



Zero Waste Advisory Commission

Meeting Minutes

January 13th, 2021

The Monthly Meeting of the Zero Waste Advisory Commission convened through Video Conference on Wednesday, January 13th, 2021, due to COVID-19 Disaster Declaration for all Texas Counties. The following are the meeting highlights. For detailed information please visit: <https://austintx.new.swagit.com/videos/111571>

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Acuna called the Commission Meeting to order at 6:09 pm

Board Members in Attendance: Gerry Acuna, Lisa Barden, Cathy Gattuso, Amanda Masino, Melissa Rothrock, Ian Steyaert, Jonathan Barona, and Kaiba White

Board Members not in Attendance: Janis Bookout (Membership pending)

Staff in attendance via WebEx: Ken Snipes, Tammie Williamson, Richard McHale, Gena McKinley, Andy Dawson, Marcus Gonzalez, Amy Slagle, Raymond Benavidez, Jaime Germany Terry, Dwight Scales, Memi Cardenas, Natalie Betts, Jason McCombs, Brent Paige, Young Park, Blanche Quartermann, and Lori Scott.

Chair Acuna opened with comments,

1. APPROVAL of the December 17th Special Called Meeting Minutes

Chair Acuna entertained a motion to approve the December 17th, 2020 Meeting minutes. Commissioner Ian Stewart made the first motion for approval of the minutes. A second motion was provided by Commissioner Lisa Barden

Item passed Unanimously

2. OLD BUSINESS

2a Discussion and Action – Truck Rental Ratification

Ron Romero Division Manager of Collections provided information seeking a favorable recommendation to approve a ratification cooperative contract with Big truck rentals to provide, collection truck rentals for 560,880.00 dollars. Ron provided additional content on this particular item. Ron explained in May of 2020 the City of Austin entered into a rental agreement for (4) four collection vehicles for up to and not to exceed (6) six months to give the manufacturer time to fix some of the truck's deficiencies. Austin Resource Recovery's fleet department found some additional flaws in the braking system of both our 2019 and newly delivered trucks. We are seeking approval of an additional (4) four trucks to insure the Garbage, Recycling, and Organics collections are not interrupted. Commissioner Kaiba White asked the question, What type of vehicles are being rented? If there are opportunities to select more options? Any information on additional collection criteria as it relates to sustainability? Ron Romero replied: There were a lot of manufactures that shut down production due to COVID-19. We did some inquiries to other vendors to see what was available. Time became sensitive to us because of the fact we were short on resources meaning equipment. We went ahead and went with this company. It was recommended due to the fact we already had a contract in place with this company. Commissioner Kaiba White asked the question, these are heavy trash trucks correct? Ron Romero replied: We had (2) two automated collection vehicles and (2) two rear loaders. Commissioner Jonathan Borona raised the question about what the plan is with ARR to make sure that we're not in the same situation six months down the line? What are the proactive steps that ARR is doing to prevent this in the future? Ron Romero replied: One of the things we're doing to prevent this in the future is we've been working very closely with our Fleet Department. Our Fleet Department was unfortunately hit very hard by COVID-19. Our manpower was down but we have various contracts with vendors in the area, that can work on our vehicles when needed. We are hoping we don't get into this situation again.

Chair Acuna entertained a motion to approve the Truck Rental Ratification RCA. Commissioner Jonathan Borona made the first motion for approval of the RCA. A second motion was provided by Commissioner Cathy Guttuso.

Item passed Unanimously

2b. Discussion and Action—Non-Curbside Recycling Contract

Andy Dawson Diversion Facilities Assistant Division Manager on behalf of ARR is requesting a recommendation for the approval of the Recycling and processing for the Non-Curbside Collection Contract. This contract will combine the in-house like services contracts with the single-stream recycling services contract at the Recycling use drop-off center and its contractors for up to five years and not to exceed 530,000 dollars. Andy Dawson provided context via FY19. The best we can draw from is in FY19 we recycled about 688 tons of single-stream materials at the RRDOC. Chair Gerard Acuna asked not curbside collection correct? Dawson replied: That's correct it would be for our in-house facilities and the Drop-off center. Commissioner Amanda Masino asked the question what is the difference in the price between the two extensions? Andy Dawson replied: Looking at the bottom of the RCA after the initial term of three years, That was to try and account for increases in volumes that we're taking in. Possibly a downmarket of the spending authority wants to budget next year. Commissioner Amanda Masino asked the question, this will start next year and potentially go until 2026? Andy Dawson confirmed.

Chair Acuna entertained a motion to approve the Non-Curbside Recycling Contract RCA. Commissioner Cathy Guttuso made the first motion for approval of the RCA. A second motion was provided by Commissioner Jonathan Borona.

Item passed Unanimously

3. NEW BUSINESS

3a. Discussion and Action – ARR Pandemic Response- Richard McHale and Meme Cardenas

Meme Cardenas, ARR Marketing, and Public Information Program Manager. provided an update on the ARR Pandemic Response. On March 13th, 2020 all non-essential City of Austin staff were instructed to telework indefinitely as the first cases of COVID-19 weaved into the Austin area. As communication staff, we were instructed to cease all department-specific communication and suddenly serve as an echo and applicant amplification of all emergency response communication through the Emergency Operations Center which included Homeland Security, Emergency Management, and Austin Public Health. All shortly after that, we were allowed to start our own messaging but, it all had to go through those proper channels to make sure that the information was fed in accordance with the messaging we wanted to get out to our citizens. It was mostly just concerning safety, like the safety of Austin, and then how to navigate during the pandemic. Moving forward in the summer of 2020, we were allowed to resume some of our communications, our regularly scheduled programming but, always being mindful that the pandemic was still around and that it was still an issue that was facing our community. Looking back, we did take inventory of our existing content that was already out there. We made sure that we put notes on things that maybe didn't show proper social distancing to date that it was pre-pandemic. We did make sure that our messaging took a less playful tone for a while and making sure that we were still kind of that authority figure as well as making sure that people knew that we were still the city and working for them to keep them safe. We increased messaging significantly with regards to a sanitation worker and, to our operator's safety as well as keeping everybody safe during the pandemic. Induration at the beginning of the onset of the pandemic, we decided with approval to waive extra trash fees. In-depth, I mean, temporarily waive those extra trash fees with the onset of the stay home-work, safe orders, the extra trash fees were reinstated on September 7th, 2020. The customers were notified via press release that we coordinated with the EOC through social media and our electronic newsletters.

Along with that messaging, we also disseminated information about making sure that, all of the garbage bags were tied, to make sure that our operators were safe. ARR didn't want trash getting out of the bags and littering the streets and then exposing possibly our operators to that. We made sure that there was consistent messaging to make sure to take care of your operators and make sure that they were painted in the same light as other essential workers are. Our staff is out there keeping us safe, making sure that we can stay home and work safely. This was a large part of our messaging for that messaging. In which staff provided a very quick response that we had to turn around. We obviously disseminated through a press release that included numerous notifications from the city, city officials, and, the EOC. Staff reached out to local area influencers and ask them "Hey, can you help us keep our operators safe? In which it was very well received. Staff sent out press releases and the ARR Director Mr. Snipes provided an interview and a lifestyle segment that we were then able to share again on our social media and, also had to communicate several services, suspensions, and assumptions as they've come and gone. The RDOC drop-off center temporarily closed as the stages changed and there were different levels of service. Currently, we are only doing in-home collection of household hazardous waste. Every time there's a change in services, there has to be a change in communication. ARR would ask other city departments to help us amplify it. There was also the temporary suspension of brush and bulk and street sweeping. Staff received a lot of calls and questions about the suspension of those services. We just worked with our customers and with the public to explain to them why those services have been temporarily suspended. When we resume the services, we would amplify those messages again. One of the things that we have been working on that is proven to be an amazing tool during the pandemic is the Austin recycles mobile app. This was something that we had been working on previous to the pandemic and once we were asked to cease all communications, we asked for permission to be able to move forward with this tool as it is a direct way to communicate with our customers. It is an enhancement of our mobile tool. If you have been on our website on [Austinrecycles.com](https://www.austinrecycles.com), there is a tool that customers can search their addresses or they can search the, what do I do with? section, a tool to learn how to properly dispose of unwanted items. Customers can look up their schedules and download reminders. ARR was allowed to launch this service because not only does it help keep Austin citizens and our customers in touch with us but, we can send them direct messages about any services, pensions, interruptions, the wave trash, fees and, extra trash fees for the moment. This tool has been extremely successful in the way that we communicate with our citizens. The creators of this app have reached out to us asking if we wanted to do a success story with them. We've had almost 10,000 downloads since March 2020, which is above any other benchmark city of our size. With this app, almost 85% of Austin's residential addresses have been searched. That is 85% of our customers we know that have used this tool. At least once 55,000 reminders were created, which helps people get that direct messaging about their collection schedule. What do I do with? tool is something that has been evolving during the pandemic. We never really thought that we'd have to put in new criteria like; rubber gloves and face masks and how to properly dispose of these items but, as the needs of our citizens and the needs of our customers change, we're adapting with them and, updating those tools as well. Instead of in-person with a lot of the engagement that we do on the residential side, we moved online with chicken-keeping classes. We had first thought that we could just do a video but, our staff identified that for chicken keeping, we wanted to make it an interactive type presentation where people could ask questions. We're asking people to use animals in the use of their compost so it was a little more sensitive. Staff realized quickly that just a video wasn't going to work. So we moved online with that. The first one was very successful and so we're planning more in the upcoming year, the fix-it clinic also moved online with a series called Fix it at Home. ARR hosted over 15 classes in the summer and there were more than 250 attendees for the Fixed at Home classes. Zero waste oriented, the Zero Waste Block layer-program kicked off again. Numerous people wanted to take the orientation. We were able to do an online virtual Zero Waste Block leader orientation. Staff was also able to do a contact list drive-through for those new block leaders to pick up materials that they may want to share with their neighbors. Staff then created numerous social media tool kits for them to help disseminate our goal and our message with their neighbors. On the commercial side, we've been working diligently on the comprehensive plan.

Staff worked with the contractors on the survey itself and making sure that that was an online platform, that those that wanted to take the survey could easily access. We worked on, promoting it so that everybody had a chance to get to take it too. Reverse Pitch is moving online. Staff is working on it and it will be hosted in May with over a hundred attendees and we hope we're planning a virtual event for 2021. ARR held our first Brownfields community meeting, which was an opportunity for the community to come forth and speak about certain projects in their areas. Also, we hosted a Recycling at Multi-Family Properties webinar, along with the Austin Apartment Association, where we invited multi-family property owners and managers to attend, to learn more about how to increase recycling at their properties. ARR is dedicated to working with the Economic Development Department on the circular economy meetup. ARR has shifted our gait or engagement with a lot virtually to be able to still meet the need but also with regards to maintaining all proper safety protocols given the pandemic. The curbside composting is coming up our fourth and final expansion where all of Austin's residential customers will have this service in their home. A large part of our engagement for curbside composting was door-to-door engagement and these town open houses where anybody could come. Attendees would get a kitchen compost collector and they could talk to us about all things composting. Unfortunately, we won't be able to provide that same level of engagement moving forward into this fourth and final expansion but, we have found a solution to that. ARR is working on a virtual town hall, in which we will have simultaneous interpretation in Spanish and Vietnamese. It will be aired on ATXN. We're also going to do a Facebook live another great thing.

Richard McHale Deputy Director of ARR spoke about what ARR has done as far as safety for our staff and the impact of the operation as well as the great work that focuses our community communication plans. Back in February of 2020, the city of Austin and Travis county representatives from multiple organizations were invited to Emmitsburg, Maryland to at FEMA training facility with a three-week-long mock disaster desktop exercise before the pandemic, was really hitting the United States. Although this exercise wasn't a pandemic scenario it did allow city and county staff to really kind of work on the processes of how we communicate with each other during these events. This consisted of; like track expenses and have some good one-on-one time with other individuals and other groups which kind of strengthened our security posture during this event. ARR had already had an existing pandemic plan. The city has a plan in general for the whole city and ARR has a departmental plan that we had developed back in 2009. Once we started hearing about the news in China and what was unfolding, we went ahead and took that plan out for review, read through it, and started discussing how we would implement it. Obviously, this would have a big impact on our operation, where they're dealing with natural disasters but, primarily floods, wind storms, and hurricanes. This wouldn't be our first pandemic but hopefully our last that we would have to deal with. We took our cues from that plan and we made adjustments and we continue to make adjustments as we work through it. We were tending to learn new things that we didn't anticipate. On the operation side, we needed to make sure that we made our employees feel safe about coming to work so we made some modifications on how we do things. Typically our employees would come in the building, meet, talk, and gather their assignments. Due to the social distancing requirements, we had to change that up. Now when employees get to work, they go straight outside. They receive their assignments outdoors then they get in their trucks and they go on to the routes. We avoided close contact and at least minimized it most of the weekend. Certain routes particularly when it's a heavy season, such as in organics, if we have staff available, we'll try to have three persons to a truck with the social distancing requirements. What we have had to do is put two people in a truck and the additional third person would be brought out to the route by a supervisor. Then the third person would be able to work on the back of the truck during that route, just to help out. Once that route was completed, then the supervisor would then go back out to that truck and pick that employee up so we wouldn't have to have more than two people in that vehicle at any one time. Employees came to us during the event too. At this time, in the beginning, a lot of stores were closed. A lot of restaurants had shut down and our employees didn't have access to restrooms or areas where they could wash their hands.

