

Timestamp	Meeting Date	Agenda Item	First and Last Name	Zip Code	Representing	Comments
3/23/2021 9:19:40	March 23, 2021	Where are my public comments?	Diane McQueen	86327	self	I submitted a public comment on each of the people interviewed for the ED position. I have the copy of my responses that was sent to me. Why are they not showing up in the public comments from last week?
3/23/2021 9:24:51	March 23, 2021	Hiring of Exec Dir	M. E. Dunn	86303		The commission had a perfect opportunity to show its commitment to creating a diverse and inclusive team by offering the position to one of the much better qualified and diverse candidates. They are empty words if not turned into real actions
						I am most disappointed in the final selection for Executive Director of the IRC. Brian Schmitt's interview and his especially disdainful and arrogant comments regarding his incomplete resume revealed that he is a political operative with complete disregard for transparency. His flippant answer when asked what he would consider a successful redistricting process was insulting. Not wanting to "meet at the Supreme Court" was smug and condescending. His casual reference to the Commissioners as "you guys" was offensive and disrespectful. I strongly recommend that the job offer to Brian Schmitt be tabled. Indeed, I would suggest that further interviews be considered until the Commissioners can agree on a single candidate to serve as Executive Director. I would like to suggest that the Commission consider opening public comments in advance of an IRC meeting. I would have provided my comments on the applicants for the position of ED however, I was unable to do so until after the interview process was underway. This effectively prevents my right for public comment until after actions have been taken. This does not assure transparency. Thank you for consideration of my concerns. Susan Bickel [REDACTED]
3/23/2021 9:28:03	March 23, 2021	IV.	Susan Bickel	85718	self	
3/23/2021 9:28:20	March 23, 2021	V. Discussion and Possible Action on Executive Director and other potential administrative support positions, and duties of all IRC staff positions.	Nelson Morgan	85054	Self	I am hoping that the votes on other important choices (such as choosing a Deputy Director, picking between candidate legal firms and mapping firms, etc.) are conducted with greater clarity than was the one for Executive Director. Some commissioners only voted for a single candidate, some for two, some for more. Perhaps, in this contentious matter, it might be best to use a ranked choice. Use of this for E.D. might have resulted in a choice that was not the person with the least obvious qualifications for the job (which, in my humble opinion, appeared to be the case for this candidate). I recognize that policy by committee is always difficult. But using ranked choice might improve the process, and ultimately result in better decisions.
3/23/2021 9:30:12	March 23, 2021	Hiring of other team members	M.E. Dunn	86303		You really would not have needed a deputy, for sure, if you had hired one of the competent and fully capable candidates. Schmitt comes with very little, if any, applicable competency so he will need a strong team around him.
3/23/2021 9:31:26	March 23, 2021	V	Mary-Jeanne Fincher	85253	self	I am very disturbed by the \$63,000 payment to Bill Schmidt, and his failure to disclose it. Based on the amount, this is not a casual or incidental relationship with a partisan campaign. His appointment should be reviewed in light of his lack of candor and clear partisan background.

