

Observation Assessment #2

Type of Observation: Conservative Coalition City Review

Mentors: Shona Huffman and Will Sowell

Location: Frisco Lakes Golf Clubhouse

Date: January 31, 2019

Time: 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Assessment:

Attending the Conservative Coalition meeting at Frisco Lakes was one of the most interesting events I've ever been to. Going into the year, I understood partisan politics would be a part of my study of local government, but one major takeaway I had from this even is democrats or republicans, the city officials are really doing everything they can to make Frisco the best place possible. I'm so glad I was able to hear from different representatives and departments because what they stressed and how they delivered the information to the public was absolutely fascinating.

Shona talked at this meeting too about the property taxes in the state of Texas versus in Frisco alone, which really resonated with me because it directly relates to all the work I've done this year. She explained how the 2.5% cap could be particularly bad for Frisco because it relies on the taxes it gets to fund public service and provide good working conditions for the employees of the City. I thought this was interesting to see at work because all of the people at the meeting seemed concerned too about the implications that the cap would have. They started writing down notes to call their representatives and the whole situation was so cool to see because it emphasized what an informed public can do to change the way the government is run. Moving forward with my Final Product, I think these solutions of sorts will be something I should definitely include to hopefully inspire some of the same urgency that I was able to witness among the residents of Frisco Lakes.

One thing that really stuck out to me was the impact the residents of Frisco Lakes have on the bearing of Frisco. Will explained to me after the event that the average person in Frisco is 38 years old, but citywide, voter turnout rates for local elections are around 10%. That contrasted with a voter turnout of 77% in the senior community Frisco Lakes, means that about 1/3 of every vote in a local election comes from that single neighborhood. It's completely astounding to me that the decisions of

the government can be so heavily skewed by one demographic, but as I've been familiar with for years, older people vote. Looking toward the future, not only will this cement to me that I have a duty to vote in absolutely every election that I'm eligible to participate in, but that I should impress the importance of it on other people too. Even if I don't necessarily agree with all the stances every resident of Frisco might take, their voice is crucial in the future of the city and how it's run, and only by them recognizing that can they actually make a difference. Local government is truly local in the sense that if a constituent of Frisco wants to speak to someone on City Council, all it takes is a phone call. I hope that with the work I'm doing, it can be communicated to a larger part of the public what a big deal it is for your voice to be heard. Even if city elections seem inconsequential, the reality is that city elections are the closest to us on a day-to-day basis and should be treated with a resulting degree of importance.

Overall, it was one of the most informative nights I've ever had with ISM and am so happy I had the chance to attend. I can't wait to continue witnessing how local government interacts with residents directly and what the public's reactions are to what they have to say.