ARR purchased additional water coolers that we installed on the trucks with a water cooler, then soap, and those coolers were meant just for washing hands. Staff had a separate cooler for any drinking water. This is one of many things we did to try to accommodate the lack of services that they were able to get. Additionally, we also rented some portable restrooms and put those in city facilities around the city so they would also have some facilities. We rented some ice machines and purchase bagged ice, instead of using our standardized machines, which one would typically run that would have like a metal device in order to avoid any type of cross-contamination. The staff gave our employee's bag guys to help them out in that situation. Core administrative staff, ARR and, the rest of the city put in place processes to allow them to telework. It's all about the extra benefit of reducing the city's carbon footprint and the amount of traffic on the roads. In certain circumstances when there has been a mask-to-mask engagement, we've installed plexiglass to reduce any potential transmission of the virus. ARR also is condoning any non-essential travel for our employees. The department also requires all/any employees coming to work to have their temperature screened before work. For our operational staff at the tenant partner service center, we have employees that come to work at four-thirty in the morning and they set up a testing area. It's a drive-through temperature screening, and we do this every morning. All employees, temperatures are scanned prior to them beginning work. This also allows us to get them any critical information that we need to deliver to them and to give them any extra supplies that they need. In regards to personal protective equipment, we were very proactive about this since we were aware of a situation and started planning prior to any cases starting in the United States. ARR went ahead and made some bulk purchases at that time. This would have been a January, February timeframe. This included bulk purchases of mass sanitizer and disinfectant gloves. We never really had an issue with not having equipment for our staff. As the virus has progressed, there were several other city departments that actually, weren't able to get equipment. We were able to supply them with supplies to get them through. Even though there were many supply chain disruptions and shortages early in the year, ARR requires any employees to wear masks inside the building and inside the trucks. The city has COVID-19 policies that require the employee to quarantine themselves at home and remain there for at least two weeks. Upon receiving a negative test result from a medical professional only at that time, are they able to return back to work. Before the contact tracing, we also have to, when we find out the situations, it requires of doing backtracking and seeing who that employee worked with and make sure we notify his or her coworkers and anyone who may have been in contact within the department, those individuals can also isolate and, get tested before they can return to work. We have had some but when we do we've had to decontaminate those areas where the employee may have been missing as concluded. We use the foggers to disinfect trucks, offices, and some of the common area and the custodial staff that work in the building here, and we partner service. Also regularly as part of their normal cleaning rotation. We wipe down all the doorknobs, railings, and the common area just as a matter of practice. As far as the impacts of the service. We have had some members. During the beginning of the incident, we had a lot of staff that would report to the emergency operations center. This staff dealt with logistical issues and administrative issues. A lot of employees were able to come back to their offices and just work remotely and will continue to do that. ARR does have some employees that are still working full-time for the EDOC helping assist them in their mission. Currently, we were able to reopen permanently and we're doing a prep of 200 customers a day and still accepted materials. It's looking like the city may go back into stage five, and if that happened, we would go back to the at-home collections to extend material as far as staffing levels. The City of Austin provided some opportunities for employees to where they would be able to stay at home and take care of their children, and their families. On any given day we had had about 70 employees out and that's between the FMLA, sick time and that includes some vacation time as well. We still do have employees that have taken vacation, but, that's been really a small amount of the people. Because of COVID-19 though our employees have had to work a lot of hours.

Most of the important work over 40 hours a week, a lot of employees have also been working on the weekends, because we want to make sure that we can deliver the services that we set out to do for our community. It's been very hard for us to hire employees even yet in the normal timeframe. We continue to compete with e-commerce and other waste management companies. So we tend to have employees that can find jobs elsewhere, jobs that are less taxing on the body, and easier to do. Even in the best of times, it's hard to get employees right now, it's definitely been harder to do so. ARR is working with the city's Human Resources department to see what strategies we can do to help employ existing employees that are here and to help them out and, urge them to stay as well as to hire new employees in the future. Ron touched on this regarding that our fleet department and our equipment vendors have also experienced the same problems and that has led to some issues with work trucks being down. Not only that but, it's been five chain disruptions that have caused some issues, getting spare parts for trucks so we can keep them running. You all just voted on the approval of that rental agreement and that was part of the impact that we had to do. We just received our latest order of trucks that ZWAC had approved pretty much about a year ago. Those trucks are now arriving and so that has helped our situation. It seems like at one point where you have the trucks, but we don't have the people. Then at other times, we have the people, but we don't have trucks. We're waiting for that perfect balance to come, and we think it's coming here shortly. Because of staffing issues, we temporarily suspended our brush and bulk collection in order to make sure that we had staff. Usually, you'd be able to collect trash recycling in our organics but, for the same reasons we had to reduce our service levels and our street sweeping operation, you still need employees to help out on trash, recycling and, organic routes. At the same time, the department is working on a re-integration plan for when we get everyone back in the office and forecast what that's gonna look like as far as how we operate at that point. The increase in the bandwidth and this has been what the impact has been as far as volumes trash, 8% recycling, 50%, our organics, you 22% people who have been home and doing their yard. They want to do a lot of yard work and believe me, they're doing it. It's been a stress on us but the one silver lining about all this is if you look at your Director's report and the numbers in that report, you'll see that we surpassed a 40% diversion rate for this past fiscal year. More concerning though is the number of positive cases that we have had. To give you a little bit of context as far as, you know, what the city has spent. The city as a whole has spent about \$194 million on the pandemic so it has been a big impact on the city and a big impact on our department. This doesn't take into account but, you know with the extra trash feeds that I talked about earlier, we estimate about \$200,000 hit in revenue that we would have normally expected, this year. It doesn't account for the additional cost of disposal or that extra 8% of trash or the extra 15% of recycling so those numbers really aren't accounted for that as well. It also doesn't account for all the additional fuel we've had to use or the extra loads of material. Many of the ratepayers here in Austin are unable to pay their utility bills. So we entertain what the forecast will look like in the future? This story's far from over, there's an additional chapter coming up, so we'll wait to see what that looks like. We'll also mention that the Texas Chapter of the Solid Waste Association in North America worked with SWANA, which is the national affiliate to petition the centers for disease control to prioritize sanitation workers to get the vaccine in an expedited manner because our employees are high risk they're out there. Not only are they essential but our employees are generally in that higher risk group. We want to make sure that those employees have moved to the front of the line and get the vaccine that they deserve. Now that the vaccines are being rolled out, I just wanted to say that I'm extremely proud of our employees that continue to show up for work and go above and beyond. Both administrative and operational employment. As we look forward to getting through this difficult time.