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3/23/2021 9:31:30	March 23, 2021	Public Comment	Hope Busto-Keyes	85743	Self	<p>I am disappointed that the Commission did not take the opportunity to find a candidate for the Executive Director position that garnered a unanimous vote; a unanimous vote which would have earned public confidence in the Commission's intent to avoid unnecessary political influence.</p> <p>With the delay of the final census report, there was plenty of time to search for and select a nonpartisan Executive Director. Instead a deeply partisan candidate has been selected.</p> <p>Public confidence in the Commission's intent to minimize undue partisan influence in the redistricting process is already eroding.</p>
3/23/2021 9:36:20	March 23, 2021	Legal Council	Sharon Edgar	86004	self	<p>In the March 3rd meeting, the Commission asked the for a public presentation from the State Procurement Office (SPO) concerning how the Commission should vet law firms not currently on the SPO's list. That presentation has not happened. I encourage the Commission to schedule that presentation in a public meeting. Thank you.</p>
3/23/2021 9:39:10	March 23, 2021	hiring the Exec Director	Julie Pindzola	86301	myself	<p>Dear IRC,</p> <p>I ask with heartfelt concern that you reconsider your selection of Brian Schmitt for Exec Director. First, his lack of solid experience, 2) his overtly partisan work history, and 3) his incredible failure to disclose the paid relationship with the Martha McSally's campaign - all speak against his appointment to a critical bipartisan effort.</p> <p>Please also note that I listed three important reasons, in no particular order, for his discredit. Similarly, the "Competitive" criterion for district boundary lines holds equal weight with the other criteria. Do not minimize its importance please.</p> <p>This state has placed great trust in your professionalism, fairness, and transparency. Please do not disappoint. This is a hard job that you must perform with great care.</p> <p>Thank you, Julie Pindzola Prescott, AZ</p>
3/23/2021 9:41:19	March 23, 2021	Public comments; Executive director choice	Susan Matheson	85715	self	<p>Two requests:</p> <p>(1) Please generously expand the opportunities for the public to comment on the process of the commission. For all Arizona residents to accept the legitimacy of the IRC process and results, the commission must be more open to the public's input.</p> <p>(2) Please reevaluate your choice of Brian Schmitt as executive director. His explanation for being paid more than \$63K from Martha McSally's campaign was not realistic. He said that his only involvement in her campaign was to "coordinate the logistics" for one campaign event. This sounds suspicious. He has already lost the public's trust.</p>

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3/23/2021 9:43:57	March 23, 2021	Executive Director Hiring	Suzanne Mead	85331	myself	I have deep concerns about the process by which Bill Schmitt was chosen as Executive Director. Apparently, a deal was made in executive session that has not been shared with the public. Were details about the various candidates secretly shared and swept under the rug? The choice of this flawed and transparently inexperienced candidate along partisan lines does not speak well for Chair Neuberg's oft-stated goal of bringing integrity, diversity, non-partisanship and ethics to the redistricting process. The fact that this candidate failed to disclose pertinent information on his resume and has no real administrative experience other than political work for highly partisan candidates, should certainly have been a red flag. Chair Neuberg also stated that she wanted someone who was a great communicator and could get up and running day one. Executive Director Schmitt is the least qualified candidate for either of those roles. Is it possible that by putting her thumb on the scale for such a candidate, that she is broadcasting loudly and clearly that she fully intends to remain the focal point of the commission and be its sole showrunner? If that is true, she will need to up her game on a few administrative details, like knowing the time limits of video livestreaming.
3/23/2021 9:48:05	March 23, 2021	Comments & Input	Debbie López	85042	Arizona Hispanic Community Forum	I would like to see you expand the opportunity to comment and get input from the community. This narrow window of Tuesday mornings isn't realistic for working people. Secondly, on your appointment of the Executive Director I wish you would have chosen a more neutral person. Jim "No" Waring's chief of staff/Martha McSally's cohort is hardly a neutral - work across the aisle kind of person. Now you will have to hire a Democratic operative as well but why put yourselves through that when you could have hired a more neutral person?
3/23/2021 9:48:33	March 23, 2021	V, VI	Andrea Varela	85122	Self	Thank you to the Commission for the work they are doing for our communities. With the hiring of the Executive Director and prospective hiring of other positions, I encourage the Commission to ensure that experience and qualifications are a critical value when hiring for these positions. The experienced staff should be able to help the Commission navigate the challenges such as a tight timeline as a result of the Census Delay. Additionally, now that Census data is projected to be released a month earlier than expected, 2018 Census Data should not be used to draw maps and the Commission should instead focus on building strong infrastructure and developing a fair and transparent mapping process.
3/23/2021 9:53:39	March 23, 2021	IV.	Maria Lynam	86301	Self	There was some audio difficulty. What happened to agenda item IV? Many of us wrote and commented on our disappointment with hiring Mr. Schmitt. They were not addressed. The question remains, why did you hire the least experienced person? This is a failure of leadership on the part of the commission.
