

Date: 1/29/13
From: Peck Young AGR
To: Officers and Members of the Austin Independent Citizen's Redistricting Commission
Re: Points for the Commissions Consideration Concerning Public Hearings

Myself and other members of our organization have been involved in the redistricting process over the years. We want to share some insights based on our experience. Public hearing have fundamentally two kinds of testimony: 1) general testimony on issues from communities of interest or disputes over where individual lines should be drawn, and 2) presentation and discussion of maps either presented by the citizens or by the commission.

The general testimony can be taken in 3-5 minute segments though you will need to be prepared for presentations in whose proponents will a) want to sign up in a certain order to speak so their presentation is coherent, or b) based on City Council experience, people will want to give their time to another speaker in their group so that person can present their case more comprehensively. These are real issues you need to be aware of especially because most veterans of giving testimony to City bodies will expect some kind of version of these rules.

As for the presentation of maps you simply **cannot impose time limits**. Depending on the complexity of the proposal and because *you are creating a record for potential litigation*, you must allow those with maps to both explain their plan/map and its justification. Most likely you will have questions from the Commission members about their presentation. Since maps are the purpose of your existence you have nothing more important to listen to.

This goes to the argument for two-phase hearings. The first phase is general public input under whatever rules you adopt. The second is the presentation of any maps. If no maps are ready at that meeting then you have no action under that section. This also gives those with maps a specific time and place on the agenda so they don't feel the need to sign-up as a block.

I have seen this format used successfully elsewhere. The good news is that overwhelmingly the testimony is general in nature. However whenever plans/maps are presented the presentation and discussion is invariably detailed, productive and lengthy. This approach best handles that fact.

I hope the Commission finds these recommendations helpful.