



# CITY OF SANTA BARBARA

## INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING COMMISSION MINUTES

**SPECIAL MEETING  
MARCH 9, 2022  
DAVID GEBHARD PUBLIC MEETING ROOM  
630 GARDEN ST, SANTA BARBARA, CA**

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### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Johnson called the meeting to order at approximately 6:02 p.m.

### **ROLL CALL**

Commissioners present: Chair Hon. Melinda A. Johnson (Ret.), Hon. Abraham Khan (Ret.), Hon. Elizabeth Allen White (Ret.) [Hon. White appeared via Zoom videoconference.]

Commissioners absent: None.

Staff present: Brandon Beaudette, Acting Assistant to the City Administrator; Ariel Calonne, City Attorney; Michelle Sosa-Acosta, Deputy City Attorney; Norma Cervantes, Administrative Analyst; Dr. Daniel Phillips, National Demographics Corporation.

All present.

## GENERAL BUSINESS

### A. Changes to the Agenda

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

The following individuals spoke:

#### 1. Howard Green

Mr. Green said that the IRC should create a story on how it came to its final decision. He asked how the IRC will conduct the March 30 public hearing and whether the Commissioners' discussions would be private or public. He also commented on how he believes the IRC is packing due to the consideration of Latino voters. With regards to how NDC has addressed Eucalyptus Hill, Mr. Green asked for an explanation on the difference between census tracts, blocks, and groups. He also asked for an overlay of the recommended map over the land use, zoning, economic, and neighborhood maps of the City of Santa Barbara. Lastly, Mr. Green said that communities of interest should be defined by public participation, such as the Eucalyptus Hill area and high fire risk area.

Chair Johnson said that any discussions between the commissioners about the final decision would be in public.

#### 2. Councilmember Kristen Sneddon

Councilmember Sneddon described the Upper East Neighborhood as speaking with a collective voice through the Upper East Neighborhood Association. Councilmember Sneddon stated that the following maps break up the Upper East: 103RE, 105AE, and DEC Plan E. She then commented on how 103RE breaks up the high fire risk areas, incorrectly puts Coast Village Road in District 6, and incorrectly groups business districts and the Waterfront all together. Chair Johnson asked if the Upper East is the same as the East Side. Councilmember Sneddon then described the differences between the Upper East and the East Side neighborhoods.

#### 3. Dr. Lanny Ebenstein, District Elections Committee

Dr. Ebenstein provided hard copies of the DEC Plan E and the plan's demographics to the Commissioners. Dr. Ebenstein said that the IRC should only consider the following maps, as they are the only maps that come close to the Banales decision: 104E, 105AE, 105BE, and the DEC Plan E. He then said that if any other plan was chosen, the City would be out of compliance with the Banales decision.

Dr. Ebenstein then described the DEC Plan E as the best map as it respects current district lines, results in a Latino plurality in District 3, respects communities of interest, and is compact. He further explained how the DEC Plan E has the waterfront going to

District 4, places City College and the Harbor within the Mesa neighborhood, and has all high fire risk areas in District 4.

Dr. Ebenstein then noted that he is around the Upper East on a daily basis and believes there is a division within the Upper East. Dr. Ebenstein referred to District 6 as a “renter’s district.” He believes that DEC Plan E creates a better District 6 than map 104E. He then discussed coastal access, State Street access, and the Santa Barbara High School and its surrounding neighborhood. He described how it was not possible to have District 1 and District 3 reach the waterfront and maintain high LCVAP numbers. He addressed Councilmember Oscar Gutierrez’s previous comments by describing how having District 3 extend further south of highway 101 would not improve LCVAP numbers though there may be a Latino population in that area.

4. Fred Sweeney, Upper East Neighborhood Association

Mr. Sweeney provided hard copies of the definition of the Upper East neighborhood to the Commissioners. Mr. Sweeney said he was a member of the Upper East Neighborhood Association’s Board of Directors. He discussed the history of Santa Barbara. He then described how any plan that breaks up the Upper East would do a disservice to the community. Mr. Sweeney said he supports the following maps: 101RE, 102RE, 104E, and 105BE.

5. Steve Forcell

Mr. Forcell said that he has lived in the Upper East neighborhood for 37 years and that Councilmember Sneddon brought the redistricting process to his attention. Mr. Forcell asked that the IRC keep the Upper East as-is so that there would only be one councilmember representative. He mentioned that the Board of Directors of the Upper East Neighborhood Association reached a consensus in wanting only one councilmember representative. Mr. Forcell disagreed with Dr. Ebenstein as to where is the true cut-off for the Upper East.

## **NOTICES**

### **INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING COMMISSION REPORTS**

**1. Presentation by the City’s demographer, National Demographics Corporation (“NDC”) on the release of additional draft maps. Commission members will discuss the viability of the draft maps.**

### **Public Comment:**

The following individuals spoke:

1. Sebastian Aldana

Mr. Aldana spoke about how he would like East Beach to stay within the boundaries of District 1 and how the East Side community wants East Beach. He also noted that not very many people live in the East Beach area.

2. Dr. Lanny Ebenstein, District Elections Committee

Dr. Ebenstein discussed how he could modify DEC Plan E to keep the Upper East intact within District 4. He said that more people live in the Waterfront than one may think. He then reiterated that the IRC should focus on plans that meet the Banales decision.

3. Councilmember Kristen Sneddon

Councilmember Sneddon said that she approves of the following maps: 101RE, 102RE, 104E, and 105BE. She then expressed her support for East Beach remaining within District 1. Councilmember Sneddon also disagreed with how DEC Plan E lays out District 4.

4. Councilmember Oscar Gutierrez

Councilmember Gutierrez described his conflicted feelings with map 103RE given that it was a “good” drawing of the West Side neighborhood, but showed an LCVAP percentage of 40% within District 3. He then noted that map 105BE had the highest LCVAP percentage for District 3. Councilmember Gutierrez asked whether it would be possible to combine 103RE and 105BE.

### **IRC Discussion:**

Hon. Khan noted that there will need to be some limitations and that he was hesitant about creating more maps.

Hon. White said she agreed with Councilmember Oscar Gutierrez’s comments.

Chair Johnson asked NDC to create a map that blends 103RE and 105BE.

## **2. Discussion of Future Agendas.**

City Attorney Ariel Calonne commented that a revision of DEC Plan E might accommodate the Upper East issue. Chair Johnson asked NDC to revise DEC Plan E accordingly.

## **COMMISSION AND STAFF COMMUNICATIONS**

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Chair Johnson adjourned the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

Approved and adopted by the Independent Redistricting Commission of the City of Santa Barbara on March 30, 2022.

SANTA BARBARA INDEPENDENT REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

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