3/23/2021 9:57:47	March 23, 2021	V.	Maria Lynam	86301	Self	Re PIO—please develop a ranked choice tool. This must be a non-partisan position.
3/23/2021 10:01:39	March 23, 2021	Deputy Director	Debbie López	85042	Arizona Hispanic Community Forum	Yes you do need another administrator that is a Democratic operative because you went partisan in your decision for Executive Director.
3/23/2021 10:04:48	March 23, 2021	Executive Director	Sharon Edgar	86004	self	At the March 16th meeting, Brian Schmitt was chosen by a 3-2 vote to be the IRC's Executive Director. Mr. Schmitt worked on John McCain's Presidential campaign, and has been Republican Phoenix City Councilman Jim Waring's chief of staff for about ten years. What is particularly troubling to many of us is that his resume did not mention campaign work for Martha McSally, and in answering the first question about his involvement in the recent election cycle, he didn't even mention McSally's name. The McSally campaign paid him \$63,652.44 for what he described as help organizing a campaign event on the Yavapai County courthouse steps, the site where Barry Goldwater announced his bid for the U.S. presidency and where John McCain held his last presidential campaign event. The optics aren't non-partisan and have shaken the confidence in the integrity and fairness of the Commission.
3/23/2021 10:10:26	March 23, 2021	hiring of legal counsel	Mary-Jeanne Fincher	85253	self	Using the AZ Attorney General for legal counsel should be absolutely ruled out. The Attorney General is clearly a partisan, and reportedly has ambitions to run for governor. His office cannot and will not be viewed as neutral in the redistricting process.

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3/23/2021 10:18:41	March 23, 2021	Hiring Legal Counsel	Deborah Howard	85308	self	<p>Brian Schmitt was arguably the least qualified in the state procurement process and the most partisan executive director candidate. Indeed 100% of his professional experience has been in the partisan political arena. And he has zero, zero, zero experience in redistricting.</p> <p>The first substantive decision of this commission was 3:2 with the split along partisan lines. In fact looking at the entirety of votes - only one partisan commissioner voted for a candidate of another party.</p> <p>Chairwoman Neuberg you justified this partisan split vote as a good thing in that it showed that the commission was free of "group think." I believe going forward "group think" is a minuscule risk. Rather the challenge will be to get to a broad consensus that spans partisan splits.</p> <p>Further there was a fair amount of bashing the 2011 commission for its controversy. I will point out NONE of that controversy was created by staff. Rather it was partisan gamesmanship - and every effort was rejected by the courts. The work of the 2011 Commission has been recognized throughout the state and nationally as both legal and fair. The 2022 commission may want to approach its task with a bit more humility in the hopes that its work will stand for the next decade as well.</p> <p>Lastly, the decision to hire Brian Schmitt does not enhance public confidence in the process, impartiality, or integrity of the work of the IRC. Sadly this deficit now makes every decision going forward even more charged.</p>
3/23/2021 10:27:15	March 23, 2021	Staff Hiring Process	Deborah Howard	85308	Self	<p>Going forward - because the selection of Brian Schmitt is completely suspect - the IRC commissioners should be involved in the hiring of additional commission staff and those interviews should be conducted in public session.</p> <p>Mr. Schmitt was explicit in stating the need to hire a staff that complements his own weaknesses (Give the man credit for self-awareness.) However his decades as a political operative will undermine the credibility of any staff he hires if conducted outside public view.</p> <p>And in voting to hire additional staff - consider using ranked choice voting. The voting process used to select Mr. Schmitt was chaotic and unclear. Two commissioners voted for only one candidate; two commissioners voted for two candidates. and one commissioner voted for three candidates. This reflects a really poor process that was understood differently by the five commissioners. And it yielded a really bad decision. No matter how you justify it.</p>
3/23/2021 10:36:45	March 23, 2021	XIV	Merri Trigilio	86005	myself	<p>On the new 2021 IRC website, the "Arizona Independent Redistricting Commission Legal Overview", July 8, 2011, is posted. It states: "In Arizona Minority Coalition, the Arizona Supreme Court suggested that the IRC's advertised map should make adjustments for all six of the goals specified in subsections 1(14)(A) through (F), rather than addressing the sixth and final goal of competitiveness only after receiving public comment on the first advertised map, as the IRC did in 2002. (emphasis added)</p> <p>· Bottom Line: Do not give short shrift to any one of the criteria. Carefully assess the relative value of each criteria in each district/region, including competitiveness.</p>

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3/23/2021 10:50:03	March 23, 2021	V. Discussion and Possible Action on Executive Director	Shanna Leonard	85719	self	<p>I would like to draw the attention of the commissioners to the title of the proposition 106 which created the commission on which you sit. "PROPOSING AN AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF ARIZONA; AMENDING ARTICLE IV, PART 2, SECTION 1, CONSTITUTION OF ARIZONA; RELATING TO ENDING THE PRACTICE OF GERRYMANDERING AND IMPROVING VOTER AND CANDIDATE PARTICIPATION IN ELECTIONS BY CREATING AN INDEPENDENT COMMISSION OF BALANCED APPOINTMENTS TO OVERSEE THE MAPPING OF FAIR AND COMPETITIVE CONGRESSIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS." Please note that the goal of your commission is to create "FAIR AND COMPETITIVE CONGRESSIONAL AND LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS" - Some of you seem to have forgotten the Arizona voters who overwhelmingly voted to create the Independent Redistricting Commission - For fairness. I speak to you Erika Neuberg. You are supposed to be independent, but your deciding vote to choose one of the more partisan candidates speaks otherwise. Are you independent?</p>
3/23/2021 10:51:14	March 23, 2021	Fear of lawsuits	Deborah Howard	85308	self	<p>Several candidates (and Commissioners) at the March 16 meeting talked about success being defined as "not being sued." A better measure of success is that in every decision you make - individually and collectively -- is whether the decision you are making is creating, or minimizing, risk. (And the last thing I will say on the subject of hiring Mr. Schmitt is that hiring someone with no redistricting experience and no state procurement experience is suspect.)</p> <p>The sad, modern reality is that lawsuits are a part of the redistricting process. The five of you have taken an oath to serve the people of Arizona - all the people of Arizona. Not just those who share your party affiliation or the political elite of both parties.</p> <p>The best way to reduce the risk of a lawsuit - and to successfully defeat any challenge - is to actually put the interests of all Arizonans first. And to do so in the public eye - showing your work as you go along. Why are you making the decision you are making - what are the tradeoffs? Contemporaneous transparency is your shield against vanity lawsuits certain to be brought by partisan interests.</p> <p>This applies to third party conversations as well. Chairwoman Neuberg in the meeting today disclosed a conversation she had the day before with Rick Hughes. And what they discussed and how it impacted the work of the commission. THIS is public transparency. If there are experts that are providing guidance to the individual commissioners about the work of the commission - those conversation and the contacts should be disclosed in the meeting. Show your work.</p> <p>If individual commissioners are conducting due diligence independently, they need to put forward the sources of that information. Those sources should have equal opportunity - but no greater opportunity - to provide insight into the work of the commission as every other member of the public. Just like this - during your meetings, through google forms.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>

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3/23/2021 10:53:05	March 23, 2021	V. Discussion and Possible Action on Executive Director and other potential administrative support positions, and duties of all IRC staff positions.	William Bowlus	85365	Myself	<p>I am dismayed that the commission chose to avoid addressing the controversy that has arisen over your choice of Brian Schmitt as the Executive Director. Within 24 hours of the decision, reports surfaced in the press and other sources that, despite Brian's statement that he had done some work for the McSally campaign as a favor for a friend and downplayed his involvement, he was actually paid \$63,000 for his work. And that he had not disclosed the extent of his involvement or the amount he was paid in his application. I don't know what he or other public servants are paid for their services, but I find it hard to believe that any of them wouldn't find \$63,000 added to their salary very attractive. It's also hard to believe it doesn't taint Brian's claims that he can be impartial.</p> <p>The decision to hire Brian has shattered public confidence in the commission's work. First, it demonstrated that you failed to fully vet this individual beforehand, that your procedures were flawed and incomplete, and yet you took action anyway. And now, despite what has come to light, that you intend to overlook this egregious omission. It seems clear that Brian intended to deceive the commission and the people in order to secure this position for himself. His hiring should be immediately reversed so that the public may see that you have a commitment to full disclosure and fairness. Second, by passing over at least two (probably three) highly qualified applicants who brought years of experience in administration, working with agencies across the state government, working with external groups and communities, in-depth knowledge of applicable law, and direct experience with the processes and issues surrounding redistricting in favor of a candidate who possesses none of these, you demonstrated that you are not committed to hiring the most qualified staff but are willing to take the lesser candidate. This begs the question why. The only answer is that you do not want to deal with the objections that might be raised by someone who is more qualified. This approach does NOT serve the public.</p> <p>It will be very hard for you to reestablish any semblance of public confidence moving forward. Every decision you make will be met with suspicion and doubt. The final outcome of the process will be dismissed as just another product of very poor governance. You will have failed to uphold the spirit of the constitution that the redistricting process be independent and fair. But we'll be stuck with it.</p> <p>If you want to reverse that impression, you must take the necessary steps to remove Brian Schmitt as your Executive Director and select one of the other candidates that has relevant experience to provide truly valuable support to the commission. Until then, the decision will haunt your work.</p> <p>William Bowlus-Root A concerned citizen</p>
3/23/2021 11:02:05	March 23, 2021	Process	Deborah Howard	85308	Self	<p>Thank you Chairwoman Neuberg for your statement today taking responsibility for the abrupt end to the March 16 morning session. I'm not sure I really think this was on your plate - but I do appreciate you acknowledging the problem.</p> <p>Also I was really glad to hear you would be providing written minutes of the meetings as the IRC staffs up. They will be very helpful to members of the public who can't commit to watching your proceeding each week.</p> <p>Lastly, and I know it is an unknown, but when you go into executive session, it would be really helpful if you could indicate whether it is a 10 minute, 30 minute or hour long conversation. I know it would only be an estimate - but it would be helpful.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration and leadership.</p>

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3/23/2021 11:21:10	March 23, 2021	Executive Director	Ted Hiserodt	85020	Self	I would like to express severe disappointment at the selection of Brian Schmitt for the Executive Director position. The mission of the IRC should be to select staff that can operate in a non-partisan fashion. However, Mr Schmitt has a hyper-partisan background having received payment in excess of \$63K from the McSally For Senate campaign. No other candidate had such a deep connection to a partisan campaign. Mr Schmitt deliberately omitted this critical detail from his resume and was evasive when Commissioner Lerner initially questioned this payment. When selecting an ED, partisan bias may be difficult to avoid but hyper-partisanship should be avoided at all costs. In this respect, the IRC has failed at it's first big decision. The process is already tainted. My fervent hope is this commission will act more independently in the future in order to preserve the integrity of it's output.
3/23/2021 11:28:08	March 23, 2021	Rankings of rfp	David Dunn	86303		And we are going to find out the rankings when? And, the public aspect of the long exec session is a rather uninformative/nontransparent motion?
3/23/2021 11:32:11	March 23, 2021	V.	Constance Aglione	85614	self	I ask the Commission to quickly begin the process of hiring an experienced and qualified Public Information Officer. The work of the Commission must be transparent to engender public confidence and acceptance of your results. It is also important that the public be kept informed of opportunities for engagement.
3/23/2021 11:46:52	March 23, 2021	Meeting Minutes	Sharon Edgar	86004	self	Thank you, in advance, for posting meeting minutes on your new website. There have been many times that there was painful feedback on someone's line or that the audio feed stopped for a moment. In the March 9th meeting, the audio feed stopped just as Chairwoman Neuberger was listed who was invited to an executive session, so it was not clear to the public who was included in the executive session. I'm assuming minutes would clearly list attendees. Thank you