



Once the ARB receives your protest, you will be scheduled for a hearing. Hearings are generally scheduled on a first come – first served basis. You will receive a Notice of Hearing from the ARB at least fifteen days prior to your hearing.

### What if I Can't Come On My Scheduled Day?

If the time is not convenient for you, contact the ARB's scheduling clerk. You have the right to reschedule your hearing one time without reason, but the ARB will require you to provide good reason for requesting another appointment time after that.

### How Do I Prepare For My Hearing?

Organize your thoughts. Gather any information, like pictures and documents that help you show the ARB what your concerns are.

If you are planning to use an appraisal that you've paid someone to do (a "fee appraisal"), you will need to make it available for the appraisal district staff to examine at least 14 days prior to your hearing date.

You can bring any other pictures or documents to the hearing with you. Everything that is presented to the ARB becomes a part of its permanent record.

Before your hearing begins, the appraisal district staff, at the request of the ARB, will ask to "scan" your pictures and documents into the ARB permanent record before your hearing

begins.

**The ARB will not see your evidence prior to your hearing.**

### What About The Appraisal District's Evidence?

The appraisal district is required to prepare and present testimony at your hearing to support its position regarding your protest. You are entitled to review the documents that will be presented in your hearing. If you request the information from the appraisal district, it must be available to you at least fourteen days before your scheduled hearing. *Requesting the information the day before your appointment only means that you have one day to examine the appraisal district's documents – It does not postpone your hearing another fourteen days.*

In any case, you and the appraisal district representative that will be presenting testimony before the ARB will have the opportunity to exchange evidence before the hearing begins.

### So What Happens At the Hearing?

First of all, the ARB will sign an *Ex Parte Affidavit* that states under oath, that they have no knowledge of your protest. Your testimony will be the first they hear about your case. Then you, your witnesses (if you choose to bring any), and all appraisal district representatives that will provide testimony in your hearing will take an oath to provide sworn testimony before the ARB.

### Who Can Attend My Hearing?

Anyone. All meetings of the ARB are open to the public and must be conducted with a quorum (or majority) of the ARB's five members present. So anyone can attend...so long as they are not disruptive. People who disrupt the meetings and hearings of the ARB will be removed from the meeting.

### Can Someone Else Represent Me?

Yes, anyone you bring with you can present testimony during the hearing, as long as they are willing to swear to provide truthful testimony.

### Do I Have To Be There?

Not necessarily. You can officially appoint someone to represent you, like a licensed tax agent, an attorney, or a certified public accountant. If you choose to let a tax agent represent you, you must file an *Appointment of Agent* form prior to the commencement of your hearing. (An employee who represents you in such matters is not required to file an appointment of agent form).

### Can't I Just Write A Letter?

Not really. But you can present a written sworn statement that states your case to the ARB. All you have to do is to sign your statement before a Notary Public and file it with the ARB prior to your hearing time. You can



mail it to the ARB or bring it to the ARB clerk (at the appraisal office) or bring it to the hearing yourself.

### Then What?

The ARB will consider your testimony (or written sworn statement) and the rebuttal testimony of the appraisal district.



Usually, the ARB hears enough testimony to make a decision during the hearing. But occasionally, the ARB may postpone making a decision to gather more information,

such as to allow an appraisal district representative time to research your concerns or to re-inspect your property to be sure that everything has been considered. Either way, the ARB will let you know when it will make a decision about your case.

You will receive official notice of the ARB's decision in an *Order Determining Protest* signed by the ARB officer presiding over your hearing.

### So, Once the ARB Makes A Decision, It's Over?

Not necessarily. Included with your *Order Determining Protest* will be instructions for appealing the ARB's decision either in binding arbitration or in district court.

### How Do I Cancel My Protest..... If I Change My Mind?

If you and the appraisal district come to an agreement on your concerns, you may be asked to sign a *Settlement and Waiver of Protest*. This document cancels your protest and the appraisal district agrees to make adjustments that you agree upon.

You can also withdraw your protest. If you want to cancel your protest without any changes. You can do this in the form of a letter to the ARB.

### **Remember.....**

The ARB is a group of five individuals who own property in the county...just like you. They are not employees of the appraisal district. They want to be sure that you are heard and that you are treated fairly under the laws of the State of Texas!

More specific details for protest filing and hearing procedures can be found in the *Freestone ARB's Hearing Rules & Procedures* booklet that was enclosed with your *Notice of Hearing* or you can view them from the web at:

[www.freestonecad.org](http://www.freestonecad.org)