Chair Gerard Acuna asked, Did you guys hear what happened late this afternoon? The EEOC has modified section K and section K basically is the health and safety portion of the EEOC regulation. Late this afternoon, they decided that, if/should an employer ask the employee to receive a vaccine that would be, and could be a mandated requirement for further future or continued employment? I encourage you guys to look into that. Richard McHale replied as of now the City will not make, is not making the vaccine a requirement and, no one will be mandated at the COA. Chair Acuna asked the question is the city going to attempt to provide the vaccine for its employees, as you stated? in other words, there is a cost, there's health insurance that the city provides. Is this something where the city is going roll it into health coverage whereas the employee is not having to go out there and pay this? Richard McHale I mean, I don't believe there's going to be any cost to the employees for the vaccine. I'm not sure how it's going to be distributed. I don't know what the city will do and maybe Ken can speak to that, but I don't believe that there will be charges on that? Director Ken Snipes replied, to this point, we know there will be three more than 300 outlets that will be distributing the vaccine in Travis county. The vaccine should be prevalent throughout the community, so there should be an opportunity for employees to get the vaccine and it will be pretty robust. As Richard said earlier it's not going to be mandatory. We would encourage everyone to get it but, the same rules would apply here that apply to the flu vaccine and, not everyone gets the flu vaccine. We would hope as many as possible with sign up to do it, but, we'll stay informed and keep everyone abreast of what the opportunities are for getting the vaccine as quickly as possible. Commissioner Kaiba White replied she wanted to commend ARR for their great work regarding working with these issues she also asked has there been any hazard pay offered or just, you know, salary increases in general? I know that we've heard from y'all before about the difficulty in hiring and so it seems like, you know, maybe the salary being offered is not sufficient, is that been examined? you know, earlier in the year the city manager and I think it as well, there was some, pain enhancement of a thousand dollars paid to employees on the front line earlier? Richard McHale replied: I don't think that was dedicated strictly to our department. Earlier in the year, there was some pay enhancement of 1,000 dollars paid to employees on the frontline. I think that was wide but, yes there was additional money for employees and commissioner. Director Ken Snipes replied going forward, we are looking at this. As a matter of fact, right now we're working with HRD to look at the pay that we're offering our CDL holders right now because as Richard talked about earlier, we're losing the various, logistics support agencies right now. If you can drive a box truck they're hiring and they're paying more than we pay, and that's been one of the major factors that have caused us to lose people as they point to the additional pay so we're working on that. We submitted some documentation for approvals on increasing the pay rate that our drivers are receiving. Chair Gerard Acuna replied I can echo that from the private side. There's obviously incredible competition poaching, every industry is facing the same dilemma and the winners seem at this point are going to be the Amazons, UPS, and FedEx guys of the world. It's a much easier, or I should say that the pay is literally extremely competitive and for us to address that, which we did cover this a couple of three months ago in one of our sessions, and we need to figure out a way to keep and compensate good employees. I think that the staff has done a great job of, of review and add into considering that opportunity. so I'd look, I'd be very interested to see how we are or looking at approaching this and what type of, you know, benefit plan we can include to keep some of the employees from jumping ship my 2 cents. Commissioner Kaiba White had a follow-up question, that thousand-dollar hazard pay or whatever it was called. was that a one-time thing? yeah. I'm just thinking about like how, you know, if you're in that position and how to kind of structure and, um, calculate what it will take to keep people there. I mean, obviously, I realized, like you also get to make these decisions on your own, but I would suggest that it would be appropriate to have something like that structured so that you know, those workers have something to look forward to every quarter or something so there's a reason to stay on and yeah, I mean, if it was me driving a delivery truck sounds a lot easier, so I can understand why if you're getting even the same pay, why you might be departing for that. So, you know for what it's worth, I certainly support, you know, whatever that wage is. They should be getting significantly more to make it worth their while to stay. Commissioner Melissa Rothrock commented, I just want to say that what struck me a lot from your presentation was you were talking about El Paso and how they had to stop their recycling pickup.

I just feel so fortunate to be in a city where we have the resources in order to continue our zero waste efforts and, you know, it's unfortunate for El Paso to be put in that position, but that really struck me in regarding keeping employees picking up the roots. This might seem a little bit of an odd question, but, goodwill locally is very known and prominent for hiring felons and its people that have served their time. they've gotten out, can rebuild their lives. and there's not a lot of opportunities for people like that that have felonies to get back into the workforce again, and goodwill has taken up that crutch for a lot of people and there's also the restaurant industry, but it's not really a career and I don't know the current status of your hiring if it allows that. but I don't, and it's just the thought, and I know that goodwill markets themselves as being an advocate for hiring felons and helping people create careers for their, for their futures, and their future families so just an idea, just an idea in thought. Richard McHale replied great idea, great thought we actually have worked with goodwill and we've had employees that actually came from goodwill or that we've employed and the city is a second chance employer and we don't ask about background checks. This is an opportunity, and we don't want to hold someone if they have made a mistake in the past, we don't want to cut them off. This gives everyone a second chance to make amends for what they did and show that they don't need to be defined by that and that we understand. Chair Acuna replied I'll echo Richard's comments there we have, the city has been very good at reaching out to two-second opportunities with employees. I think we've probably been doing that for well over 20 years now, as far as reaching out and giving folks a second chance, another opportunity.

3b. Discussion and Action- Citywide Diversion Rate- Gena McKinley

Gina McKinley Strategic Initiatives Division Manager spoke and said we have recently had some questions about Austin's diversion rates. I wanted to walk you through a quick presentation to talk about the numbers that we report and how and how those are, and where they come from. As a city with a zero-waste goal to divert 90% of our material from the landfill, by the year 2040, we use the diversion rate, as one of the main metrics we use to measure our progress towards meeting that goal. This is how is it calculated when we talk about diversion, we're talking about materials that are going somewhere other than the landfill so that includes recycling, composting, reuse, and waste prevention and reduction, and the number that you hear most frequently quoted as Austin's diversion rate is 42%.and that number is based on a 2015 community diversion rate study that looked at raw data from Austin resource recovery collection points, as well as sampling of materials generated and managed by other parts of the community by private haulers and self haulers. This is where 42% comes from. You'll hear another number, which you've heard Richard reference in the previous presentation. That is the diversion rate performance per reported, as one of Austin Resource Recovery's regular performance measures and it's the material like he said, is included in the director's report for these commission meetings and you can track it month to month and that number is 40.38% and that is based on the material that we control directly. I'll go into a little bit of detail on those two points. The 2015 community diversion rate study was really designed to get a better, better measure of Austin's progress towards zero waste. We established our zero waste plan in 2011, which was adopted by the council. and we really needed to look at the entire community, not just the portion of material that Austin Resource Recovery is collecting and that took a comprehensive approach to assess diversion based on several different things. We looked at data from established recording methods that the department had access to. We looked at quantities that were collected through outreach and surveying done throughout the study. We also had field studies done in the business community and did waste and recycling sorts for both residential and commercial streams. There's a lot of detail in that study. I'm not going to dive super deep, but these are some of the key findings from that study. It did estimate that our diversion rate for the entire community for Austin residents and businesses was 42% and also found that roughly 85% of the material that's generated in the community is managed by private haulers so not Austin Resource Recovery, which is roughly 15%. It also noted that a large percentage of material we're going to the landfill we're either recyclable or compostable.

