

COUNCIL DISTRICT COMMISSION MINUTES

July 17, 2001

The Council District Commission of the City of Mesa met at Hale Elementary School, 1425 N. 23rd Street, on July 17, 2001 at 6:35 p.m.

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

1. Welcome – Council District Commission Member.

Commission Member Alice Swinehart welcomed everyone to the meeting and voiced appreciation to residents for their participation in the redistricting process. She stated that Spanish and sign language interpretation for the meeting are available to any citizen upon request. No requests for translation were received. Ms. Swinehart introduced Chairman Pat Langdon and Commission Members Dwayne Priester and Jim Driskill. She also introduced Dr. Alan Heslop and Dr. Florence Adams of National Demographics Corporation.

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

Dr. Heslop provided a brief overview of the redistricting process to date and the criteria adopted by the Commission to guide the process. He commented on the Voting Rights Act and other Justice Department regulations that apply to the districting process including benchmarks Mesa must meet regarding sustainable Hispanic population percentages, particularly regarding District 4. Dr. Heslop also commented on the boundary line contortions and population deviations necessary to meet the benchmark in District 4; the population inequality of the current districts; and the rapid growth in Districts 5 and 6.

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 Marti Soza, Marilynn Wennerstrom, 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.

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

Dr. Adams commented on a previously voiced concern of Mesa resident Teresa Brice-Heames regarding the fact that the Evergreen Historic District is divided in the Recommended Plan. Dr. Adams said that the Recommended Plan would be modified to incorporate the Evergreen Historic District wholly within District 4 and that the benchmark of District 4 would still be met with this modification.

Dr. Adams discussed the issue of disadvantaged voters (residents ineligible to vote for a District Councilmember in the 2000 and 2002 elections) and stated that there would be approximately 17,000 disadvantaged voters from District 6 in conjunction with the Recommended Plan and approximately the same amount from District 5 in Alternative 2. She noted that this issue is a result of the fact that implementation of the district system in Mesa coincided with the decennial

census and the requirement that new district boundary lines be drawn in accordance with census results.

Dr. Adams responded to a question from Marilyn Wennerstrom, a Mesa resident, regarding the Justice Department's approval of districts that are excessively contorted.

In response to questions regarding the process of approval of a final redistricting plan, Commission Member Swinehart advised that the Commission will vote on a final plan on August 1, 2001; that the City Council will review the Commission's decision during the Council Meeting on August 6th; and that if there are any concerns the Council requests the Commission to reconsider, the Commission will meet again on August 7th. Ms. Swinehart noted that the Commission has final approval authority regarding the redistricting plan submitted to the Justice Department.

5. Adjournment.

Without objection, the District Commission meeting adjourned at 7:05 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 17th 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

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