

**MINUTES
of the
FOURTH MEETING
of the
REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE**

**August 15, 2011
Performing Arts Center, West Mesa High School
Albuquerque**

**August 16, 2011
Concert Hall, V. Sue Cleveland High School
Rio Rancho**

The fourth meeting of the Redistricting Committee was called to order on August 15, 2011 at 4:15 p.m. in the Performing Arts Center at West Mesa High School in Albuquerque.

Present

Rep. Mary Helen Garcia, Co-Chair
Sen. Linda M. Lopez, Co-Chair
Sen. Kent L. Cravens (August 16)
Rep. Anna M. Crook
Sen. Stuart Ingle
Rep. Conrad D. James (August 15)
Rep. Larry A. Larrañaga
Sen. Lynda M. Lovejoy
Rep. James Roger Madalena
Rep. W. Ken Martinez
Sen. Gerald Ortiz y Pino
Rep. Debbie A. Rodella
Rep. Edward C. Sandoval (August 15)
Sen. William E. Sharer
Sen. John Arthur Smith
Rep. Thomas C. Taylor

Advisory Members

Rep. Ray Begaye (August 15)
Rep. Donald E. Bratton
Sen. William F. Burt (August 15)
Rep. Gail Chasey
Sen. Carlos R. Cisneros (August 15)
Rep. Nora Espinoza
Rep. Nate Gentry (August 15)
Sen. Timothy M. Keller (August 15)
Rep. Ben Lujan (August 15)
Rep. Bill B. O'Neill (August 15)
Sen. Sander Rue (August 15)
Rep. Sheryl Williams Stapleton (August 16)

Absent

Sen. Phil A. Griego
Sen. Timothy Z. Jennings

Rep. Paul C. Bandy
Sen. Mary Jane M. Garcia
Rep. Thomas A. Garcia
Rep. Rodolpho "Rudy" S. Martinez
Sen. Howie C. Morales
Sen. George K. Munoz
Sen. Steven P. Neville
Rep. James E. Smith
Rep. Shirley A. Tyler

Rep. Mimi Stewart

Sen. Peter Wirth (August 15)

Guest Legislators

Rep. Ernest H. Chavez (August 15)
Rep. James Lewis (August 16)
Rep. Antonio "Moe" Maestas (August 15)
Rep. Jane E. Powdrell-Culbert (August 16)
Sen. John M. Sapien (August 16)

(Attendance dates are noted for members not present for the entire meeting.)

Staff

Jon Boller, Staff Attorney, Legislative Council Service (LCS)
Alise Rudio, Staff Attorney, LCS
Leslie Porter, Research Assistant, LCS
John Yaeger, Assistant Director for Legislative Affairs, LCS

Guests

A copy of the guest list is in the meeting file.

Handouts

Copies of handouts and other written testimony are in the meeting file.

Monday, August 15

The committee was welcomed by Richard Berry, mayor, Albuquerque, and Winston Brooks, superintendent, Albuquerque Public Schools.

Overview of Redistricting and Introduction to 2011 State and Congressional Redistricting Concepts

Brian Sanderoff, president, Research & Polling, Inc. (R&P), presented the ABCs of redistricting and reviewed the congressional concepts, several senate and house concepts as well as the Public Regulation Commission (PRC) concepts.

Public Comment

Jim Buhaug, resident of the east mountain area of Bernalillo County, said that most people he has talked with in that area prefer to be in the same congressional district as the rest of Bernalillo County. He said that while all of the congressional plans look fine on the basis of population and political performance, he favors concepts A and B, which seem to be the most compact and also keep the east mountain area in the First Congressional District.

Dolores Watkins, an Albuquerque northeast heights resident, requested that the committee consider the compactness of the area, for it is important for legislators to have physical contact with the voters. She stated that the issues are complex and the committee needs to listen to the public. She said many problems can be solved by hosting smaller meetings in several communities.

Jean Montoya, resident, Rio Rancho, suggested that the committee view Rio Rancho as a community of interest, since it is large enough to stand alone and its representation should reflect this. She expressed support for congressional concepts A and D.

