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## Council members disavow Gonzalez audit

On Thursday, City Council approved a resolution that backs away from a City Auditor's report associated with the fraught ethics review of former Zero Waste Advisory Commissioner Daniela Ochoa Gonzalez.

Though the measure initially passed on consent, Council Member Mike Martinez, who sponsored the item, moved to reconsider the motion so Council Member Kathie Tovo could participate in the vote.

Tovo had been off the dais at the time of the consent vote. When she returned, she voted to approve the measure. That action made the vote unanimous.

The resolution directs the auditor's office to print a "conspicuous notice" on the first page of the audit report that reads, "Notice: This Report has not been accepted by the Austin City Council and is subject" to the provisions of the resolution.

In addition, the resolution "thanks ... Gonzalez for her service to our community on the Zero Waste Advisory Commission and her commitment to helping Austin move toward its Zero Waste goals."

The report in question said that Gonzalez had held a job that conflicted with her service on the ZWAC. In its wake, Gonzalez resigned from the commission, and eventually lost her job over the allegations.

Council also approved a set of actions that more broadly address larger concerns associated with the Gonzalez case. The Martinez resolution instructs the offices of the City Auditor, the Ethics Review Commission, and the Auditor's Integrity to clarify the ethics complaint process.

A resolution from Council Member Bill Spelman also addresses more general issues. That document instructs staff to begin the process of changing code to move boards and commissions ethics review entirely under the purview of the ERC.

The commission will offer its comments on that suggestion before final code language is approved.

Still lingering are apparent issues with legal counsel for the City Auditor's office (<http://www.austinmonitor.com/stories/2014/10/council-double-take-ethics-complaints/>). Spelman, however, suggested that progress has been made in regard to discussion of those matters.

Texas Campaign for the Environment Executive Director Robin Schneider, who has advocated for Gonzalez, offered a statement. "This must be a wake-up call — Austin's system has failed to provide a simple means of due process, and if it weren't for the extraordinary action taken by the Council, Daniela Ochoa would have had no means to clear her name. We need strong democratic accountability if we are going to protect the public interest. We're looking forward to seeing Council rectify the process which put Daniela in this position."