

Legislation Details (With Text)

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City Council

MEETING DATE: 4/12/2017

TITLE:

Public Hearing to Receive Public Comments on the Composition of Potential Council Election Districts

FROM:

Charlie McClendon, City Manager

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends the City Council hold a public hearing and receive comments from the public regarding the composition of potential Council election districts.

BACKGROUND:

The City Council was elected under an at-large election system, whereby Council Members are elected by voters of the entire City. On March 8, 2017, the Council adopted a Resolution of Intent to Change Election Systems. Moving to by-district elections would require a Council Member (and all candidates for that position) to reside within a designated district boundary, and each Council Member would be elected only by voters of the appropriate district.

DISCUSSION:

On March 8, 2017, the Council adopted Resolution 2017-07, adopting line drawing criteria for creating Council district boundaries. The adopted resolution states the following:

Specification of Criteria to Guide the Establishment of Electoral Districts

- The boundaries of the electoral districts shall be established so that the electoral districts are equal in population as defined by law.
- The boundaries of the electoral districts shall not be gerrymandered in violation of the principles established by the United States Supreme Court in *Shaw v. Reno*, 509 U.S. 630 (1993), and its progeny.
- The boundaries of the electoral districts shall be established so that the electoral districts do not result in a denial or abridgement of the right of any citizen to vote on account of race or color as provided in Section 2 of the federal Voting Rights Act.
- The boundaries of the electoral districts shall observe communities of interest as identified in public comment or identified by the city council, including, but not limited to rural or urban populations; social interests; agricultural, industrial or service industry interests; residential and commercial areas, the location of city facilities and historical sites, and the like, insofar as practicable.
- The boundaries of the electoral districts shall be compact, insofar as practicable.
- The boundaries of the electoral districts shall be created to contain cohesive, contiguous territory, insofar as practicable.
- The boundaries of the electoral districts may observe topography and geography, such as the existence of mountains, flat land, forest lands, man-made geographical features such as highways, major roadways and canals, etc., as natural divisions between districts, insofar as practicable.
- Unless otherwise required by law, the electoral districts shall be created using whole census blocks, insofar as practicable.
- The boundaries of the electoral districts may avoid the “pairing” of incumbents in the same electoral district, insofar as this does not conflict with the constitution and laws of the State of California and the United States.
- The boundaries of the electoral districts shall comply with such other factors which become known during the districting process and are formally adopted by the City Council.

The City will have at least two (2) public hearings prior to the release of draft maps of Council election districts. Council will then hold an additional two (2) or more public hearings to solicit public input regarding the content of the draft maps and the proposed sequence of elections. Then an additional public hearing will be held prior to the approval of an ordinance implementing a Council election district map.

Today’s hearing partially fulfills the requirement of California Elections Code Section 10010 that states:

“(1) Before drawing a draft map or maps of the proposed boundaries of the districts, the political subdivision shall hold at least two public hearings over a period of no more than thirty days, at which the public is invited to provide input regarding the composition of the districts.

The intention of this hearing is to identify the neighborhoods, other “communities of interest,” and other local factors that should be considered or used as ‘building blocks’ when the drawing of draft maps begins. The public is welcome to propose complete districting maps, but it is not required.

This hearing will also be the public launch of the City’s online redistricting tool, provided by our districting consultant (National Demographics Corporation, or NDC). The online tool is available as a link from the City website.

FISCAL IMPACT:

None associated with the public hearing. Council approved a contract award to National Demographics Corporation (NDC) on January 11, 2017 along with a budget amendment of \$25,000 to fund the contract.

ATTACHMENTS:

Resolutions adopted on March 8, 2017 (2)