

SUBJECT: Creating a municipal management district for certain land in Austin

COMMITTEE: County Affairs — favorable, without amendment

VOTE: 6 ayes — Coleman, Anderson, Biedermann, Cole, Dominguez, Rosenthal
0 nays
3 absent — Bohac, Huberty, Stickland

SENATE VOTE: On final passage, May 8 — 31-0

WITNESSES: No public hearing

BACKGROUND: It has been suggested that the Lions Municipal Golf Course in Austin, known locally as "Muny," which currently is owned by the University of Texas at Austin and leased by the city, should be preserved as green space and for its historical significance.

DIGEST: SB 2553 would establish the Save Historic Muny District to preserve the land used for the Lions Municipal Gold Course in Austin as a golf course, publicly available parkland, or a combination of these uses.

Purpose and governance. The district would be a municipal management district located in certain areas of Austin described in the bill. Its establishment would not preclude the preservation of the land as a functioning golf course nor would it require a person to sell the land to the district or the City of Austin or enter into an agreement with the district.

The district would be governed by a board of five directors. Their appointments and terms are specified in the bill.

Activities. The district, using any money available, could acquire, construct, operate, maintain, or finance any improvement project or service allowed to municipal management districts. The district could contract with a governmental or private entity to carry out any of these

actions, which would be considered governmental functions or services for the purposes of interlocal cooperation contracts.

The district could not exercise the power of eminent domain.

Funding. The district could enter into a contract with the city to allow the city to provide revenue from fees collected from municipally owned utility customers in the district in exchange for the district providing an improvement project or service that provided a public benefit to the city.

The city and district could not enter into a contract for the imposition of a fee unless the fee was approved in an election. If voters approved a ballot proposition for the fee, the district would not be allowed to exceed any limitations imposed on the project by the proposition. If the proposition was not approved, the district could not call a subsequent election on the imposition of a fee for the same proposed project before the first anniversary of the previous election.

The district could charge rates, fares, charges, rents, or other fees but could not impose an assessment, tax, impact fee or standby fee.

The district could accept a gift, grant, or donation from a public or private source and could join and pay dues to a charitable or nonprofit organization that performs a service or provides an activity consistent with the furtherance of the district purpose.

Dissolution. The board would dissolve the district on December 31, 2020, unless a fee had been approved at an election or the district had entered into an agreement with the owner of the Lions Municipal Golf Course that provided for the purchase of the land or a method of preserving the land as a golf course, publicly available parkland, or a combination of those uses.

The bill would take immediate effect if finally passed by a two-thirds record vote of the membership of each house. Otherwise, it would take effect September 1, 2019.