CITY OF RICHARDSON
COUNCIL DISTRICT BOUNDARY COMMISSION
MINUTES – MARCH 6, 2012

The Council District Boundary Commission met March 6, 2012, at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall in the Second Floor Conference room number 206, 411 W. Arapaho Road, Richardson, Texas.

MEMBERS PRESENT:
Bill Hammond, Vice Chair
Gerald Bright, Commission Member
Janet DePuy, Commission Member
Marilyn Frederick, Commission Member
Barry Hand, Commission Member
Thomas Maxwell, Commission Member
Don Bouvier, Commission Member

MEMBERS ABSENT:
David Gantt, Chairman
Eron Linn, Commission Member

CITY STAFF PRESENT:
Michael Spicer, Director of Development Services
Sam Chavez, Asst. Dir. of Dev. Svcs. – Planning
Susan Smith, Asst. Dir. of Dev. Svcs. – Dev. & Eng.
Israel Roberts, Development Review Manager
Keith Krum, Sr. Planner
Chris Shacklett, Planner
Kevin Laughlin, City Attorney
Kathy Welp, Executive Secretary

1. **Meeting convened at 5:35 p.m.**

2. **Minutes of February 21, 2012 meeting.**

   Mr. Bright asked to change the word "ethic" to "ethnic" on page three, seventh paragraph, and Ms. Frederick noted that she was not present for the meeting and her name should be removed from those in attendance.

   Motion: Mr. Bright made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected; second by Ms. Frederick. Motion passed 7-0.

3. **Adopt boundary adjustment criteria.**

   Mr. Krum reviewed the items discussed in the previous meeting highlighting the Federal requirements and presenting a list of discretionary local boundary adjustment criteria for the Members to consider including:

   - Boundaries should keep incumbents in their respective Districts

- Boundaries should respect existing HOA boundaries
- Boundaries should not be precluded from crossing Central Expressway
- Boundaries should account for future growth where possible

Mr. Hand said he thought the second bullet point regarding Homeowners Associations (HOAs) was not as important as the other points and felt it might be advantageous to have two council members representing a single HOA.

Vice Chair Hammond asked what would be the advantages of splitting a HOA.

Mr. Hand stated if a scenario was presented where an issue with diluting minority voting strength could be solved by splitting a HOA boundary, then the HOA boundary should not be the overriding factor in the Members' decision. He added that this criterion was more traditional in nature and suggested the council districts should be divided in a manner that was more geographically appealing.

Ms. Frederick said she appreciated Mr. Hand's opinion, but thought more people identified with their neighborhood associations than with voting precincts. She stated there did not seem to be a scenario where the need to split a HOA boundary would be necessary, and dividing a single HOA between two different districts would not be appropriate.

Mr. Maxwell was not opposed to Mr. Hand's suggestion, but thought the idea of splitting HOA boundaries would not appeal to some of the citizens. Maxwell thought it should be viewed as a concept the Members should consider versus it being a hard and fast rule.

Mr. Hand agreed and said the criterion should not be a mandatory.

Vice Chair Hammond asked to clarify that if the Members came up with a "perfect plan" that divided a HOA between two Districts, the plan should not be discounted because of the HOA boundaries?

Mr. Hand stated that was correct.

Mr. Bright asked if any of the existing options divided any of the HOAs.

Mr. Krum replied that none of the current options divided any of the HOAs.

Mr. Bright stated that HOAs were a natural way for people to come together and if the other criteria were met and the only factor holding up an option was dividing a HOA; then he would say yes to that option.

Vice Chair Hammond pointed out that the criteria are discretionary and if one criterion stood in the way of moving ahead in a logical manner then perhaps that particular criterion should be disregarded.

Ms. Frederick stated that in the future when there is a higher density along Highway 190 and Central Expressway she could see that density tipping the scales and possibly dividing the HOA boundaries into different council districts, but not now.

Mr. Bouvier asked the Members to keep in mind that any new district boundaries would be in place for another ten years and there had been discussions about changing the City Charter to single-member districts and electing the mayor. He added that as a HOA president, he and other presidents were working to bring a sense of unity to their associations and felt that splitting the associations would do more harm than good.

Mr. Hand asked what would be the harm if an association was represented by two council members.

Mr. Bouvier said the HOA presidents had spent a great deal of time trying to get away from divisive issues that sometimes exist in neighborhoods and dividing a neighborhood would only add to a "one side versus the other" type of environment.

Vice Chair Hammond stated that each homeowner within an association would be represented by only one council member whether or not the association was divided.

Mr. Hand reiterated that citizens are allowed to vote for all seven Council members under the current charter. If the Members were looking to break down the traditional ideology and barriers, and there was a perfect plan that presented itself, he would be in favor of exploring options that would cross association boundary lines.

Mr. Krum stated it did not seem that HOA boundaries would be a deciding factor if there were an option that worked in all other aspects.

Vice Chair Hammond replied that it was not something the Members had to consider at present, but could address it at later date if necessary.

Mr. Bright asked if the Members should vote on the proposed criteria.

Mr. Spicer replied that Members should determine the local criteria they want the staff to use to develop and evaluate the options.

Vice Chair Hammond noted that when he was on the Boundary Commission ten years ago, the Members submitted three different plans to the City Council because they could not agree on a single option; however, if they had looked at taking out one of the local criteria it might have helped come up with a perfect plan. He added that if it came to the point that three options were on the table and it was clear that by removing one of the criteria it would provide a perfect plan, the Members should seriously look at that option.

Mr. Spicer stated that the federal criteria were mandatory, and asked if they wanted to keep the local criteria as requirements or guidelines.

Mr. Maxwell said he felt the criterion regarding HOA boundaries should carry less weight compared to the other three criteria.

Mr. Bright suggested that if staff did come up with an option that did not take into consideration association boundaries it should be presented at the next meeting.

Mr. Krum replied an option had been prepared that breached HOA boundaries, but he would continue to work on the material as directed by the Members.

Mr. Krum continued his presentation showing analysis taken from U.S. Census data noting the different ethnic and racial percentages within each district for the current district boundaries.

Vice Chair Hammond said he had looked at the options and noticed that each district had the highest level of a certain minority and wanted to know if there was any reason for the Members to try and change any of that.

Mr. Spicer stated the geographic distribution of minority populations and the concentration of denser multi-family housing resulted in the consistent emergence of the same districts having the highest percentage of the same minority populations in every option produced so far, with District 1 having the highest percentage of Black population, District 2 having the highest percentage of Asian population, and District 3 having the highest percentage Hispanic population in all examples. He added that the federal criteria prohibits diluting minority voting strength, but because Richardson does not have single-member districts and voters may vote for any of the Council candidates regardless of district, this concern is largely mitigated. He also noted that none of the options presented would dilute minority voting strength.

Mr. Krum concluded his presentation by presenting a graphic depicting the location of the HOAs within each District. He added that with future growth in the panhandle, and along Highway 190 and Central Expressway, there could be an increase in the size and number of HOAs.

The Members stated they had arrived at a consensus regarding the boundary adjustment criteria and asked the staff to follow the criteria when preparing future options and information.

4. Review and discuss demographic data and boundary adjustments associated with Options A through D.

Mr. Krum pointed out that the only changes in Options A through D from the information presented at the last meeting was the addition of minority population

information and staff had determined there was consistency across each of the options in terms of the percentage for each group throughout the District.

No further comments were made.

5. **Review and discuss demographic data and boundary adjustments associated with new Options E and F.**

Mr. Krum explained that options E and F were generated in response to the discussion at the last meeting when staff was directed to look at configuring the boundaries in a more vertical alignment.

Mr. Krum noted that Option E would split both the Heights Park and Richardson Heights HOAs and the total deviation would be 9.93%, which was close to the federally mandated maximum of 10% deviation. He added that the demographics for each option (A through F) showed the minority population percentages were basically the same across the board.

Regarding Option F, Mr. Krum said he took the boundaries from Option E and produced a version that did not split the two HOAs, but the percentage of deviation exceeded the federally mandated maximum of 10%.

Mr. Maxwell asked what the motivation was for establishing the boundary line between Districts 1 and 4 in Options E and F because he felt if the boundary were moved to the west it would even out the deviation percentage.

Mr. Krum replied moving the boundary west would not take in much more population and would split the Highland Terrace HOA.

Vice Chair Hammond noted that the federal criteria stated the boundaries should be compact and contiguous and Options E and F did not seem to fulfill the "compact" portion of that criterion.

Mr. Krum confirmed that the vertical alignment of the districts did tend to reduce the compactness of the districts.

Mr. Maxwell asked Mr. Hand what his reasoning was for wanting a vertical alignment of the Districts.

Mr. Hand replied he thought it might be useful to break down some of the traditional barriers and spread the influence of Council members to different areas. An example would be to have District 4 stretch from the northern city limits to Spring Valley on the south.

Vice Chair Hammond asked Mr. Hand to define what he meant when he used the term "useful?"

