CITY OF RICHARDSON
COUNCIL DISTRICT BOUNDARY COMMISSION
MINUTES – MAY 15, 2012

The Council District Boundary Commission met May 15, 2012, at 7:45 p.m. at City Hall in the City Council Chambers on the first floor, 411 W. Arapaho Road, Richardson, Texas.

MEMBERS PRESENT: David Gantt, Chairman
Bill Hammond, Vice Chair
Gerald Bright, Commission Member
Janet DePuy, Commission Member
Barry Hand, Commission Member
Thomas Maxwell, Commission Member
Don Bouvier, Alternate Commission Member
Eron Linn, Alternate Commission Member

MEMBER ABSENT: Marilyn Frederick, Commission Member

CITY STAFF PRESENT: Michael Spicer, Director of Development Services
Sam Chavez, Asst. Dir. of Dev. Svcs. – Planning
Keith Krum, Sr. Planner
Kevin Laughlin, City Attorney
Kathy Welp, Executive Secretary

MEETING

Chairman Gantt asked Mr. Bouvier and Mr. Linn to alternately vote in place of Ms. Frederick who was not able to attend the meeting.

1. **Meeting convened at 7:51p.m.**

2. **Minutes of the April 24, 2012 and May 1, 2012 meetings.**

   Motion: Vice Chair Hammond made a motion to approve the April 24, 2012, minutes as presented; second by Ms. DePuy. Motion approved 7-0.

   Motion: Mr. Bright made a motion to approve the May 1, 2012, minutes as presented; second by Mr. Maxwell. Motion approved 7-0.

3. **Presentation of revised Option 2 boundaries and additional information requested for the district boundary realignment options under consideration.**

   Mr. Krum presented an introduction to redistricting noting the City Charter required the City Council to appoint a commission every ten years following the U.S. Census to review Council District Boundaries to ensure population equality. He stated the federal Voting Rights Act requires that the difference between the most populous district and least populous district should not exceed a 10 percent deviation, adding that the City's current deviation is 32.43 percent.

Mr. Krum reviewed the criteria the Commission considered while determining new Council district boundaries, including:

Federal (required)	Local (discretionary)
Population deviation between most populous and least populous district should not exceed 10%.	Boundaries should keep incumbents in their respective districts.
Boundaries should be compact and contiguous.	Boundaries should respect existing HOA boundaries.
Boundaries should follow roadways or other easily identifiable physical features.	Boundaries should not be precluded from crossing Central Expressway.
Boundaries should not dilute minority voting strength.	Boundaries should account for future growth where possible.

Mr. Krum stated the Commission had originally reviewed eight options; three of which were forwarded to the public hearing on April 24th for input and consideration. Based on concerns expressed regarding Option 2 and its proposed boundaries between Districts 3 and 4 which placed the Cottonwood Creek and Canyon Creek Homeowners Associations (HOA) in different districts, Option 2 was subsequently revised. The result, Option 2a, reunited the Cottonwood Creek and Canyon Creek HOAs in District 4 and shifted the TI multi-family housing area to District 3.

Chairman Gantt pointed out that even though Options 2 and 2a had the highest percentage of deviation among all options; Option 2a reduced that deviation by one full percentage point.

Mr. Krum concluded his presentation by reviewing the individual options and examining the proposed changes to the four Council Districts.

4. Public Hearing to receive comments related to the district boundary realignment options under consideration.

Chairman Gantt opened the public hearing and noted there were five individuals wishing to address the Commission.

Mr. Chip Pratt, 2700 W. Prairie Creek, Richardson, Texas, representing the Canyon Creek HOA stated the board of the HOA voted unanimously to support Option 1 because it breaks the east/west boundaries created by U.S. Highway 75 and strongly honored the spirit of compactness. He added that while the citizens of Richardson vote for all representatives, Option 1 ensured the representatives would be more familiar with local issues in their respective districts.

Mr. David Knepper, 101 Shadywood Lane, Richardson, Texas, stated that he was in favor of Option 3 because of the demographics, but could also support Option 2a if necessary.

