

COUNCIL DISTRICT COMMISSION MINUTES

December 9, 1998

The Council District Commission met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on December 9, 1998 at 5:32 p.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

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

STAFF PRESENT

Cindy Barris
Steve Burg
Barbara Jones
Ellen Pence
Tom Remes

OTHERS PRESENT

Florence Adams
Bill Brando
Luule Brando
Alan Heslop
Robbie Sherwood
Marilynn Wennerstrom
Others

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

1. Approval of minutes from November 4, 1998 Commission meeting.

It was moved by Vice Chairman Andersen, seconded by Commission Member Whalen, that the minutes from the November 4, 1998 Commission meeting be approved.

Carried unanimously.

2. Consider minutes of first round of public hearings on districting.

Commission Member Brice-Heames noted the presence of additional citizens, particularly representatives from the Hispanic community, at the November 12, 1998 public hearing and requested that their names be included under "Others Present."

It was moved by Commission Member Whalen, seconded by Commission Member Bailey, that the minutes from the November 5, 9, 12, 17, and 18, 1998 public hearings be approved as amended.

Carried unanimously.

3. Hear a presentation and discuss proposed citizen plans for Council districting.

Assistant to the City Manager Ellen Pence introduced Drs. Alan Heslop and Florence Adams, consultants from National Demographics, Inc. who are assisting the Commission and City in establishing district boundaries.

Dr. Heslop spoke concerning the favorable response and participation to date in the districting process, noting that more than 60 citizen plans have been submitted, including approximately 30 from Mesa students. Dr. Heslop commented that various ideas have been introduced, resulting in significant refinement when compared to the initial concept plans (red, blue, and green) prepared to assist citizens in developing kits. Dr. Heslop advised that the dominant theme of approach has been modified to reflect citizen suggestions. Dr. Heslop expressed the opinion that the Commission and the districting process have been well served by the input received from citizens.

Dr. Adams, President of National Demographics, Inc., said that citizen submissions have consisted of maps (entire City and/or individual districts), letters, and comments/suggestions. Dr. Adams displayed numerous citizen plans submitted and reported that emerging trends include 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 noted that the citizen plans and analyses have been compiled into booklet form and distributed to the Commission for review.

In response to a question from Commission Member Bailey, Dr. Adams stated the opinion that the level of citizen participation has been exemplary.

4. Discuss and consider the recommended districting plan, plus two alternative plans.

Dr. Adams presented the recommended districting plan and Alternatives #1 and #2 prepared in response to the input received from citizens. Dr. Adams said that copies of the plans and a cover letter have been provided to the Commission. Dr. Adams noted that the three plans meet established criteria, with the exception of geographic equality (which cannot be obtained), but stated 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 advised that residential/retirement communities and areas of influence as defined by Building a Healthier Mesa remain intact within the plans and that each district in each plan contains a high school. Dr. Adams related efforts to achieve minority influence and noted that District 4 reflects Hispanic populations of 32.24%, 34.74%, and 34.51%, respectively, within the recommended plan and Alternatives #1 and #2.

Dr. Adams commented that opportunity exists for revisions prior to the development of a final plan and encouraged input concerning the plans from the Commission, Council, and citizens.

Dr. Heslop stated that the second series of public hearings will allow an opportunity to determine which plan provides the most appropriate political action for various communities.

Discussion ensued pertaining to the effect of the recommended plan on incumbent Councilmembers, the ease in transition (redistricting) provided by continuous (straight) boundary lines, and the feasibility of obtaining population projections from the City's Community Development Department.

Commission Member Brice-Heames spoke in favor of Alternatives #1 and #2 given the greater Hispanic concentration but indicated a preference for Alternative #2, noting that District 4 encompasses the City's historic districts and proposed expansion of redevelopment boundaries.

Commission Member Bailey commented concerning the importance of retaining neighborhood communities and stated support for the recommended plan. Commission Member Bailey noted that additional historic districts (outside District 4) will likely be designated in the future.

Vice Chairman Andersen spoke in support of the recommended plan. Vice Chairman Andersen stated that boundary lines conform to major streets, are easily recognized, and will accommodate future adjustments.

Commission Member Whalen said that she prefers the recommended plan. Commission Member Whalen commented that the recommended plan reflects continuous (straight) lines and is simplistic and easy to understand.

Chairman Langdon congratulated Drs. Heslop and Adams for their efforts. Chairman Langdon spoke in favor of the recommended plan and the concept of three districts in both the northern and southern portions of the City, with a provision for two districts in the east to accommodate infill and growth.

5. Discuss proposed schedule for second round of public hearings on districting.

Chairman Langdon stated that a presentation before Council is scheduled for the December 10, 1998 Study Session, to be followed by a second series of public hearings as follows:

December 10 - Hale Elementary School
December 12 - Brimhall Junior High School
December 14 - Fremont Junior High School
December 16 - Rhodes Junior High School
December 17 - Mesa Junior High School

In response to a question from Chairman Langdon, Environmental Attorney Steve Burg said that the item before Council is an update concerning the districting process. Mr. Burg advised that the process is proceeding as directed by the initiative approved by voters and no action is necessary by the Commission at this time.

Commission Member Brice-Heames spoke concerning the role of the Commission, commenting that pursuant to the initiative, districting is intended to be a citizen process and is not to be directed by the Council. Commission Member Brice-Heames indicated support for advising/updating Councilmembers but said that a recommendation from Council concerning the presentation of the recommended plan and two alternatives to the public is unnecessary.

Members of the Commission concurred that no action is needed at this time.

Ms. Pence reported that a two-page news release has been prepared outlining the second series of public hearings to be held throughout the community. In response to a request from Ms. Pence, Commission Members volunteered to host the public hearings.

6. Scheduling of future Commission meetings and general information.

Ms. Pence stated that a meeting of the Commission has tentatively been scheduled for Wednesday, January 13, 1999, at 5:30 p.m., at which time the consultants will present their final report. Ms. Pence said that it is anticipated that the Commission's final report will be presented to Council at the January 14 Study Session, with Council action scheduled for the Regular Council Meeting to be held on Tuesday, January 19.

7. Items from citizens present (three minutes per speaker).

Luule Brandofino, 61 South Macdonald, displayed a citizen plan she submitted and explained the intent of the layout. Ms. Brando stated the opinion that the plan is simplistic, accommodates anticipated growth, and is conducive to redistricting.

Chairman Langdon expressed appreciation to Ms. Brandofino for her participation but spoke concerning the requirement to equalize population, noting significant deviations from the ideal district reflected in Ms. Brandofino's proposal. Chairman Langdon thanked Ms. Brando for her comments.

8. Adjournment.

Chairman Langdon expressed appreciation to everyone for their time and encouraged attendance at the upcoming public hearings.

It was moved by Commission Member Brice-Heames, seconded by Commission Member Whalen, that the meeting of the Council District Commission adjourn at 6:38 p.m.

Carried unanimously.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Council Districting Commission of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 9th day of December 1998. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this ____ day of _____ 1999

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK