

COUNCIL DISTRICT COMMISSION MINUTES

June 7, 2001

The Council District Commission of the City of Mesa met at the Superstition Police/Fire Substation Community Room, 2430 S. Ellsworth Road, on June 7, 2001 at 6:35 p.m.

COMMISSION PRESENT

Jim Driskill
Dwayne Priester
Marti Soza

COMMISSION ABSENT

Pat Langdon, Chairman
Alice Swinehart

COUNCIL PRESENT

None

1. Welcome – Jim Driskill, Council District Commission Member.

Commission Member Jim Driskill welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Commission Member Marti Soza. Commission Member Driskill advised that Spanish and sign language interpretation for the meeting are available. No requests for translation were received.

Commission Member Driskill stated that the purpose of the Council District Commission is to determine new Council district boundary lines based on 2000 census figures. He provided a brief history regarding the implementation of a Council district system in Mesa and noted that the Mesa City Charter mandates that redistricting be conducted in conjunction with the United States decennial census.

Commission Member Driskill introduced Dr. Florence Adams of National Demographics Corporation (NDC) and stated that the City retained NDC to provide expert, technical assistance throughout the redistricting process. He noted that NDC also worked with the City of Mesa during its initial districting process in 1998.

(Commission Member Dwayne Priester joined the meeting at 6:46 p.m.)

2. Review of Preliminary Report on Districting in Mesa.

Dr. Adams stated that redistricting materials consisting of the Preliminary Report on Districting in Mesa and Citizen Kits are available to the public in the rear of the room. She said that the report is a guidebook for the public to use regarding the redistricting process and stressed the importance of public participation in the redistricting process. Dr. Adams discussed the various topics addressed in the report including Mesa's history, growth, geography and demography;

the public participation process; redistricting tasks and NDC's approach to redistricting; and data and maps (based on 2000 census data) used throughout the process.

Dr. Adams discussed the criteria approved by the Commission to be used to guide the line-drawing process and reported that the criteria falls within three categories: 1) *Issues of Equality and Fairness*, which includes Equal Population, Adherence to the Voting Rights Act, and Compactness and Contiguity; 2) *Councilmanic Districts*, which refers to the City Charter requirement that the residence of an incumbent Councilmember must not be removed from the district he was elected to represent; and 3) *Good Government Criteria*, which includes Respect Community of Interest, Follow Natural and Man-made Boundaries, Citizen Input, Population Growth, and Existing Districts.

Dr. Adams stated that pursuant to Arizona law, districts must be "nearly equal" in population. She said that 2000 census figures must be utilized in the redistricting process, even though Mesa has continued to grow since the 2000 census was conducted. She noted that population counts of pre-cleared, recently annexed areas were added to 2000 census figures to determine Mesa's total population and the populations of the six existing districts. Dr. Adams reported that, for the purpose of redistricting, Mesa's total population is 397,760; and that the ideal target district population is 66,293 ($397,760 \div 6$). Dr. Adams explained the differences between census blocks, block groups and tracts and noted that citizen block groups are used in conjunction with the Citizen Kits.

Dr. Adams reported that the Justice Department must pre-clear all election changes within Arizona including districting and redistricting plans, and annexations. She spoke about Justice Department mandates regarding dividing areas with significant minority concentrations and preserving majority minority districts. She stated that the Hispanic population is the significant minority population in Mesa and noted that although Mesa does not presently have a majority minority district, District 4 is considered a minority influence district (sufficient population to make up a strong segment of a district and have an influence over the vote in the district).

Dr. Adams reported that three Councilmembers were elected to serve as District Councilmembers (Districts 1, 2 and 3) in 2000 and that three Councilmembers are serving out terms as Councilmembers elected at-large. She added that District Councilmembers will be elected in Districts 4, 5 and 6 in 2002.

3. Review of Citizen Kits.

Dr. Adams identified and commented on items contained in the Citizen Kits including an instruction sheet in English and Spanish, a spreadsheet providing race/ethnicity population analyses of current districts based on the 2000 census, and a population deviation table of the six districts. She discussed the numerous maps contained in the Citizen Kits, including: 1) Current Districts; 2) Total Population Counts; 3) Hispanic Population Counts; 4) Voting Age Population Counts; 5) Hispanic Voting Age Counts; 6) various thematic maps depicting the location of minorities throughout Mesa by percentages; and 7) a plain blank map and a clear overlay map (for use by citizens to develop concepts).

Dr. Adams spoke about the process of submitting maps for consideration; the preferred method of marking citizen maps to facilitate faxing; and the information that is provided to citizens when

maps are returned. She said that citizen maps may be resubmitted for further analysis and consideration as many times as the citizen wishes.

4. Discuss three alternative district concepts for Mesa.

Dr. Adams stated that NDC developed three alternative district concepts to aid citizens in creating their own concepts. She referred to maps provided that contained the three concepts and explained how existing district lines are delineated on the maps to illustrate where the boundary lines were adjusted. She noted that spreadsheets containing population data, percentages and deviations are also provided with each of the three concepts.

Dr. Adams discussed the specific boundary adjustments in Concept A, which include movement of District 3 slightly east and north; considerable movement of District 1 east; movement of District 2 east; and movement of District 5 (into District 6) south to Southern Avenue. She noted that District 4 has the highest percentage of Hispanic population at 46.15%, and that the overall deviation of Concept A is 1.25%

Dr. Adams commented on the boundary adjustments in Concept B which include movement of District 3 east and north in a different manner than Concept A in order to add population; straightening of the lines in District 4 and movement of District 4 into District 6, resulting in a reduction of the Hispanic population in District 4 to 43.96%; movement of District 1 into District 2 and also into District 4; and movement of District 5 into District 6. She noted that the overall deviation of Concept B is 4.02%.

Dr. Adams discussed the boundary adjustments in Concept C including movement of District 4 slightly into District 3, straightening the line between 3 and 4; movement of District 3 north; movement of District 1 significantly east; and significant configuration change of District 5. She stated that the most significant change in Concept C is the movement of District 2 to the southern border of the City. She noted that the Hispanic population of District 4 is 46.24%, and that the overall deviation of Concept C is 2.76%.

5. Question and answer on districting.

Dr. Adams responded to questions and concerns from the public pertaining to the dilemma of dividing a community in an effort to balance district populations; population counts of persons vs. registered voters; the consideration of total population vs. voting age population; Justice Department requirements regarding protecting minority communities; and representation inequity in the eastern areas of the City due to a multitude of temporary residents.

Dr. Adams encouraged citizens to submit plans or commentary for consideration and noted that the deadline for submitting plans is June 29th. She stated that the next Council District Commission meeting is scheduled for July 5th at 5:30 in the Lower Council Chambers; that a districting update will be presented to the City Council at the July 12th Study Session in the Lower Council Chambers; and that the second series of public meetings will commence on July 12th at 6:30 p.m. at Shepherd Junior High School Auditorium.

Commission Member Driskill voiced appreciation to citizens for their participation in the redistricting process.

6. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Districting Commission meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Districting Commission Meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 7th day of June 2001. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this ____ day of _____ 2001.

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK

pjt