Marvin Schott, Albuquerque, expressed concern about moving Precinct 302 from House District 20, since it is predominantly urban. He noted that only house concepts A and B keep that precinct as part of an urban district and said he hopes that it remains part of House District 20.

Nancy Montaña, member, Southwest Association of Neighborhoods, requested that the Rio Grande be one of the boundaries for house and senate districts representing Albuquerque. She pointed out that the west side of Albuquerque has grown a tremendous amount and will continue to do so. She therefore asked for the maximum number of legislators possible. Finally, she asked that historic, economic and political interests of communities be preserved.

Jerry Worrall, member, Westside Coalition of Neighborhood Associations, informed the committee that there are 75 neighborhood associations west of the Rio Grande and that his organization represents 28 of those. He said the members of his organization, along with four other coalitions, concur that the Rio Grande should serve as the district boundary for house and senate districts. He said the west side needs representation of its own and it has existed without it long enough.

Mark Rosenblum, resident, Valencia County, said that all of the congressional concepts split the county, and he suggested that a concept be developed whereby the county is considered a single entity and be put in a district that stretches toward Albuquerque.

Tracy Goodluck, Native American Democratic Caucus, told the committee that the caucus is composed of Native Americans and non-Native Americans. She emphasized minority voting rights and said that minorities are underrepresented in the legislature. She mentioned the severe poverty among Native Americans and requested that the committee should consider increasing the number of Native American districts. She asked the committee to listen to the recommendations of the tribes.

Charlie Plough, member, Unitarian Church, commended the legislature for its work throughout the past 20 years and highlighted the importance of maintaining the nature of the current districts. He asked that rural districts not be pulled into Albuquerque and that the number of urban districts should be increased.

Sterling Fluharty, Southwest Political Services, noted his appreciation for the transparent process and requested that the committee continue to provide information to the public throughout the special session.

Nkazi Sinandile, Albuquerque Refugees, said she represents immigrants from Africa. She said she lives in Senate District 17, the "International District", which provides homes for refugee immigrants. She asked that the International District be considered a community of interest. She noted that refugees come from around the world and that they are eligible for citizenship after five years, at which point they can vote. She said these people need compassion and asked the committee to remember them.

Cheryl Haaker, member, League of Women Voters (LWV), mentioned an op-ed article in the *Albuquerque Journal* from Mary Wilson. She urged the public to use the legislature's web site.

Victor Limary, owner, Talin International Market Place, said the market has been a prominent Asian market in the International District since 1980. He said the Asian population in Albuquerque is very small, and many of its residents are refugees who are at a disadvantage due to differences in culture. He asked that the International District be considered a community of interest, noting that working with multiple legislators is trying.

Andrew Leo Lopez, South Valley resident, Albuquerque, said that the Rio Grande is an obvious district boundary. He said the Middle Rio Grande Conservancy District comprises the eastern and western floors of the valley in four counties and should be considered a community of interest based on the voting strength of 80,000 voters with property and based on water rights. He said that the conservancy district desires increased representation and that the legislature tends to ignore the district's interest in water rights and open space issues, and he declared that the legislature violates every redistricting principle discussed. Regarding congressional districts, he suggested that one district include Bernalillo County in its entirety coupled with northern Valencia County because the Pueblo of Isleta has marriage and blood ties. Concerning senate concepts, he suggested leaving the Navajo Nation in Senate District 4 and emphasized that the Navajo Nation and the pueblos are not the same people. He also said that the west side of Albuquerque, from south of Paseo del Norte to west of the Rio Grande, should also be in Senate District 4. Finally, Mr. Lopez stated that the cost of \$50,000 per day for the redistricting special session is less expensive than litigation, and he added that the judicial branch should not be burdened with doing the job the legislative branch has failed to do.

Representative Maestas reminded the committee that democracy requires that the west side of Albuquerque have two new house seats and that no debate on this should occur. He said that local governments have struggled to accommodate the massive growth of the area and that even if the area is given two new representatives, the west side will still be underrepresented the day after redistricting due to continued growth. He asked the committee to consider the future growth of the area and suggested that the population of the west side's house districts be targeted closer to 28,000 due to this anticipated growth.

JoAnne Anders, Paradise Hills, supports: (1) additional representation for the west side that would allow for future growth; and (2) contiguous communities of interest. She supports congressional concept A, house concept E, senate concept C and either PRC concept B or E.

Ava M. Bowers, chair, Precinct 31, Navajo Nation, expressed her desire to be in the First Congressional District. She explained her frustration of attempting to contact her congressman due to a closed local office. Regarding the PRC, she said that a person from San Juan County does not have anything in common with her and mentioned the lack of phone lines on the Rio Puerco in Albuquerque.

Bich-Hanh Nguyen, founding member, Asian American Association of New Mexico, discussed her efforts to reestablish Vietnamese refugees after the fall of Vietnam in Senate District 17, the International District. She said that this district is the most diverse in the state and that the Vietnamese restaurants are one of the economic engines of the area. She explained

that many people resettled from their homelands to Albuquerque and that the area is greatly appreciated. She asked for this community to be protected so voices are not drowned out due to the potential split into different senate districts. She requested that Senate District 17 remain intact and suggested that the area be split into two house districts at most.

Charlie Bennett, member, La Mesa Community Improvement Association, offered a brief background of Senate District 17. He said it was conceived in 2002 by engaged citizens who wished to recognize the constructive assets of the area. He said the idea was acknowledged by the Albuquerque City Council and the legislature in 2009, with the purpose of the design being to afford citizens self-determination and to encourage increased, positive economic outcomes for the area to flourish. He stated that the voters in the area are the most diverse in New Mexico, with the highest concentration of Asian Americans, as reflected in developed businesses. He added that the area also has the largest concentration of eastern Europeans and has 48 language groups represented. He stressed that to split the area would deny the residents the ability to elect a legislator capable of understanding these diverse needs.

Louie Tafoya, resident, Albuquerque, said he claimed many ancestries on the census form, including French, Indian and Spanish, and explained that he does not care for the term "Hispanic" due to its generic nature. He said the west side of Albuquerque is divided from the rest of the city by the Rio Grande, a natural boundary that should be used as a district boundary. He urged the committee to consider creating three house seats on the west side as well as keeping the area intact.

Andres Lazo, president, SVC Neighborhood Association, urged the committee not to form a district based upon political parties but rather on the morals of democracy. He said the redistricting process does affect school board makeup. For too long, he said, the west side of Albuquerque has been brushed aside and the children have had to pay the consequences of underrepresentation and have had to fight the stigma of the schools they attend. He advocated for a long-term redistricting solution that will account for future growth on the west side, given that 34 percent of Albuquerque's 500,000 residents live on that side of the river.

Pat Risback, member, Anderson Hills Neighborhood Association, emphasized that southwest Albuquerque is underrepresented and needs as many legislators as possible to be able to meet the needs of the area. He said there is a lack of infrastructure, including restaurants. He wants the area to be viewed as a single unit and the state to respect the people of the area.

Vic Segura, resident, Albuquerque, said that the west side of Albuquerque is underrepresented on the city council and on the school board and that this should have been resolved in 2001. He stated that the west side needs three new house districts and two new senate districts.

Allan Oliver, resident, Albuquerque, applauded the transparency of the process. He stated that New Mexico is a majority-minority state and that any plan that dilutes minority voting strength is wrong. He emphasized that the west side is very underrepresented.

Tuesday, August 16

The committee was welcomed by Rio Rancho Mayor Tom Swisstack, Rio Rancho School Board President Don Schlichte and Superintendent V. Sue Cleveland.

At the suggestion of Senator Lopez, the members of the committee introduced themselves. Mr. Sanderoff introduced the R&P staff.

