



CITY OF CARSON

MINUTES CARSON CITY COUNCIL SPECIAL MEETING JUNE 13, 2019

6:00 P.M.

CALL TO ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 6:01 P.M. by Mayor Albert Robles in the Congresswoman Juanita Millender-McDonald Community Center, located at 801 E. Carson Street, Carson, California 90745.

ROLL CALL:

City Clerk Gause-Aldana noted the roll:

Council Members Present:

Mayor Albert Robles, Mayor Pro Tem Cedric Hicks, and Council Member Jim Dear.

Council Members Absent:

Council Member Lula Davis-Holmes (entered at 6:26 P.M.) and Council Member Jawane Hilton (entered at 6:02 P.M.)

Other Elected Officials Present:

Donesia Gause-Aldana, City Clerk

Other Elected Officials Absent:

Monica Cooper, City Treasurer

Also Present:

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

Also Absent:

David Roberts, Assistant City Manager; Maria Williams-Slaughter, Director of Public Work; and Saied Naaseh, Director of Community Development; Faye Moseley, Director of Human Resources and Risk Management and Tarik Rahmani, Director of Finance

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS FOR MATTERS LISTED ON THE AGENDA (MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC)

SPECIAL ORDERS OF THE DAY (Item 1)

Item No. 1. 2019-589

**PUBLIC HEARING NO. 2 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)**

Mayor Robles opened the Public Hearing.

City Clerk Gause-Aldana 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 communications was received from Mr. Charles Thomas.

Assistant City Manager Raymond introduced Public Hearing No. 2 related to changing from an at-large to by-district system for election of City Council Members pursuant to the California Voting Rights Act. He also introduced Demographer David Ely of Encompass Demographics.

Demographer Ely provided a presentation on the process of district mapping.

Council Member Hilton

Inquired about consensus tracking.

Demographer Ely responded the consensus data will be collected in 2020 and released at the beginning of 2021. He mentioned, if the City goes to district based elections the data will have to be re-analyzed to determine if there is equal population. If it is determined not to be an equal population, the City will have to repeat this process to redraw the district lines.

Mayor Robles inquired if voters approve district based elections in March will the Charter have to be amended to include the district mapping language.

Council Member Dear

Mentioned the City of Long Beach re-evaluate their districts every 10 years to see if it puts them out of the 5% margin. He inquired about the areas with the highest levels of median income and poverty; and the process moving forward.

Demographer Ely noted the steps leading up to drafting the maps. He mentioned copies of the maps can be made available on the City's website.

Recommendation:

TAKE the following actions:

1. OPEN the Public Hearing.
2. TAKE public testimony.
3. CLOSE the Public Hearing.

ORAL COMMUNICATIONS (COUNCIL MEMBERS)

Louie Diaz

Inquired about the availability of the district maps and if correspondences regarding this matter can be done electronically.

Mayor Robles directed City Clerk Gause-Aldana to post the district maps on the City's website.

City Clerk Gause-Aldana stated she would have the district maps posted the following day.

Hans Hoogendam

Inquired about officials representing each district.

Ana Meni

Inquired about a proposed map being available for the public to view and comment. She inquired about the mandated public hearings and information regarding this matter be posted on the City's website.

Mayor Robles responded by noting the process.

Council Member Dear

Requested to present his suggestions to the public for the district mapping.

Assistant City Attorney Jones denied Council Member Dear's request noting the Public Hearing is to receive public input only.

Council Member Dear

Requested Louie Diaz return to the podium to answer questions regarding his residence in the Lincoln Village area, which is a census tract and important for Demographer Ely to be aware of this area.

Louie Diaz responded to Council Member Dear's inquiries and confirmed the issues regarding his area of residence.

Mary Martin

Spoke about the residential area near the oil refinery having no population but would be an area of interest. Inquired about the possibility of increasing the number of Council Members.

Mayor Robles responded by noting the Charter language.

Hans Hoogendam

Inquired about how the City would be divided into districts and which Council Member would be representing the district. He also inquired about viewing the proposed district mapping.

Mayor Robles responded noting the Mayor, City Clerk and City Treasurer positions would be elected and the Council Members will be elected by district. He also informed Mr. Hoogendam that the meetings are state mandated to be in compliance with the process however providing proposed maps would be in violation of the process.

Tommie Williams

Referred to districting based elections in Compton. Spoke in opposition of dividing the City into districts. She stated districts would promote racism and division. She suggested Council notify homeowners association presidents and block captains.

Mayor Robles responded stating he would have copies of the presentation available at the next meeting and distribute to the community.

Council Member Davis-Holmes stated these mandated meetings are for education only, and residents will have the opportunity to decide if they want the City to continue having at-large elections or change the Charter by going to district based elections in the March 2020 election.

Mayor Robles referred to the City of Whittier and noted if residents vote to continue to have at-large elections the state can make the decision for the City to go to district-based elections.

Carson Resident

Inquired about the purpose of districts. He mentioned his concerns for adequate representation for minority groups.

Mayor Robles provided explanation and used City of Santa Monica as an example.

Council Member Dear noted other cities threatened with lawsuits.

Council Member Davis-Holmes stated she supports what the consensus of the residents and agrees this effort is reverse discrimination.

Carson Resident

Inquired how the worst street in Carson be renamed Martin Luther King Blvd.

Council Member Davis-Holmes noted the resident comment was not a part of the Public Hearing and stated she would have a side bar with him regarding his inquiry.

Council Member Dear inquired of City Attorney Jones if the City did not have a charter and did not address being an at-large election city, would the City be required to address.

City Attorney Jones responded the election would be on the Charter Amendment .

Miguel Viera, Carson Chamber of Commerce Representative

Spoke in support to the City and offered to partner with the City throughout the districting process.

Jamie Monteclaro

Stated the public did not have an opportunity to study the process because participation kits were not available until the day of the meeting. He noted two ways to change the City from at-large to district elections, pass an ordinance from at-large to district and amend the charter or submit measure ballot to voters. He is in favor of remaining an at-large election City. He mentioned his 8 children and his rainbow family, he is open to all nationalities; and never felt discriminated while being a resident.

Robert Lesley

Referred to a conversation he had with Vera Robles-DeWitt regarding her comments regarding the lack of Latino representation. He noted the City of Santa Monica and City of Whittier was forced to go to district voting because those cities were disproportioned.

Council Member Davis-Holmes

Encouraged residents to vote and let their voices be heard in March 2020 election.

Mayor Pro Tem Hicks

Noted the Public Hearing is being held because of a threat of a lawsuit. He encouraged attendance at the City Council meeting on June 18th. He informed residents they will have an opportunity to review the district maps, and the interactive map on the City's website for residents to input. He encouraged residents to vote during the election in March 2020.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 7:28 P.M. by Mayor Pro Tem Hicks.

Mayor Albert Robles

ATTEST:

City Clerk Donesia Gause-Aldana