

# **COUNCIL DISTRICT COMMISSION MINUTES**

July 18, 2001

The Council District Commission of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1<sup>st</sup> Street, on July 18, 2001 at 6:30 p.m.

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

1. Welcome – Dwayne Priester, Council District Commission Member.

Commission Member Dwayne Priester welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Chairman Pat Langdon and Commission Members Alice Swinehart and Jim Driskill. Commission Member Priester also introduced Dr. Alan Heslop and Dr. Florence Adams of National Demographics Corporation (NDC). Commission Member Priester informed the audience that Spanish interpretation for the meeting is available to any citizen upon request. No requests for translation were received.

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

Dr. Heslop spoke concerning the favorable response and participation to date in the districting 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 Marilyn Wennerstrom, Marti Soza, 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.

Dr. Adams commented that as a result of the 1998 voter-approved initiative to transition from an at-large City Council system to single-member districts, citizens who currently reside in Districts 5 and 6 and who are moved into District 2 will become ineligible to vote in the March 2002 City Council election. Dr. Adams advised that in the Recommended Plan, approximately 17,667 District 6 citizens, if moved into District 2, would become ineligible to vote (non-registered voters), and in Alternative 2, an estimated 17,717 District 5 residents, if moved into District 2, would also not be permitted to vote in the upcoming City Council election.

Dr. Adams reported that in response to concerns expressed by the residents of the Evergreen Historic Neighborhood that the area would be split into two districts, NDC has determined that it is possible to maintain the benchmark mandated by the Federal Voting Rights Act and to restore the neighborhood within one district. Dr. Adams stressed the importance of public participation in the redistricting process and noted that the Council District Commission will render the ultimate decision regarding this matter.

Dr. Adams commented that the final public hearing is scheduled for July 19, 2001, 6:30 p.m. at the Superstition Police/Fire Substation, 2430 South Ellsworth Road, to be followed by an August 1, 2001, 5:30 p.m. Council District Commission meeting. Dr. Adams stated that on August 6, 2001, 5:45 p.m., the Council District Commission will present the Recommended Plan to the City Council for its approval.

Dr. Heslop acknowledged the Council District Commission for its dedication during the districting process.

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

Manny Cortez, 2837 East Emelita, expressed support for Alternative 2 and stated the opinion that he would prefer that the district boundaries be divided in a north/south configuration which would place the Council representative in closer proximity to his/her constituents. Mr. Cortez also suggested that consideration should be given to an increase in the number of Councilmembers from six to eight.

Barbara Cortez, 2837 East Emelita, voiced concerns regarding the Recommended Plan wherein District 1 would stretch from Price Road to Greenfield Road. Ms. Cortez noted that the configuration would diminish the "community of interest" criteria. Dr. Adams clarified that such changes are necessary to accommodate the rapid growth in the eastern section of the City; to remain in compliance with Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, and also commented that per the City Charter, a Councilmember who has been duly elected cannot be moved out of his/her district.

Victor Linhoff, 820 North Robson, expressed appreciation to the Council District Commission and NDC for their efforts. Mr. Linhoff stated the opinion that it is imperative that Mesa's historic neighborhoods remain intact within a single Council district.

In response to an opinion expressed by Janie Thom, 4043 East Flower, regarding the City's timetable to submit its Recommended Plan to the Justice Department, Dr. Adams clarified that the Justice Department has up to 120 days to pre-clear all election changes within Arizona, including districting and redistricting plans.

In response to a question from Pas Gutierrez, 5441 East Emerald Avenue, Dr. Adams advised that per the Recommended Plan, the Evergreen Historic Neighborhood is currently split between Districts 1 and 4; however, it is the opinion of the consultants that the residential area could be included within District 4 without a dilution of the Hispanic population.

Marilynn Wennerstrom, 1112 North Center Street, voiced concerns regarding typographical errors on the maps contained in the Recommended Plan and Alternative 2 materials.

Commission Member Priester thanked everyone for their attendance and participation during the districting process and encouraged their attendance at the final public meeting on July 19, 2001.

Commission Member Swinehart spoke regarding the various components of the Recommended Plan which were taken into consideration by the District Commission including the negative deviations in Districts 5 and 6.

5. Adjournment.

Without objection, the District Commission meeting adjourned at 7:35 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 18<sup>th</sup> day of July 2001. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

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BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK

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