

COUNCIL DISTRICT COMMISSION MINUTES

January 13, 1999

The Council District Commission met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on January 13, 1999 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
Jeff Martin
Ellen Pence
Tom Remes

OTHERS PRESENT

Florence Adams
Phil Austin
Hector Benitez
Pat Gilbert
Pas Gutierrez
Alan Heslop
Stacy Ramirez
Carol Reed
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 December 9, 1998 Commission meeting.

It was moved by Commission Member Brice-Heames, seconded by Commission Member Whalen, that the minutes from the December 9, 1998 Commission meeting be approved.

Carried unanimously.

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

It was moved by Commission Member Whalen, seconded by Commission Member Bailey, that the minutes from the December 10, 12, 14, 16, and 17, 1998 public hearings be approved.

Carried unanimously.

3. Hear a presentation, discuss and consider the final recommended district plan for Mesa.

Assistant to the City Manager Jeff Martin 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 stated the opinion that the districting process in Mesa has been exemplary. Dr. Heslop noted a direct relationship between citizen comments, input, and maps and the final recommended district boundaries.

Dr. Heslop commended the Commission Members and City staff for their efforts and expressed appreciation for the assistance of Dr. Adams.

Dr. Adams, President of National Demographics, Inc., reviewed the map and summary statistics for the final recommended plan. Dr. Adams reported that support for the previously recommended plan was extensive but that modifications have been incorporated into the final plan to address the following concerns presented by citizens: a) strengthen the percentage in the Hispanic influence district, b) better reflect future population trends with increased negative deviations in growth areas and increased positive deviations in developed areas, and c) preserve voting precinct boundaries to the extent possible.

Dr. Adams advised that the final recommended plan: a) reflects an increase in the Hispanic percentage in District 4 to 34.27 percent, while the Hispanic voting age population has been increased to 30.18 percent; b) extends positive deviation in Districts 2 and 3 and negative deviation in District 5; and c) divides three fewer voting precincts. Dr. Adams commented that the final plan reflects the input of citizens and is recommended for approval.

At the request of Commission Member Brice-Heames, Dr. Adams delineated boundary lines for District 4.

Vice Chairman Andersen expressed the opinion that the districting process has been participatory and educational. Vice Chairman Andersen commended Drs. Heslop and Adams for their efforts.

Commission Member Bailey spoke in support of the final plan, noting the fulfillment of two personal requisites: a) an ability to defend the process and b) an ability to report that full opportunity was provided for citizen participation and consideration of input. Commission Member Bailey stated appreciation for the occasion to serve as a Commission Member. Commission Member Bailey expressed the opinion that the final plan represents an appropriate foundation for redistricting.

Chairman Langdon commented that the final plan adheres to the criteria established at the outset of the districting process, maintains the integrity of neighborhood associations, and will accommodate future growth. Chairman Langdon spoke concerning the importance to the community of the development of the Hispanic influence district. Chairman Langdon noted the opportunity provided for public participation in the districting process and commended National Demographics and City staff for their work.

Chairman Langdon stated that a resolution has been prepared for consideration by the Commission recommending approval of the initial Councilmember district boundaries as defined in the consultant's final recommended plan. Chairman Langdon read the resolution.

Commission Member Brice-Heames expressed concern relative to the terms *many* and *best* included in the resolution as follows: a) *received input from many citizens of Mesa* and b) *finds that it best meets the criteria adopted by the Council District Commission*. Commission Member Brice-Heames expressed the opinion that the resolution should reflect facts and that the terms *many* and *best* should be eliminated or more clearly defined.

Vice Chairman Andersen concurred with Commission Member Brice-Heames regarding utilization of the term *many*. Vice Chairman Andersen spoke in favor of retaining the term *best* given the Commission's responsibility to select the best plan.

Commission Member Bailey advised that in addition to the public hearings and comments/maps received by the consultants, she has had an extensive number of conversations with individuals and the City has received numerous telephone calls via the hotline. Commission Member Bailey stated support for use of the term *many* when considering input received from all sources.

