**Commission Meeting Minutes**

The following are the minutes of the Utah Independent Redistricting Commission meeting. The meeting was held on Tuesday, July 27, 2021 at 4:00 p.m. in the Taylorsville State Office Building Room #1400, 4315 South 2700 West, Taylorsville, UT 84129-2128.

*Attendance* - Commission Members

Chair, Utah Independent Redistricting Commission - Rex Facer

Commissioner Lyle Hillyard

Commissioner Jeff Baker

Commissioner Rob Bishop

Commissioner Karen Hale

Commissioner Christine Durham

Commissioner William Thorne

*Attendance* - Staff and Others in Attendance at Anchor Location:

Gordon Haight, UIRC Executive Director

Aly Escobar, Administrative Coordinator

Beau Bayless, Intern

Christelle Gatoro, Intern

Sariah Bennion, Intern

Joey Fica, Intern

Cassidy Hansen, Intern

Autumn Lee, Intern

Seyon Pen, Intern

Matt Cannon, Legal Counsel from Ray Quinney & Nebeker

Teresa Facer, Volunteer

Katie Wright, Better Boundaries

Roger Dunn, GIS Volunteer

Kathleen Riebe

Note: A copy of meeting materials, and an audio recording of the meeting can be found on the Public Notice Website. The minutes may refer to the recording found on the Public Notice Website with the approximate number on the recording where an issue is being discussed.

1. Welcome – Chair Rex Facer

Chair Facer started the meeting at 4:08 P.M.

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1. Introduction: Seyon Pen – Intern

Chair Facer turned the time to Seyon to introduce herself. Seyon is an MPA student at BYU and started the week of this meeting.

1. Action Item: Approval of the Minutes of July, 20 2021

Chair Facer noted that a revised set of minutes were sent to the commissioners late, and as such suggested waiting until the next meeting before approving the minutes.

1. Presentation: General Legal Discussion – Matt Cannon

Chair Facer then turned the time to Matt Cannon. Matt introduced his presentation this week as a follow-up to the discussion of standards and criteria from the previous meeting. Please go to 01:40 in the recording to listen to Matt’s presentation. The recording is posted to the Public Notice Website on the July 27, 2021, posting. <https://www.utah.gov/pmn/>

This presentation was largely based on the presentation given on July 20 with some modifications after discussions on July 20. Public comment on the suggested standards and criteria is encouraged. In this presentation and discussion the commission clarified that the order standards and criteria are written in do not represent a ranking of prioritization.

The second portion of Matt’s presentation discussed contiguity and some legal considerations for this standard.

1. Discussion: Insights from the National Conference of State Legislators.

Chair Facer introduced this item and asked for comments from the other commissioners.

Commissioner Thorne thanked Gordon and Chair Facer for the presentations and discussions in previous meetings as those presentations served to help prepare for the conference.

Commissioner Durham said that she felt like the commission has done a good job identifying issues and goals. She also mentioned some concerns about resources and times.

Commissioner Baker explained that the conference helped him to better understand the purpose of maintaining the core of existing districts as a measure of continuity rather than incumbent protection. He also agreed with Commissioner Durham that the commission seems to be on track overall.

Commissioner Hale mentioned some thoughts on how race is and can be used as a factor without being a predominant factor. She also mentioned some presentations on legislative privilege and feeling that the commission had done a good job in working towards transparency.

Commissioner Hillyard mentioned how large the job is. There are a lot of potential resources needed, but he mentioned worrying about spending time on nuance just to have the legislature fail to approve maps from the commission.

Chair Facer then asked Gordon for any thoughts from the conference, Gordon commended the commission on being prepared and gaining a lot from the conference and was glad to hear the commissioners feel that the commission is working in the right direction. Gordon mentioned the need to maintain not only the criteria from the commission but also the criteria from the legislature. He mentioned a presentation about Colorado and their requirements on how many times a county can be split and explained that staff was looking at the previous maps for similar data to compare to. He explained that while there is some more expensive complex analysis possible, staff was working on some more approachable analysis to start.

Chair Facer agreed with other comments made, mentioning resources and the potential for expensive analysis mentioned by Gordon. He then asked for any comments from Matt.

Matt mentioned the large scope of the work ahead of the commission, especially when compared to the smaller relative budget of the commission. He emphasized that other commissions often use the services of professional GIS consultants, but the budget does not allow that.

Commissioner Hillyard thanked Gordon for his work and several commissioners expressed agreement.

1. Discussion: Mapping Planning and Associated Issues – Gordon Haight

Chair Facer then turned the time to Gordon for some discussion of mapping. Gordon then turned the time to Cassidy for some discussion of the Legislative Committee’s standards as well as population deviation. She mentioned that the Legislative Committee had adopted a standard of 5% maximum deviation, but that in their discussion there was a lot of discussion around how to best use standards for rural districts. Some of the Legislative Committee discussed the possibility of a larger deviation to better provide rural representation. Cassidy then showed an example of how relatively small changes in deviation can have an effect on mapping.

Cassidy also mentioned that the Legislative Committee would be including the locations of incumbents on their maps as opposed to the current plans of the commission.

Gordon mentioned that no final mapping decisions have to be made yet, but the commissioners will hopefully consider this idea on how slight population changes can have large effects on how intact communities are left.

Commissioner Hillyard mentioned the importance of where people live when it comes to running for state legislature as it plays into keeping communities together. Commissioner Thorne asked if target numbers for each district are known. Gordon said he would find those targets.

