

Commissioners no longer invited to agenda review meeting

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By Catherine Dominguez



At the request of County Attorney J D Lambright, the Montgomery County Judge's Office is no longer inviting county commissioners to its Expanded Agenda Review Meeting. County Judge Craig Doyal said his office still is having the meetings with department heads and the County Attorney's Office to ensure items on the agenda are properly noticed. The meeting is scheduled for 3 p.m. the Thursday prior to Tuesday Commissioners Court meetings.

"In an abundance of caution, they did not send it to the commissioners or the commissioners' offices," Lambright said. Lambright said there has never been a quorum of commissioners at the meetings. Doyal said he sometimes attends the meetings but it is Chief of Staff Jim Fredricks who conducts the meetings.

Late last month, The Courier questioned Doyal's office regarding the meetings, not posting them or opening them up to the public since all commissioners were on the email invite, which includes a draft agenda. If three of the five members attended, it would constitute a quorum, and the meeting would have had to be properly posted and opened to the public under the Texas Open Meetings Act.

Lambright said the original language with the invite could have been problematic since it stated "while attendance is not mandatory, you are strongly encouraged to attend or to send a representative to ensure your item is represented."

While all elected members of the court are on the email invite from the judge's office, the meetings are not posted, the public, including the media, is not allowed to attend and no minutes are kept.

"We are going to continue to have the agenda review meetings," Doyal said. "I think they are very effective in making sure the meeting is posted properly and working with the department heads in getting their information out there so we can move forward with any action that needs to be taken (during the regular posted court meetings)."