

ARB Member Tom King's remarks delivered to TCAD Board January 7, 2021

I want to talk a little bit about the blindsided attack made by the Chief Appraiser at your last Board of Directors meeting on December 3rd. I call it a blindsided attack because the charts and pages concerning the ARB, its budgeted cost overrun, the high cost of doing hearings, and the per diem payment to ARB members that the Chief Appraiser showed, were not available to the public before your meeting nor were they available to the ARB before the meeting.

Usually, data is provided to a party so they can prepare rebuttal comments and check the accuracy of the data presented. But not in this case. Through open records requests and a review of information presented in the public websites of several of the counties in the Chief Appraiser's charts, here are a few of the inaccuracies on the TCAD chart titled "2020 ARB Comparison": Bexar County held 16,291 Formal Hearings not the 8,580 shown; Fort Bend County held 31,148 Formal Hearing not the 15,960 shown; Dallas County held 72,441 Formal Hearings not the 116,198 shown. There are other things that are incorrect, these are just some examples.

I've got one other item to address, if you will allow me too.

Please write Down the numbers 66%; 66%; 23%; 10%. These numbers represent the % of Travis County appeals/protests resolved informally - 2017 and 2018 were at 66%; 2019 fell to 23% and for this past year, 2020, it landed at 10% (this is information I received from an Open Records Request). Here's the big budget problem of unintended consequences (at least I think it is unintended) - the ARB members were paid about \$390,000 for their work in 2017 and 2018. In 2019 that cost rose to \$1.5 million and for 2020 it will be over \$1.2 million - triple what the cost was just 2 years ago. It's very simple, (a) lower number of informal agreements equals a higher number of ARB formal hearings, equals higher ARB costs! By the way 2020 informal % of total protests filed: Williamson 72%; Bexar 75%; Fort Bend 66%.



So, you as a Board of Directors, need to this year decide: Do you want TCAD to “negotiate” value appeals and reach back to that 60% informal agreements level and go back to \$400,000 ARB costs or do you want TCAD to continue to have ARB costs at the \$1.2 to \$1.5 million range? With asking the Travis County Judge to appoint a sufficient number of new members to reach 200 ARB Members, it sounds to me as if you want the \$1.5 million cost level.

One last thing, in your last meeting, you formally requested an “update from ARB Chair on ARB operations” be added to the next agenda. I don't see an update on the Agenda for this meeting. I hope you will allow the ARB Chair to comment at length about our operations.