thing. And then another site right on the screening structure for eighth street, that's not part of the cleanup, but we just resolved it. So there are sites like that that come and go, but these nine sites have been recur, they've been chronic and we do need to clean up. And the process was for us to do the cleanup and see how much effort it is and that kind of thing. >> Kitchen: I would like to ask for a list of all the sites that you did some analysis of because that will just help me understand. >> Okay. >> Kitchen: I have other questions. Do y'all want to -- >> I have one more comment. Of the nine sites, that's for the pilot, but it's not to say that we're not looking at -- >> Kitchen: Sure, I understand that. >> The sites with our existing resources. That was to enhance our existing

resources, but we're not stopping that work there at those locations. >> Kitchen: I'm just trying to understand what you've learned so far about the particular sites that you've looked at. That's all I'm trying to do. >> Can I ask a quick follow-up? So the 250 was in addition to what -- the current resources used for encampments, is that right? >> So right now we do to infrastructure and do our maintenance and if there is a camp site or something that is related to homelessness we have to do

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the cleanup. Sometimes the work is done by our in-house staff and sometimes we may engage staff like people like easter seals or sometimes we have crews from downtown community. So we do have those kinds of resources, but we never had like a dedicated like homelessness encampment. >> Garza: So this is just focusing on the additional -- >> Right. >> Garza: We have ongoing funding that supports these efforts. >> Right. Well, we have money and operations budget to do the infrastructure maintenance and a lot of that comes out of that already. But that is just part of of what we do day-to-day. >> Garza: Okay. Councilmember tovo, did you have -- >> Tovo: I do. So as we see camp site or here of camp sites that might be eligible for this type of cleanup, I assume that we could just forward them on to someone on your staff for consideration? >> We will do an assessment and if it qualifies for a cleanup we will go in there and bring the considerate to start -- contractor to start cleaning up. Once the pilot is completed we'll have an expanded contract and have the capacity to do these cleanups. >> That would have to be done with existing resources outside the pilot funding. >> Yes. >> Tovo: And we made a budget rider or additional direction with this contract to make sure it was teaming up with social services and it seems like that's happening consistently as you go out to the site. The contractors are not going out to the site without other personnel there who can provide some level of social service. >> Absolutely. >> Tovo: Great. I think I had a couple more questions. The response -- go ahead. You offered us the example of the one area which was in

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that third category of deprioritized for removal, but providing the residents of that camp site with the tools that they need to clean up the area. Do you have other examples? Has the response been generally pretty positive with that kind of interaction or is it still very early to tell? >> It is early to tel we wanted to do it. We thought about it and decided just on one site just to see how this thing is going to play out because before we go too far into doing the deeper dive, let them stay there and try to bring them services, we wanted to see how it worked out. A big part of it is also to have a willing partner, willing stakeholder at the camp site. So we just found one site where there's an individual who is fairly intelligent and willing to work with us and it was just a perfect alignment and we figured that would be a good place for us to start the work. There have been other people who have joined the camp and there's been positive things that are happening where people are trying to keep the place clean and things like that, which is kind of what we would like to see. But we haven't gone past that one camp. >> Tovo: Thank you. I have a couple more, but if you have some. >> Kitchen: So let's talk for a minute about

the -- I guess it's the immediate priorities, which I assume some these are culverts, is that correct? Or these are the storm -- the large storm drains, some of them are? >> Right. >> Kitchen: Okay. So my question relates to -- I guess my question really relates to I think you have it on your last slide about the infrastructure changes to culverts where we can daylight. It seems to me that that might be really what's called for or what's necessary in areas that are really dangerous because I'm concerned that a monthly

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cleanup is not going to be something that is either sustainable or -- what's the right word? Either sustainable or a solution. Because folks should not have to live in a culvert. It's terribly dangerous for them. And it's a public safety and a public health issue. So is the -- so I'm not quite sure if -- are we talking about a -- first off, which of these are culverts? Of the nine. >> So the east Riverside, the first one is a culvert. The second one at Wickersham is on the creek itself. It's a little bit further up on Riverside. There's a whole cluster of them on Riverside. I believe the -- >> So the Riverside ones? And that's like this picture down here. >> Right. That's the one that's 2301 east Riverside. That's the one that caught on fire. But there are other ones that are not exactly in the culvert. The one on eighth street is right on the the creek under the bridge, but it's not a culvert. But like they could be asleep and the water could rise in the creek. >> Kitchen: So have you considered at least in one of these areas, I would think, that we should start immediately with structural changes, combined with social services, so people cannot be staying there? Because it is dangerous. >> Right. >> Kitchen: So my question is whether that is part of this program and whether you could then go in with social services and help the folks who are living there into more immediate housing or temporary shelter and then make it a place where you can't put up a camp? Have you considered that approach? >> Right. So just to give you an idea, the 2301 east Riverside is one place we went to see if we could do any infrastructure changes. And part of the issue with that culvert, it is pretty far down, it is pretty deep.