Mr. Jason Lemons, 1119 Wildwood Lane, Richardson, Texas, stated that he was in support of Options 2a or 3, and opposed to Option 1. He added that the two options he supported better distributed the business centers among districts, whereas Option 1 would cause the loss of business diversity in District 3.

Chairman Gantt asked Mr. Lemons if he had to choose between 2a or 3 which he would choose.

Mr. Lemons replied that he preferred Option 2a because he felt it met the federal criterion of compactness with the north/south design.

Commissioner Bouvier asked for clarification about the comment regarding the loss of business in District 3.

Mr. Lemons replied there would be the perception that District 3 would have more retail businesses as opposed to professional services businesses. He added that Options 2a and 3 offered the best options for business diversity of the three options under consideration.

Mr. Andrew Laska, 502 Hyde Park, Richardson, Texas, President of Richardson Heights Neighborhood Association (NA), stated the NA was opposed to Option 1 and neutral on Options 2a and 3. He expressed the view that median income information provided to the Commission did not adequately reflect the trends of income in the districts and asked the Commission to devalue that information in their considerations.

Mr. Laska stated he wanted to expand on Mr. Lemons' comments and felt he was referring to major employment centers (i.e., Fossil, UTD, Telecom Corridor, etc.), and noted that Option 1 eliminated every employment center in the City from District 3. However, in Options 2a and 3, employment centers would be located within District 3.

Regarding age of housing, Mr. Laska stated Options 2a and 3 divided housing stock among the districts in a more equitable fashion, whereas Option 1 would keep most of the older homes in one district. In addition, some of the lowest priced housing would be located in District 3 under Option 1.

Chairman Gantt asked Mr. Laska if he had to choose between 2a or 3, which he would choose.

Mr. Laska replied that with balancing all the criteria, he would pick Option 2a, but could also live with Option 3.

Ms. DePuy asked for clarification of the statement regarding employment centers in Options 2a and 3 and where those centers would be located.

Mr. Laska replied the Fossil and UTD employment centers would be in Districts 1 and 4 respectively in Option 1, but in Option 2a they would both be in District 3. In Option 3, only Fossil would be located in District 3.

Mr. Maxwell pointed out that in Option 3, District 1 would end up with no employment centers and questioned if that was a valid criterion.

Mr. Laska replied that no option would be perfect based on all the criteria that had to be considered, but felt Option 2a presented the better option.

Mr. Linn asked if Mr. Laska was in support of Option 2a because it distributed the business centers and housing values more equally as opposed to the other options.

Mr. Laska replied that Option 2a, in his opinion, divided the home values, home age, and employment centers more equally than the other options.

Vice Chair Hammond asked why the age of the homes, homes values, and median incomes were relevant to redistricting.

Mr. Laska replied that the issue of urban/suburban decline often revolves around trends of income, which can dictate housing choices, including the age of homes, maintenance involved, size of homes, and the challenges associated with those issues are often different in different parts of a city. Therefore, if the challenges are more evenly distributed among elected officials they would tend to pay more attention to those issues.

Vice Chair Hammond stated that he did not see the relevance of the items mentioned, pointing out that they were not identified as part of the federal criteria. He added that what the Commission was considering, outside the federal criteria, were historical considerations made by the City over the years.

Mr. Laska agreed there were several criteria the Commission considered that was not part of the federal criteria, but in view of the changes the City has experienced over the years it was reasonable to also consider other factors that represented new challenges to the City.

Mr. Bouvier asked if Mr. Laska was concerned that under Option 2a all seven Council members could potentially be elected from either north or south sides of the City.

Mr. Laska replied that he was not concerned. He explained that in Option 2a, if the District 1 representative lived north of Renner Road, it was his experience that the representative would be aware of what was going on in the entire district, not just the representative's immediate neighborhood. Therefore, he was more in favor of Option 2a because that option better distributes the diversity of neighborhood characteristics in the north and south of the City among almost every council district.

Mr. Hand stated he appreciated Mr. Laska's analytical perspective and was disappointed that the Commission had challenged him but none of the other speakers.

Mr. Charlie Newton, 2106 Goldenrod Drive, Richardson, Texas, stated that, based on the information provided, he preferred Option 2a over the other options because it was the most balanced.