Overview of Redistricting and Introduction to 2011 State and Congressional Redistricting Concepts

Mr. Sanderoff covered the ABCs of redistricting and reviewed the congressional concepts, several senate and house concepts as well as the PRC concepts. He noted that 40 percent of the 240,000 growth in population in New Mexico over the past 10 years occurred on the west side of Albuquerque and in Rio Rancho. Simple math, he explained, tells us that new house and senate seats must appear on the west side and in Rio Rancho.

Public Comment

Wes Basset expressed his admiration for Rio Rancho and requested that it be considered a community of interest and given its own representative.

Carol Dooley, citizen, Rio Rancho, said that the movement of Precinct 65 will cause voter disenfranchisement and opined that Rio Rancho needs a legislator who lives in the city. She requested that the city, in its entirety, be in the First Congressional District because Rio Rancho has more in common with Albuquerque than the rural areas of the Third Congressional District.

Michael Letwenko, citizen, Rio Rancho, said the best representation of the city is from an individual who is close to the people in the area. He requested that Rio Rancho be removed from House District 65, which is a majority Native American district.

Ms. Montoya reiterated the sentiment of considering Rio Rancho as a community unto itself and the desire not to split its representation.

Debbie Hernandez, citizen, Rio Rancho, stated she would rather that Rio Rancho be paired with Albuquerque than be put into a rural congressional district.

Rosheada Harris, citizen, Rio Rancho, mentioned the growth she has seen in Rio Rancho over the past two years. She emphasized the need for more representation.

Roy Stroit, Placitas, told the committee that, regarding congressional districts, Rio Rancho has more in common with Albuquerque than it does with Taos; he added that the city has not had a decent house or senate district. He said that the senate concepts do not work for the Town of Bernalillo, which should be the hub for house and senate seats in the area, and that the Sandia Crest ridgeline should be the eastern boundary for any district, thus making Placitas part of the districts on the west side of the Sandias instead of being part of any east mountain district.

Pat Merl, Algodones, stated that the house concepts place Algodones within a Native American district and opined that this does not make sense. She said that her senate district is a

non-Native American district, and her house district is a Native American district. She said that others besides Native Americans live in her districts, and she emphasized that they need representation as well.

Mr. Fluharty said that the provided precinct data illustrate that there are 10 precincts in Sandoval County with more registered voters than the total number of adults and said the voter files are inflated.

Alonzo Clayton, citizen of Rio Rancho and former city councilor, asked the committee to preserve communities of interest, Rio Rancho being one of them.

James Dory Garduño, citizen, Rio Rancho, indicated his support for Rio Rancho having its own representation. He asked that Precincts 70, 47 and 85, which constitute western Rio Rancho, be kept together.

Hope M. Garcia, resident, Rio Rancho, expressed her support for Rio Rancho being considered a community of interest. She said it is the third-largest community in New Mexico, but it currently has only one legislator. She does not want Rio Rancho to end up a political orphan, adding that the city needs a legislator to live in Rio Rancho, not one who commutes to it. She requested that the committee respect Rio Rancho as a community of interest and asked for new legislative districts that will maximize the city's voice. She also asked for Rio Rancho to remain in the Third Congressional District.

Ms. Haaker thanked the committee, R&P and the public speakers. She urged public speakers to submit written testimony to their legislators.

Tom Plummer, citizen, Rio Rancho, said that Rio Rancho deserves its own unfractured representation from a representative who lives in Rio Rancho and that districts reflect geographic boundaries and should be drawn using common sense.

Thomas Buckner, chair of the Democratic Party of Sandoval County, emphasized the importance of redistricting for Rio Rancho. He asked that the committee look at the diversity of the city and strive to make the process fair, equitable and transparent.

Walter Paul, resident of Rio Rancho since 1965, asked the committee to keep Rio Rancho in one district and to put his precinct in a Rio Rancho district rather than as part of Senate District 22.

Ms. Binder referred to an op-ed article in the *Albuquerque Journal* by Mary Wilson.

Dawn Robinson, citizen, Rio Rancho, said Rio Rancho is a unique community with unique needs. She asked that the districts be drawn to aid the community in getting what it needs.

Adjournment

There being no further business, the committee adjourned at 7:10 p.m.