

Timestamp	Meeting Date	Agenda Item	First and Last Name	Zip Code	Representing	Comments
3/30/2021 9:09:56	March 30, 2021	Public Comment	Misty Atkins	85737	self	Limiting public comment to Tuesday during the meeting excludes an enormous portion of the Arizona population who work on Tuesdays or have other life conflicts. Please leave public comment open so all citizens are represented.
3/30/2021 9:11:13	March 30, 2021	Hiring legal counsel	Betty Bengtson	85718	League of Women Voters of Arizona	Both previous redistricting commissions hired two legal firms to maintain balance and a full range of legal advice. The League of Women Voters of Arizona urges the 2021 IRC to maintain this practice. Both you and the public will be well-served by it. Unfortunately, one can assume there will be lawsuits filed against actions and decision of this commission. Expert and balanced legal advice will perhaps help to avoid or mitigate some potential legal actions. This will be money well-spent.
3/30/2021 9:13:08	March 30, 2021	legal team hiring	Misty Atkins	85737	self	Hiring the best legal team is imperative regardless of the process. Limiting the discussion in executive session is not transparent. There is no valid reason for this.
3/30/2021 9:17:21	March 30, 2021	VIII. Discussion and Possible Action on options for securing legal counsel.	Diane McQueen	86327	self	I think the commission should go with Option 3. The AG's Outside Counsel List is most likely a partisan list based on the political party of the AG. The commission needs to be as nonpartisan as possible on this selection given that they have already made a very partisan decision in hiring Brian Schmitt.
3/30/2021 9:17:46	March 30, 2021	Public Comment	Hope Busto-Keyes	85743	Self	I urge Commissioners and Executive Director to select additional staff, including a Public Information Officer, who are experienced, fair-minded and without undue partisan influence. Also, I encourage Commissioners to prefer using the 2020 census data for redistricting to ensure the best possible representation of the citizens of Arizona. Thank you for your consideration
3/30/2021 9:18:05	March 30, 2021	Legal Firm choices	Maria-Elena Dunn	86303	self	Where are the empirical markers? In any event Are you going to accept a divided decision again? And, why is the Chair pushing for the contracted firms? Are we moving forward with a process for reasons that are not quite clear to the public. And, here we go - when things are complicated, Exec Session is the option.
3/30/2021 9:18:18	March 30, 2021	legal choice	Misty Atkins	85737	self	It is imperative to have unanimous agreement when deciding on a format.
3/30/2021 9:24:42	March 30, 2021	IV Public Comments VI Executive Director	Tina Whitley	85704	Myself	I am concerned that the person chosen to be Executive Director has no experience with Redistricting meaning he will be learning on the the job while leading the commission. He is also a donor to Republicans who have run for office in Arizona. This task is of utmost importance for our state and deserves the most experienced and nonpartisan leadership possible. More access to making comments is necessary. To limit the public, for whom the commission is working, to a specific time on Tuesday is ludicrous. Open this up please. We need as much public input as possible so IRC is able to represent all Arizonans.
3/30/2021 9:28:24	March 30, 2021	IV Public Comments	M.E. Dunn	86303		This is the SECOND mtg at which earlier Public Comments are not addressed. What is the point of having the public comments if our concerns expressed therein are not at least acknowledged? Many of us have expressed questions re what we believe rather odd chose of Mr Schmitt as Exec Dir have, seemingly, been ignored as not even a recognition of these comments have been aired in the meeting. PLEASE hear our voices
3/30/2021 9:30:51	March 30, 2021	Selection of Legal Counsel	Deborah Howard	85308	Self	It is quite a challenge to provide useful comment w/o knowing the firms under consideration. Do you plan to inform the public of hte firms that responded to the RFP? And thinking about the failed process for voting in choosing an Executive Director I ask that you strive to make the vote a consensus vote. Every commissioner has an obligation to make the best possible selection - individually and as a team member and to seek the best selection for the Commission, the process and the state. Another 3:2 vote would be a clear marker this commission is headed to disaster...
3/30/2021 9:33:24	March 30, 2021	VIII. Selection of legal counsel	Maria Lynam	86301	Self	Option 3 or Option C would be the most fair. Commissioner Watchman already stated that his 2 preferred firms/proposals were not on the AG list. This is the most non-partisan choice for the Commission to choose.
3/30/2021 9:33:39	March 30, 2021	Legal firm	David B Dunn	86303		Hard to understand why an exec session is required to get "legal advice" on what the pros and cons and timing of going with Option B or C.. Even if specifics are being addressed re one firm or another, this can be done as it was done for Exe Dir candidates, by assigning numbers to the firms and discussing them "anonymously" that way. At each new mtg, as we move into potentially thorny issues, it appears, exec sessions are coming earlier and more often. Public meetings should be public as much as possible, whether you have the legal right to call exec sessions or not.

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3/30/2021 9:45:26	March 30, 2021	Selection of legal counsel	Deborah Howard	85308	Self	<p>More than one of the Commissioners seem to bridge each major conversation with a reference to what worked - or maybe didn't work - with the 2011 Commission. Such a comparison in process is unhelpful. What will distinguish this commission is its commitment to forging consensus. This might take more than three - five minutes allocated for each major contract or staff hire decision. Take your time. Invite experts to help you make the decision -- not from the legal parameters the AG and ADOA give you -- but a contextual framework you might get from redistricting professionals, those who have served the AIRC previously, academics (I suspect Commissioner Lerner may have many suggestions), and others.</p> <p>Take the time to learn what you don't know - instead of filling in the blanks from the perceived weaknesses of the 2011 Commission. Their work has withstood the test of time - and legal challenges. Will yours?</p>
3/30/2021 9:46:36	March 30, 2021	Agenda Item III	Brian Bickel	85718	Self	<p>As you move forward with this process the Commission is becoming increasingly partisan. Your choice for ED was a partisan one and devoid of public comment. Your rush to hire legal counsel is beginning to appear partisan as well. Whether it is real or perceptual, any firm vetted by the state procurement office or the AG will appear biased. And your desire to make decisions prior to having the opportunity to consider public comment relevant to the issue being discussed smacks of a lack of concern for the public. For public comment to be meaningful the commission must have the opportunity to review those comments prior to taking action on the relevant subject. If that is not the case then the process just devolves to the public telling you that we don't like the decision you made and public comment is pointless, nothing more than shutting the door after the horse has left the barn. Give the public the opportunity to provide meaningful comment by providing the names of firms or individuals you are considering in advance so the comment means something.</p>
3/30/2021 9:48:54	March 30, 2021	IV. Public Comment	Maria Lynam	86301	Self	<p>This is the second meeting I have attended when agenda item IV is ignored. I'm aware that public comment has been made RE past meetings. Do you publicly comment on them? If not, do ALL commissioners get written copies of them?</p>
3/30/2021 10:01:01	March 30, 2021	Legal Firm/s	Maria-Elena Dunn	86303	self	<p>I have been at all meetings and I do not recall whether a decision has been made as to whether the commission will be hiring one or two firms?</p>
3/30/2021 10:05:18	March 30, 2021	Legal Firms	David Dunn	86303	self	<p>"Personal learning" outside of the public eye seems to be part of what brought us to the decision of choosing Mr Schmitt. That "due diligence" may have brought information out that the public never heard and similarly could happen with the legal firms. IF something is learned outside the context of the public meetings, these should be brought up to the public venue and not then discussed in exec session.</p>
3/30/2021 10:08:08	March 30, 2021	VIII. Discussion and Possible Action on options for securing legal counsel:	Diane McQueen	86327	self	<p>The commission needs to develop some type of ranked choice system for selecting legal council that they can pair with their interview questions. This should have been done with the ED position.</p>
3/30/2021 10:11:16	March 30, 2021	Hiring of Executive Director and staff	Betty Bengtson	85718	League of Women Voters of Arizona	<p>The choice of an Executive Director on a 3-2 mostly partisan vote was disappointing, especially when previous executive directors were selected unanimously. The problem with technology and the absence of one of the commissioners during the interviews also created public concerns about the selection process. There were other qualified candidates with more knowledge of the Arizona redistricting process, more experience with state procurement, and better communications skills who were a more obvious choice for the position than your selected candidate. More troubling was last minute information about Mr. Schmitt's recent paid political campaign involvement which did not appear on his resume. He must have known this should have been disclosed.</p> <p>The executive director is staff and works under the direction of the commissioners, especially the IRC chairperson. He is not a 6th commissioner, as frequently stated. However, there will be many opportunities through advice and information gathering to influence the Commission's direction and decisions. Given these circumstances, the Commissioners, collectively, must do all you can to adhere to the expectations for an open and fair redistricting process and to maintain public confidence in the IRC and in your actions. You must seek balance in the rest of the staff appointments and be alert for partisan influences.</p> <p>Your decision to hire a PIO next was wise. There is a critical need to communicate information about the Commission's work, your plans, and your decisions.</p> <p>Thank you for your continued work on behalf of the people of Arizona. We recognize you have a difficult task and are grateful for your thoughtful approach to all the decisions and actions you must make.</p>

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3/30/2021 10:14:15	March 30, 2021	Public Comment	M.E. Dunn	86303	myself	When is the public going to be given the official emails for the commissioners? An earlier public comment mentioned that some people are unable to "attend" these mtgs, and comment, so they need a mechanism for contributing to the process and have their thoughts available through the website.
3/30/2021 10:14:15	March 30, 2021	VIII.	Maria Lynam	86301	Self	Did the group you selected submit proposals? If so, can they be viewed?
3/30/2021 10:19:34	March 30, 2021	VIII.	Maria Lynam	86301	Self	Did the group you selected submit proposals? If so, can they be viewed?
3/30/2021 10:21:34	March 30, 2021	Public Comments	David Dunn	86303		WOW. Different "factions" of the state, Mr York?!?. What a way to describe your role. I thought you were part of an INDEPENDENT commission. And, the words of the Chair re the public comments on Mr Schmitt are empty words re, among other platitudes, how the public should understand why sometimes these decisions are "hard." That this is a marathon and every action will be part of that race. But in my view, if the race starts with a handicap (a less than qualified, partisan exec dir), it does not bode well and means that the "race" is going to end up poorly..
3/30/2021 10:22:31	March 30, 2021	IV. Comments re Agenda	Maria Lynam	86301	Self	Commissioner York stated that the commissioners come from "different factions". "Factions that have chosen us" and that is how they move forward. What happened to a non-partisan commission?
3/30/2021 10:26:06	March 30, 2021	Public Comment	Deborah Howard	85308	Self	NO. No. No. No. No. A thousand times no! You are not a member of the AIRC to represent factions of the state. Your oath as a commissioner is to serve all the state of AZ -- take off your partisan glasses and any sense of a responsibility to represent a single or multiple factions of the state. The purpose of Prop. 106 is to end the practice of gerrymandering and improve 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. This sentence is from the official title -- there is not a single reference to the Commissioners be a representative of a faction. You are to be balanced and independent. Please adjust your thinking to encompass the interests of the entire state!
3/30/2021 10:27:07	March 30, 2021	Hiring	Barbara Tellman	85705	self	I strongly urge you to hire on the basis of experience and qualifications, not political leanings. I was very disappointed at your choice of Executive Director, the candidate with the least experience in redistricting, state procurement, etc. Please assure that additional staff have the qualifications to fill the gaps in the ED's experience and qualifications. I applaud your dedication to diversity.
3/30/2021 10:29:30	March 30, 2021	VI. Discussion and Possible Action on Executive Director and other potential administrative support positions	Nelson Morgan	85054	Self	Given the strongly partisan prior history of the chosen Executive Director, it is critical that the Commission monitor the staff hires (such as the upcoming Assistant to the Director) to make sure that this does not become a mirror of a Republican office staff. I know that the Chair has stated that the desired diversity of the staff is not just based on ethnicity but also on the political side, but I am interested in what actually happens, as opposed to just current intent. I know that it is important that the E.D. feels comfortable with the staff that he will be working with, but still a politically slanted staff will be problematic. The public will be watching this closely.
3/30/2021 10:30:06	March 30, 2021	Hiring of Exec Assnt	M.E. Dunn	86303	myself	I think it is essential that Commissioners be involved in the hiring process of EVERYONE on the paid staff. As just said by the Chair, "Brian will need guidance." Sad that it is now that she finds that he needs help when, in fact, someone who would have needed much less could have been employed. And, private conversations with Brian.... And, I am confused as to what is meant by disdain for group think. Does that mean a preference for unilateral decisions? And, is the position Exec Asst or Administrative Assnt?

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3/30/2021 10:34:00	March 30, 2021	Legal Interviews	Deborah Howard	85308	Self	<p>Suggested questions for Interviews with legal counsel</p> <p>1) The public must have a high level of trust and confidence in counsel's ability to provide objective, balanced, nonpartisan advice to the Commission. How can you provide that assurance?</p> <p>2) The Commission has multiple, ranked redistricting criteria. How would you advise the Commission negotiate conflicting criteria, e.g., achieving VRA compliance while not making race a predominant criterion or motive? What is your perspective on the relative weight of the four state criteria: Compact and contiguous, respecting communities of interest, representing geographic features and city and county boundaries, and competitiveness?</p> <p>3) Given your experience with redistricting, what are common mistakes made by other boards and commissions which result in litigation being brought, and how can we avoid these pitfalls? What actions should the Commission take now to mitigate litigation risk in the future?</p> <p>4) If the Commission successfully files its maps in good-faith compliance with its constitutional requirements, on what basis are its maps most likely to be legally challenged?</p> <p>5) Compliance with Section 2 of the VRA can take various forms, including but not limited to the creation of majority-minority districts, influence districts and coalition districts. Please describe your interpretation of the various district options and describe the VRA compliance challenges the Commission faces. How would you advise the Commission to use or not use partisan election data in pursuing VRA compliance and defending its work?</p> <p>6) Arizona as a uniquely diverse state in terms of racial and ethnic minorities. How would you defend the constitutionality of majority-minority, influence, or coalition districts that the Commission may have to draw? How would you advise the Commission to use or not use partisan election data in pursuing VRA compliance and defending its work?</p> <p>7) Shelby v. Holder (2013) laid dormant key sections of the VRA, including the mandate for preclearance and the retrogression standard. How should this ruling affect the AIRC as it draws districts?</p> <p>8) How do you envision your role in working with the mapping consultant and other staff?</p> <p>9) When the 2020 Census data are released, what do you think will be the most significant and challenging issues for Commission to consider? How would you propose using the "extra" time afforded by the delays in the data release?</p>
3/30/2021 10:43:54	March 30, 2021	3	Brian Bickel	85718	Self	<p>Looking at your four choices for legal representation one stands out from the rest and not for a good reason. Statecraft, PLLC is a small firm with significant political and government experience and all of the principals happen to be Republican. The diversity of the two largest firms, Ballard & Spahr and Snell Wilmer provides a much better look for a non-partisan commission. In my opinion Statecraft should not even be considered at best and at worst be the first firm eliminated.</p>
3/30/2021 10:50:08	March 30, 2021	Mapping Firm	Maria Dubourt	86303	myself	<p>"A greater number of very qualified firms will help in arriving at consensus." How did that work in the selection of an Exec Dir? In the end, a candidate being very qualified counted for nothing for that position!</p>
3/30/2021 10:50:24	March 30, 2021	IV. Discussion on Public Comments	Nelson Morgan	85054	Self	<p>Now that I have listened to each of the meetings so far, I am finding the Commission's discussion about public comments on the previous meeting to be woefully inadequate. For instance, last meeting there were many comments about the perceived problems with the choice for Executive Director, both in process and result. This was not even really discussed, except for some vague comments about representing a faction (which was not particularly appropriate either - the commission should be representing the whole state). Frankly, it seems as if the Commission is just going through the agenda item in a pro forma fashion, just to fulfill the requirement, and is not taking it seriously. What is the value of our comments if they are ultimately not going to be discussed? I understand that it would not be appropriate to discuss each individual comment, but if there are consistent themes across a significant fraction of the comments, they should be quickly summarized and then seriously discussed. I'm just not hearing that. Please take this agenda item more seriously.</p>

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3/30/2021 11:15:49	March 30, 2021	Law Firms	Sharon Edgar	86004	self	I appreciate the Commission for conducting as much work in the public view as possible and look forward to hearing the law firm presentations. Please ask how each law firm views the relative weight of each required redistricting criteria. In Northern Arizona, compactness is not really an option, but respecting communities of interest, providing competitive districts and using boundary lines that keep city and county boundaries whole is important.
3/30/2021 11:16:28	March 30, 2021	XVI - Future meetings	María-Elea Dunn	86303	Myself	When meetings can start in person, is the commission considering doing hybrids so that those not able to attend in person, can still "participate?"
3/30/2021 11:19:37	March 30, 2021	3	Brian Bickel	85718	Self	Ballard Spahr leans Democratic and Snell & Wilmer is Republican. Osborn Maledon is the best bi-partisan or non-partisan choice.