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And a long stretch of it is actually along Riverside. So from a design point it's kind of hard to do that. And then there are some things we can do such as putting bar screen at the entrance of the culvert, that will require drain analysis that there is no upstream flooding caused because of that. So we're going to do some analysis like that over every one of them. So in terms of providing immediate housing and shelter, what we do is we bring in integral care and all these social services, but that's sort of the place where the watershed mission area gets passed and we get into the services being provided by other departments since we've worked with them and whether we can arrange for immediate housing, we have to work with other agencies to make that happen. >> Kitchen: We have examples around other parts of the city where we've been cleaning up, txdot has been cleaning up, and so have our municipal court. And the problem with the cleanups is that people don't have a place to go. So the cleanups are episodic and I would say that monthly and quarterly is not very often. They're episodic and they're not an ultimate solution for folks. So I know that you -- that this program cannot solve all those problems.

I'm not suggesting that. I'm just thinking that -- I am concerned that this program is not going far enough, particularly with regard to the places that are most dangerous for people. And simply cleaning up a culvert and not taking the action that's necessary so that people are -- are gotten out of harm's way I think is not going to work. And so you mentioned that there was a need for some structural analysis. Is that going to be started for these few places? >> That one particular site we are looking at -- we have engaged engineers from watershed protection to take a look at that and see what the feasibility of that particular location is.

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>> Kitchen: Okay. Is that kind of analysis actively being started or is it going to be started in the future?
>> Hello, councilmembers, my name is John beachy, a project manager with the watershed department. I want you to know on that particular culvert since there's so much activity on there, we're working concurrently both on doing cleanups for that as well as projected structural changes. We're looking at the feasibility of what those type of structural changes could like like. There's a few components we have to look at in regards to does the structure impact the conveyance of water through there, does it provide maintenance access? And those are things that are actually ongoing. So while we realize that maybe the cleanup isn't the appropriate end approach for this thing, it will have to be cleaned out in the event of whether we put structural changes there. So it's a concurrent approach is what we're looking to take. >> Kitchen: That's fine, I didn't mean instead. I understand that the cleanups in the social services, which I'm glad to see that you've married those two because that's absolutely necessary and important for the folks that are living there. I'm just expressing my concern that we really need to have a solution in sight for folks. So I would really just want to understand and you don't have to tell me right now, but I want to understand what the timeline is for the analysis of these structural changes. So that we can understand that. And then I'd like to have some further understanding of the services that will be provided in these areas because what's happening now with cleanups in the social services that we are providing, it's not -- it's not connecting people to shelter. And of course a lot of that is because we don't have the shelters. So I understand that. In any case, my second request then is if you could

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provide me with a timeline for the analysis and for which of these locations. And again, it's the culverts that appear to me to be the most dangerous for people. So I would like to understand the timeline for considering structural changes there. >> The one actively having considerations for structural changes is the 2301 east Riverside site. I do have a tentative schedule without speaking further with our engineering department to confirm T I'm hesitant to give it at this time. >> Kitchen: You can give it to me later. >> We can get back to you. >> Kitchen: Sure. >> I think my last question for the moment is I'm not sure I understood what it meant, infrastructure changes to culverts, which we've just discussed, where we can daylight. The where we can daylight wasn't clear to me. I think we were missing a word or if it was daylighting -- >> Let me attempt to answer that. The culvert in question at the Riverside, not only

crosses the roadway, but then extends a total of 900 feet or beyond. So it is a very long culvert. We are working with our development services department to not get into those situations again. In fact, this area is redeveloping and if this site does redevelop at a more vertical mixed use fashion, we're looking to detail them or establish a natural creek there to get rid of that long stretch of culverts. That's what is meant by daylighting. Remove the culvert, but maybe put a natural creek back in, the vegetation. The commercial properties tend to keep that looking nice with their landscaping plans and what >> Tovo: Well, thank you very much. I know there were some questions about how this would work and how -- whether it would be people going in and cleaning up and removing people's documents and personal belongings and I appreciate the care in which you've approached this

