

COUNCIL DISTRICT COMMISSION MINUTES

July 19, 2001

The Council District Commission of the City of Mesa met at the Superstition Police/Fire Substation Community Room, 2430 S. Ellsworth Road, on July 19, 2001 at 6:30 p.m.

COMMISSION PRESENT

Pat Langdon, Chairman
Jim Driskill
Alice Swinehart

COMMISSION ABSENT

Dwayne Priester
Marti Soza

COUNCIL PRESENT

None

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

Chairman Pat Langdon welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Commission Members Jim Driskill and Alice Swinehart. Chairman Langdon also introduced Dr. Alan Heslop and Dr. Florence Adams of National Demographics Corporation (NDC). Chairman Langdon informed the audience that sign language interpretation and Spanish interpretation for the meeting are available to any citizen upon request. No requests for translation were received.

2. Review and discuss Report on Citizen Kits and Citizen Input.

Dr. Heslop spoke concerning the favorable response and participation to date in the districting process, noting that 15 fully developed plans, three partial plans and many excellent written comments were submitted. Dr. Heslop commented on citizen maps submitted by Marilyn Wennerstrom, Marti Soza, Joseph A. Gorski, Ann Kulik and Teresa Brice-Heames. Dr. Heslop stressed that the level of citizen participation has been exemplary.

3. Review of recommended redistricting plan and two alternatives.

Dr. Heslop presented the Recommended Plan and Alternatives 1 and 2 prepared in response to the input received from citizens. Dr. Heslop discussed the following noteworthy features contained in the Recommended Plan:

- District 4 total Hispanic population is 48.16% and Hispanic voting age population is 44.03%.
- Two other districts have been created with significant Hispanic populations:

District 1 with total Hispanic population of 18.59% and Hispanic voting age population of 16.06%; District 3 with total Hispanic population of 19.59% and Hispanic voting age population of 16.73%.

- The population deviation in each district is relatively low, with an overall deviation of 7.93%.
- District 5, a rapid growth area, has a negative deviation, and Districts 1 and 2, which are relatively slow growth areas, have positive deviations.
- The Districts in the plan respect the major communities of the City, follow several well-known boundaries, depart little from existing district configurations and incorporate significant citizen input.
- Each district in the plan includes a high school.

Dr. Heslop reported that Alternative 1 achieves the benchmark in District 4 with a total Hispanic population of 48.16%, a Hispanic voting age population of 44.03%, and a total deviation of 7.07%. Dr. Heslop commented that Alternative 1 would create a positive deviation in District 5 and a slightly negative deviation in District 6.

Dr. Heslop advised that Alternative 2 also meets the benchmark with District 4's total Hispanic population of 48.05% and the Hispanic voting age population at 43.87%. Dr. Heslop stated that the deviation in District 5, an area of rapid growth, is positive. Dr. Heslop explained that in Alternative 1 and Alternative 2, a high school would not be included in each district.

Dr. Adams commented that this meeting is the last in the second series of public hearings, to be followed by an August 1, 2001, 5:30 p.m. Council District Commission meeting. Dr. Adams stated that on August 6, 2001, 5:45 p.m., the Council District Commission will present the Recommended Plan to the City Council for its approval.

Dr. Adams reported that in response to concerns expressed by the residents of the Evergreen Historic Neighborhood that the area would be split into two districts, NDC has determined that it is possible to maintain the benchmark mandated by the Federal Voting Rights Act and to restore the neighborhood within one district.

Dr. Adams commented that as a result of the 1998 voter-approved initiative to transition from an at-large City Council system to single-member districts, citizens who currently reside in Districts 5 and 6 and who are moved into District 2 will become ineligible to vote in the March 2002 City Council election. Dr. Adams noted that in the Recommended Plan, approximately 17,667 District 6 citizens, if moved into District 2, would become ineligible to vote (non-registered voters) and in Alternative 2, an estimated 17,717 District 5 residents, if moved into District 2, would also not be permitted to vote in the upcoming City Council election.

Chairman Langdon stressed the importance of public participation and invited the audience to share their questions and concerns.

4. Questions and comments on recommended redistricting plan and two alternatives.

In response to a question from a citizen, Dr. Adams clarified that the NDC is required by law to utilize the 2000 census to determine Mesa's population, and if winter visitors were living in the

City at the time such census was conducted, they would be counted as part of the total population.

Manny Cortez, 2837 East Emelita, stated that he will support whichever Recommended Plan is approved by the Council District Commission. He emphasized that it is the duty of Mesa's residents to become aware of potential adverse effects (i.e., the inability of some individuals to vote in the upcoming 2002 City Council election) which may occur as a result of the redistricting process. Mr. Cortez also voiced the opinion that the special focus on the Hispanic population within the City merely creates animosity among various ethnic groups. Dr. Adams stressed that NDC must comply with the Voting Rights Act which was enacted to eliminate voting rights abuses within minority populations.

Mr. Cortez acknowledged the efforts of the Council District Commission and NDC during the lengthy districting process.

In response to questions from citizens, Dr. Adams clarified that per the Recommended Plan, expansion of District 1 from Price Road to Greenfield Road is necessary to accommodate the rapid growth in the eastern section of the City; to remain in compliance with Section 5 of the Voting Rights Act, and also to conform to the City Charter which mandates that a Councilmember who has been duly elected cannot be moved out of his/her district.

Chairman Langdon thanked everyone for their attendance and participation.

5. Adjournment.

Without objection, the District Commission meeting adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing minutes are a true and correct copy of the minutes of the District Commission Meeting of the City of Mesa, Arizona, held on the 19th day of July 2001. I further certify that the meeting was duly called and held and that a quorum was present.

BARBARA JONES, CITY CLERK