



CITY OF CARSON
MINUTES
CARSON CITY COUNCIL
SPECIAL MEETING
AUGUST 17, 2019

9:30 A.M.

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 9:46 A.M. by Mayor Pro Tem Cedric Hicks in the Juanita Millender-McDonald Community Center, in the Dominguez Room, located at 801 E. Carson Street, Carson, California 90745.

ROLL CALL:

Deputy City Clerk Joy Simarago noted the roll:

Council Members Present:

Mayor Pro Tem Cedric Hicks, Council Member Jawane Hilton and Council Member Jim Dear

Council Members Absent:

Mayor Albert Robles and Council Member Lula Davis-Holmes

Other Elected Officials Absent:

Donesia Gause-Aldana, City Clerk and Monica Cooper, City Treasurer

Also Present:

Sharon Landers, City Manager; John Raymond, Assistant City Manager; and Idris Al-Oboudi, Director of Community Services

SPECIAL ORDERS OF THE DAY: (Item 1)

Item No. 1. 2019-783 PUBLIC HEARING NO. 5 RELATED TO CHANGING FROM AN AT-LARGE TO A BY-DISTRICT SYSTEM FOR ELECTION OF CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS, PURSUANT TO THE CALIFORNIA VOTING RIGHTS ACT (CITY COUNCIL)

Deputy City Clerk Simarago reported the Notice of Public Hearing and postings have been given pursuant to applicable law. Other mailings, as requested, were provided to individuals and organizations. The affidavits attesting to mailing such notice are on file in the City Clerk's Office. One written communication was received.

The continued public hearing was held as follows:

Public Testimony

Mary Martin

Stated she is neither for or against the item. She referred to a past meeting reminding Council Members their constituents are in the entire city not just those who supported them.

Council Member Dear noted if and when the City goes to district based elections he will continue to keep the interest of all residents as part of his decision making.

Mayor Pro Tem Hicks paused the comments and requested a staff report from Assistant City Manager Raymond.

Assistant City Manager Raymond noted the exhibits and maps are available and he introduced Demographer, Dave Ely.

Dave Ely, Demographer, announced that residents may submit draft maps to the City Clerk's Office. He noted the next public hearing will be held on September 17, 2019. Maps will be posted seven days prior to the next meeting anticipating further draft maps are submitted. He provided a Powerpoint presentation of the information available on the City's website; and how to provide submissions. He stated he will review meeting recordings to find out what is possible to add in the draft.

Mayor Pro Tem Hicks inquired if the City was in a position to select the top suggestions to meet the timeline deadline to possibly go to districts for the March 2020 election.

Assistant City Manager Raymond discussed the public hearing process. He noted the City needs input from City Council and the community. He anticipates including revised maps and comments from this meeting as part of the public hearing on September 17, 2019.

Public Testimony

Mayor Pro Tem Hicks inquired of the audience the number of residents wishing to provide comments and opened the floor for public testimony.

Speaker

Requested an overview of the reasons for the possible lawsuit and an outline of dates for the March 2020 election compliance. She inquired if the demographer can create an analysis of what constitutes a draft versus submission of maps. She inquired about the deviation of two districts. She also inquired about the meaning of CVAP acronym.

Dave Ely, Demographer, noted the acronym CVAP means, citizen volume and population. He provided an explanation to the aforementioned speaker's comments.

David Jones

Stated districts will divide the City and he referred to gerrymandering. Separation is not equality.

Hans Hoogendam

Requested clarification of what the lawyer is threatening to do to the City. He referred to Draft Map No. 3 and the representation of ethnic groups. He inquired how districting would provide equal representation. He believes the City should not have to do anything.

Council Member Hilton

Noted the name of the lawyer who is threatening to sue the City is Kevin Shenkman. He explained district based elections.

Mayor Pro Tem Hicks

Inquired about making the letter from Mr. Shenkman available to the public.

Assistant City Manager Raymond noted the letter is posted on the City's website.

Pastor Byron Smith

Inquired if Dave Ely, Demographer, reviewed the Voter's Rights Act of 1965 to ensure discriminatory voting practice were fair across the board. He referred to the maps including unincorporated areas. He stated districting should be about accessibility not just race.

Dave Ely, Demographer, noted the purpose of districts-based elections being a reflection of neighborhoods. He noted potential problems with public submissions. He stated he reviews his drafts in an effort to create districts who reflect similar groups of people in the city.

Janice Schaefer

Stated she viewed the map where she resides and that it is strange out of all the cities that Carson has to comply with some discrimination rulings that do not exist in the City. She requested Dave Ely, Demographer, to pull up his first Powerpoint presentation draft where she resides. She noted her mobile home park boundaries and stated residents to the south of her do not share the same concerns where she resides.

William Koons

Referred to the Demographer comments from the last meeting regarding issue with the breakdown percentage of the various ethnicities. He noted there should be balance to other districts, not break up the neighborhoods or community that share a common interest.

Ana Meni

Requested clarity on the districting set up by voter population and not overall population.

Assistant City Manager Raymond noted the standardized map by demographer and maps hand drawn on spreadsheet map.

Ana Meni

Inquired about population block groups. She wanted to know which ethnicity Pacific Islanders fall under, if separate from Asians.

Council Member Dear discussed census tracts.

Dave Ely, Demographer, noted separate category for Pacific Islanders which is a small group, limited to Polynesian groups.

Ana Meni

Referred to Submission Map No. 4 with concern on the south western tip in Section splitting neighborhood which should be included on bottom of section; referred to industrial land; inquired if numbers are based on census versus registered voters; where does elected officials fall under on the maps; are addresses redacted; request overall map where elected officials fall on the map.

Council Member Dear noted it was illegal to consider the residences of the City Council citing gerrymandering of districts.

Dave Ely, Demographer, noted City Council residents can be taken into consideration but cannot dictate the maps.

Council Member Dear noted address of elected officials is public record. He lives on northeast corner of 219th and Figueroa Street.

Speaker

Inquired if possible to fight Shenkman Group and stay at large.

Mayor Pro Tem Hicks stated there is an option to not go to districts. However, the threat of litigation exists. He discussed the process of amending the charter during the March 2020 election. He noted Santa Monica and Torrance has switched to districts.

Richard Hernandez

Stated he is a Carson resident for 43 years. He supports district-based elections.

Marti Newman

Stated she worked with City Council many years ago; inquired about attorney suing the city and referred to the 2020 census; inquired how soon after March 2020 election, will districts go into effect.

Dave Ely, Demographer, noted the City of Carson will need to analyze 2020 census data for areas of growth in population.

Council Member Dear noted if population reaches 100,000 or more the city could go to six districts versus four districts.

Speaker

Inquired which set of maps are priority.

Demographer Ely responded to the speaker by stating it will be the City Council's decision to decide which maps to focus on.

There being no other person(s) wishing to speak, Mayor Pro Tem Hicks closed the Public testimony portion of the public hearing.

Recommendation: TAKE the following actions:
1. OPEN the public hearing, and
2. TAKE public testimony and
3. CONTINUE the public hearing to September 17, 2019.

ACTION: Mayor Pro Tem Hicks continued the public hearing to September 17, 2019.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS (COUNCIL MEMBERS) – None.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 11:07 A.M. by Mayor Pro Tem Hicks.

Mayor Albert Robles

ATTEST:

City Clerk Donesia Gause-Aldana

APPROVED BY CARSON CITY COUNCIL/SUCCESSOR AGENCY/ HOUSING AUTHORITY
<u>10-01-2019</u>
Approved as Submitted. AR/JD 4/0/JH/0