Mr. Hand asked the Members to go back and look at Option A, which had received comments from his neighbors that it would be the worse possible scenario because it combined the most blighted and under-represented (lack of appointments to board and commissions) areas of town in one District. However, Options E and F spread the influence of Districts 1 and 3 north, and the influence of District 4 south.

Ms. Frederick stated that by doing what Mr. Hand suggested it would add almost all warehouse property to District 1.

Mr. Hand stated his suggestion would include the future growth area of Highways 190 and Central Expressway. He pointed out that the largest negative deviation was in District 1, and if there was future growth and development along Spring Valley, it would increase the population in that District and the total deviation would stay under the 10% limit. In addition, the advantage of redevelopment in District 3 would be the replacement of one-for-one and not add population to the City, but the future growth in District 1 could be much higher.

Mr. Bouvier noted that District 3, which includes the University of Texas at Dallas (UTD), would have the higher population growth. Also, since the Council Districts were basically an "at large" representation he thought it was not as important.

Ms. DePuy said she liked the idea of a north/south alignment because it would bring together two different kinds of communities, but the amount of deviation was likely not enough to allow for future growth.

Mr. Hand stated he like the idea of District 4 crossing Central Expressway and if more area was moved into District 1 it would be beneficial.

Mr. Maxwell suggested moving the north side of District 1 to the other side of Central Expressway.

Mr. Hand asked if the southern boundary of District 4 could be moved north to Spring Valley and would that help with the percentage of deviation.

Mr. Krum replied that the area between the boundary and Spring Valley did not contain that much population so the increase would not be significant.

Mr. Spicer asked if the Members were concerned that some options were too close to the 10% deviation because as long the percentage was below 10% they complied with the federal directive. He added that the last boundary change adopted by Council in 2002 had a 9.3% deviation.

Mr. Maxwell said that although the percentage of deviation was below the federal mandate, he thought the public might not be in favor an option that was too close to 10%.

Vice Chair Hammond thought that the point raised by Mr. Maxwell, along with the fact that Options E and F were not compact, might prove to be problematic.

Mr. Laughlin advised that part of the compact consideration often dealt with traditional boundaries of neighborhoods and commonality of interests in different parts of town; however, secondary elements of "compact and contiguous" criteria could be additional factors to be considered under a single-member district.

Mr. Laughlin explained that the common interests in the southern portion of the City that are different from those of the north could be a factor that should be considered depending on the nature of what the interests were.

Mr. Bright asked Mr. Hand for his rationale for breaking down traditional boundaries or barriers and how it could be explained to the public.

Mr. Hand replied that if you compare either Options E or F with the current districts, the area is a little larger if measured diagonally than in the vertical alignment; however, he felt it was important to break down some of the old barriers and not put all the under-represented areas in one district. In addition, spreading the influence from the top of a district in the vertical alignment option to the bottom would also balance out some of the under-represented areas.

Ms. Frederick asked if Mr. Hand thought Option C would be acceptable.

Mr. Hand replied that Option C was acceptable because it added the Greenwood Hills and Lake Park Estates neighborhoods to District 3 and kept the Highland Terrance neighborhood in with District 1. He added that generally speaking, Option C did not bring anything new to the table other than District 4 crossing over Central Expressway.

Ms. Frederick pointed out that Option C also pulled the Mark Twain neighborhood into District 4 and that was more toward the goal of increasing representation in under-represented areas. She added that District 1 in Option C provided more coverage than in other options.

Mr. Hand countered that Option C was not any more compact than Option E and that it did not have as much room for growth as Options E or F.

Ms. DePuy stated that Option C contained some of the vertical alignment desired by Mr. Hand, but was more compact than Option E.

Vice Chair Hammond suggested that District 4 had the least amount of population deviation to allow for future growth than any of the other plans.

Mr. Hand replied that if the Members looked at Options E or F, the negative deviation is lower and has more room for growth. However, in Option C, by the time the Bush Station and UTD grow it would push the deviation too high.

Vice Chair Hammond asked if staff had enough information to refine the current options or formulate other options.

Mr. Spicer replied that staff had sufficient information relative to the criteria and asked the Members what they would like the staff to bring back to the next meeting.

Vice Chair Hammond directed staff to use the criteria to give Members the pros and cons of each option so they could use that information to make a better analysis of the options.

6. Commission direction to staff concerning next steps.

The Members directed staff to use the boundary adjustment criteria to formulate pros and cons of each option and present that information at the next meeting. They would also like to see the actual acreage of each district for each option.

7. Set next meeting date.

The next meeting will be on Tuesday, March 20, 2012, at 5:30 p.m.

8. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 6:36 p.m.

Bill Hammond, Vice Chair
Council District Boundary Commission