**Commission Meeting Minutes**

The following are the minutes of the Utah Independent Redistricting Commission meeting. The meeting was held on Friday, September 3, 2021. Hideout Community Center located on 49 W 600 S St, Monticello, UT 84535

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.

Attendance - Commission Members

Chair, Utah Independent Redistricting Commission - Rex Facer

Commissioner Karen Hale

Commissioner Lyle Hillyard

Commissioner Jeff Baker

Commissioner William Thorne

Commissioner Robert Bishop

Attendance - Staff and Others in Attendance at Anchor Location:

Gordon Haight, Executive Director

Aly Escobar, Administrative Coordinator

Beau Bayless, Intern

Julianne Kidd, Intern

Sariah Morey, Intern

Joey Fica, Intern

Attendance – Public in Attendance

Katie Wright, Better Boundaries

Elsie Dee, San Juan City

Susie Philemon, Resident

Kim Henderson, Monticello City

Cheryl Bowers, Blanding City

Kate Golde, Monticello City

Chester Johnson

Chase Clyde, UEA

Bruce Adams, San Juan County Commission

Shannon Brooks, Monticello College

Curtis Henderson, Resident

Matt Cannon, Legal Counsel from Ray Quinney & Nebeker (virtually)

# I. Open House

At the start of the meeting, an open house was held to allow the public to view drafted maps.

# II. Public Hearing 7:00

Chair Facer began the meeting at 6:34 PM

# III. Welcome – Chair Rex Facer

Chair Facer welcomed everyone and introduced the commissioners in attendance, noting that Commissioner Durham was not in attendance.

# IV. Action Item: Approval of the Minutes of August 10, 2021

Chair Facer moved to the next item and asked for any needed changes to the minutes from the August 10 meeting.

*Commissioner Hillyard moved to approve the minutes.*

*Commissioner Thorne seconded the motion.*

*Commissioner Bishop Aye*

*Commissioner Thorne Aye*

*Chair Facer Aye*

*Commissioner Hillyard Aye*

*Commissioner Hale Aye*

*Commissioner Baker Aye*

*The motion carried and minutes are approved.*

Commissioner Hillyard asked if Commissioner Durham would be able to vote if she were to appear online. Chair Facer responded that she would, but noted that Commissioner Durham was not attending virtually at the time.

# V. Presentation: Redistricting Process – Rex Facer

Chair Facer moved to the next item and stated that he would explain some of the process of redistricting.

He began by explaining that Proposition 4 in 2018, began the creation of the Utah Independent Redistricting Commission (UIRC) and after some compromise legislation in 2020 the commission was created, with the commissioners themselves being appointed in February 2021.

Chair Facer then explained that commissioners had been meeting for several months to understand the task ahead of them, namely creating three maps for Utah’s Congressional seats, state house of representatives, state senate, and state school board districts. Those maps will then be given to the legislature.

He then stated that as part of that process the commissioners wanted to hear what people thought of their own communities to better inform the mapping process.

Chair Facer then went on to explain the criteria to be used by the commission. More information about these criteria can be found here: <https://uirc.utah.gov/uirc-meeting/synopsis-criteria-and-standards/>

In this explanation, Chair Facer also mentioned the needed population numbers, which can be seen at the link above. He also mentioned the Commission’s decision not to use political data.

Chair Facer then stated that the commissioners had begun the mapping process, and that software to draw maps and communities of interest are available at uirc.utah.gov.

Commissioner Hale suggested that Chair Facer explain the timeline.

Chair Facer explained that input would be collected until approximately October 22, and would be delivering maps to the legislature on November 1. Public comment collected before then will be used to improve and refine drafted maps. Chair Facer also invited attendees to not only give feedback to the UIRC, but also to the Legislative Redistricting Committee as they have ultimate responsibility.

Commissioner Hillyard further explained that the legislature will have to approve new maps by the first of the year for elections.

Chair Facer then explained that all mapping is being live streamed and the commissioners would welcome input during the livestreamed mapping.

# VI. Presentation: Monticello Mayor Tim Young

# VII. Presentation: Blanding City Mayor Joe B. Lyman

Chair Facer noted that the agenda had several mayor’s speaking, but that the mayors did not seem to be in attendance.

Gordon pointed out that there were several members of various City Councils and the County Commission. Chair Facer then recognized Elsie Dee from San Juan County, Cheryl Bowers from the Blanding City Council and Kim Henderson from the Monticello City Council. He then asked if Cheryl Bowers would address the commissioners regarding Blanding.

Cheryl Bowers then addressed the commission discussing Blanding. Her comments included a focus in Blanding on family values and rural interests. She also emphasized the need for rural communities to have a voice, and explained her concern that putting rural communities in the same districts as urban communities can drown out the rural voice.

Chair Facer then asked Kim Henderson to address the commissioners regarding Monticello.

Kim Henderson then addressed the commission discussing Monticello. She mentioned a focus in Monticello on family and small community atmosphere and noted that Monticello is similar to Blanding. Kim then addressed the need for rural communities to have a voice and explained how many rural communities share the same kind of concerns and need the chance for a united voice. She also mentioned that to her, San Juan County and Grant County are very different, and may not make the most sense to stay in a district.

Commissioner Bishop pointed out that Bruce Adams of the San Juan County Commission was also in attendance and suggested that he might have a few words to say. Bruce Adams then addressed the commission regarding San Juan County. He mentioned that some of the Navajo residents of the county are underserved in part due to complications of sovereignty between various government players. He mentioned residents with no running water or electricity. He then expressed that it would be nice if counties had more equal say, similar to the federal senate, though he understood why each county does not have a senator and how the system works. He then moved on to explain that it would be nice if each county could have their own representative in the house. He noted that in his experience, it feels like San Juan County gets less representation and lumped in with more counties. He noted concern that the current house representative has an incredibly large geographic area and suggested that it would be very helpful to have a district that a representative could visit all areas of more realistically. He ended with a plea to ensure San Juan County has representation.

Chair Facer thanked all the speakers and noted that this was the first Public Hearing for the Utah Independent Redistricting Commission. He explained that starting in a rural part of Utah was intentional, as Rural Utah can feel ignored. He also explained that the commission had worked hard to remain transparent and allow the public to be involved and explained that this hearing and all future hearings would be broadcast live to YouTube.

# VIII. Presentation: Redistricting – Julianne Kidd

Chair Facer mentioned the importance of public input and asked Julianne Kidd to speak regarding the process for public comment.

Julianne Kidd then spoke about the importance of public comment and explained the various avenues for public comment. Comments will be accepted through email at uirccomments@utah.gov and through our website uirc.utah.gov

# IX. Presentation: Public Hearing Format – Gordon Haight

Chair Facer then turned the time to Gordon Haight to explain the process for the remainder of the meeting. He mentioned that staff would be available to answer questions after the meeting and turned the time to the public for comments.

# X. Open Public Comment: Chair Rex Facer

Chair Facer noted that comments would be part of the public record and part of the maps and report delivered to the legislature.

Shannon Brooks from Monticello then addressed the commission. His comments mentioned federalism and sovereignty of local governments.

Susie Philemon from San Juan spoke regarding the experience as a Navajo member of the community, and the treatment of the larger Navajo Community.

Commissioner Hillyard addressed Bruce Adams' comment regarding each county having a senator as something that would be struck down. He then explained that due to where San Juan county is in the state, the districts including San Juan county will need to include counties to either the west or the north of the county. He asked the public which option seemed preferable to them, including some geographic issues with what roads provide access to the west. He also included a personal experience regarding smaller counties having a voice, explaining how highly he placed comments from Rich County while he served in the legislature.

Bruce Adams addressed the commission and explained that San Juan is part of a four county AOG including Carbon, Emery, Grand, and San Juan Counties. He explained that he wasn’t sure if those counties had enough population to constitute a district, but suggested that it may be best to go north if that AOG did not have the proper population.

Kim Henderson added that it might be interesting to see how Grand County would feel about that district, as they may feel that their voice was drowned out by the neighboring counties. She would suggest that the district instead go west.

Commissioner Hillyard mentioned that the commission would do their best to use comments like these, but also reminded the audience that there was a chance that counties may have to be split at times to best use population numbers.

Commissioner Bishop then again addressed Bruce Adams’ comments about each county having a representative. He explained that it seemed unlikely that San Juan County would be split but that the people in the area needed to help the commissioners understand what counties and areas they would like to be included with. Bruce Adams asked some questions regarding specific population numbers of various counties and Chair Facer explained that staff could help answer those questions after the meeting. Commissioner Thorne also mentioned that members of the public can use the software themselves and population counts are included.

An audience member asked if this question of what counties to include with San Juan was just for house or for all districts. Commissioner Hillyard answered that responses can address any and all district types, and it may vary depending on the district type.

Some questions were asked regarding population counts and the commissioners answered. Commissioner Baker and Commissioner Thorne again encouraged people to talk with staff after the meeting to look at the software and learn some of the basics.

Commissioner Bishop brought the discussion back to the question of what counties to include with San Juan. Commissioner Hillyard and Chair Facer also explained the difficulty of balancing all the districts simultaneously. It may be that the counties San Juan would like to be included with may need to be included with other areas of the state.

Commissioner Hale emphasized the importance of comments regarding specific communities and reminded the public that there are avenues to submit just a community of interest and not just the whole state.

Cheryl Bowers again mentioned the importance of trying to keep rural communities with each other and not drowned out by an urban area.

Commissioner Thorne also suggested that the public can reach out to staff with help with the software.

# XI. Close Public Comment: Chair Rex Facer

Chair Facer closed the public comment section of the hearing.

# XII. Commission Discussion and Direction to Staff: Gordon Haight

Chair Facer asked if staff had any other comments for the commissioners.

Gordon thanked the public for their comments. He explained that the Legislative Redistricting Committee would have a meeting in Moab soon and encouraged the public to comment to them as well. Commissioner Bishop also encouraged the public to reach out to their representatives. Commissioner Thorne emphasized that the commission wants to include the public as much as possible and Gordon encouraged people to comment on drafted maps as they get posted.

# XII. Adjourn

Chair Facer asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

*Commissioner Hillyard motioned to adjourn.*

The meeting was adjourned at 8:03pm.