



City Council Agenda Report

DATE: July 27, 2021
TO: Honorable Mayor and City Councilmembers
FROM: Dave Richards, Assistant to the City Manager
SUBJECT: Update on the City's Redistricting Process

RECOMMENDATION:

That the City Council receives the report from staff about the City's redistricting process and summary of the first Redistricting Hearing.

BACKGROUND:

This agenda report provides background on the City's transition to voting districts, the subsequent need to redistrict, and a review of the City's first Redistricting Hearing.

Redistricting is the process of adjusting City Council voting districts so that each district has substantially the same number of voting-aged residents and are in compliance with federal and state voting rights laws. Cities with voting districts are required to update district maps following the release of the centennial US Census data.

El Cajon transitioned from an at-large to a by-district election process for Councilmembers with the passage of Measure S in November 2016. The Mayor remains elected at-large.

The transition to City Council voting districts means that the City must evaluate and potentially adjust its voting districts based on the 2020 US Census. The US Census Bureau plans to release the 2020 Census data on or around **September 30, 2021**. To comply with the Voting Rights Act, the City must approve a District Map no later than 205 days ahead of the November 8, 2022, General Election, or **April 17, 2022**.

In alignment with the 2019 FAIR MAPS Act, the City has scheduled the following four Redistricting Hearings:

- Wednesday, July 14, 2021, 6:30 p.m. at the Hillside Recreation Center;
- Wednesday, September 8, 2021, 6:30 p.m. at the Renette Recreation Center;
- Thursday, November 4, 2021, at 7 p.m. at the Kennedy Recreation Center; and
- Saturday, January 22, 2022, at 10:30 a.m. at El Cajon Valley High School.

The City Council hosted its first Redistricting Hearing on July 14, 2021, to gather feedback about communities of interest—neighborhoods with similarities other than race or political preference. In all, twenty-nine people attended the hearing.

Following a brief presentation by the City's redistricting consultant, Shannon Kelly of National Demographics, Inc. ("NDC"), Mayor Wells opened the public hearing. Seventeen individuals offered testimony, seven of whom identified themselves as El Cajon residents. In general, speakers advocated for more public hearings, the ability to provide testimony by phone and online, streaming meetings, and additional translated materials. Attached to this report are draft minutes from the hearing.

During the September Redistricting Hearing, NDC will introduce an online mapping tool and continue gathering public input about communities of interest. During the final two hearings, the City Council will consider and choose its final district election map.

Prepared By: David Richards, Assistant to the City Manager

Reviewed By: Vince DiMaggio, Assistant City Manager

Approved By: Graham Mitchell, City Manager

Attachments

Draft Minutes of the July 14, 2021, Redistricting Hearing

CITY OF EL CAJON REDISTRICTING MEETING



MINUTES

EL CAJON, CALIFORNIA

July 14, 2021

The Redistricting Meeting of the City of El Cajon, held Tuesday, July 14, 2021, was called to order by Mayor/Chair Bill Wells at 6:32 p.m., in the Hillside Recreation Center, 840 Buena Terrace, El Cajon, California.

ROLL CALL

Councilmembers present:

Councilmembers absent:

Deputy Mayor present:

Mayor present:

Other Officers present:

D R A F T

Goble, and Ortiz

Metschel

Kendrick

Wells

Mitchell, City Manager

Foley, City Attorney/General Counsel

Cortez, City Clerk

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO FLAG led by Mayor Wells.

POSTINGS: The City Clerk posted the Agenda of the July 14, 2021, meeting on July 8, 2021.

PUBLIC HEARING:

1. Public Hearing to Receive Input from the Community Regarding Redistricting

RECOMMENDATION: That the City Council:

1. Receives the report from staff about the redistricting process;
2. Opens the Public Hearing and receives public testimony; and
3. Closes the Public Hearing.

PUBLIC HEARING: (Continued)

DISCUSSION

Mayor Wells introduced the Assistant to the City Manager, David Richards, who introduced Arabic translator, Zaki Slevani for those requiring live translation.