What that told us is that achieving zero waste as a city is, is doable if all of those materials could be going somewhere else, we could hit that 90% diversion rate target. This shows a rough breakdown of the data sources that were used during the 2015 study. We had several existing data sources like the licensed hauler ton of reports, the universal recycling coordinates our Austin materials, marketplace study facility contracts, and other material, other direct services that the department. it's like our residential curbside services, but to capture that other generation data from that 85%, we had to work with large employers and universities, donation centers, food banks, and others, to gather that data and better understand the composition of those streams and the disposal methods that were at play. This just shows you the breakdown as I mentioned, the study found that roughly 15% of the total material generated in Austin was managed by the city of Austin, which is largely our residential curbside collection, and that the remaining 85% managed by private haulers so with data analysis, data collection, and analysis to track where we are as an entire community, on our way towards reaching zero waste is more complex. When you consider that a large percentage of the material is managed by multiple service providers where the city doesn't necessarily have access to all those data points. As a result, achieving zero waste and increasing diversion really requires a balance between programs that the city runs directly. and those that we influence in the community. To dive a little deeper into the data sources for that 85%. You'll see that some data is self-reported why as other data we actually have weight tickets and then some rely upon third-party studies like the university and rates study that we're talking about now. While we have had additional data sources over the years as the university versatile recycling ordinance, for example, is fully implemented now but, we still have limitations to that data. The URO annual recording gives us information about access to diversion at commercial and multifamily properties, but it doesn't actually include material volumes. We only know the potential capacity that would be available for diversion. The c and d ordinance does require weight tickets so we do have some better data there, whereas the special events ordinance requires proof of service, but not necessarily the quantity of materials diverted, and then the licensed hauler ordinance is self-reported data and it often includes materials from outside the city limits as many hollers don't isolate, um, the volume of materials sent just to Austin alone. There are some challenges with that data in terms of really looking at it as a metric towards diversion and your waste. If we look at the 15%, this is the second number that we talked about, that 40.38%, that's the 15%, and this is the material that the city of Austin or city managed contractors control directly and this includes residential curbside collections. Any of the materials that we're collecting and recycling these drop-off center and a handful of other things like the carts that we collect or damaged carts that get recycled litter collection, et cetera. 15% is public is reported publicly. We include it in your director's report for the commission meetings and is a snapshot from the city's website where you can look at performance measures across the organization. This highlights, the measure that we're talking about here. It tells you all the data points that are used in that calculation and you can track the diversion rate year over year from fiscal year to fiscal year and you'll see circled in red, the 40.38%. and like Richard said, we were really pleased to hit over that 40% mark because for several years it seems we've been hovering around that 37%. so to hit that is a really great milestone for that. That is a very quick synopsis, I realized we are running short on time, but I wanted to give you guys a better understanding of what we're talking about when we talk about diversion. As you know, we're in the process of updating as you always plan, and as part of that plan, it allows us to evaluate additional measurements. Some of the ones we're looking at our capture rates for specific materials or disposal rate per capita as an example but one of the challenges we really face is having access to data so to provide frequent tracking of where we are as a city for zero waste, we're reliant really upon third-party studies to evaluate that diversion across the school full spectrum of waste generation. It comes at a cost because we do have to pay consultants to do the work. The more that we can create mechanisms to have access to reliable data, to provide the department and the city, the ability to evaluate our progress towards your waste on a more frequent and regular basis will help us really see how we're doing and how we're performing as a community when it comes to waste generation and diversion.

Commissioner Amanda Masino asked the question, I was wondering if you had from either the 2015 study or from some other work, any way to compare what's happening with the 15% compared to the rest and what I mean by that is are there assumptions that we can make if the 15% that arr is handling directly is at 40% diversion? Back in 2015, when we looked at it, 85% was only at 20%, can we make some assumptions about using the arr rate to understand what's happening in that 85% that we don't have direct data for you? Do you see what I'm saying? like there might be ways that the numbers are related to each other, even though they're different data sets in different involved parties if we're at 40 for this segment of the pie, what does that mean for the 85% segment of the pie? Gena McKinley replied I think I understand what you're saying. and I don't have all that data analysis done and in front of me, but I think that there are some ways that you could slice and dice the data to draw some conclusions. I mean, on the kind of big picture, what that tells us is that what we can see happen, like what we see happening right now with our curbside services and what we saw in 2015 at the con at the community level is about the same so it's performing about the same. We can attempt to break down by different segments so we can look at commercial properties, for example, and then we could look at multifamily properties so we could begin to segment that 85% and look at the actual waste characterization. Part of the 2015 study did include a waste characterization study. so we broke down that stream a little bit that's where we could tell the percentage of recyclable and the percentage of compostable material that was being landfilled so I think there's some, there are some similarities you could pull out from it and I can definitely do that. I'd be happy to follow up with the commission. I could email the commission some more detailed breakdowns of that 2015 study if you haven't seen it. We have a lot of summary documents that were created at that time and I think even a video summary, if you don't, if you're tired of reading things, so I can send you some more information to dive deeper. Commissioner Masino replied that would be great, yeah I'd love to see the continued detail, because as you mentioned, you know we've gotta be thinking about the metrics going forward with the new plan. and so it would be interesting just to revisit that and see if there are other connections between yeah. the city control, the arr controlled part, and the rest of what's going on. Commissioner Kaiba White commented my interest is also in that the data or lack thereof. I definitely would like to revisit those numbers from the 2015 study that breakout that sounds great. It does just seem though that like our current system of reporting, is just inadequate and I know we've, you know, this isn't the first time that has come up in conversation at this commission, and it doesn't seem like that heavy of a lift to require that the private sector share that information with the city and together, and if they're not gathering it, but you know, I guess I'm just, I'm just wondering if there is any, if I'm, if I am missing something that makes that more of a big deal. Chair Gerard Acuna commented, piggybacking off, uh, Kaiba's concerns and questions. If I'm not mistaken and please correct me if I'm wrong I mean, Richard, you were, you were there, but in the old days we actually had, if I'm not mistaken, more frequent reporting by the private guys, the private haulers and I think at that time it was every semi-annual reporting and it was basically, it started with the multi-family recycling ordinance, went into effect, oh my god, a long time ago when I had hair but, after that, it was wonderful. and we reported on a, at least a semi-annual basis and were able to keep a better account of, of how the private sector was progressing when it comes to office buildings, that was a little bit more challenging, but we've progressed a heck of a lot with the URO and I can see that more frequent reporting might, might help and kind of clearing up some of these numbers and, or at least making them a little bit more accurate. not that they're not accurate now, but at least giving us a better idea of which direction we're heading in and I, I'm sorry, I just wanted to tack on my 2 cents on your thoughts there. Commissioner Kaiba white replied basically getting data more than once every five years or whatever. Commissioner Cathy Guttuso replied how do we get the data from that 85%. Gina Mckinley replied I think what you're trying to ask is how do we get that data from the 85%? Commissioner Cathy Guttuso replied no, I'm wondering how other cities get this data, or do they have, uh, a higher percentage? and we've been able to get, sorry it was somebody speaking and different cities, or there are different ways that cities are set up? Gena McKinley replied in different cities different ways are set up. The city of Austin is a city with, a Zero waste goal, but also a city with an open market and so that is the challenge that I described in terms of data collection other cities do it differently. I don't know if directors Snipes might want to talk about the way that they manage that in Seattle but, we've looked at other cities and as part of the comprehensive plan update ours, you're always planning.