Gordon then changed the topic to the planned procedure for when census data is released. He suggested that it is possible that the mapping process takes 100 or more hours, plus additional checks and analysis from staff. With that, Gordon suggested that approximately three weeks may be needed for mapping. He asked the commission to consider if public hearings should be delayed to allow for mapping to be done before meetings begin.

Gordon then asked the commission for their thoughts on how to differentiate maps turned in. The commission is required to turn in three options for each map and Gordon asked how the commissioners wanted to determine the difference between those option maps.

Commissioner Hillyard mentioned an earlier suggestion of splitting the commission into three teams and having each team create a map for each of the required district types.

Commissioner Durham agrees that splitting the commission into teams as such seems like an efficient approach, but worries about having relatively small teams of two. Gordon and the commissioners discussed some possible logistics and exercises that could be tried to use this suggestion.

Commissioner Hale mentioned that the census data will likely take some time to upload and use after being released and asked if mapping could actually occur on August 17 given that delay.

Commissioner Baker explained the process of uploading the census data. Once data is released GIS companies such as ESRI have a quality control process to ensure data is entered correctly and he expected usable data perhaps by the 21st or 22nd.

Gordon agreed with Commissioner Baker’s explanation of that time frame.

Gordon then explained that August 17 may indeed be too early to map given the data, but wanted the commissions to discuss and decide on how the mapping should be done.

Gordon asked if the commissioners wanted to have maps done before public hearings begin.

Commissioner Hale and Chair Facer agreed that it would be nice to bring something to show at the public hearings, but it could be more of an outline of what areas need to be adjusted rather than a drafted map.

1. Presentation: Mapping Exercise – Gordon Haight

Gordon explained the mapping exercise for this meeting. The maps for this week had additional data from last week such as city boundaries. Gordon explained that the goal from this week's exercise was to approach how to start a map, and so essentially blank maps were given.

For this portion of the meeting, commissioners split into three groups. To view recordings of the mapping exercise please go to the UIRC YouTube channel.

The commissioners discussed some takeaways from the mapping exercise, including a need for larger monitors in mapping rooms and some kind of laser point that is visible on the screens.

The commissioners also discussed approaches to starting. Commissioners Bishop and Hillyard strongly suggested starting with existing boundaries rather than from scratch.

More discussion was had on this issue of whether or not to start from scratch, as existing boundaries help simplify, but might maintain poor boundaries if they exist.

1. Presentation: Public Outreach – Interns

Cassidy presented on some social media outreach, including potential posts with things like memes to get more interaction. She also mentioned looking at outreach from other independent commissions, including educational videos from the Michigan commission. Cassidy said she had talked to Love Communications about getting similar videos created. A social media calendar also in the works and more consistent posting was a goal listed.

Commissioner Hillyard asked about the potential of getting posts sent to the commissioners, and Cassidy said she would send the commissions essentially a social media digest each week.

Commissioner Hillyard also mentioned having seen a recent social media post about both the legislative committee and the independent commission and worries about gerrymandering. He explained that comments on this post also seemed to indicate the commission had essentially sold out when compromise legislation was being drafted. He suggested having some public outreach focused on explaining more of the process of how that legislation was crafted and what changes were made to the initial ballot initiative.

Gordon mentioned Katie Wright from Better Boundaries was in attendance and suggested that staff would work with Better Boundaries on outreach like that.

Commissioner Hale also mentioned that the commission was not yet in existence when that legislation was being drafted, and it might be helpful to explain that as well.

The time was then turned to Christelle to present on the updated calendar of events. She mentioned that tabling events in cities had been going well and the staff had received some valuable feedback during those events. Christelle also explained that staff had started reaching out to various community groups, including school groups, religious groups, and other community groups. She asked commissioners to give any suggested groups to staff and staff would then reach out.

Commissioner Baker suggested reaching out to city utility companies to help get flyers to citizens.

Beau then presented on outreach to cities. He explained that staff had been reaching out to various city officials across the state to ask for help with outreach, input, and some GIS assistance. He mentioned that all the cities contacted so far had been receptive and there seems to be a lot of general interest in being involved.

Commissioner Thorne asked if tribal groups had been contacted.

Christelle and Gordon said they had done some outreach and would be attending the upcoming summit hosted by the Indian Affairs group.

Commissioner Thorne mentioned that there might be other officials better to talk with and suggested reaching out directly to more tribal groups.

Staff thanked Commissioner Thorne for the input and said they would update their process.

Commissioner Hale asked for clarification regarding some previous discussion about attending the Utah League of Cities and Towns conventions. Gordon clarified that staff would be attending that event and talked to City officials there.

Joey then presented on his experience making a practice map with the redistricting tool. He explained the importance of finding where maps can come together. He also said that getting his practice map around halfway done without looking at all data sources took over ten hours. He strongly suggested thinking about the final district as early as possible. Commissioner Bishop asked if Joey was using existing boundaries. Joey replied he had not. Joey then explained his process in mapping in more detail. Commissioner Bishop then agreed with Joey’s comments about the difficulty of creating a final district and shared some experience from seeing maps drawn while in the legislature.

Gordon then mentioned that part of the city outreach had been asking cities how they would like to be split if they had to be split, which should hopefully help inform the commission especially for that final district. 

1. Public Comment:

No emails requesting public comment had been submitted.

Chair Facer also mentioned an updated schedule from the Legislative Committee for meeting and explained that commissioners would be given that schedule next week.

Commissioner Hillyard moved to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:51 P.M.