Chairman Gantt thanked those who had come out to the meeting and with no further comments, closed the public hearing.

5. Take necessary action related to the Commission's consideration of the district boundary realignment options.

Chairman Gantt stated that the Commission's next action would be to have further discussion on the three options under consideration and then select which option or options should be sent to the City Council.

Regarding Option 1, Mr. Bright asked staff if the area north of Centennial Boulevard would be located in District 3; if the area south of Centennial would be in District 1; and would a neighborhood be divided.

Mr. Krum replied that Centennial Boulevard would be the border between the two districts and would not split a neighborhood.

Mr. Maxwell stated that information regarding median income, housing age, value and rental percentages would be useful in helping the Commission make a decision since all three of the options complied with the other local and federal criteria.

Mr. Linn stated the comments regarding home values and employment centers were interesting because Option 2a seemed to be the best option to equitably distribute those areas as opposed to the other two options.

Mr. Hand agreed with Mr. Maxwell's statement that all three options met the federal and local criteria, and felt the decision on which option was preferable came down to the message and perception the Commission wanted to send. He added that the City was a very homogeneous, middle-class City and if the citizens would get out and study the City they would understand that an elected representative from the southern portion of the City could understand issues in the north, especially since the City was only 3 miles across in any one direction.

Mr. Hand reviewed the pros and cons of each option noting:

- Option 1 – Would leave the districts most similarly configured to how they currently exist with the exception of removing employment centers from District 3, and retains all the older, under-represented neighborhoods in one district.

- Option 2a – Business centers are better balanced and it meets the Council's goal of doing something bold.

- Option 3 – Adds compactness to the districts, places potential redevelopment neighborhoods in District 1, and extends Districts 3 and 4 across U.S. Highway 75.

Mr. Hand stated he preferred Option 2a and would like the Commission to forward two of the three options to the City Council for consideration as opposed to all three.

Mr. Bright stated he supported Option 3 because he felt it best met the federal and local criteria as opposed to Option 1. He added that he would not support Option 2a because it did not meet the compactness criterion, and had the possibility of diluting the voting strength by having all the elected officials from one geographic area.

Mr. Bouvier concurred with Mr. Bright regarding Option 2a, but stated he was in support of Option 1.

Vice Chair Hammond stated that although Option 2a was bold, he thought it was radical in its approach and concurred with Mr. Bright and Mr. Bouvier. In addition, the testimony received from the public was somewhat ambivalent about Options 2a and 3, but he was in favor of Option 3.

Ms. DePuy concurred with the earlier statement that people should get out and study the City because it is only 3 miles in any direction, but pointed out that most people shop and stay within their individual neighborhoods. She stated she was in favor of Option 3, but preferred that both Options 2a and 3 be sent to the City Council for consideration.

Mr. Maxwell stated he liked Option 2a because it was balanced in regards to the criteria, including the employment centers. He added that his second choice would be Option 3, but felt it lacked a major employment center in District 1.

Chairman Gantt stated that all of the options before the Commission met the federal and local criteria or they would not have been included for consideration. He added that he favored Option 3; was concerned that Option 1 grouped all of the oldest housing in one district; and Option 2a increased the likelihood that all elected representatives could be from one part of the City. However, he was in favor of sending Options 2a and 3 to the City Council for consideration.

Mr. Hand agreed that Option 2a presented the possibility that all elected representatives could come from an area north of Campbell Road, but pointed out that in Option 1, all the representatives could be from one block south of Campbell; and in Option 3, they could all be from north of one block south of Arapaho.

Mr. Hand concluded his comments by expressing confidence that the elected officials would be able to capably represent any area within their districts, either north or south.

Mr. Bright added that under the current Council district boundaries, District 1 did not have a major employment center, which was the same argument stated earlier regarding Option 3.

Motion: Mr. Hand made a motion to forward Options 2a and 3 to the City Council for consideration; second by Mr. Maxwell.

The motion passed 5-2 with Mr. Bouvier and Mr. Bright opposed.

6. Adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:06 p.m.

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David Gantt, Chairman
Council District Boundary Commission