

COUNCIL DISTRICT COMMISSION MINUTES

July 12, 2001

The Council District Commission of the City of Mesa met at Shepherd Junior High Auditorium, 1407 N. Alta Mesa Drive, on July 12, 2001 at 6:40 p.m.

COMMISSION PRESENT	COMMISSION ABSENT	COUNCIL PRESENT
Pat Langdon, Chairman Jim Driskill Dwayne Priester Alice Swinehart	Marti Soza	None

1. Welcome – Dwayne Priester, Commission Member.

Commission Member Priester welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Commission Members Alice Swinehart and Jim Driskill. He stated that Spanish and sign language interpretation for the meeting are available to any citizen upon request. No requests for translation were received. Mr. Priester also introduced Dr. Alan Heslop of National Demographics Corporation (NDC).

2. Review and discuss Report on Citizen Kits and Citizen Input.

Dr. Heslop provided a brief overview of Mesa's redistricting process to date and said that the purpose of the second series of public hearings is to solicit input from citizens regarding the Recommended Plan and alternative plans. Dr. Heslop commented on the relevance of the Voting Rights Act and the benchmarks Mesa must meet with respect to equal district populations and sustainable Hispanic population percentages, to ensure Justice Department approval of the final redistricting plan. He explained that the results of the 2000 census confirmed that the existing six districts are no longer equal in population; that the populations of Districts 5 and 6 have increased significantly; and that the overall population of District 4 has decreased but has an increased Hispanic population. He stated that in order to meet Federal benchmark requirements, the boundary lines of District 4 must be contorted to some degree.

Dr. Heslop spoke concerning the favorable response and participation to date in the redistricting process, noting that 15 fully developed plans, three partial plans and many excellent written comments were submitted. Dr. Heslop commented on citizen maps submitted by Marilyn

Wennerstrom, Marti Soza, Joseph A. Gorski, Ann Kulik and Teresa Brice-Heames. Dr. Heslop stressed that the level of citizen participation has been exemplary.

3. Review of recommended redistricting plan and two alternatives.

Dr. Heslop presented the Recommended Plan and Alternatives 1 and 2 prepared in response to the input received from citizens. Dr. Heslop discussed the following noteworthy features contained in the Recommended Plan:

- District 4 total Hispanic population is 48.16% and Hispanic voting age population is 44.03%.
- Two other districts have been created with significant Hispanic populations:

District 1 with total Hispanic population of 18.59% and Hispanic voting age population of 16.06%; District 3 with total Hispanic population of 19.59% and Hispanic voting age population of 16.73%.

- The population deviation in each district is relatively low, with an overall deviation of 7.93%.
- District 5, a rapid growth area, has a negative deviation, and Districts 1 and 2, which are relatively slow growth areas, have positive deviations.
- The Districts in the plan respect the major communities of the City, follow several well-known boundaries, depart little from existing district configurations and incorporate significant citizen input.
- Each district in the plan includes a high school.

Dr. Heslop reported that Alternative 1 achieves the benchmark in District 4 with a total Hispanic population of 48.16%, a Hispanic voting age population of 44.03%, and a total deviation of 7.07%. Dr. Heslop commented that Alternative 1 would create a positive deviation in District 5 and a slightly negative deviation in District 6.

Dr. Heslop advised that Alternative 2 also meets the benchmark, with District 4's total Hispanic population at 48.05% and the Hispanic voting age population at 43.87%. Dr. Heslop stated that the deviation in District 5, an area of rapid growth, is positive. Dr. Heslop explained that in Alternative 1 and Alternative 2, a high school would not be included in each district.

(Commission Chairman Pat Langdon arrived at the meeting at 7:00 p.m.)

4. Questions and comments on recommended redistricting plan and two alternatives.

Chairman Langdon encouraged citizens to provide input regarding the Recommended Plan and alternatives.

In response to a question from Marilyn Wennerstrom, a Mesa resident, regarding a concern raised with respect to the Evergreen Historic District, Dr. Florence Adams of NDC reported that during the recent Council District Commission meeting, Teresa Brice-Heames, a resident of Mesa, pointed out that the Evergreen Historic District is divided in the Recommended Plan and

Alternative 1. Dr. Adams stated that the division was unintentional and that modifications would be made to maintain the Evergreen District wholly within District 4.

Manny Cortez, a Mesa resident, spoke in support of Alternative 2 due to the fact that it divides the City into three northern and three southern districts, consistent with the current plan. He stated opposition to the fact that the Recommended Plan would prevent a significant number of District 6 residents from voting for a District Councilmember in the next election. Mr. Cortez noted that District 6 residents did not vote for a District Councilmember in the 2000 election.

Dr. Adams explained that this is an unfortunate and unavoidable result of the districting process due to the fact that the transition to a districting system entailed the initial election of Councilmembers from Districts 1, 2 and 3 in 2000 and from Districts 4, 5 and 6 in 2002; and due to the fact that the populations of Districts 5 and 6 must be reduced to redraw districts that are nearly equal in population. She noted that residents disadvantaged by the final adopted plan would be eligible to vote for a District Councilmember in the 2004 election.

Dr. Adams stated that the total number of Mesa residents disadvantaged by the Recommended Plan and the alternatives would be determined and disclosed in the near future. She noted that the purpose of the second series of public hearings is to uncover and address ramifications of the Recommended Plan and alternatives.

Dr. Adams responded to questions from the public regarding the Maricopa County islands within Mesa.

Chairman Langdon encouraged residents to continue participating in the redistricting process and stated that all comments and suggestions would be considered.

5. Adjournment.

Without objection, the District Commission meeting adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the District Commission Meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 12th day of July 2001. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK