



July 28, 2014

Whispers 7-28-14

Nerds seek more library money . . . Self-described nerd **J.C. Dwyer** and 900 other citizens have signed a petition urging the **City Council** to put more funding into **Austin's libraries** this year. Dwyer says he and others have had productive conversations with several members of Council and their staff and feels like they have a good chance to increase the limited funds that caused libraries to cut their hours several years ago. They "run a pretty tight ship," he said. "They just barely have enough resources to do their job." Last year's priority was getting enough funds to put **RFID (radio frequency identification)** in the books of each branch to cut down on theft. In addition to the petition, Dwyer's group has sponsored a letter writing campaign, which produced a multitude of hand-written letters, including some from children, to get Council's attention . . . **Council returns for budget hearing . . .** On Thursday, Council members will hold their first budget work session since May, officially ending their summer break. That's going to be at **Town Lake Center** at 9:30 a.m. We hope the staff has figured out an easy way to make **Wi-Fi** available to everyone. That's just one of the little things that has cropped up as a problem since **City Hall** has been under reconstruction . . . **Former commissioner seeking to clear her name . . . Daniela Ochoa Gonzalez**, who resigned from the city's **Zero Waste Advisory Commission** after the **City Auditor** issued a report saying that she had improperly participated in matters before the commission regarding **the company she had contracted with, Texas Disposal Systems**, is seeking action at Tuesday's meeting of the city's **Ethics Review Commission**. **(The above sentence has been corrected to reflect that Ochoa Gonzalez was a contractor and not an employee of TDS.)** Through her attorney, **Mariano Conde de Frankenberg**, Ochoa Gonzalez has asked the commission to state that the **City Auditor Kenneth Mory** exceeded his authority. Specifically, Ochoa Gonzalez wants the commission to find that **City Code** does not give the auditor any authority to conclude that a City official violated conflicts of interest provisions and to publicize such findings to the City Council. According to Frankenberg, both of these responsibilities reside solely with the **Ethics Review Commission**. The commission already has on its agenda a staff report on the auditor's procedures in this case and will consider whether to file their own complaint against Ochoa Gonzalez . . . **Hearing on 'Source of Income' protections . . .** The **Austin Human Rights Commission** will consider a recommendation to the **City Council** to add "**Source of Income**" protections to the city's **Housing Discrimination Ordinance** at its regular meeting today. The commission will take public comments. Source of Income protections are designed to keep low-income renters from discrimination because they derive all or part of their income from public assistance. The **Austin Community Development Commission** will consider a similar recommendation at its regular meeting Aug. 12. Today's meeting is set for 5:30 p.m. at the **Neighborhood Housing and Community Development Department**, 1000 East 11th Street . . **Travis County HR seeks changes in personnel policies . . . Travis County's Human Resources**

Management Department is seeking two changes to the **County Code**. The department wants to revise its **Drug and Alcohol policy** to encourage, instead of penalize, people seeking help for substance abuse through the HR department. The department also wants to revise County Code to add a **Catastrophic Sick Leave Policy**, which would allow eligible employees to donate and receive hours from a pool of donated hours for paid time off. Employees could get extra paid time off hours after they exhaust their sick leave balance in cases of catastrophic injury or illness.

Commissioners discussed the proposed changes last week and the items will be back on the agenda Tuesday. . . . **Meetings** . . . The **Capital Metro Transportation**

Authority board meets at noon at Capital Metro, 2910 East Fifth Street . . . The **Design Commission** meets at 6 p.m. in the Boards and Commissions Room at City Hall

The **Library Commission** meets at 6 p.m. at the Austin History Center, 810 Guadalupe Street . . . The **Historic Landmark Commission** meets at 7 p.m. in One Texas Center, 505 Barton Springs Road . . .

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