



## CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

### INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING COMMISSION MINUTES

#### TECHNICAL TRAINING PUBLIC HEARING NOVEMBER 8, 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.

#### 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; Brian D'Amour, City Engineer; Dr. Doug Johnson, National Demographics Corporation; Dr. Daniel Phillips, National Demographics Corporation.

Public Present: E. Howard Green.

All present.

## **GENERAL BUSINESS**

A. Public Comment. Any member of the public may address the Commission for up to ten 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 participated in the City's 2015 districting process and used State census data rather than a front-end interface that blocks his view of the data. Mr. Green said he has asked and not been told where to find the State census data for the redistricting process. Mr. Green also commented that the draft maps system is helpful for non-computer users, which he enjoys. Mr. Green then said that the time period that has been allotted for access to the draft maps system was through the end of the year. Mr. Green said he felt that was not appropriate given the number of public hearings to be held in the next year, and instead the draft maps system should be available until the final map is adopted. Mr. Green is concerned of how the staff recommendations will initially be seen by the public. Mr. Green hopes that there will be face-to-face public hearings, though he does not think the current number of hearings scheduled is necessary. Mr. Green then said he thinks the recent election showed that at least part of the City's Charter may need to be amended.

B. Changes to the Agenda.

Hon. Khan noted that he believes Joslyn Fritz, Brian D'Amour, and Tony Ruggieri were present at the September 20 public hearing. It was confirmed that both Ms. Fritz and Mr. D'Amour were present at the September 20 public hearing and that the meeting minutes should be amended to add Mr. D'Amour.

Chair Johnson wanted to clarify her question on the use of incumbency during the redistricting process and the answer provided by the City's demographer, National Demographics Corporation. Dr. Daniel Phillips discussed the use of incumbency with the Commission. Chair Johnson requested that the minutes should be amended to add that the intention is to allow the voters to determine whether an incumbent should be retained or replaced rather than have the Commission eliminate that option for them.

Hon. White moved to approve the minutes as amended. Hon. Khan seconded. The minutes were approved.

## **ITEMS NOTICED FOR PUBLIC HEARING**

1. Presentation by the City's demographer, National Demographics Corporation ("NDC"), and City staff on the online and paper mapping tools.

Mr. D'Amour introduced Dr. Phillips from NDC. Dr. Phillips presented on the online and paper mapping tools. When discussing the use of citizen voting age population in redistricting, Chair Johnson asked Dr. Phillips for a case citation to understand why citizen

voting age population is used. Dr. Phillips clarified that citizen voting age population is used for purposes of abiding by the Federal Voting Rights Act. City Attorney Ariel Calonne said that the City Attorney's Office would provide a memo on the use of population measures in redistricting.

Hon. Khan asked what communities of interest are and how they are considered in creating draft maps that comply with election law and redistricting principles. Dr. Phillips said that, ideally, public testimony would provide background on communities of interest. Dr. Phillips also said that the law requires that neighborhoods are kept together and not split up unless public testimony supported splitting up the neighborhoods. After obtaining such information, the map drawing process would also be focused on equal population and satisfying the Federal Voting Rights Act by not diluting the voting power of protected class voters. Dr. Doug Johnson added that there is some disagreement about the boundaries of communities of interest and that the Commission's judgment will be needed. Mr. Calonne agreed that the Commission's judgement will determine communities of interest for the purpose of drawing maps. Hon. Khan asked what is the definition of communities of interest and where can the Commission find those defining principles. Dr. Phillips responded that the Commission will find them in state law, such as the FAIR MAPS Act. Dr. Phillips then read the definition of communities of interest from the FAIR MAPS Act. Mr. Calonne said that Deputy City Attorney Michelle Sosa-Acosta briefed the Commission on communities of interest and state law in her report from the Summer of 2021. Dr. Phillips mentioned that the story map and the interactive review map could serve as ideas for communities of interest. Mr. Calonne asked how the City can ensure any skeptical members of the public of the integrity of the data and tools. Dr. Johnson said that all information is publicly available. Mr. Calonne asked whether the formulas in Excel spreadsheets made public are accessible. Dr. Johnson confirmed the formulas are accessible by turning off the protections on the spreadsheet. The public may also go to the state's website to download the data themselves.

Chair Johnson asked why partisan registration is included in demographics on the online mapping tool, Dave's Redistricting App. Dr. Johnson said NDC would go back to check and hide the partisan registration data. Dr. Phillips said that when draft maps are presented to the IRC, the maps will not be presented in the same format as the online mapping tools, but instead as a standard format map with different colors highlighting different districts.

Dr. Phillips then explained that there will be a link on the redistricting website with a tutorial on the Dave's Redistricting App. Hon. White asked who the Commission should contact if they experienced issues. Dr. Johnson said that NDC is available to help the Commission and reminded the Commission that the Commission's main role is to select a map.

Hon. Khan asked if there was a basic criteria that weeded out maps that are not viable for redistricting. Dr. Phillips said that NDC will post every map it receives but when presenting maps to the Commission, NDC will flag maps that are not viable for redistricting. Chair Johnson asked if the public submitting a non-viable map would be

notified of its deficiencies. Dr. Johnson said that it will depend on how many maps are received and if the maps are timely submitted.

## 2. Discussion of Future Agendas.

Ms. Sosa-Acosta noted that the next public hearing is scheduled to be in-person on January 8, 2022. Chair Johnson asked what staff will be present, including those with expertise should someone want to draw a map. Ms. Sosa-Acosta clarified that by then the public will have had time to submit maps and that during the hearing there will be interpreters in Spanish and American Sign Language as well as the City's demographers to answer any questions the public may have.

Hon. Khan asked whether City staff would propose the order of business for the upcoming hearing and how to limit the agenda and public testimony so that it is manageable. Ms. Sosa-Acosta said that the public will be able to comment on draft maps, as well as District 1-specific considerations. Ms. Sosa-Acosta noted that more time will be allotted for public comment and that there will be no limits on the subject of public testimony. Hon. Khan reiterated a need for an organized agenda for the public hearing and time limits for public testimony. Hon. White suggested managing time on January 8 depending on the turnout. Chair Johnson agreed and asked if the agenda can be revised by the Commission. Mr. Calonne said that the Commission cannot poll itself between meetings, but the Commission could delegate Chair Johnson the authority to review the agenda. Mr. Calonne said that consistent with the Brown Act, the Commission can delegate time according to the public turnout at the next meeting. The Commission then delegated to Chair Johnson the authority to review the January 8 public hearing agenda for approval.

## **COMMISSION AND STAFF COMMUNICATIONS**

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Johnson adjourned the meeting at 7:37 p.m.

Approved and adopted by the Independent Redistricting Commission of the City of Santa Barbara on January 8, 2022.

SANTA BARBARA INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

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HON. MELINDA A. JOHNSON, (RET.) CHAIR