# CITY OF RICHARDSON
# COUNCIL DISTRICT BOUNDARY COMMISSION
# MINUTES – MARCH 20, 2012

The Council District Boundary Commission met March 20, 2012 at 5:30 p.m. at City Hall in Second Floor Conference Room 202, 411 W. Arapaho Road, Richardson, Texas.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**
David Gantt, Chairman
Gerald Bright, Commission Member
Janet DePuy, Commission Member
Marilyn Frederick, Commission Member
Barry Hand, Commission Member
Thomas Maxwell, Commission Member
Eron Linn, Commission Member

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**
Bill Hammond, Vice Chair
Don Bouvier, Commission Member

**CITY STAFF PRESENT:**
Michael Spicer, Director of Development Services
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 5:33 p.m.**

2. **Minutes of March 6, 2012 meeting.**

   **Motion:** Ms. DePuy made a motion to approve the minutes as presented; second by Mr. Maxwell. Motion passed 4-0 (quorum present, but not full membership).

3. **Review and discuss demographic data, physical characteristics, and criteria associated with Options A - F.**

   Mr. Krum reviewed the Council District Boundary criteria including the four federally required and the four local discretionary criteria.

   Mr. Spicer stated that in response to the Members' direction at the previous meeting, staff had prepared an evaluation of each option which was provided to Commission members prior to the meeting. In preparing the evaluation, Mr. Spicer stated it was staff's objective to complete the assignment in the most objective manner possible. Each criterion for each option was assigned a score and the scores for all criteria were then tallied for each option, producing a composite score for each option. The resulting composite score provided a relative indicator of how well each option fulfilled the criteria. The higher the composite score the better the option satisfied the criteria taken as a whole.

Mr. Spicer stated that feedback concerning the evaluation had been received from Commissioner Hand prior to the meeting. He stated Mr. Hand had suggested that evaluation of each option's total deviation might be better measured by a score that simply recognizes whether a particular option complied with the 10% threshold requirement or not, as opposed to staff's method of assigning scores for this criteria based on a comparative ranking of each option's percentage of total deviation. He added that Mr. Hand also observed that the scoring system appeared to suggest that contiguity might be more important than preserving minority voting strength.

Mr. Spicer stated that in response to Mr. Hand's observations staff prepared a revised evaluation that included reconsideration of the scores for the total deviation and contiguity criteria. Option C emerged as the top ranked option in the revised analysis with Option B second. Overall, Options A, B, and C appeared to more fully satisfy the criteria when compared to Options D, E, and F. He added that the analysis should be viewed as but one method to consider the relative merits of each option and not a definitive determination that must be followed.

Mr. Gantt commented that he thought the analysis was well done and asked if there were any questions for staff.

Mr. Hand stated he understood the weighting process, but asked if the Members were supposed to judge compactness as the highest criteria. He added that with the information presented, it made it look like compactness was five times more important than any of the other criteria.

Regarding the weighting process used with the revised evaluation, Mr. Krum replied that all criteria except compactness and contiguity were scored based on whether each criterion complied yielding a score of "1", or did not comply yielding a score of "0". In contrast to the other criteria, however, the extent of compactness and contiguity can only be evaluated comparatively, as there are no precise threshold measurements of compactness or contiguity. Consequently, these two criteria were ranked among all options based on scores derived from perimeter/area measurements and the number of adjacent boundaries associated with each district in each option, respectively.

Mr. Spicer stated that staff had recognized there might be disagreement with the weighting of criteria and that was why advisory text had been included noting there would still be a level of subjectivity involved.

On the issue of contiguity, Mr. Spicer said staff had reexamined the criterion following comments from Mr. Hand and revised the scoring. The districts fell into three groups with like scores: those that had the most districts that were contiguous to other districts received 3 points; the districts with the next highest contiguity received 2 points; and the one with the least contiguity received 1 point. He added that if the Members preferred a different methodology by which to evaluate the criteria, staff could prepare another evaluation based on that methodology.

Mr. Hand maintained that a district was either compact or it was not, which would mean that it received a "1" or a "0" and felt this process would generate a more consistent mathematical formula. He also wanted to know why "Ethnic Balance" was not part of the criteria.

Mr. Laughlin explained that in theory the Members should not be taking race into consideration, but the Voting Rights Act requires it to be done so there are some federal criteria that could carry more weight than the discretionary criteria. An example would be the 10% deviation; an option could be ranked whether it did or did not meet the criteria, but when a district boundary plan is presented to a federal judge, it would likely receive a more favorable consideration if it were closer to the ideal district number, that is having the lowest possible total deviation.

Chairman Gantt reiterated that the information presented was simply a tool or guide and asked if the Members wanted to suggest a combination between the two analyses to determine what might be the best option.

Mr. Maxwell asked if any of the options had changed since the last meeting.

Mr. Krum replied that they had not, but there was additional information provided regarding each option.

Mr. Spicer reminded the Members that if they wanted additional options they should direct staff to prepare what they would like to see.

Mr. Hand asked if the next step was for Members to make a motion and approve one or more of the options.

Mr. Krum replied that a public hearing would need to be scheduled before any option was presented to the Council, and since it would entail a more involved process, it is likely it would not take place on the same night as a regularly scheduled City Plan Commission meeting. Additionally, a public hearing notice would have to be published in the newspaper in advance of the hearing so the earliest date would be at least three weeks out.

Mr. Spicer said staff would receive advice from counsel as to how the public hearing should be structured, but asked the Members if they wanted to bring all six options forward or reduce the number.

Chairman Gantt stated that the number of options should be reduced, noting that some of the options were similar and asked the Members if they wanted to eliminate a few and possibly take 3 or 4 to the public hearing.

Mr. Maxwell said he thought Option F should be eliminated because it was over the 10% deviation.

Mr. Hand asked if there was a way to tweak Option F to bring it into compliance, or change Option E so it did not split the HOAs.

Mr. Krum replied that the only difference between Options E and F was the change in the boundary between District 1 and 3.

Mr. Maxwell stated, in response to Mr. Hand's question, that Option E was the way to make Option F work.

Chairman Gantt concurred with Mr. Maxwell and asked the Members if Option F could be removed from consideration.

Mr. Hand asked if the Cottonwood Creek HOA could be added to District 3 in Option F, and what the ramifications might be.

Mr. Krum replied that the Cottonwood Creek HOA could be shifted to District 3, but it would require estimating population because census blocks would be split as a result.

Chairman Gantt asked if that meant splitting the area down an alley and, if so, would that be considered an "easily identifiable border" as required by federal criteria.

Mr. Spicer asked if there was anything that would preclude the splitting of a census block.

Mr. Laughlin replied that one thing he had not seen in the Options was a consideration towards county voting precincts because it could end up having people vote in different county precincts depending on where the lines were drawn and how the polling places were set up.

Mr. Krum remarked that voters in the City voted for all Council places.

Mr. Laughlin replied that he was aware of that, but suggested looking at County voting boundaries – where the borders impact neighborhoods, streets, landmarks, and the census block boundaries, and that might help determine which option is better. He thought there might be a chance that some of the criteria could be violated under any of the options.

Mr. Spicer stated that the point was whether the District Boundary Commission has a sound basis for doing so if certain of the criteria were violated.

Mr. Laughlin agreed, adding that keeping neighborhoods together; maintaining population balance; and not diluting the minority voting strength would be most significantly viewed by the federal judge as all positives.

Mr. Spicer asked if all block data were kept intact under the current configurations.

Mr. Krum replied that no census blocks were split by any of the options.

Mr. Hand asked if Option F would be compliant if more area was moved from District 4 to District 3.

Mr. Krum responded that it likely could be compliant.

Mr. Hand stated that he felt it would be beneficial to have at least two distinctly different approaches represented at the public hearing: one from Options A, B, or C; and then one from Options E or F.

Ms. DePuy said she felt the splitting of the HOAs might be an issue at the public hearings, but agreed that taking two dissimilar options to the public hearings would make sense.

Mr. Laughlin commented that given the way HOAs had developed and formed a community of interest in Richardson, as opposed to other cities, their preservation is a factor to be considered.

Ms. Frederick asked Mr. Hand what goals he hoped to accomplish by adding area from District 4 into District 3 in Option F.

Mr. Hand replied that it would distribute the Council member's influence and representation in a new way and break down some decades-old barriers including crossing Central Expressway. In contrast to this approach, Mr. Hand stated that by arranging the districts east/west, the lower income, under-represented population would remain in the same districts, and the higher income, higher-represented population would likewise remain in the same districts, which was not healthy for the City.

Ms. DePuy pointed out that Option C disregarded the artificial boundary presented by Central Expressway.

Ms. Frederick stated that Option C would likely be more palatable to the public.

Chairman Gantt summarized that the Members did not want to take six options forward; Options E and F should be eliminated; and some of the elements of Option F should be used to create a new option – Option G.

Mr. Krum asked if the Members wanted to eliminate any of the other options, or wait until Option G has been prepared and presented.

Mr. Hand suggested eliminating Option D because he felt it stratified District 3, divided Districts 1 and 4 via Central Expressway, and felt it was too similar to Options A and B.

Chairman Gantt pointed out that Option D was the most compliant with only 1.50% deviation and asked how the option rated in the analysis.

Mr. Krum noted that Option D ranked fourth behind Options A, B, and C in both the original and revised analyses.

Chairman Gantt suggested the Members study Options A, B, C and D and reduce the group down to 2 options, with the idea that Option G would be presented during the next meeting. He added that at the next meeting a decision could be made on the three options to be presented at the public hearing.

Mr. Maxwell stated the group should come to a consensus on the criteria of greatest importance to be used to evaluate the options before presenting the information to the public.

Chairman Gantt proposed the Members take a closer look at the material presented, think about the criteria as it related to the options, and be prepared to express their views at the next meeting.

Mr. Spicer asked if the Members would like the staff to weight certain criteria more or less than others.

Mr. Bright thought that based on legal counsel's advice, the deviation should be rated more than just 1's and 0's.

Ms. DePuy stated that the federal requirements should carry more weight than the discretionary requirements.

Chairman Gantt stated he felt the federal criteria and the percentage of deviation should carry more weight than the discretionary criteria.

4. **Commission direction to staff concerning next steps.**

   The Members directed staff to delete Options E and F and advised staff to prepare a new Option G similar to Option F, but with the Cottonwood Creek Neighborhood Association shifting from District 4 to District 3. The Members will review Options A, B, C, D and G at the next meeting with the goal of selecting 3 to 4 options to present at a subsequent public hearing.

5. **Set next meeting date.**

   The next meeting was set for Tuesday, April 3, 2012, at 5:30 p.m.

6. **Adjourn**

   The meeting was adjourned at 6:19 p.m.

David Gantt, Chairman
Council District Boundary Commission