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and the sense of respect for the individuals you're working with as well as for their belongings. So I think we all would agree that this is not -- this is just one piece of a much more comprehensive program that we need to undertake as the city moves forward. >> Thank you forward for your leadership and the other services, the housing bond, all that plays into this for getting housing for the folks. Thank you. >> Kitchen: One another thing. I just want to make it clear for folks, maybe more for the public than for anyone else, because I think we all understand that this is not the only -- I mean, this is a very important program and it gives us the opportunity to try some things, but it's not the only cleanups that are occurring around the city. Txdot has been and I understand that that is ending, has been performing cleanups, but also there are other aspects of the city or other departments of the city that are engaged in cleanups and those are going to continue. So I just want people to understand that because there's been cleanups done on an ongoing basis of another -- a number of areas. And I'm sure you guys have been in touch with them, but -- and I would suggest that you do if you haven't. I think it's municipal court that's been involved in those cleanups. I see you -- you have been involved in that. And that's where my comment comes from when I talk about monthly and quarterly. So I assume when you go and cleanup an area you will -- you're also talking about as part of the cleanups providing resources for the people in terms of trash bags and maybe trash receptacles and those kinds of things for every location? Is that what you're talking about? >> On the [indiscernible] We would give them trash bags. We're not looking at receptacles because that particular -- providing cans, we do not think of

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providing cans, we think of providing supplies and those kinds of things. >> Kitchen: Okay. What about for the immediate and prioritized areas? >> The immediate sites, except for the ones that are stored in the bag, everything gets removed. >> Kitchen: That's right. And it will be right back there with people -- because they don't have resources or other options, within the week they will be right back and they won't have the option to clean up because they won't have the resources themselves with trash bags or receptacles. So I would suggest that you think in terms of whether there's some -- some of the things that you are going to do for the deprioritized areas, if some of them might be appropriate for immediate

and prioritized areas too. Because one of the problems is that people don't have trash bags or trash receptacles makes it very difficult for them to keep their area clean. >> We can definitely look at that. We've done some benchmarking with other places in terms of trash receptacles, especially right next to the creek they tend to get blown away. And there are other things that happen as a result of that, that's some other reasons why we don't want to provide trash cans or those cans right next door. One thing we've been thinking is providing them bags and maybe providing some trash pickup, like regular trash pickup nearby. And especially for the ones that are deprioritized, like the one on eighth street, we could consider something like that in the interim, if they tried to get shelter or places to go. But the ones that are immediate, they're immediate because of the [indiscernible] And the folks. That's the place that you don't want to encourage people to stay. >> Kitchen: And I appreciate that. I just am -- just pointing to the fact that immediate and prioritized cleanup without other alternatives is not going to last.

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>> Sure. >> Kitchen: That's all I'm pointing out. >> Yeah. >> Kitchen: Okay. >> Garza: I was a little confused from the presentation about the leave no trace. I guess how does -- why is that tied in to this? >> So once we get to a camp site that we feel does not pose a real immediate threat to safety of conveyance or there's no like crime or anything of those things, then if they're going to be staying in that camp site for an extended period of time, we teach them such as how to start a campfire, how to manage a campfire. For example, a lot of times people start a campfire within a tent and that's not safe for them to do that. So we give them trash bags so that they can store the trash in a safe place and that can be removed. So we essentially teach, educate them on how to keep a clean camp site. And that's where the leave no trace principal pills come in. That's what you teach the kids when they go camping, how to start a safe fire, how to use a durable surface, things like that. >> Garza: I see where a connection can be made, but to councilmember kitchen's points, this is a really different scenario. It's not just people camping for the weekend. These are their homes. So I'm just a little concerned about I know you guys are working hard and this is an extremely difficult -- probably one of the most difficult issues we're dealing with at the city level, but I wonder if there's a different way we can talk about those principles and how we're helping them. >> Well, going back to councilmember kitchen's point about providing some kind of receptacle or some kind of services at the camp site, these are some things we can provide while they're waiting for services because like she said, they don't have a place to go and we're kind of letting them stay there. And while they're there they

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don't create any more degradation is the point. That's why we're teaching them how to -- like how to use the bathroom, for example. >> Okay. >> Things like that. >> Garza: I'm just curious, when you guys show up to-- when your staff shows up to these encampments, if there's people there and like the picture with like the couch, I'm just curious what the interaction is. Do you -- I don't know how to say this. We're going to take your couch? I don't know how this all works. >> We have come up with APD for

a notification protocol, especially for the ones that are immediate. And we inform them that a cleanup is coming and a lot of this personal property will be removed, except for things that we encourage them to stay in the bags, such as medical or birth certificates, whatever. And the rest will be removed. And it's done by people who do this all the time with integral care, inform them that this is an opportunity for us to get you some help. Are you part of an assessment. We go through that whole assessment and they're also aware by that time, 72 hours, there will be a cleanup coming so it's not like we just show up and take their stuff right away. That's how that plays out. >> Garza: Okay. And just lastly I'll say that I think it would be if to have some -- it would be good to have some type of presentation before we talk about budget to understand what additional resources are needed and the information that you were able to find out through this pilot and how we can -- and whether that's in your wheelhouse or in public health's, what we can do to better address this issue. Councilmember kitchen? >> Kitchen: And as part of that, I think we need to have a conversation as a city about how we can best use our resources for longer term results because 250,000