Mr. Richards stated the requirements to adjust districts every 10 years, following the United States census, to ensure districts have substantially equal populations of voting-aged residents.

Mr. Richards introduced Consultant, Shannon Kelly from National Demographic Corporation to provide detailed information on the redistricting process.

Ms. Kelly provided detailed information on the Redistricting Process including the following:

- Initial Public Hearing, July 14, 2021;
- Census Data Release expected date is mid to late August, 2021;
- Public Hearing No. 2, September 8, 2021 to provide overview of online mapping tools for public use;
- California Data Release expected in late September/early October 2021;
- Public Hearing No. 3, November 4, 2021 to solicit feedback from the public about draft maps;
- Public Hearing No. 4, January 22, 2022 to revise maps received and to discuss and revise recommended final map options and discuss the election sequence;
- The need for redistricting after the initial 2017 formation of districts in the City of El Cajon;
- Redistricting rules and goals;
- Definition of 'Neighborhoods';
- Definition of the term 'Communities of Interest';
- Current district map for the City of El Cajon;
- Discussed notable City of El Cajon boundaries; and
- Key Communities of Interest in El Cajon.

Mayor Wells opened the Public Hearing.

Anna Holmes, resident of District 4, requested that more redistricting information be posted on the website.

Mr. Richards and City Manager Mitchell stated that more information will be added as soon as data is received from the U.S. Census, and that no final decision can be made until such information is available. The intent of the first meeting is to start the process and to allow as much public participation as possible.

PUBLIC HEARING: (Continued)

Keith Holmes, a citizen of El Cajon suggested that the City 'free' itself from state regulations to streamline the redistricting process. Mr. Holmes spoke of the population density in the City from the large amount of apartment buildings.

Najah S. Abdelkader, a San Diego resident and representing the Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, requested more opportunities for the community to attend redistricting meetings. Ms. Abdelkader stated that the Arab, Middle East and North African immigrants are not properly accounted for, or adequately represented, as the Census counts them as 'white'.

Mohamed Alhawari submitted a speaker card but chose not to speak.

Requests for: More than 4 (four) public hearings, preferably after maps have been submitted; Request for speaker cards, power points and any printed information in multiple languages, Arabic included; Request for hybrid meetings to allow people to stream the meeting in lieu of in person participation; accept written testimony (online); accept voicemail comments to be presented during the public hearings; and a request for more translators were made by the following:

Ahmed Zarour, El Cajon resident – using translator – Majdal Center
Yasmeen Obeid, Community Organizer – Majdal Center
Ramah Awad, Community Center of San Diego
Jeanine Erikat, Partnership for the Advancement of New Americans
Selma Hassan, Majdal Center
Hadeel Kareem, Lakeside resident – using translator - Majdal Center
Farika Erikat, El Cajon resident – Majdal Center
Rami Ibrahim, Majdal Center
Dalal Erikat, Majdal Center
Adam Aregat, Majdal Center
Mohamed Erikat, El Cajon resident – Majdal Center
Nael Aregat, San Diego resident
Mumtaz Momand, El Cajon resident, representing the Afghan Community

Additionally a comment made stated that the April 2022 deadline to adopt the new map is in conflict of the information on the website in regards to Measure S, adopted in 2016, which states the new maps must be adopted no later than December 31st after the decennial U.S. Census.

The last speaker, Fabby, an El Cajon resident stated that Zoom meetings are not necessary as many knew of the meeting and chose not to attend.

PUBLIC HEARING: (Continued)

MOTION BY WELLS, SECOND BY KENDRICK, to CLOSE the Public Hearing.

MOTION CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE OF THOSE PRESENT (METSCHER – Absent).

Adjournment: Mayor Wells adjourned the Redistricting Meeting of the City of EI at 7:46 p.m.

ANGELA L. CORTEZ, CMC
City Clerk

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