Commission Member Whalen acknowledged the concerns of Commission Member Brice-Heames given the limited attendance at the public hearings but expressed the opinion that input was received from *many* citizens overall.

Chairman Langdon commented that attendance at the public hearings was limited but said that input from all sources was significant. Chairman Langdon noted that he personally spoke to a civic organization and that other Commission Members likely did so as well. Chairman Langdon stated the opinion that utilization of the term *many* is valid when including all sources.

Chairman Langdon said that it is the Commission's task to select the *best* plan for the City and that use of the term is appropriate. Chairman Langdon spoke in favor of the resolution.

Commission Member Brice-Heames noted the significant effort to elicit input but expressed concern that utilization of the current districting process as a model and the term *many* may indicate acceptance of low turnout and low participation.

In response to a request from Chairman Langdon, Dr. Heslop stated that resolutions adopted by other communities in relation to districting have contained the phrase *fully meets* instead of *best meets*. Dr. Heslop spoke concerning informal contacts of Commission Members and the City and suggested use of language such as *and in other informal ways received input from many citizens of Mesa*.

It was moved by Commission Member Bailey, seconded by Commission Member Whalen, that the resolution be adopted recommending to the City Council the establishment of the initial Councilmember district boundaries as defined in the final recommended plan.

Phil Austin, 215 North Robson, former Assistant Attorney General for the State's civil rights enforcement, said that he has frequently been contacted by the Department of Justice for review and input regarding specific language included in submissions. Mr. Austin concurred with the concerns of Commission Member Brice-Heames pertaining to the term *many* in relation to the extent of participation in the districting process. Mr. Austin recommended that the word *many* be deleted or the language modified in a manner similar to that suggested by Dr. Heslop.

In response to a question from Chairman Langdon, Mr. Austin commented that the number of participants at the public hearings may not constitute *many* when compared to the population of the City. Mr. Austin indicated a preference that the word *many* be deleted from the resolution and that *fully* be substituted for the term *best*.

In response to a question from Marilyn Wennerstrom, 1112 North Center, Environmental Attorney Steve Burg explained the purpose in presenting a resolution versus an ordinance for adoption by the Commission. Mr. Burg indicated that a resolution will additionally be presented for Council consideration.

Dr. Heslop advised that other communities have adopted final plans by either a resolution or an ordinance.

It was moved by Commission Member Bailey, seconded by Commission Member Whalen, that the motion be amended to delete the words *from many* and substitute the words *in numerous other ways received input from concerned* (citizens of Mesa).

Commission Member Bailey expressed the opinion that utilization of the term *best* is more appropriate than *fully*.

Carried unanimously.

4. Scheduling of future Commission meetings and general information.

Mr. Martin stated that the Commission's recommendation will be presented to Council at the January 14, 1999 Study Session and that the consultants will be available to respond to questions. Mr. Martin encouraged the Commission Members to attend the meeting.

Mr. Martin noted that it is staff's intent to include on the agenda for the January 19, 1999 Regular Council Meeting a resolution approving the Commission's recommendation.

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

In response to an additional question from Mr. Austin, Mr. Burg explained implementation of the districting system as outlined in the initiative approved by voters.

Ms. Wennerstrom commended the Commission and the consultants for their efforts and suggested that the current Commission Members be retained for the future redistricting process. Chairman Langdon thanked Ms. Wennerstrom for her input and recommended that she present her comments to Council.

6. Adjournment.

Chairman Langdon stated appreciation to the Commission and the consultants for their work and to the citizens for their participation in the districting process.

It was moved by Commission Member Whalen, seconded by Vice Chairman Andersen, that the meeting of the Council District Commission adjourn at 6:37 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 District Commission of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 13th day of January 1999. 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

(This was the final meeting of the District Commission; therefore, the Commission did not have an opportunity to approve these minutes.)