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250,000, it's not enough to get a place for everyone, but 250,000 could be used on temporary shelters, for example. And not instead of it. I just want us to understand what all resources we're spending as a city on things that are not going to be -- that are not -- that are not longer term solutions. So anyway, that's just for us, not for you guys. >> Tovo: What I recall from our budget discussion this summer is this is not money that can be used outside of the watershed department. It's money that needs to go toward improving water quality and storm water issues. And so it's a creative -- really a creative program that's allowing us to address our water quality issues while also helping in a different -- from a different angle helping our issues, helping our effort to end homelessness. And so I would -- I also wanted to just point out that the budget rider that I had brought forward also requested that we get regular memos on this work to the health and human services committee and so that was part of my request to have it on today is that I hope we can do that in the time between -- between, between now and our budget coming forward in the spring. >> And I think the request for -- the contract when they do cleanup to provide a regular update on that, we definitely plan on doing that. >> Kitchen: Last question then. On the campfires, I'm certain y'all are doing this, but I'm sure that you're assessing the -- you know, where we're talking about campfires in terms of the risk of fire, wildfire? >> I'm sorry, what was your question? >> Kitchen: Well, my question really is when I hear "Allowing campfires," then I know that at least the folks -- my constituents and others in community might want to ask, well, how

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is it that you can allow campfires? Aren't you allowing for greater risk of wildfire? So I just -- I'm certain y'all have thought about that. I just want to know how you address that question. >> And that's definitely part of it. Just to go back to why the leave no trace principle is important is we try to teach them how to safely start and manage a camp after fire done. And mostly they do it because it's cold

outside and they want to stay warm or maybe do some cooking. And we are looking at some potential, say maybe -- just like -- this is a txdot bag that we're using while we're still doing the work. We are planning to create a watershed specific kind of bag that would provide potentially like -- they have these devices that are safe to start a fire and once they're done they can be crushed and it's easy to dispose, as opposed to just like a cylinder or some kind of things that they just find to start on fire on. So that's the kind of stuff that we are going to be starting to pilot with. And that's the approach we're taking and like I said, it's a pilot and we'll learn more about it. That would be my answer to somebody who asks. Is I will experiment with it, find out how it works and if it doesn't, it's not safe and that I they will not allow it, but hopefully that's the approach that will work out for us. >> Garza: Any other questions? No? Okay, thank you for that presentation. Again, I know this is a difficult issue and I appreciate your presentation. I'm not showing on mine and I just refreshed any speakers signed up for any other items. Is that right? They're not here anymore? Okay. So the only item that we have is item 4, and that will be taken up in

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executive session. I want to make sure that's right with our liaison. And so let me find the executive session script. The committee will go into closed session to take up one item pursuant to section Boston .074 of the government code the city will discuss personnel matters related to item 7, discuss the appointment of members to the social health board of managers. Is there any objection to going into an executive session on the announced item? Hearing none, the committee will go into executive session.

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[Executive session].

[3:30:38 PM]

>> We are out of closed session. In closed session we took up and discussed personal matters related to item 7. And so as related to that, the health and human services committee will interview the following five applicants: Eliza may, Jonathan wise nbahm, Jesus Garza,. And I believe the clerk's office will work on reaching out to those applicants and scheduling those interviews. Likely at our April meeting, but possibly a special called if the current person sitting there is not able to hold over until April. And then the only other item we have is the last item, which is future agenda items. So councilmember kitchen, did you have one? >> Yes. I just wanted to add to an item that councilmember tovo mentioned earlier, and that was regular updates on the initiatives that the city is pursuing with regard to homeless issues. And so just to be specific because I think it might be more helpful if we're specific. One of them is the watershed initiative as councilmember tovo mentioned. Another one is the jobs program. I think regular updates on that. We have the immediate shelter program, so regular updates on that. And I realize that

it may not -- actually, regular updates on that would be helpful. And those three at least. I don't know if regular updates on the arch.

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>> Garza: Councilmember tovo. >> Tovo: Yes, I would say if by April there's no new information, maybe the following meeting. But as that redesign gets going, as there's information to share, this would be a great agenda item to use to share that information. >> Kitchen: There may be other initiatives that I'm not thinking of off the top of my head, but I guess the point being that there's a whole range of activities that are under development or occurring. And so regular updates on those would be helpful as opposed to just across the board updates. We're wanting to drill down on the specific activities that are taking and understanding the status and what we're learning from them. >> Garza: The only other one I would suggest we add is an update on the bonds we just passed, any related to public health, obviously specifically one that is important to me as the health center in dove springs. So just T understand the prioritization and how we can get those much-needed facilities built as quickly as possible. Anybody else? A timeline would be great too. If there's no objection, we are adjourned at 3:33. Thank you.