

Timestamp	Meeting Date	Agenda Item	First and Last Name	Zip Code	Representing	Comments
5/11/2021 8:16:04	May 11, 2021	Prior public comments	Rita Day	86301	Self	<p>Commission is NOT ACTING NON PARTISAN</p> <p>Regarding the vote for Brian Schmitt as Executive Director, 2/3rds of the published comments on March 23 were opposed to his selection. The comments indicated he was obviously PARTISAN and he was the least qualified of all the candidates, having very little experience. So the choice made by the Chair and the 2 Republicans was opposite what the majority of the public comments reflected. So, how can this Commission be considered fair and non-partisan?</p> <p>The same goes for the public comments posted on May 4th regarding the selection of the mapping team: Timmons. There was only one negative comment for the HayStaq Team, while the remainder of the comments regarding the mapping teams were either negative AGAINST the Timmons team or POSITIVE for HayStaq. The Chair and the 2 Republicans voted for Timmons, while the 2 Democrats voted for HayStaq. Again, a 3-2 vote, with the majority of the public comments posted on May4th aligned with the Democrats. It seems like the Commission is definitely NOT non-partisan and the public comments indicate they aren't in agreement with Chair and the 2 Republican commissioners. How can this be considered fair and non-partisan???</p>
5/11/2021 8:17:55	May 11, 2021	Public Input	Laura Huenneke	86004	self	<p>Thank you for providing opportunities for public input during your meetings – and, in advance of last week’s meeting, over a more extended timeframe. I really appreciate the chance to see the comments provided through the meeting link each week. However, it is worrisome (and less than transparent) that comments submitted through the “Contact Us” or other links are not visible to the public. This means that those who cannot watch/access the meeting links in real time are closed out of the transparent process that others are using. It also means that the public is missing the chance to see or hear much of the input that you are receiving – again, this can only contribute to skepticism. I urge you to create a mechanism for archiving and making public (and, ideally, searchable) ALL of the input and comments you are receiving. Moreover, I urge you to devote a little time in each meeting’s agenda to some meaningful summary of (and response to) public comments received. What are the major concerns you are hearing? What are you doing to resolve or mitigate those concerns? Merely acknowledging that you received many comments is not sufficient to reassure the public that you are taking input seriously. Commissioner Lerner is doing a very good job today of responding in a concrete fashion to some of the comments received about the mapping consultant applicants.</p>

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5/11/2021 8:19:00	May 11, 2021	public comments	linda chiles	85051	public	Commissioner Lerner, thank you very much for your comments regarding Haystaq. Hopefully the bitter language regarding differences of opinion and the public will remain as balanced in their comments as they expect the commission to be in their actions.
5/11/2021 8:21:26	May 11, 2021	Items for future agenda	Laura Huenneke	86004	self	Many of us are concerned about the poor track record of NDC in producing maps that have been challenged and ruled unacceptable due to racially biased and discriminatory representation. I request that the Commission describe for the public the steps it will take to hold the mapping consultant to high standards for compliance with the Voting Rights Act and with the criteria laid out by Prop 106, during the process of producing and reviewing potential districting maps.
5/11/2021 8:22:43	May 11, 2021	Minutes of prior meetings	Laura Huenneke	86004	self	Interesting discussion of having minutes, recording of video meeting, and transcripts of the video as different means of recording the meeting. I'd encourage you to remember that there are some rural (and other) areas of Arizona without good access to high-speed broadband. For residents in this situation, the transcripts would be the closest possible record of the actual meeting. So I'd encourage you to keep the transcripts easily available to the public, in addition to the video.
5/11/2021 8:22:47	May 11, 2021	Prior comments	Rita Day	86301	Myself, Az voter	Erika Neuberg just commented that majority of commission votes have been unanimous. However, the most critical ones have not been unanimous. They were divided 3-2. Specifically the vote on mapping firm and choice of executive director. Both votes were divided on partisan lines.
5/11/2021 8:28:28	May 11, 2021	IV. Discussion on Public Comments received prior to today's (May 11, 2021) meeting.	Nelson Morgan	85054	Self	I greatly appreciate Commissioner Lerner's comments. While it is a general (and bipartisan) truth that public comments can get overheated in these politically charged times, it happens to be the case that for the discussion on the mapping consultants, the arguments against Timmons/NDC tended to be more nuanced, and the comments about Haystaq were very often both misinformed and inflammatory. Commissioner Lerner pointed out what should be obvious, namely that Haystaq was not controlled by Pres. Obama or Sen. Sanders. She pleaded for civility from all commenters, and pointed out that the Commissioners were volunteers, trying to do their best. She also made the point that it was important to take the time to address concerns in the public comments, as opposed to just thanking us for them. These were all excellent points, and I applaud her taking the time to put them together.

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5/11/2021 8:36:40	May 11, 2021	3. Public comments	Rita Day	86301	Myself, AZ voter	<p>Commissioners,</p> <p>So far, there have been 2 very important decisions made by the IRC: 1) selection of the Executive Director and 2) selection of the mapping team. Both selections were anything but Non-Partisan. Both were decided by 3-2 vote, with the supposed "Independent" Chair Neuberg joining the 2 Republicans for 3 votes against the 2 Democrats. This commission is showing that they are INCAPABLE OF BEING NON-PARTISAN!</p> <p>Furthermore, the characterization of Chair Erika Neuberg as "Independent" is extremely questionable! She was formerly a Republican before changing to "Independent" and she "donated thousands of dollars to Gov. Ducey's re-election campaign." (Per Arizona Republic article by Andrew Oxford 1/21/2021)</p> <p>From the beginning the AZ IRC was "fraught with questions about who among the 5 nominees (for Chair of the IRC) was truly independent." (Per Arizona Republic article by Andrew Oxford 1/21/2021). Even Neuberg herself said "If it's always 3-2 and especially if it's always one direction, it's a warning sign." WELL, ERIKA NEUBERG, THE WARNING SIGN YOU WARNED US ABOUT IS CLEARLY UPON US!</p>
5/11/2021 8:39:53	May 11, 2021	IV. Discussion on Public Comments received prior to today's (May 11, 2021) meeting.	Nelson Morgan	85054	Self	<p>Chair Neuberg read a statement about the requirements for legal firms re conflict of interest, in response to public comments that expressed concern about the firms (e.g., Snell and Wilmer) maintaining clients who are strongly partisan. The gist of the statement was that there is no requirement for disassociation with such clients so long as the legal work with them does not have any overlap with the work of the IRC. I agree that this should be a minimal requirement. However, this constraint does not include the effect on public perception. In this redistricting process, one of the most difficult parts is the need to minimize the public's view that it is controlled by partisan considerations. While there is probably no such thing as an independent legal firm that is qualified for this role (hence the need to have two firms), maintaining a client base of partisan candidates will make it harder for the Commission to promote the perspective of neutrality. I understand that this is a done deal; but it will be a difficult thing for you to contend with, and simply saying that you "trust them" is not particularly reassuring. It would be better to note that you will be vigilant about problems that arise. You are the public's watchdogs - we are not reassured by happy comments about trust. Or at least, if you feel trust, "trust but verify." And tell us about that. Thank you.</p>

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5/11/2021 8:46:33	May 11, 2021	VIII	Diane Boman	86303	Myself	I am getting very concerned over the lack of transparency when vetting positions and consultants. To date I have not heard one discussion from the commissioners stating their likes and dislikes about candidates for any position. How is this transparent? You have your discussions behind closed doors and then read an edict stating your choice and we as Arizonans must accept this. I would like to know how the commissioners felt about the information about each of these firms that have been in the newspapers and their success rate. I realize you cannot talk about the cost in public but that is of no matter to me. I want the most experienced candidate just like you. I hope that you can be more transparent with the public in the future since it is our money that is paying for these consultants.
5/11/2021 8:49:40	May 11, 2021	Request to the Commission	Diane Boman	86303	Myself	Is it possible to receive a copy of the comments through the website? I also looked at last weeks comments and found none of the comments that Commissioner Lerner referred to. Is there an issue with getting all the comments from each meeting?
5/11/2021 8:57:35	May 11, 2021	Four	Janell Hunt	85143	Myself, Arizona citizen and voter	<p>Commissioners: I want to thank Commissioner Lerner for her statement this morning regarding Public Comments that were submitted to you regarding the hiring of mapping consultants.</p> <p>For those of us who have focused on doing the research before commenting, it was alarming to read the hundreds of statements you received that were not factual and clearly politically motivated in opposition to Haystaq. I do want to trust that your decision of who to hire for this job...the focus of the entire project...was made on solid information and not influenced by these untruths.</p> <p>As much as we want the IRC to be "Independent", this is an extremely partisan process you are involved in. I want to trust that you are seeking public comment that is truthful and fair to help guide your decision making.</p> <p>The next steps you take are important to us as you work together for the best Redistricting Plan for ALL of us Arizona citizens and communities. Planning for public hearings and reliable sources of information is integral to your work.</p> <p>Thank you all for your consideration of these concerns.</p> <p>Again, I send best wishes for a successful outcome to this project.</p> <p>Janell Hunt, San Tan Valley</p>

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5/11/2021 9:03:01	May 11, 2021	public comments	Susan Bickel	85718	self	Thank you Commissioner Lerner for your comments regarding the tone and content of the recent public comments regarding the selection of the mapping firm. I appreciate your statement of clarification regarding the qualifications and intentions of one of the mapping firms under consideration, Haystaq. I believe that it is always important that misinformation be called out and corrected by anyone who hears it. Doing and saying nothing is tantamount to agreement.

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		IV. Discussion on Public Comments received prior to today's (May 11,				<p>Thank you Commissioner Lerner for addressing the tone and content of the public comments that were submitted in advance of last week's meeting regarding the selection of a mapping consultant, in particular those that attacked Haystaq. You hit it right on the head.</p> <p>As an independent voter I've been very disappointed at the partisan wrangling that has dominated the public comments on this topic (and others). The Commission was set up by the voters expressly to be independent for a reason. When the public floods the discussion space with outlandish and (provably) unfounded assertions, it makes it difficult for that independence to hold. Worse, when the Commission makes decisions that appear to give those partisan comments credence rather than based on evidence and logic, the independence of the Commission itself is undermined.</p> <p>This shouldn't be a contest between the Democrats and the Republicans. Remember that at least a third of the voters in Arizona (and probably even more of the population) are solidly independent. Where is the representation for this block of people? Their views and concerns and needs do not seem to be acknowledged much less taken into account in the decisions we've seen so far. Rather than seeing their participation on the Commission as a duty to represent ALL Arizonans (and acting in such a manner), some Commissioners appear to be acting as if they were representing only the political party that put them onto the Commission. They seem to be headed toward creating maps that favor their political party and its candidates over their rivals. This isn't (or shouldn't be) about which party can prevail at the polls because they've managed to create districts that ensure they win. It should be about creating districts where politicians have to make their case to the voters about why their policies and legislative focus will make their districts, Arizona, and the US a better place in which to live and work.</p> <p>Independents will be watching closely the way Commissioners conduct themselves at public appearances and during upcoming public meetings. When asked about their role, will they portray it as working to create districts that will ensure the needs of all Arizonans as an independent regardless of the political party that selected them to be on the Commission? Or will they say their role is to represent that political party on the Commission. Whatever the case, I hope they will be honest with the people about how they view their role. It will help us judge the output of the Commission's work with a clear understanding of the forces that were in play to forge it.</p> <p>I look forward to hearing more of the kind of honest comments we heard from Commissioner Lerner today. Like me, I'm sure other independents felt her candidness was refreshing.</p> <p>William Bowlus-Root A concerned citizen</p>

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5/11/2021 9:05:04	May 11, 2021	#8 / executive session	Mary-Jeanne Fincher	85253	self	Would the Commissioners please explain how they distinguish between listening to the lawyers explain legal concepts to them and the rendering of legal advice? The latter can be in E session, but the former shouldn't be. The number and length of E-sessions seems really excessive.
5/11/2021 9:11:08	May 11, 2021	Selected Mapping Firm and Eecutive Director	Brian Templet	85715	Myself	The independence of the Commission is critical. A discredited mapping firm and an under-qualified Republican Operative as Executive Director compromises that independence.
5/11/2021 9:15:23	May 11, 2021	Executive Session	Sharon Edgar	86004	self	Thank you Commissioner Lerner for correcting the flood of public comments that incorrectly stated that Haystaq is a socialist firm owned by Obama and Sanders. Thank you, too, for pointing out that their 2011 maps prevailed in court and did NOT result in flipping either chamber of the state legislature. I deeply appreciate your work and am sorry and concerned about the hateful tone of so many of last week's public comments.
5/11/2021 9:17:52	May 11, 2021	executive session	Sharon Edgar	86004	self	Thank you Chairwoman Neuberg for letting us know who was attending the second executive session of this morning's meeting. We appreciate having that information.
5/11/2021 9:24:00	May 11, 2021	Public Input Meetings	Hope Busto-Keyes	85743	Self	Dear Commissioners, Please ensure that the upcoming public input meetings are transparent, and accessible to the public, including, for in-person meetings, public health practices due to COVID/ADA/internet meetings/language translation when possible. In addition to meetings in metro areas, tribal lands and other rural communities are critical, as will be communities of interest. Having diverse public input from every corner of the state will help create the best district lines possible. Thank you for your consideration.
5/11/2021 9:26:44	May 11, 2021	Attorneys	Sharon Edgar	86004	self	Please have the attorneys identify themselves when speaking because it is not clear to those of us who are watching who is speaking. Sometimes we just see a conference room with a couple of attorneys and sometimes we just see a box with a letter. Thank you.
5/11/2021 9:28:15	May 11, 2021	Mapping Consultant	Holli Ploog	86336	Self	I am greatly disappointed that the Commission has apparently listened to pages of cut and paste comments (obviously organized by a partisan group) that shot arrows against the most highly qualified respondent to the RFP for a mapping consultant. Thank you Commissioner Lerner for trying to set the record straight. The Commission needs to show its true independence (which so far has not been evident to the public)? Is the Commission going to represent all Arizonans?

