

COUNCIL DISTRICT COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES

November 12, 1998

A Council District Commission Public Hearing was held in the Multipurpose Room of Lincoln Elementary School, 930 South Surrine, on November 12, 1998 at 6:35 p.m.

COUNCIL DISTRICT COMMISSION PRESENT

Chairman Pat Langdon
Wilford Andersen
Teresa Brice-Heames

STAFF PRESENT

Jamie Brennen
Linda Crocker
Barbara Jones
Jeff Martin
Ellen Pence
Tom Remes

OTHERS PRESENT

Florence Adams
Connie Brice
Ken Brice-Heames
David Brimhall
Bryce Chapman
Manuel Chavez
Julia Cogswell
Margie Frost
Avalyn Gentry
Alan Heslop
Ilias Kostopoulos
Tanya Law
Ruben Martinez

OTHERS PRESENT (CONT.)

Paul Miller
Alfano Padilla
Helen Padilla
Barbara Pajak
Carol Reed
Joe Ramirez
John Smith
Crystal Young
Marilyn Wennerstrom
Others

Teresa Brice-Heames, Council District Commission Member, 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.

Council District Commission Member Brice-Heames welcomed the citizens to the meeting and expressed appreciation to everyone for their attendance. Commission Member Brice-Heames briefly explained the purpose of the hearing and introduced members of the Council District Commission present at the meeting.

Commission Member Brice-Heames advised that the City has retained National Demographics, Inc. as consultants to assist the District Commission and the City in developing district boundaries. Commission Member Brice-Heames introduced Drs. Alan Heslop and Florence Adams, representing National Demographics, to the members of the audience.

2. Review of preliminary report on districting in Mesa.

Dr. Heslop stated that a preliminary report on districting in Mesa has been prepared and is available to any individual interested in the districting process. Dr. Heslop outlined two basic legal requirements pertaining to the districting process: a) establish districts that are equal in population (based on 1995 census data) and b) establish districts that give fair representation to all groups. Dr. Heslop stated that pursuant to the Voting

Rights Act, Hispanics (Mesa's largest minority group) must not be excluded or disadvantaged in any way in the districting process.

Dr. Heslop commented that the following criteria have additionally been adopted by the District Commission and reviewed by the City Council for use in guiding the districting process: a) community of interest; b) access, recognition, and geography; c) citizen input; and d) population and growth. Dr. Heslop stated that districts should be composed in a manner that enhances the spirit of community; districts should be drawn that give voters easy access to their representatives (fully contiguous, reasonably compact, and easily recognized by voters); districts should not be drawn until full opportunity has been provided for citizens throughout the community to provide insights and participate in the process; and districts should be designed, where possible, to reflect present and future directions of growth (thereby minimizing revisions necessary in the redistricting following the decennial census).

3. Review of citizen kits.

Dr. Heslop stated that citizen kits have been prepared to assist individuals in submitting districting plans. Dr. Heslop advised that each citizen plan submitted will be presented to the Commission, City Council, and U.S. Department of Justice and that the final plan will likely contain elements from various citizen plans.

Dr. Adams, President of National Demographics, Inc., reported that the citizen kits are available in English and Spanish. Dr. Adams presented a page-by-page review of materials contained in the citizen kits, including a table of contents, instruction sheet, summary of the districting process, list of suggested districting criteria, 1995 mid-decade census statistical data (total population, voting age population, zero population enumeration districts, minority population percentages/counts), maps, and annexations.

Dr. Adams delineated differences between mid-decade census enumeration districts and census blocks/block groups/tracts. Dr. Adams explained the process for preparing/submitting maps and presented suggestions for aggregating data to configure district boundaries. Dr. Adams said that ideal districts will contain a population of 56,353 and that each citizen kit submitted will be analyzed and deviations (from the ideal district) noted.

Dr. Adams indicated that additional maps identifying issues of community interest (e.g., "Building a Healthier Mesa" areas of influence, school district attendance boundaries, and residential/retirement communities) are included in the citizen kits to assist in developing plans.

4. Discuss three alternative district concepts for Mesa.

Dr. Adams stated that three alternate district concepts (identified as red, blue, and green) have been prepared for use as a reference in eliciting input as citizens develop individual maps for submission. Dr. Adams indicated that the concepts vary from each other but that each meets established criteria.

Dr. Adams advised that the red and blue concepts reflect a concentration of Hispanic population in one district (approximately 33 percent) while the green concept divides the population into two districts (approximately 22 percent per district). Dr. Adams noted that is not feasible to create a majority minority district in Mesa but spoke concerning the importance of maximizing minority influence and obtaining input from the Hispanic community.

Dr. Adams said that the district concepts are available to citizens from four primary sources: a) citizen kits (color-coded), b) displays at the public hearings as well as City Hall and the main branch of the Library, c) the City's web site (www.ci.mesa.az.us), and d) the City Manager's Office (blue line copies with street detail).

5. Question and answer on districting.

Dr. Adams and Dr. Heslop responded to questions from citizens pertaining to the fact that every citizen who submits a district concept will receive a written response from the consultants, influence districts, computer software programs available to assist in preparing/transmitting plans, projected growth and population deviation (from the ideal district), and time frame for submission of district boundaries to the U.S. Department of Justice. Dr. Adams noted that all citizen maps must be submitted no later than December 1, 1998.

6. Adjournment.

Commission Member Brice-Heames expressed appreciation to the citizens for their attendance and interest in the districting process. Commission Member Brice-Heames urged those present to submit plans and to encourage others to participate in the process.

Without objection, the public hearing adjourned at 7:41 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 12th day of November 1998. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held.

Dated this ____ day of _____ 1998

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK