



# CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

## INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING COMMISSION MINUTES

### INFORMATIONAL PUBLIC HEARING SEPTEMBER 20, 2021 COUNCIL CHAMBERS, 735 ANACAPA STREET CONDUCTED VIA ZOOM

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#### CALL TO ORDER

Chair Johnson called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m. and announced that the meeting is being held via teleconference and all members of the Independent Redistricting Commission are participating electronically from various locations.

#### PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

#### ROLL CALL

Commissioners present: Chair Hon. Melinda A. Johnson (Ret.), Hon. Abraham Khan (Ret.), Hon. Elizabeth Allen White (Ret.).

Commissioners absent: None.

Staff present: Joslyn Fritz, Engineering Technician; Ariel Calonne, City Attorney; Michelle Sosa-Acosta, Deputy City Attorney; Sara Iza, Senior Planner; Dr. Doug Johnson, National Demographics Corporation; Dr. Daniel Phillips, National Demographics Corporation.

Public Present: E. Howard Green; Carla Navarro Woods.

All present.

## **GENERAL BUSINESS**

A. Changes to the Agenda. None.

B. Public Comment. Any member of the public may address the Commission for up to two minutes on any subject within its jurisdiction that is not scheduled on this agenda for a public discussion.

E. Howard Green provided public comment. Mr. Green said that he thinks two districts have shifted slightly and that the process as detailed by the City may be “overkill.” He said that staff or NDC should immediately apply the state numbers to see how it balances against the numbers from the prior districting process. He commented on how the redistricting process is expensive. Mr. Green also asked where he can find the state’s allocated data to the City of Santa Barbara.

## **ITEMS NOTICED FOR PUBLIC HEARING**

1. Introduction of the Independent Redistricting Commission by City staff and the Honorable Commissioners.

Deputy City Attorney Michelle Sosa-Acosta described the appointment of the IRC and introduced each commissioner. Ms. Sosa-Acosta then explained the role of the IRC in the redistricting process.

2. Report on Final Civic Engagement and Outreach Plan for Redistricting.

Senior Planner Sara Iza presented on the Final Civic Engagement Plan and described the timeline for the eight proposed public hearings.

Hon. Johnson opened public comment before the IRC began asking questions.

### **Public Comment:**

Mr. Green provided public comment. Mr. Green said that the City’s redistricting website is hard to find. He said that the redistricting website lacks information, such as certain powerpoint slides. He then requested additional information, such as the names of City staff members working on the redistricting process and the number of people from the public in attendance at the public hearing. Mr. Green also said that he does not see the use of Channel 18 in the Civic Engagement Plan.

Carla Navarro Woods from District 5 provided public comment. Ms. Woods said that she thought the six public hearings were important. She also mentioned that she preferred to hear from the IRC first before public comment.

## **IRC Discussion:**

Hon. Khan proposed an amendment on page 4 of the Civic Engagement Plan so that the following is written: "At the conclusion of the individual District hearings and the proposed finalization of the redistricting maps by City staff and National Demographic Corporation, the Independent Redistricting Commission shall review the proposed plan before adoption, and then shall submit the plan to the City Council for its final hearing, review, and adoption to be heard on Tuesday April 12, 2022."

Hon. White then said that it has been confirmed that the hearing is being shown on Channel 18.

The IRC then moved to approve the amendment to page 4 of the Civic Engagement Plan. There were no objections and the amendment was approved.

Hon. White then stated that every effort is being made to ensure that the public will have all the access needed for a fair redistricting process.

Hon. Johnson then asked whether there will be more public hearings than required. City Attorney Ariel Calonne confirmed that to be true. Hon. Johnson then asked whether there is any value to combining the district meetings to save on costs. Mr. Calonne said that the City Council approved the Civic Engagement Plan. Mr. Calonne then said that it will not be known if there is public comment without holding each district hearing, thus erring on the side of more public participation. Hon. Johnson then commented that the costs to conduct the hearings appeared to be reasonable. Hon. Khan then mentioned that the process is mandated by the FAIR MAPS Act and the California Elections Code, and not an arbitrary process. Hon. White also mentioned that the City must abide by the settlement agreement in a prior litigation.

The IRC then moved to adopt the Civic Engagement Plan. There were no objections and the Civic Engagement Plan was adopted.

3. Introduction and presentation by the City's demographer, National Demographics Corporation ("NDC") followed by a presentation to the public on the redistricting process and timeline.

Dr. Daniel Phillips presented on the redistricting process and the City of Santa Barbara's raw 2020 Census Data. Dr. Phillips also discussed communities of interest and public mapping tools for public engagement.

## **Public Comment:**

Mr. Green provided public comment. Mr. Green said that he wanted to know the magnitude of the changes from the adjusted 2020 Census Data as it conforms to prisoner

populations. Mr. Green expressed concern of materials not being posted on the redistricting website.

A citizen then stated that she or he is in a district that does not allow in-person voting, which the citizen prefers to do, and whether that could be a consideration in the redistricting process. Mr. Calonne then explained that the issue was not a redistricting consideration.

#### **IRC Discussion:**

Hon. Johnson noted that citizens are not supposed to be disenfranchised from voting for an incumbent they like yet when considering communities of interest, incumbency is not supposed to be considered. Hon. Johnson asked how those two factors are applied together. Dr. Phillips said that when it comes to communities of interest, that is a state legal criterion. Dr. Phillips said that the state laid out how a community of interest is defined, such as a nonpartisan entity. Dr. Phillips confirmed that incumbency will not factor in defining a community of interest. Once communities of interest are identified and not disturbed, traditional redistricting principles can be considered. Thereafter, incumbency may be considered.

#### **4. Discussion of Future Agendas.**

Ms. Sosa-Acosta said that there would be a technical training of mapping tools on October 20, 2021.

#### **Public Comment:**

Mr. Green provided public comment. Mr. Green asked for presentation materials to be posted on the redistricting website the Monday before the next public hearing. In particular, he said he would like to use the online mapping tools as soon as they are available. Mr. Green asked for the 2015 dividing objects to be on the redistricting website. He then said that he thinks the district testimony, particularly for the high number districts, would be too late to provide meaningful change to the proposed districts by NDC's draft map.

Ms. Sosa-Acosta then responded that the City and NDC are working diligently to make the online mapping tools available as soon as possible with the adjusted 2020 Census Bureau data. Dr. Doug Johnson then said that the City's redistricting webpage has a map where the public can zoom in and see all of the boundaries.

The IRC moved for approval of the minutes of the IRC meeting on August 25, 2021. There were no changes to minutes and were approved without amendment.

