

# COUNCIL DISTRICT COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES

November 9, 1998

A Council District Commission Public Hearing was held in the Multipurpose Room of Emerson Elementary School, 415 North Westwood, on November 9, 1998 at 6:40 p.m.

## COUNCIL DISTRICT COMMISSION PRESENT

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

## STAFF PRESENT

Wayne Balmer  
Barbara Jones

## STAFF PRESENT (CONT.)

Dan Hansing  
Jeff Martin  
Ellen Pence  
Andrea Rasizer  
Tom Remes

## OTHERS PRESENT

Florence Adams  
Juan Ambriz  
Judy Fogwell  
Margie Frost  
Alan Heslop  
John Mark  
Edna McLaughlin  
Dan Nowicki  
Marilynn Wennerstrom  
Crystal Young  
Larry Young  
Others

Teresa Brice-Heames, Council District Commission Member, 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.

Commission Member Brice-Heames welcomed the citizens to the meeting and expressed appreciation to everyone for their attendance. Commission Member Brice-Heames commented that because she resides in this area, she has been provided the opportunity to host this public hearing. Commission Member Brice-Heames briefly explained the purpose of the hearing in providing citizens an opportunity to submit comments and participate in the districting process.

Commission Member Brice-Heames introduced Council District Commission Members present and commented that the members will be available to answer any questions or concerns.

Commission Member Brice-Heames advised that the City has retained National Demographics, Inc. as consultants to assist the District Commission and the City in developing district boundaries. Commission Member Brice-Heames 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). Dr. Heslop stressed the importance of utilizing Mesa's man-made reference points, including freeway accesses.

### 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 the deadline for submission of district plans is December 1, 1998.

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 referred to overheads depicting three alternative district concepts (identified as red, blue, and green) which 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.

Commission Member Brice-Heames remarked concerning the significant deviation between the Hispanic census population and the Hispanic voting age population.

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). Dr. Adams stated that to date, three district plans have been submitted by Councilmember Hawker, and one plan has been submitted by District Commission Vice Chairman Andersen.

5. Question and answer on districting.

Dr. Adams responded to questions from citizens pertaining to the assessment of future minority growth, the district plan submission process and the 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 reiterated that citizen maps must be submitted no later than December 1, 1998 and encouraged those present to invite their neighbors and attend the remaining public hearings to be held on November 12 at Lincoln Elementary School, November 17 at Jefferson Elementary School, and November 18 at Mountain View High School.

6. Adjournment.

Commission Member Brice-Heames expressed appreciation to the citizens for their attendance and interest in the districting process.

Without objection, the public hearing adjourned at 7:53 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 9th day of November 1998. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held.

Dated this \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_ 1998

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BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK