

Kingsbury holds historic first meeting

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With three loud bangs of a gavel, Kingsbury Mayor Shirley Nolen made history, starting the city's first-ever commission meeting.

"As an all women-commission, you are the first city in Texas to accomplish that," special guest state Sen. Judith Zaffirini said. "Bravo."

More than 50 people filed into the Fellowship Hall of the Kingsbury Baptist Church on Saturday to witness the newly-incorporated city's inaugural meeting.

"The city of Kingsbury was created by you people in Kingsbury under the provisions of Texas Local Government chapter 8, and it is defined as a type C municipality," city attorney Sam Drugan said. "A type C municipality is created and defined by the legislature and is governed by a city commission rather than a city council."

Among those in attendance were multiple dignitaries, in addition to Zaffirini, including, a representative from Senator Donna Campbell's office, County Judge Kyle Kutscher and Precinct 1 Commissioner Greg Seidenberger.

"Everybody is gathered here today because a group of people in the community came together and worked hard, dedicated their time and persevered over some pretty big challenges," Kutscher said. "I just want us all to take a minute and recognize that group by putting our hands together."

Seidenberger also expressed gratitude for the group of individuals that spearheaded the city becoming incorporated.

"I want to say congratulations, but I want to say thanks because to serve in any public office is a challenge," he said. "Sometimes it's not always the best thing in the world because you feel like you can't do enough for people or you get yelled at for something you have no control over. So really I say congratulations and thank you for serving."



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Senator Judith Zaffirini gives city of Kingsbury Mayor Shirley Nolen a gavel on Saturday as the mayor prepares to hold the city's inaugural commission meeting in the Fellowship Hall of the Kingsbury Baptist Church.

Following the invocation and Pledge of Allegiance, Kutscher swore in Nolen as mayor, along with Alison Heinemeier and Janet Ignasiak as city commissioners before turning the floor over to Zaffirini.

“The key is to be true to your priorities, and those priorities must always be faith and family first, and then public service and then your business responsibilities,” the lawmaker said. “That has truly been the key.”

Most of the meeting’s business centered on establishing procedures related to the commission’s agendas and meetings as well as Nolen appointing people to the positions of city attorney, clerk and mayor pro tem.

“As mayor, I would like to nominate Art Martinez De Vara and Sam Drugan as city attorneys for the city of Kingsbury,” she said.

Nolen said De Vara’s previous experience with small city politics was one of the reasons she nominated him for the position.

“Mr. De Vera has not only worked pro bono in aiding Kingsbury in incorporation, but also the cities of Sandy Oaks, Providence Village and Ivanhoe,” Nolen said. “He has also attended and donated to almost every election fundraiser and event held for Kingsbury.”

Likewise, the mayor said Drugan was an instrumental member in the Kingsbury Incorporation Committee.

“He has worked tirelessly, not only as the legal voice within the committee, but as a volunteer for every event, celebration and fundraiser for the incorporation committee and the city of Kingsbury,” she said. “I love the fact that Mr. Drugan loves living here in Kingsbury.”

Nolen also made her nomination for the city’s clerk position — Nelda Hotchkiss.

“Ms. Hotchkiss stepped up and volunteered to serve the city of Kingsbury in addition to her full-time job,” the mayor said. “She has shown a willingness and desire to learn (which is) something we need in the city clerk as we embark in this startup of a new city.”

Additionally, the three-member team put on a show for those in attendance with a fun game of paper, rocks, scissors to see who would serve as the mayor pro tem.

“It was just to add a little excitement to the meeting,” Nolen said. “We actually decided earlier with a coin toss that Alison would fill the position.”

The effort to incorporate Kingsbury was mounted more than a year ago in the wake of years of discussion that intensified after the city of Seguin annexed land to extend its city limits to State Highway 130 and Interstate 10, bringing the reach of its Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction out into the historic community along the railroad tracks.

While members of the Kingsbury Incorporation Committee have said they will set their sights on joining the two parts of Kingsbury together, there was no mention of the of the annexed land during the meeting.

“We will be having a public hearing on the Fiscal Year 2016 budget and tax rates for the city of Kingsbury on Monday, Dec. 7,” Nolen said, adjourning the meeting.