

COUNCIL DISTRICT COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES

November 5, 1998

A Council District Commission Public Hearing was held in the Auditorium of Rhodes Junior High School, 1860 South Longmore, on November 5, 1998 at 6:40 p.m.

COUNCIL DISTRICT COMMISSION PRESENT

Chairman Pat Langdon
Lynda Bailey
Mary Jo Whalen

COUNCIL PRESENT

Jim Davidson
Dennis Kavanaugh

STAFF PRESENT

Cindy Barris
Jamie Brennen
Dan Hansing
Jeff Martin
Ellen Pence
Tom Remes

OTHERS PRESENT

Florence Adams
Robert Blatz
Tom Buffington
Donald Costello

OTHERS PRESENT (CONT.)

Ryan Fitzloff
Alan Heslop
Mike Kalember
Ruben Martinez
Vern Mathern
Steve Mitton
Laurie Nichols
Marion Porch
Roy Schult
Robbie Sherwood
Marilynn Wennerstrom
David Woolf
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 expressed appreciation to everyone for their attendance. Chairman Langdon briefly explained the purpose of the hearing and introduced members of the City Council and Council District Commission present at the meeting.

Chairman Langdon advised that the City has retained National Demographics, Inc. as consultants to assist the District Commission and the City in developing district boundaries. Chairman Langdon introduced Drs. Alan Heslop and Florence Adams, representing National Demographics.

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 alternative 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 City Councilmember Dennis Kavanaugh responded to questions from citizens pertaining to computer software programs available to assist in preparing/transmitting plans, projected growth and population deviation (from the ideal district), time frame for submission of district boundaries to the U.S. Department of Justice, the anticipated districting implementation process as outlined in the initiative approved by voters at the May 19, 1998 General Election, and redistricting requirements following the year 2000 census.

Dr. Adams noted that all citizen maps must be submitted no later than December 1, 1998. Dr. Adams stated that a recommended plan and two alternatives will be prepared for presentation at the Council District Commission meeting to be held at 5:30 p.m. on December 9 and the City Council Study Session to be held at 7:30 a.m. on December 10 (both meetings to be held in the City Council Chambers).

Commission Member Bailey advised that a second public hearing will be held at Rhodes Junior High School on December 16, 1998. Commission Member Bailey invited everyone to attend.

6. Adjournment.

Chairman Langdon expressed appreciation to the citizens for their attendance and interest in the districting process. Chairman Langdon urged those present to submit plans and to encourage others to participate.

Without objection, the public hearing adjourned at 8:03 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 5th day of November 1998. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held.

Dated this ____ day of _____ 1998

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK