

The unincorporated areas in Cedar Park's fire service area have been receiving fire and first responder services from Cedar Park Fire Department since its inception. Those residents do not pay Cedar Park property taxes and Cedar Park is not under obligation to provide those services. For several years, representatives from Cedar Park met with individuals and groups from the various neighborhoods about the situation. In November of 2010, the Cedar Park City Council formally voted to let the residents in those unincorporated areas know that they had to come up with some mechanism by which they could contract with the City for fire and first responder services or the City would no longer provide them after December 31, 2011.

Various meetings were held in the neighborhoods and several informational meetings conducted by the City of Cedar Park. The Williamson County residents decided to try to form two separate ESDs: one for the Shenandoah neighborhood on the southern end of Cedar Park and another that includes all the others areas and neighborhoods which are in the northeast area of the City.

There are specific steps which must be followed in the ESD formation process and Charlie Crossfield has been volunteering his time and assisting the neighbors in the areas desiring to form the ESD's. In order to petition the Commissioners Court to have an ESD election placed on the ballot, a petition with one hundred valid signatures from registered voters and property owners in the respective areas is required. Charlie prepared the petitions with the required language and exhibits for each of the areas and representatives from the two areas collected signatures.

The petitions from the two areas each contained approximately 180 signatures. The Williamson County Elections office went through the petitions and verified signatures until they found at least 120 valid ones on each petition.

On May 17, 2011, I will be placing an item on the Commissioners Court agenda to recommend the County formally accept the petitions. If the County approves the petitions, they are forwarded to the City of Cedar Park for their action since the areas are in their ETJ. The Council will then vote on whether or not to accept the petitions. Assuming an affirmative vote, the appropriate language will be placed on the November ballot for the voters in those areas to vote on the issue.

If the ballot initiative passes, the Commissioners Court will appoint ESD Commissioners to the two respective ESD Boards.