

COUNCIL DISTRICT COMMISSION MINUTES

April 12, 2001

The Council District Commission of the City of Mesa met in the lower level meeting room of the Council Chambers, 57 East 1st Street, on April 12, 2001 at 5:30 p.m.

COMMITTEE PRESENT

Pat Langdon, Chairman
Jim Driskill
Dwayne Priester
Marti Sezate Soza
Alice Swinehart

COUNCIL PRESENT

Mayor Keno Hawker
Jim Davidson

OFFICERS PRESENT

Mike Hutchinson
Joe Padilla

1. Welcome by Mayor Hawker.

Mayor Hawker thanked the members of the Commission for agreeing to serve in this important capacity and noted that the first half of the redistricting process was completed approximately three years ago. He said that the Commission at that time understood that the boundary lines would only remain in effect until the results of the 2000 Census were determined. He explained that the district lines now have to be revised once again based on the revised census figures to take into account the increase that has occurred in the population count.

Mayor Hawker discussed the importance of receiving Department of Justice approval and conducting the entire process according to established criteria. He said that after the lines are drawn, several citizens will be attempting to determine their eligibility to run in the upcoming 2002 elections while others may be excluded. The Mayor said that he anticipates that the lines will increase in the eastern portion of the City, which has realized the most significant population growth.

Mayor Hawker urged the members of the Commission to base their decisions on what makes the most sense from a geographical point of view and stressed the importance of avoiding "mid-block" divisions. He also commented on ensuring that citizens will be able to easily identify the districts and noted that District 4, located in the downtown area, contains the largest concentration of the City's minority population.

Discussion ensued relative to City of Mesa and County land located within Mesa's planning area; the Desert Uplands Area; freeway treatments; traffic-calming measures; noise mitigation; the fact that District 6 will include Williams Gateway Airport and the noise influence area, and the importance of obtaining as much citizen input as possible.

Mayor Hawker commented on the important role that the Commission's work will play throughout the entire community and added that the consulting firm that has been retained to conduct the redistricting process was also involved in the initial redistricting process, and has both an excellent reputation and credentials. He also stressed the importance of conducting the entire process in an open manner with strong communication and citizen education. Mayor Hawker once again thanked the members of the Commission for their willingness to serve the City of Mesa.

2. Introductions.

Pat Langdon, who was selected to serve as Chairman of the Council District Commission, requested that the members and Staff introduce themselves and provide brief background information. Mr. Langdon commented that he was fortunate to have served in the position of Chairman during the initial redistricting process and said that he looks forward to working with the members of the Commission.

3. Hear a presentation on Citizen Advisory Boards & Committees roles.

Deputy City Attorney Joe Padilla provided the members of the Commission with a brief overview relative to the establishment of a District System form of government in Mesa and the appointment and duties of the Commission. Mr. Padilla stated that the Commission's recommendations will be presented to the City Council and they can either accept or reject the initial recommendations. He added that if the Council rejects the Commission's initial recommendations, the Commission will be asked to review and reconsider the matter and said that the Commission's second set of recommendations to the Council will be final and may not be rejected.

Discussion ensued relative to the Code of Ethics and the fact that the members of the Commission will be required to conform to all of the Ethics Codes as well as the requirements of the Open Meeting Law. He encouraged the members of the Commission to contact him at any time with questions or concerns regarding this process and said that he looks forward to working with the members of the Commission on this important project. He added that an outside consulting attorney has also been retained to participate in this process and will work with the consultant, National Demographics, throughout the redistricting effort.

4. Hear a presentation on the background of Mesa's last districting effort.

Chairman Langdon provided the members of the Commission with brief background information on Mesa's initial districting effort and said that the consultants, National Demographics, is a great organization to work with. He commented on the significant amount of data that will be generated and said that it is frustrating to work with out-of-date information, however, the law stipulates that the figures generated as a result of the 2000 Census be used to compile the data.

Discussion ensued relative to expansion versus infill, particularly in the eastern portion of the City, the fact that a significant amount of proposals will be received for review by the Commission, public participation and the importance of getting the citizens to attend the meetings and provide input, the mechanics of the process including 10 public hearings and the fact that the top three proposals will be presented to the Council for their review, Chairman Langdon's suggestion that the Commissionmembers take turns Chairing the various public

hearings and the fact that this method worked well during the last redistricting effort, and the presence of a Spanish-speaking interpreter at all of the meetings.

Chairman Langdon advised that Special Assistant to the City Manager Jenny Sheppard will serve as the chief administrative support person and Assistant to the City Manager Ellen Pence will oversee all of the public participation and advertising elements, including the preparation and distribution of the citizen kits.

5. Hear a presentation on the background of National Demographics key personnel and method of districting approach.

Ms. Sheppard provided the Commission with brief background information relative to the consulting firm National Demographics, which is headquartered in Claremont, California. She advised that the company is headed by Dr. Alan Heslop and Dr. Florence Adams and has been awarded a redistricting contract for the State of Arizona. She said that the company will also be involved in redistricting efforts for the cities of Surprise and Peoria. Ms. Sheppard noted that the consultants will be opening an office in Arizona and commented on the consultants' expertise and professionalism.

Discussion ensued relative to the fact that the Department of Justice looks favorably upon cities that include significant public input in their redistricting processes and said that the goal of the City is to include approximately 66,000 citizens in each of the districts. She noted that 55,000 was the total per district count used in the previous districting effort for Districts 1, 2 and 3. She explained the public hearing and recommendation process that will follow and said that the goal is to complete the process by August 10, 2001. Ms. Sheppard encouraged the members of the Commission to contact her if she can be of any assistance.

Chairman Langdon added that National Demographics has developed computer software which enables them to quickly analyze data and propose modifications and recommendations. He also discussed the importance of attending the various public hearings.

6. Hear a presentation on current district boundaries, issues and challenges of the redistricting timeframe.

Deputy City Clerk Cindy Barris said that the City Clerk's office will be involved in the preparation and distribution of meeting minutes and will also work with the City Attorney's office in the preparation of the Department of Justice submission. She explained that one of the challenges facing the Commission is the timeframe involved in the process and said that the schedule calls for forwarding the Department of Justice submission by August 10th. Although staff will request expedited approval, the Department then has up to sixty days in which to review the submission. Candidates can file their paperwork between November and December, so this does not allow the candidates very much time. She thanked the members of the Commission for their willingness to help in this important process and urged them to call her if she can be of any assistance.

7. Hear a presentation on the marketing and public information program on the districting effort.

Assistant to the City Manager Ellen Pence provided a brief overview of the marketing and public information program that has been developed for the districting effort and said that staff's major goal is to ensure that the process is as inclusive as it can possibly be. She stated that staff

looks forward to working with the members of the Commission and added that they are at their disposal.

Discussion ensued relative to the booklet that was prepared for the initial districting effort, the fact that the City's web site will be used extensively during this process, the preparation, distribution and analysis of "citizen kits" and the fact that the kits will be available on the City's web site and can be completed and submitted electronically, news articles, the utilization of a sign language interpreter as well as a Spanish interpreter at all of the public hearings, direct mail brochures (two mailings), the establishment of a "hot line" for citizens to call, and staff's recommendation that a "Speakers' Bureau" be developed and that members of the Commission speak to various organizations to explain the process and encourage participation.

Ms. Pence informed the members of the Commission that the marketing and public information program developed for the previous district effort received a national award for getting citizens involved and outreach efforts. She said that she looks forward to working with the members of the Commission.

Chairman Langdon commented that the Commission will define the districts within the City of Mesa for the next five and possibly ten years and stressed the importance of doing a thorough, professional and accurate job.

8. Scheduling of future meetings and general information.

Ms. Sheppard referred to a schedule of future meetings contained in the binders distributed to the members of the Commission and added that the schedule will be updated periodically. She said that the plan is to send packets out a week before the public hearings and said that staff has a list of interested citizens who participated in the last process. She encouraged the members to forward the names of citizens they believe would want to participate in the process as well so that their names can be added to the mailing list.

9. Adjournment.

Chairman Langdon once again thanked the members of the Commission for their willingness to serve on this important Commission and thanked staff for their assistance.

Without objection, the Council District Commission meeting adjourned at 6:24 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Council District Commission Meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 12th day of April 2001. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

Dated this ____ day of _____ 2001

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK