

Linda Curtis for League of Independent Voters
Public Comments, Bastrop Commissioners Court, June 22, 2023

I'm embarrassed for everyone in this room and those who cannot come to these daytime meetings.

I'm embarrassed that Bastrop County is disregarding the basic tenets of open government and put on events last week that are a study in closed government.

I spoke with a guy named "Jeff," one of the experts from EdgeConneX, who wouldn't even give me his last name. I honestly felt sorry for him -- he was obviously embarrassed too.

Jeff showed me a rendering of an EdgeConneX project with 6 buildings when -- so far as I know -- that property or possibly an adjacent parcel is slated for four buildings for which a 75%, 10-year property tax abatement was passed by this court in September 2024.

Jeff didn't seem to know anything about those other four buildings. He did point to where he said another building is under construction, maybe the first of the four abated buildings, but that building was not pictured, nor was there any rendering of the other three future buildings. So, is it four or six buildings on the abated property? If EdgeConneX doesn't know, how are we supposed to know?

Another EdgeConneX expert honestly told me he felt that Bastrop County was "irresponsible" for allowing 70 decibels of noise, when the company is trying to innovate to reduce the noise substantially.

What's going on here? We simply cannot know because an honest back and forth conversation--- in public, so everyone can hear, otherwise known as an open meeting town hall -- was missing in action last week. You -- Commissioners -- made things worse, not better.

Thankfully, KVUE news last Thursday showed how the EdgeConneX project is right next door to 100 families who live in Stony Point.

I have to admit that I'm most embarrassed for us – Bastropians, including yours truly -- who have not been paying enough attention and have trusted you would protect our interests.

Now you have our attention.

It doesn't have to be this way. Commissioners in Hill County, Bell County, Hays County and others are stepping up and taking on an industry that is fast tracking projects. Even the data center industry admitted at the April 9 hearing of the Texas House State Affairs Committee to spreading misinformation. No local officials were invited to that one. I'm hoping some will be at tomorrow's hearing by the Texas House Natural Resources Committee.

I am asking you to work with us to get all the answers to questions that citizens have. I am expecting a real town hall easily accessed by those most affected on the western side of Bastrop County.

Wake up, Bastrop County.