

COUNCIL DISTRICT COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES

December 10, 1998

A Council District Commission Public Hearing was held in the Multipurpose Room of Hale Elementary School, 1425 North 23rd Street on December 10, 1998 at 6:31 p.m.

COUNCIL DISTRICT COMMISSION PRESENT

Chairman Pat Langdon
Lynda Bailey
Teresa Brice-Heames
Mary Jo Whalen

STAFF PRESENT

Cindy Barris
Jamie Brennen
Steve Burg
Barbara Jones
Ellen Pence

OTHERS PRESENT

Florence Adams
Stephanie Balcazar
Tom Dickens
Linda Gage
Celeste Jilka
Ed Jilka
Bob Nowak
Judy Nowak
Dawn Schoenberger

OTHERS PRESENT (CONT.)

Roy Schult
Marilynn Wennerstrom
Dave Woods
Nancy Woods
Others

Pat Langdon, Chairman of the Council District Commission, advised that Spanish and sign language interpretation for the meeting are available to any citizen upon request. No requests for translation were received.

1. Welcome.

Chairman Langdon welcomed the citizens to the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance. Chairman Langdon introduced members of the Council District Commission present at the meeting.

Chairman Langdon briefly explained the purpose of the public hearing. Chairman Langdon introduced Dr. Florence Adams, President of National Demographics, Inc., the consultant who is assisting the Commission and the City in developing district boundary lines.

2. Review and discuss citizen kits.

Dr. Adams advised that the meeting this date is the first in a second series of public hearings concerning the districting process. Dr. Adams presented background information pertaining to the first series of public hearings and the utilization of citizen kits as a component in developing district boundaries. Dr. Adams noted that the deadline for the submission of citizen kits was December 1, 1998 and that a total of 62 citizen plans were submitted.

Dr. Adams reported that citizen submissions consisted of maps (entire City and/or individual districts), letters, and comments/suggestions and that various ideas were introduced, resulting in significant refinement when compared to the initial concept plans (red, blue, and green) prepared to assist citizens in developing kits. Dr. Adams displayed numerous citizen plans submitted and reported that emerging trends included three districts in both the northern and southern portions of the City, with a provision for two districts in the east to accommodate growth. Dr. Adams stated that the citizen plans and analyses have been compiled into booklet form and are available for review.

3. Review of recommended districting plan and two alternative plans.

Dr. Adams advised that the districting process is predicated upon federal mandates relating to population and minority representation. Dr. Adams stated that districts should be drawn that are equal in population (to the extent possible) and provide fair representation to all groups. Dr. Adams noted that the Voting Rights Act and later Court decisions make clear that Hispanics, Mesa's largest minority group, must not be excluded or disadvantaged in any way in the districting.

Dr. Adams presented a recommended districting plan and two alternative plans prepared in response to input received from citizens. Dr. Adams said that copies of the plans and a cover letter delineating additional criteria adopted by the District Commission for use in guiding the districting process have been prepared for distribution. Dr. Adams advised that the three plans meet established criteria (with the exception of geographic equality, which cannot be obtained), but said that the recommended plan is preferred, particularly given the significant number of continuous (straight) lines along major streets and more easily identified district boundaries.

Dr. Adams stated that communities of interest (e.g., residential/retirement centers and areas of influence as defined by Building a Healthier Mesa) are configured diversely but remain intact within the plans; each district in each plan contains a high school; and each plan includes two districts in the east to accommodate growth. Dr. Adams indicated that it is not feasible to create a majority minority district in Mesa but related efforts to achieve minority influence. Dr. Adams reported that Hispanic population concentrations vary by approximately two percent among the three plans.

Dr. Adams commented that opportunity exists for revisions prior to the development of a final plan and encouraged input from citizens (e.g., letters, hotline) concerning the recommended plan and two alternative plans.

4. Questions and comments on recommended districting plan and two alternative plans.

In response to questions from citizens, Dr. Adams explained the districting process/time frame for implementation as outlined in the initiative approved recently by voters. Dr. Adams spoke concerning the effect of the recommended plan on incumbent Councilmembers, potential revisions to the recommended plan or alternative plans, population projections and redistricting following the Year 2000 census, and initiative requirements to increase the number of Council districts.

Dr. Adams reiterated that the recommended plan and two alternative plans meet established criteria but provide varying configurations/options for consideration. Dr. Adams and Commission Members urged feedback from citizens.

Various citizens present indicated a preference for the recommended plan.

5. Presentation on possible impact of new Council districting system.

This item was not discussed at this time.

6. Adjournment.

Chairman Langdon thanked the citizens for their time and interest. Chairman Langdon noted that four additional public hearings have been scheduled and encouraged citizen attendance and input.

Without objection, the public hearing adjourned at 7:32 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Council District Commission Public Hearing of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 10th day of December 1998. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held.

Dated this ____ day of _____ 1999

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK