

COUNCIL DISTRICT COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES

December 17, 1998

A Council District Commission Public Hearing was held in the Auditorium of Mesa Junior High School, 828 E. Broadway on December 17, 1998 at 6:30 p.m.

COUNCIL DISTRICT COMMISSION PRESENT

Chairman Pat Langdon
Teresa Brice-Heames

COMMISSION ABSENT

Wilford Andersen
Lynda Bailey
Mary Jo Whalen

STAFF PRESENT

Jamie Brennen
Linda Crocker
Barbara Jones
Ellen Pence

OTHERS PRESENT

Lawrence Packard
Bill Puffer
Viola Walker
Marilynn Wennerstrom
Larry Young
Others

1. Welcome.

Commission Member Teresa Brice-Heames advised that Spanish and sign language interpretation for the meeting are available to any citizen upon request. No requests for translation were received.

Commission Member Brice-Heames welcomed the citizens to the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance. Commission Member Brice-Heames introduced Council District Commission Chairman Pat Langdon to the members of the audience.

Commission Member Brice-Heames briefly explained the purpose of the public hearing, and introduced Dr. Florence Adams, President of National Demographics, Inc., the consultant who is assisting the Commission and the City in developing district boundary lines.

2. Review and discuss citizen kits.

Dr. Adams highlighted a presentation on the districting issue and noted that the process is predicated on federal mandates relating to population and minority representation. Dr. Adams stated that districts should be drawn that are equal in population (to the extent possible) and provide fair representation to all groups. Dr. Adams noted that the Voting Rights Act and later Court decisions emphasize the importance of ensuring that the districting process does not exclude or disadvantage in any way Hispanics, Mesa's largest minority.

Dr. Adams presented additional criteria adopted by the District Commission for use in guiding the districting process. Dr. Adams indicated that the population totals to be utilized in implementing districting are those of the last official census count (1995 mid-decade census).

Dr. Adams noted that the meeting this date is the last in a second series of public hearings concerning the districting process. Dr. Adams provided an overview of the first series of public hearings and the utilization of citizen kits as a component in developing district boundaries. Dr. Adams noted that the deadline for submission of citizen kits was December 1, 1998.

Dr. Adams reported that citizen submissions consisted of maps (entire City and/or individual districts, letters and comments/suggestions) and said that various ideas were introduced, resulting in significant refinement when compared to the initial concept plans (red, blue, and green) prepared to assist citizens in developing kits.

Dr. Adams displayed numerous citizen plans submitted and reported that emerging trends included three districts in both the northern and southern portions of the City, with a provision for two districts in the east to accommodate growth. Dr. Adams stated that the citizen plans and analyses have been compiled into booklet form and are available for review.

3. Review of recommended districting plan and two alternative plans.

Dr. Adams presented a recommended districting plan and two alternative plans prepared in response to input received from citizens. Dr. Adams noted that the three plans meeting established criteria (with the exception of geographic equality, which cannot be obtained), but said that the recommended plan is preferred, particularly given the significant number of continuous (straight) lines along major streets and more easily identified district boundaries.

Dr. Adams stated that communities of interest (e.g. residential/retirement centers and areas of influence as defined by Building a Healthier Mesa) are configured diversely but remain intact within the plans; each district in each plan contains a high school; and each plan includes two districts in the east to accommodate growth. Dr. Adams reported that it is not feasible to create a majority minority district in Mesa but related efforts to achieve minority influence. Dr. Adams reported that Hispanic population concentrations vary by approximately two percent among the three proposed plans.

Dr. Adams commented that opportunity exists for revisions prior to the development of a final plan and encouraged input from citizens concerning the recommended plan and two alternative plans.

4. Question and comments on a recommended districting plan and two alternative plans.

In response to a question posed by Marilyn Wennerstrom, 1112 North Center Street, Dr. Adams advised that the actual numbering of the six Council districts may be revised in the future.

Bill Puffer, 8330 East Thomas, expressed concerns relative to extensive growth that has occurred in the community since the last census, particularly in the east Mesa area. Dr. Adams explained the 'one person, one vote' guideline which must be followed and added that extensive thought went into developing districts that would accommodate current and future growth in the eastern portion of the City. Dr. Adams noted that a redistricting process will occur in 2001 but said that no provision exists in the districting initiative that would require the City to redistrict at the mid-decade census.

Dr. Adams stated that the Council Districting Commission has scheduled a meeting on January 13, 1999 to select the recommended redistricting plan that will be presented to the City Council at a Council Workshop on January 14, 1999. Dr. Adams invited those present to attend one or both meetings, which will be held in the lower Council Chambers. Dr. Adams stated that in the event the City Council does not vote in support of the recommended districting plan, the proposal will be sent back to the Commission which will forward a second, final recommendation to the City Council which, according to the initiative, must be approved.

5. Presentation on possible impact of new Council districting system.

This item was not discussed at this time.

6. Adjournment.

Without objection, the public hearing adjourned at 7:23 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 17th day of December 1998. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held.

Dated this ____ day of _____ 1999

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK