

MINUTES

BE IT REMEMBERED, That on this 26TH DAY of OCTOBER, 2021, Commissioners Court of Fort Bend County, Texas, met at a special meeting with the following present:

KP GEORGE	COUNTY JUDGE
VINCENT MORALES	COMMISSIONER PRECINCT 1
GRADY PRESTAGE	COMMISSIONER PRECINCT 2
ANDY MEYERS	COMMISSIONER PRECINCT 3
KEN R. DEMERCHANT	COMMISSIONER PRECINCT 4
LAURA RICHARD	COUNTY CLERK

When the following were heard and the following orders were passed:

1. Call to Order.

Call to Order by Judge KP George at 10:02 a.m.

Judge George commended the County's constituents for their interests in this important process of redistricting. Judge stated the Commissioners originally adopted a timeline, as state legislature had not yet completed their work in Austin. The court has learned the last day to adopt the 2022 Political Map for Fort Bend County is November 29, 2021, which is more time than initially anticipated. Judge George has asked our IT Department to continue to receive map options from the public and will ask the court to ratify and amend the timeline for the public's feedback.

2. Receive Public Comments:

The Public is invited to attend and participate in these meetings. Those wishing to address the Court should complete and turn in a public participation request form provided for this purpose. Each speaker will be asked to come before the Court, to identify themselves, their address, and the Commissioners Court Precinct and Election Precinct they reside within. Comments should be reasonably concise and to the point. Questions will be answered, but the Court will not permit argument or excessive discussion of any particular topic. The hearing will be conducted under rules of judicial decorum. A video recording will be made of this hearing.

There were three public comments:

Nimra Shahzad, 4230 Lewis Creek Dr, Richmond, is a senior at the University of Houston and resides in Precinct 4. Ms. Shahzad spoke on the importance of the redistricting maps. She stated the growth in Fort Bend County has grown with a large proportion of Asian Americans and asked the court to take this process seriously.

Item 2 continued Receive Public Comments:

Idemudia Uwagbale, 14943 Havenridge Drive, is a member of the Texas Organizing Project. Mr. Uwagbale spoke on the redistricting maps and stated Fort Bend County is the most diverse County in Texas and the fastest growing County in the U.S. He believes County precincts must reflect real communities and their interests. Mr. Uwagbale believes the timeline was set too tight for community input and asked the court not to take a vote today.

Cynthia Ginyard, 11418 Oak Lake Ridge Court, Precinct 4155, Chairwoman of Fort Bend County Democratic Party, stated it is her desire to have three favorable Commissioner Precinct areas favoring the Democrats.

3. Receive presentation of proposed redistricting maps.

A. Proposed maps presented by members of the Court.

Robyn Doughtie, Director of Information Technology displayed the Redistricting Maps and began with the current Map of the four precincts.

Precinct 1 Proposed Map was presented.

Commissioner Morales described his redistricting map as a good diversity map, allows Commissioner Precinct 2 to have a hand in future development, and will allow Commissioner Precinct 1 to be involved in future development between Simonton and Orchard.

Precinct 2 Proposed Map was presented.

Commissioner Prestage explained the Precinct 2 map changes a decision that brought Precinct 1 to take in Arcola and Fresno and has been in place for 20 years. In 2011, Precinct 1 had exactly 25% of the population therefore there was no reason to change. Commissioner stated his plan stays status quo and leaves the political situation the same, does not disrupt projects being worked on, communities of interests and future development plans. The Precinct 2 map presents the least amount of change.

Precinct 3 Proposed Map was presented.

Commissioner Meyers stated this Commissioners Court is not a Legislative body. The Court oversees operations in the budget necessary to provide County services to the residents of Fort Bend County. The precincts should reflect the geography and maintain communities of interests and not partisan politics. Commissioner Meyers stated through Dave's redistricting the proportionality, competitiveness, minority representation, compactness and splitting are measured. Commissioner tried to keep the subdivisions together, the MUDs, other taxing entities together rather than splitting them. He stated his map accomplishes these measures and believes it is the fairest.

Precinct 4 Proposed Map was presented.

Commissioner DeMerchant stated Precinct 4 map is called the ponytail map. Commissioner explained he created a map that is fair and balanced and represents diversity.

County Judge Proposed Map was presented.

Judge George quoted the Texas House Redistricting Chair, Representative Todd Hunter, said "Redistricting is a political process and some people like it, some people don't like it, that is the nature of the business". Judge stated his map is fair because it gives an opportunity for a person of color possibly to get elected from Precinct 3, it reflects the way the County is growing, balances all of the four precincts with a 0% deviation and it aligns with all the natural boundaries throughout the community.

Item 3 continued Receive presentation of proposed redistricting maps:

B. Proposed maps presented by members of the public.

A few of the public maps were shown with no presenter present in court.

Judge George opened the meeting for any public comments on the public maps.

There were three public comments.

Eric Ramirez, Precinct 1007, spoke on the Redistricting maps. Mr. Ramirez said politics should be put aside and no one should put elected officials out of their precincts.

Rodrigo Carreon, explained the redistricting maps should be split by using Hwy 59 as a divider line to divide the Precincts.

Niloufar Hafizi, 6511 Sterling Canyon Drive, Katy, Precinct 3 spoke on behalf of Emgage Action, Muslim American Advocacy Group and the Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) community and stated Fort Bend County has the highest AAPI population than any County in Texas. She asked the court to keep in mind the language communities as the various maps are looked into and prioritize keeping minority groups together.

4. Take all appropriate action regarding the redistricting of Fort Bend County political boundaries.

Bridgette Smith-Lawson, County Attorney asked the court for more time so the legal analysis can be conducted on the maps as presented. Ms. Smith-Lawson asked the court to not take any final action today because doing so will be legally inadvisable.

Commissioner Prestage would like to extend the deadline of the submittal of maps to noon on Friday, October 29 and adopt the redistricting plan during the November 9 Commissioners Court Meeting.

Commissioner Morales suggested to the court that no action be taken until after the 6:00 p.m. public hearing for the benefit of the public.

5. Adjournment.

Commissioners Court Special Meeting adjourned at 11:34 a.m. on Tuesday, October 26, 2021.

Moved by Commissioner Meyers,
to adjourn.

I attest to the accuracy of the foregoing minutes.



Laura Richard, County Clerk, Fort Bend County, Texas