

COUNCIL DISTRICT COMMISSION MINUTES

May 23, 2001

The Council District Commission of the City of Mesa met at Shepherd Junior High School Auditorium, 1407 N. Alta Mesa Drive, on May 23, 2001 at 6:30 p.m.

COMMISSION PRESENT

Pat Langdon, Chairman
Jim Driskill
Marti Soza
Alice Swinehart

COMMISSION ABSENT

Dwayne Priestler

COUNCIL PRESENT

Bill Jaffa

1. Welcome – Pat Langdon, Council District Commission Chair.

Chairman Langdon welcomed everyone to the meeting and said that the purpose of the meeting is to encourage and gather citizen input regarding the Council district line-drawing process. Chairman Langdon informed the audience that Spanish and sign language interpretation are available. Sign language interpretation was provided upon request.

Chairman Langdon introduced Dr. Alan Heslop and Dr. Florence Adams of National Demographics Corporation (NDC) and stated that they are experts in this area and were retained by the City to provide technical assistance throughout the process.

2. Review of Preliminary Report on Districting in Mesa.

Dr. Alan Heslop spoke about the importance of gathering and utilizing citizen input in the district line-drawing process. He referred to the *Preliminary Report to the City of Mesa Council Districting Commission on the Redistricting Process* (copies of the report and Citizen Kits were available to the public in the rear of the auditorium), and said that the report is a guidebook for the public to use regarding the redistricting process. He added that the report will also be used by the Justice Department when evaluating Mesa's final redistricting plan. Dr. Heslop discussed the various topics addressed in the report including Mesa's history, growth, geography and demography; the public participation process; redistricting tasks and NDC's approach to redistricting; and data and maps (based on 2000 census data) used throughout the process.

Dr. Heslop commented on the criteria approved by the Commission that will be used to guide the line-drawing process and reported that the criteria falls within three categories: 1) *Issues of*

Equality and Fairness, which includes Equal Population, Adherence to the Voting Rights Act, and Compactness and Contiguity; 2) *Councilmanic Districts*, which refers to the City Charter requirement that the residence of an incumbent Councilmember must not be removed from the district he was elected to represent; and 3) *Good Government Criteria*, which includes Respect Community of Interest, Follow Natural and Man-made Boundaries, Citizen Input, Population Growth, and Existing Districts. Dr. Heslop noted that the criteria are listed in priority rank order.

3. Review of Citizen Kits.

Dr. Adams stated that 2000 census figures must be utilized in the redistricting process, even though Mesa has continued to grow since that census was conducted. She noted that population counts of pre-cleared, recently annexed areas were added to 2000 census figures to determine Mesa's total population and the populations of the six existing districts. Dr. Adams reported that, for the purpose of redistricting, Mesa's total population is 397,760; and that the ideal target district population is 66,293 ($397,760 \div 6$). Dr. Adams explained the differences between census blocks, block groups and tracts and noted that citizen block groups are used in conjunction with the Citizen Kits.

Dr. Adams stated that the Justice Department must approve all election changes including districting and redistricting plans, and annexations. She spoke about Justice Department mandates regarding dividing areas with significant minority concentrations and preserving minority majority districts. She noted that the Hispanic population is the significant minority population in Mesa.

Dr. Adams identified and commented on items contained in the Citizen Kits including an instruction sheet in English and Spanish, a spreadsheet providing race/ethnicity population analyses of current districts based on the 2000 census, and a population deviation table of the six districts. She referred to numerous maps contained in the Citizen Kits, including: 1) Current Districts; 2) Total Population Counts; 3) Hispanic Population Counts; 4) Voting Age Population Counts; 5) Hispanic Voting Age Counts; 6) various thematic maps depicting the location of minorities throughout Mesa by percentages; and 7) a plain blank map and a clear overlay map (for use by citizens to develop concepts).

4. Discuss three alternative district concepts for Mesa.

Dr. Adams stated that NDC developed three alternative district concepts to aid citizens in creating their own concepts. She referred to maps provided that contained the three concepts and explained how existing district lines are delineated on the maps to illustrate where the boundary lines were adjusted. She noted that spreadsheets containing population data, percentages and deviations are also provided with each of the three concepts.

Dr. Adams discussed the specific boundary adjustments in Concept A, which include movement of District 3 slightly east and north; considerable movement of District 1 east; movement of District 2 east; and movement of District 5 (into District 6) south to Southern Avenue. She noted that District 4 has the highest percentage of Hispanic population at 46.15%, and that the overall deviation of Concept A is 1.25%

Dr. Adams commented on the boundary adjustments in Concept B which include movement of District 3 east and north in a different manner than Concept A in order to add population; straightening of the lines in District 4 and movement of District 4 into District 6, resulting in a reduction of the Hispanic population in District 4 to 43.96%; movement of District 1 into District 2 and also into District 4; and movement of District 5 into District 6. She noted that the overall deviation of Concept B is 4.02%.

Dr. Adams discussed the boundary adjustments in Concept C including movement of District 4 slightly into District 3, straightening the line between 3 and 4; movement of District 3 north; movement of District 1 significantly east; and significant configuration change of District 5. She stated that the most significant change in Concept C is the movement of District 2 to the southern border of the City. She noted that the Hispanic population of District 4 is 46.24%, and that the overall deviation of Concept C is 2.76%.

5. Question and answer on districting.

Dr. Adams and Dr. Heslop responded to questions from citizens pertaining to the preferred method of marking boundary lines on maps submitted for consideration; adjustments for population growth since the 2000 census; and the duration of the redistricting plan upon approval and adoption.

In response to questions regarding the process of submitting a plan/map to the City for consideration, Dr. Adams advised that plans/maps should be sent to Special Assistant to the City Manager Jenny Sheppard, who will forward all submittals to NDC. She added that NDC will analyze the plan and make appropriate comments and suggestions and return the plan to Ms. Sheppard (within 72 hours), who will forward the plan back to the citizen. Dr. Adams noted that citizen plans can be resubmitted for further analysis and consideration as many times as the citizen wishes.

Chairman Langdon acknowledged the presence of Councilmember Bill Jaffa in the audience.

Chairman Langdon expressed appreciation to the citizens for their attendance and participation in the redistricting process. He urged everyone to attend future public meetings and noted that the next public meeting will be on May 24th at Pedro Guerrero Elementary School, 463 S. Alma School Road.

6. Adjournment.

Without objection, the Districting Commission meeting adjourned at 7:31 p.m.

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I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the Districting Commission Meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 23rd day of May 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

pjt