



October 15, 2013

Whispers 10-15-13

Questions over Hornsby Bend deal . . . Texas Disposal Systems is raising concerns about a contract that would award the right to haul and process biosolids (read: the stuff you flush) from the **City of Austin's Hornsby Bend** site. If approved, the deal would cost the city \$4.65 million for a year and would come with two 12-month extensions at the same rate. That total runs to \$13.95 million. The recommended company, **Synagro**, has a history of providing bio-solid service in other Texas municipalities, as does TDS. TDS officials claim that they can provide bio-solid treatment for a lesser amount on-site at Hornsby Bend. The company was not included in the list of finalists provided to Council members. In Council documents, staff argues for an award to Synagro based on the fact that the company offered the lowest bid, and that **Austin Water Utility** staff also recommended the firm. Expect no small amount of pushback from TDS . . . **Home Builders call for fewer regulations . . . The Home Builders Association of Greater Austin** is calling on the city to pull back on the number of new and proposed regulations, claiming they could drive the cost of a new home out of reach for many homebuyers. In a news release, the association called on the **Austin City Council** to cut back on its "aggressive regulatory initiatives that are making it even more expensive for residents to live here." The association says it is concerned about requirements that could add accessibility ramps to new homes and potential increases in water and wastewater fees, as well as a new electric utility line extension fee. The group claims that all the new regulations could add as much as \$10,000 to cost of a new home. The **Texas A&M Real Estate Center** reports that the average home price in Austin is now \$281,300 . . . **Mobile voting set for Senior Centers . . . The Travis County Clerk's Office** has scheduled most mobile voting for senior activity and assisted living facilities at the beginning of the early voting period to help alleviate some of the problems associated with the new **Voter ID Law**. Officials say the early timeframe will allow seniors to determine if they have the proper identification, and if necessary, provide them with enough time to submit a request to vote by mail. The **Nov. 5 Election** is the first election where registered voters will be required to show one of seven forms of approved photo ID in order to cast a vote. Officials in the County Clerk's office recommend that seniors who are not sure if they have the proper identification to vote in person should sign up to vote by mail. Voting by mail does not require a photo ID and is available to registered voters who are 65 years of age or older, disabled, or will be absent from the county during the entire voting period. Voters may fax in or mail a request to vote by mail. Requests must be received in the Clerk's Office by Oct. 25 . . . **Acevedo to discuss officer involved shootings . . . Austin Police Chief Art Acevedo** is the featured speaker Wednesday at the **Metropolitan Breakfast Club**. The chief will discuss how officer-involved shootings are investigated, including the involvement of the **US Justice Department** in these incidents. Members should reserve a spot on the MBC website. The meeting is set for 7am at **The University of Texas Club** in **Darrell K Royal Memorial Stadium**. . . . **Meetings . . . The Austin City**

Council will hold a work session at 9am in the Boards and Commissions Room at City Hall . . . The **Council Public Health and Human Services Commission** meets at 3pm in the Boards and Commissions Room at City Hall . . . The **Zoning and Platting Commission** meets at 6pm in Council Chambers at City Hall . . . The **Travis County Commissioners Court** meets at 9am in Chambers at 700 Lavaca St. . . . The **Williamson County Commissioners Court** meets at 9:30am in the Williamson County Courthouse in Georgetown . . . The **Hays County Commissioners Court** meets at 9am in the Hays County Courthouse in San Marcos.

©2013 In Fact Daily All Rights Reserved