These are, you know, these are great questions to be asking great input to provide in terms of supporting different ways for the department to have access to data. The licensed hauler ordinance that I mentioned earlier, I don't know, chair if that's what you were referring to, but that is still in place it does still require twice a year that haulers are reporting data to the city. The Universal Recycling Ordinance, as you all know, it does require annual reporting from a good portion of the community. That data is just limited because we don't know actually, once they put the data access to the services in place, we don't necessarily know what's like and how much recycling is being generated, for example, to put the licensed color ordinance data, and then the URO data together and it's tricky. It's not a one-to-one match. Ken Snipes replied I was just going to say really quickly it's been a question that I've asked since coming here and the open market as Gina pointed to does make it really hard to get that data because it's private and so it's a more insular system compared to some of the other styles that you might see where you might have a full control model where you know we have access or control over everything or some type of franchisee arrangement where we come back to the data so it is a little bit more complicated in this system. We'll keep working on it to try to figure out, what can we do contractually or otherwise to try to get at that data. Commissioner Kaiba White replied so I guess I'll just maybe be a little blunter it seems to me that we have a system that is not ideal to achieve our zero waste goals in that we have all these private haulers that are doing their own thing and they want that system to continue so that they can continue their business under their current model okay I understand that might not be my priority, but I understand that motivation. It seems like a small price for them to pay, to be required, to collect and share this data, to continue with this model that is perhaps not in the public's best interest here so I guess I'm suggesting that maybe an amendment should be made to the URO to just simply require this data collection and reporting and I dunno, it just, that doesn't seem like that open haulers should think to ask for or demand, I guess. Commissioner Cathy Gutso asked would it be an amendment to the city council or for the URO well we would need? Gena McKinley replied I think what commissioner White is suggesting is amending the universal recycling ordinance so that would be just like the amendments that we've made to that ordinance it would require conversations with stakeholders and then we would move an amendment up to the city council and city council would have to vote and approve that change. Commissioner Cathy Gutso replied you know I don't think we're going to get up to our zero waste goals unless we do them. Chair Gerard Acuna replied correct me if I'm wrong we're currently going through a revision of the master plan. and I think part of the revision includes a comprehensive review of our diversion plan or diversion goals and where we currently sit along with some suggestions from the consultants on how we can improve our diversion goals if I'm not mistaken and please correct me if I'm wrong Gena McKinley replied you are correct chair and as I mentioned at the end of the presentation, there's an operation where we have an opportunity right now as we are evaluating that plan, evaluating the industry and everything that's changed since 2011, when that initial plan was adopted to see what kind of changes might be needed to help us better track our progress towards zero waste to help us reach that goal more efficiently, more effectively so these are all things that are on the table as part of that process. There'll be several, several more meetings with this commission and opportunity for public input and public engagement we're planning that for the beginning of the new year so this is great input that can be a part of that process as we shape what that plan looks like going forward. Commissioner Kaiba White commented I guess I hope that the consultants that are, you know, being paid to give their advice on how to meet the goal are encouraged to think outside of, you know, whatever we currently are in here in Austin and, and to give us the full range of what they think would get us to the end goal because I know it can be tempting to just try to and nibble around the edges of a system that I don't want to say isn't working, but it's, it's not working to the extent that we want it to work and so I just, you know, let's get our money's worth out of those consultants and, you know, that's, I'll leave it at that. Chair Gerard Acuna replied it's one thing to tell us how to get it done. It's another for us to actually implement this and not staff or not the department, but just human beings you and me, we have to go out and actually do it I mean, as citizens it's up to us too, to take the initiative and get it done, but, nonetheless and if there are no other questions commissioners, gina, thank you very much for the presentation.

3c. Discussion and Action: Green Fleet -Ken Snipes

Director Ken Snipes provided a presentation and update on the Green Fleet Initiative. Good evening I'll be brief on this because we are somewhat pressed for time now so commission based on the interest that we received about bringing the Green Fleet Initiative in general, one of the things that I wanted to talk about and get your support for is our desire to move forward with creating our own Green Fleet Initiative. We will look to start that next year early next year. we've all already done some preliminary work but we wanted to talk a little bit about what we have seen and what we've done and what we're looking for in the future. So why do we want to do this? Well, there are several reasons to move towards a green fleet. There are obvious environmental benefits to include greenhouse gas reductions, clean air for our citizens, and also there's a huge opportunity for savings in terms of reducing our fuel costs while reducing wear and tear on our fleet. These are a couple of other things that we'll talk about in a couple of other slides that are coming up. So what this is, is a calculator that I borrowed, from California. it is not directly relatable to our system here in Austin but, it's close enough to give a foundational understanding of what we might be able to do in our system if we were to take advantage of some of the going green fleet opportunities. What this model demonstrates here is a refuse truck and based on, some input, but that includes the cost of electricity for charging the trucks and also to compare it to the cost of fuel. In this application, you'd have an opportunity to save about \$8,000 for a year in fuel and reduce your greenhouse gas emissions by 53 tons and that's based on a charging rate for a truck of this size that would charge overnight. These are the types of numbers that we'd be able to realize so pretty substantial if you'd figure that we're reducing our fuel costs by 8,000 per year for each one of these types of trucks that are in our fleet. This is a light-medium-duty/ light-duty pickup truck. There were quite a bit of questions about this type of vehicle and we'll talk a little bit more about this as well but this is the type of savings that we'd be able to realize from an electric pickup truck so about \$1,000 per year savings and fuel and seven tons of greenhouse gas emissions that we would reduce here. This number represents what we'd be able to realize in our light fleet. If we continue to expand the number of vehicles in our light fleet that are all-electric. So about \$223 per year in savings in fuel and four tons in greenhouse gas emissions So where would we start? We want to start working on our business case. we're already starting to pull together data for that and information for that. We'll build our roadmap, we'll continue what we've started, meaning we've already started to purchase some green and some electric vehicles in our fleet already so we continue to do that. We wouldn't stop doing that while this work was taking place and we would also perform periodic market reviews because one of the things that we have problems with right now is that in certain segments of the market, the vehicles aren't available for whatever reason over time The green fleet electric fleet vehicles, I started out on the very light vehicles and now have moved over and skipped over that middle range and is heavily focused on the very large of vehicles in which we'll continue to monitor the market. Totally across our department, we have about 420 fleet items of those, we have 239 heavy fleet assets, and those consists of our collection units in tractor-trailers, cranes, rollout, trucks, and sweepers. We have 105 light feed assets. Those are the cars that I mentioned earlier. What we have in our system right now, is a total of five, all-electric vehicles and 10 hybrids. We have 48 c and g vehicles. For the heavy fleetside. we have a total of 13 yellow fleet, and we do have some opportunities in this space. The market has matured enough here that there are some assets, and so we'll watch this market as well and as we replace our vehicles, we'll evaluate opportunities for replacing some of the diesel burners and maybe even a hybrid to replace the diesel burner or an all. We also have some special vehicles in our fleet as well. They're also some opportunities to go with electric vehicles in this class, these are primarily used for special events and things like that. We also have an opportunity to review the market again in this As for opportunities and obstacles, this is a big issue for us. I'm currently working on the best opportunity for us to move towards electrifying our fleet is in the light sector. The major factor prohibiting the part, the department from moving forward with the procurement of a heavy fleet is the fact that we do not have a transfer station in our system. A transfer facility would benefit us in several ways.

and would improve in our efficiencies.

Obviously, our trucks aren't having to drive as far to tip their loads on the far end right now. Our trucks drive over 30 miles round trip or one way to offload, and we would have a carbon footprint reduction because the vehicles don't have to drive as far to do that work, and then also there's less wear and tear on the vehicles. We don't spend as much time on the road driving to, and from the landfill, we're actually driving to the transfer facility, tipping that material, and then back on the routes. For the pickup truck market, unfortunately, there's not a lot available right now and in fact, nothing's going to be available until probably mid to late next year. Ford and Tesla are supposed to be the first two to come to the market with pickup trucks. Based on what I've seen, I don't know if the Tesla model is utilitarian enough for what we would need so that really leaves us with the Ford, as an item on the market that we're looking at right now, which is an all-electric Ford f-150 so again, we'll continue to monitor this market as well as we start to purchase and the next few budget cycles we'll start to incorporate some of these opportunities. These are the projected purchases for the fiscal year of 2022 so we were scheduled to purchase two Toyota Prius's. It is possible to spec two of those for all-electric, EV sedans in which those would be chevy bolts. We also are scheduled to purchase a Ford Escape Hybrid and we could do the same there. Also, we mentioned that we'll be purchasing the pickup trucks and so we can explore the option to purchase EV pickup trucks, once those are available to us to purchase? Commissioner Kaiba White replied I just wanted to say thank you I know I've asked about this in the past, so I appreciate the presentation. Chair Gerard Acuna replied you know, Ken kind of a silly question here and if we looked at this one group, I think that you're at a cedar park and they retrofit vehicles to either hybrid or electric vehicles and it's in our backyard and I've, you know, they, they've made many news reports and, technology reports and I'm just curious if you know, something like that. I have no idea what the retrofit would cost, but, you know, since they're in our backyard, would it do us any good to talk to somebody? Ken Snipes replied I don't know specifically if we reached out to them, but we have looked at some, all-electric, heavy fleet trucks recently, the biggest issue with those trucks right now is a limitation in the mileage the most mileage, the most you'll get out of them right now is about 70 to 80 miles range, maybe nine and because we spent 30 miles of that drive in two and then 30 miles back from the landfill, they just won't work in our system right now but as far as the outfit in cedar park, I don't know, maybe Richard can reach out to them? Richard McHale replied yeah, actually I did about a month ago I emailed them and so I wanted to get a conversation going with them. I haven't heard back from them at this point, but yeah, you're right, Jerry I mean, they are right in our backyard and I think it'd be a wonderful opportunity if we could work with them but, so far I haven't heard back so, we'll definitely follow up with them again now. Chair Acuna replied you know if nothing else, I guess we're going to have to invest in what electric tow trucks when our big guys break down, we can pull them in charge them, but nonetheless being silly guys, I'm sorry, it's late. Commissioner Kaiba White commented I knew there was some plan to purchase. I don't remember the details. I'm sorry to purchase pickup trucks in 2021. I don't remember what the exact timing of that is. Do you think that it is possible or that to happen in a timeframe that would allow possibly for those to be fulfilled by the electric f-150? Ken Snipes replied yes we're hoping that we could be one of the first outfits to get our hands on some of those trucks so we'll, we'll watch that very closely and if they're available, we'll try to purchase a couple of them. Richard McHale replied commissioner White I'll just mention that we did check into that and the pricing isn't available at the time so we can't move forward until we get pricing from the manufacturer. so that's the hold up on that particular issue. Commissioner Kaiba White commented yeah that's fair enough I guess my question is more so that, like, you're not gonna move forward, like immediately with purchasing, you know, a gas and internal combustion engine version, you know, in Q1, before you even know what the pricing is? Richard McHale replied we actually are, our order does go in at the beginning of the year if you remember, during my presentation earlier, I just told you the trucks we just got now, you all had approved a year ago so that order goes into citywide where you don't order this specifically by ourselves, we're in a greater order with other vehicles so we're probably we'll go in, uh, before pricing is available, but, we often do also have the option during the year, uh, if we need that we can purchase vehicles so I mean there's no guarantee on the timing yet of when that pricing will be available. So yes we do need to get that order in, but, like I said if we are able during the year, so yeah.

Commissioner Kaiba White replied I mean, I hear that and I appreciate that guess I'm, that's all, not that it's your fault it's just a little frustrating that it sounds like even if you were to purchase any view later in the year, it wouldn't really offset the purchase of the other vehicle because you already well-placed the order. Richard McHale responded well, you know, we're, we, we are talking about the six, six trucks and to be honest, you know, in my personal life, I've bought a brand new car first year, and those first models that come out are usually the ones that have the bugs so I'm not against the waiting a little bit and let them work some of those bugs out so that when we there. Commissioner Kaiba White responded all right, fair enough. Commissioner Melissa Rothrock commented yes it was mentioned earlier that tesla cyber truck versus the four that the cyber stripe, wasn't you utilitarian enough for what you guys were wanting? is that just because of the looks or the function? because the looking online, the ford electric vehicle says the hasn't released the pricing officially, but they're expecting the cost to start around 55,000 so I would look at the range, cause I would think the most utilitarian fuel you could get would be getting the best price for the best range, for the best use of the vehicle and the tesla cyber trucks will have over the air updates to their software so if the first models are buggy, then they would be fixed over the year update, which I don't believe ford can do that and the first version of the cyber truck is going to closer to the 40,000 range and those prices are confirmed and those trucks are going to be released in late 20, 21 so I would just, you know, do a cost-benefit analysis of the cyber truck and it's going to be in our city so, you know, and be something to consider.

4. Director's Report and Staff Briefings

Director Ken Snipes introduced Skyra Rideaux to present information about the ARR Circle meetups program that's happening within our Circular Economy Program. My name is Skyra Rideaux I'm a new member of the circular economy team within a strategic initiatives division of ARR and my role specifically focuses on growing the capacity for business engagement within our circular economy business community in the city of Austin so what that means and what I specifically work on is focusing on doing one-on-one business engagement business with our circular economy businesses. we support economic development through an equity lens, in order to gain knowledge on our circular economy, businesses and identifying challenges and opportunities for business growth for expansion, and of course, connecting them to resources and incentives here as well and part of that is, of course, we're committed to growing our local businesses, ensuring that they're able to make capital investments in Austin, and increasing job opportunities within the city of Austin as well but mainly what we want to focus on is ensuring that we're maintaining open communication and fostering long-term relationships with our circular economy business community and one of the ways that we do that is through one of our new business networking events so circular meetups is a new business and virtual networking series that we created our first one was actually hosted on December 1st at the beginning of this month. What it does is this provides an opportunity for our local circular economy, business owners, startups, sustainability professionals, across all industries to come together and connect and learn more about what's going on and happening within the circular economy here in Austin so best practices, things that they can share and connect on are ways and opportunities for them to collaborate together we are going to start hosting them bi-monthly. Our first one was this month, our next one will be February 2nd. they are one hour long so they're fast, they're fun, they're informational and they happen over lunch and so basically our format is we get a couple of our circular economy businesses to come in and they talk about the work that they're doing, how they're collaborating with others and opportunities that they see within the circular economy industry in Austin, moving forward so we had three businesses this past meetup on the first we had Samantha Snabes and, Logash from trash list and then Lauren Chavez from junk luggers, and in between those presentations, we have awesome opportunities to do intermittent networking breakout sessions so those who came and participated in those moods got the opportunity to

meet other business owners in the circular economy industry. and of course, other professionals who are doing this work as well.

The goal, all of our meetups, of course, are together with like-minded businesses and entrepreneurs, give them opportunities to network we also want to take the opportunity to raise awareness of circular economy and our businesses here locally and how they're making an investment and an impact in helping us reach some of those zero waste schools that we were talking about. and we want to also increase the number of businesses that are practicing or even considering circular economy principles here in Austin. Some of the outcomes of one of our first events were we had a total number of registered attendees of 53, 28 of them were in attendance that included our speakers and some members from our team as a result of that I've received one business engagement visit from that. i'm working on a second one, three new linkedin connections who were really excited about the opportunity to come together and continue to learn about the circular economy and be involved in that we got some really good survey feedback from some attendees as well, and some new speaker requests and for those of you who maybe weren't aware we also have a circular economy map where businesses in the circular economy industry can fill out the application we list their business on our map, depending on which part of it that they fall into and it's a way for them to know who is participating in the industry here locally, and for them to also continue to connect with one another so we had some new map applications as a part of our circular meetups as well and of course for our future goals and future impact, we're looking to increase our participation up to 40 for every meetup that we're hosting and continue to introduce our circular economy, businesses to one another and make connections and partnerships, providing more networking opportunities for professionals and enthuses within this emerging industry and of course, we want to continue to encourage our circular economy and businesses to invest in the city of Austin, achieve our zero waste goals, and offer opportunities for them to co-create solutions, to some of our material waste stream problems that we're we're experiencing here in Austin so again but days for 2021, we host these bi-monthly so we'll have one in February, April, June, August, October, and December of next year our February speakers for 2021, I've already been committed and identified and we're really looking forward to and excited about the opportunity to continue to offer our business community within the circular economy, chances to come together, to learn from one another to form collaborations, and continue to work together and invest in the community here in Austin so I thank you so much for the opportunity. I know it was super quick. I don't want to take up too much of your time, but I appreciate the opportunity to talk about this new event it's really fun. I think it's going to be a great way to continue to connect our businesses here. Commissioner Amanda Masino commented great, great program sounds very exciting how are you getting the word out to businesses about this series? Skyra Rideaux replied that is a great question so we work with our Austin resource recovery and our economic development, public information teams. so we have connections with local businesses so talking to the ones, we already have connections with, reaching out to industry groups like some of our chambers, our local chambers, who might have businesses that are engaged in this practice, and some who already in our relationships through our newsletter and businesses that were already connected to you that are on our map or engaged in this process as well so really using the networks that we already have strong relationships with to continue to get the word out about the work that you are. Ken Snipes commented Chair, we have the rest of the director's report here and we have a couple of other items that we'll just touch base on. A couple of things that I want to highlight in the interest of time here for running overtime and a bit short on even our extension. The holiday tree recycling event could be impacted by a coronavirus staging here if we go to five but, I do want to also, to say that on our statistical reports, we talked a little bit about some of those things earlier, but, you guys got a chance to see some of the impacts that we've been dealing with systems shift of waste has moved from the commercial sector and into the home so I would pick it up more and more materials and I can't say enough about how happy I am with all of the work that the team has put in and continued to come work, come to work during the pandemic great outstanding work. Chair Gerard Acuna replied yes great job. I mean, this is, it's not easy waking up when you hear the, uh, challenging news every morning or every evening so guys, thank you.all right Ken can you want to just allow the commission to at this stage since we basically have a

few minutes left to review this and any questions, please can the commissioner's reach out to staff with any future questions? yes. great.

5. future agenda items adjournment

Chair Gerard Acuna commented as far as future agenda items, there's a couple of things I commissioners please chime in. if you'd like to see something, I add it now on record the week, and that included our next gathering. I know we talked about a retreat? Commissioner Amanda Masino replied jerry, I did the community resilience office, invited boards and commissions, to a session to learn about their work and what they would be asking, how they would be asking us to provide a channel to the community and support the work they're doing so it was just an initial conversation open to, you know, a certain number of members from each commission and I think we should be, you know, aware of their work and looking out for what that connection is going to be between zero waste and what that resilience office is doing. so it may be not next month, but in a few months, it might be appropriate to have, a briefing from that resilience office. Chair Acuna replied thank you for doing that for attending. I guess I was lazy, but just teasing, nonetheless. thank you, Amanda. I know you, Ken did you want to touch on the thoughts about having a retreat for the commission itself so we can get a get-together and discuss where we want to head in the future in addition, to kind of work out some of the business challenges that we face?

if you guys want to touch on that, explain the process here that would, uh, they would occur.

Ken Snipes replied yes thank you, commissioner actually, yes, I do want to talk about that so we're proposing to have a retreat in January with the commission where we would come together and kind of work on a few things we could talk about the direction of the department have a refresher for the bylaws and some of the commission related items but just an opportunity to actually sit down and talk about and together on developing a path forward, uh, and to talk about our working relationships and things like that. Chair Gerard Acuna replied and the other thing, guys, I, you know, as far as future agenda items go, I would love to see an item on there. I mean, going back to diversion here, something that reintroduces us and, or we take a little bit more seriously, this C and D recycling infrastructure needs that we have in our community a lot of the infrastructure is, is more parochial than anything at this stage so if us, if we, as a city, when it continues to promote and grow our, our actual diversion zero waste, perhaps we do need to consider the city involving itself a little bit more in the actual, infrastructure goals and I think commissioner, I'm sorry, commissioner director snipes.

and I had a brief chat about that and on how we could, start brainstorming and making sure that there are available opportunities for the many, many other contractors and or service providers who don't have a quote-unquote, landfill, or facility for doing that type of a diversion sorting you name it.

but I like to see that if we can on the agenda for the next lady, just, just brief discussion and starts towards those goal commissioners, any other items that you'd like to look at, and it could be a very short meeting, but, uh, I'm sure we'll have enough, another idea or two that pops up that we can include in the agenda and, uh, Ken, you're going to get back with us on a possible date you said, or I'm sorry that the times of dates. Ken Snipes replied yes so we'll reach out to see if we can find a date that works for everyone and so expect to hear from us soon on that. Chair Gerard Acuna replied I appreciate that commissioners any other comments? any other thoughts? all I can say is thank you. thank you very much for a wonderful year to a challenging year. if that makes any sense. Ken, Richard, Gina, everybody, Ron, all you guys are at staff you, you did a wonderful job too, to survive this year and I'm looking forward to next year and, and commissioners thank you guys for the commitment that you you've given us and please guys have a merry, merry Christmas, happy holidays, happy Hanukkah, and everyone guys enjoy the light.

4.Future Agenda Items

- 1. C and D recycling infrastructure needs*
- 2. ZWAC Retreat*

Chair Acuna: I'll entertain a motion for Adjournment

Commissioner Cathy Gattuso moves to adjourn the meeting

2nd by Commissioner Ian Steyaert

Meeting adjourned at 8:00 pm