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5/11/2021 9:39:49	May 11, 2021	Comments on prior pubic comments	Rita Day	86301	Self, AZ VOTER	I want to thank Commissioner Lerner for her comments in response to the outlandish & untruthful comments against HayStaq Mapping consultants, especially those comments saying HayStaq was owned by Obama & Bernie Sanders. Thank you, Commissioner Lerner! It is too bad that the rest of the commission was silent on this.
5/11/2021 9:40:48	May 11, 2021	Mapping Consultant	Sharon Edgar	86004	self	I am terribly concerned about your decision to hire mapping consultants who have a record of producing maps that discriminate against Hispanics. To use Commissioner York's term, the "optics" aren't great. Those of us who want fair maps would like to know that the majority of Commissioners are dedicated to producing fair maps. Thank you.
5/11/2021 9:44:51	May 11, 2021	Response to public comments	Ted Hiserodt	85020	Self	I want to thank Commissioner Lerner for her statement today regarding the public comments opposing HaystaqDNA. Many of those comments were disrespectful and were parroting false information. The entire IRC should understand that the public comments were brigaded by the hyper partisan group, Turning Points USA. TP USA is an activist group known for overwhelming social media with cut / paste and bot controlled political messaging. I will not share the names publicly, but if the commission wishes to reach out to me I can show where multiple paid employees of TP USA have commented. Additionally, a detailed study of the comments will show several repeated phrases as well as words missing the same letter - over and over. This is indicative of bot behavior and troll farming. For this reason, I believe it is important that the IRC share the rubric by which the mapping consultant candidates were scored as well as the individual scoring. The public has a right to know whether or not the IRC has been swayed by an organized disinformation campaign.

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5/11/2021 10:05:11	May 11, 2021	VII	Tammy Ryan	85041	Self	<p>I am very concerned that the IRDC is using Executive Session to keep the public from seeing important discussions. According to Arizona Ombudsman web page "A public body may meet in executive session for one of seven reasons: 1) personnel discussions, 2) confidential records, 3) legal advice, 4) litigation, contract negotiations, and settlement discussions, 5) employee salary discussions, 6) discussion regarding international, interstate, and tribal negotiations, and 7) discussion regarding the purchase, sale, or lease of real property. A.R.S. § 38-431.03."</p> <p>While I recognize that recently there has been a lot of personnel decisions and the selection of contractors, the Board seems to be leaning away from following this law rather than compliance. The length of time and number of times the Commission goes into E-Session is quite disturbing. For example, the Public Meeting training did not have to be held in E-Session. Just because an attorney may be giving the training, does not constitute legal advice. Some questions raised within might, so they could be answered in E-Session but overall the Commission should be leaning toward more transparency, not less. Please be aware, trust must be earned and so far the way the Commission is functioning is not creating an environment that is building much confidence in your decisions.</p>
5/11/2021 10:08:52	May 11, 2021	Selection of Mapping company	Margaret Gallagher	85258	self	<p>How do you plan to address the public's concerns that the Commission's work will not reflect the interests of ALL Arizonans? From your actions so far, it appears the Commission has a bias toward Republicans.</p>
5/11/2021 10:23:56	May 11, 2021	Mapping consultant	Peggy Pena	85643	Self	<p>The question is the current public perception and legacy of the current commission. So far the actions of the commission (selection of Republican Executive Director and Republican Mapping Consultant Firm) have not presented an image to the public of a non-partisan, unbiased, and independent commission. All signs point to an Arizona electorate that is truly equally divided: voter registration is almost evenly split D(32%), R(35%), I(32%); the Arizona Legislature is the same (House-R31 & D29, senate-R16& D14); the US congressman is D(5) & R(4); and we have two democratic US Senators, With Arizona being a purple state the commission needs to demonstrate to the public that it will represent the partisan makeup of Arizona.</p>
5/11/2021 10:33:50	May 11, 2021	I through X	Nancy Meister			<p>Thanks for the making the public comments actually public. It is the only way to understand what is happening as the IRC is constantly in executive session - another 1.5 hours of silence on YouTube! What a total waste of Arizona citizens' time trying to follow this process and make sure it is done in a just and equitable manner.</p>