

COUNCIL DISTRICT COMMISSION PUBLIC HEARING MINUTES

November 18, 1998

A Council District Commission Public Hearing was held in the Auditorium of Mountain View High School, 2700 East Brown Road, on November 18, 1998 at 6:40 p.m.

COUNCIL DISTRICT COMMISSION PRESENT

Chairman Pat Langdon
Wilford Andersen
Lynda Bailey
Teresa Brice-Heames

STAFF PRESENT

Cindy Barris
Jamie Brennen
Barbara Jones
Frank Mizner
Ellen Pence
Andrea Rasizer
Tom Remes

OTHERS PRESENT

Florence Adams
Georgette Baggett
Audrey Burfiend
J. Callero
Isabel Chanley
Fernando Cordova
Ron Fischer
Pas Gutierrez
David Henderson
John Mork
Karen Pierce

OTHERS PRESENT (CONT.)

Beverly Selvage
Justin Turner
Dick Van Dyne
Mina Van Dyne
Fernando Venegas
Joe Walsh
Marilynn Wennerstrom
Lee Whelan
Mary Ann Whelan
Ardell York
Others

Wilford Andersen, Vice Chairman of the Council District Commission, 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.

Vice Chairman Andersen welcomed the citizens to the meeting and thanked everyone for their attendance. Vice Chairman Andersen introduced members of the Council District Commission present at the meeting.

Vice Chairman Andersen briefly explained the purpose of the public hearing. Vice Chairman Andersen introduced Dr. Florence Adams, President of National Demographics, Inc., a consultant who is assisting the Commission and the City in developing district boundary lines.

2. Review of preliminary report on districting in Mesa.

Dr. Adams stated that a preliminary report on districting in Mesa has been prepared and is available to any individual interested in the districting process. Dr. Adams advised that the districting process is predicated upon federal mandates relating to total population and minority representation and that based on the constitutional issues of equality and fairness, districts should be drawn that: a) are equal in population to the extent possible and within the guidelines acceptable to the U.S. Department of Justice and b) give fair representation to all groups. Dr. Adams noted that the population totals to be utilized are those of the last

official census count (1995 mid-decade census) and that the Voting Rights Act and later Court decisions make clear that Hispanics, Mesa's largest minority group, must not be excluded or disadvantaged in any way in the districting.

Dr. Adams 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. Adams 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).

3. Review of citizen kits.

Dr. Adams reported that the citizen kits are available in English and Spanish. Dr. Adams reviewed information contained in the citizen kits, including an instruction sheet, summary of the districting process, list of suggested districting criteria, analysis of the 1995 mid-decade census total population and voting age population (18 years of age or older) by race and ethnicity, total population and voting age population data listings by enumeration district, zero population enumeration districts, annexations, census tract maps and data, faxable maps for use in submitting plans to the consultants, and thematic maps showing minority total population and voting age population percentages and population counts.

Dr. Adams identified differences between enumeration districts and census tracts 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 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. Dr. Adams displayed a sampling of citizen maps submitted to date and the analysis prepared for each.

Dr. Adams noted that citizen maps must be submitted no later than December 1, 1998 and will be included in packets distributed during the second series of public hearings.

4. Discuss three alternative district concepts for Mesa.

Dr. Adams stated that three alternative district concepts (identified as red, blue, and green) have been prepared for use as a reference in eliciting input as citizens prepare individual maps for submission. Dr. Adams indicated that the concepts vary from each other but that each meets established criteria and contains deviations from the population norm of 3 percent or less.

Dr. Adams said 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. Dr. Adams reported that feedback to date from the Hispanic community reflects a preference for a concentration of Hispanic population in one district.

Dr. Adams informed those present that the district concepts are available 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).

5. Question and answer on districting.

Dr. Adams and Teresa Brice-Heames, Council District Commission Member, responded to questions from citizens regarding the preparation of the three district concepts, annexations, and anticipated implementation of the districting process as outlined in the initiative approved by voters at the May 19, 1998 General Election.

Dr. Adams stated that a recommended districting plan and two alternatives will be presented at the Council District Commission meeting to be held at 5:30 p.m. on December 9 and the City Council Study Session to be held at 7:30 a.m. on December 10 (both meetings to be held in the City Council Chambers). Dr. Adams indicated that the schedule for the second series of public hearings is included in the preliminary report.

6. Adjournment.

Dr. Adams and Vice Chairman Andersen expressed appreciation to the citizens for their attendance and interest in the districting process. Dr. Adams and Vice Chairman Andersen urged those present to submit plans and encouraged participation in the second series of public hearings.

Without objection, the public hearing adjourned at 7:45 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 18th day of November 1998. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held.

Dated this ____ day of _____ 1998

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK