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MICRC

03/18/21 9:00 am Meeting

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>> Steve Lett:

Good morning.

Good morning to all the Commissioners and good morning to all of those watching out in the Ether.

As Chair of the Commission, I call this meeting of the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission to order.

This Zoom Commission meeting is being live streamed to YouTube.

For anyone in the public watching who would prefer to watch via a different platform than they are currently using please visit our social media at redistricting MI to find the link for viewing on other platforms.

Our live stream today includes closed captioning.

We have ASL interpretation available for this meeting.

If you would like easier viewing options for the ASL interpreter on your screen, please e-mail us at [redistricting@Michigan.gov](mailto:redistricting@Michigan.gov) and we will provide you with additional viewing options.

Similarly, if you would like access to translation services during the meeting, please e-mail us at [redistricting@Michigan.gov](mailto:redistricting@Michigan.gov) for details on how to access language translation services available for this meeting.

Translation services are available for both Spanish and Arabic.

Please e-mail us and we will provide you with a unique link and call in information.

This meeting is being recorded and would -- will be available at [redistricting Michigan.org](http://redistrictingMichigan.org) for viewing at a later date.

This meeting is also being transcribed and those transcriptions will be made public and available and posted on [redistricting Michigan.org](http://redistrictingMichigan.org).

Along with written public comment submissions.

Members of the media who may have questions before, during or after the meeting should direct those questions to the communications and outreach director Edward Woods III at [Woods F3@Michigan.gov](mailto:Woods F3@Michigan.gov).

For purposes of the public record and for members of the public watching, I will now request the Department of State staff to take note of the members of the Commission present.

Sally, would you please call the roll?

>> Sally: Good morning everyone.

Commissioners when I call your name please unmute yourself and indicate the location that you are attending remotely from.

Doug Clark.

- >> I'm, present and I'm remotely in the meeting from Rochester hills, Michigan.
- >> Sally: Juanita Curry.
- >> Juanita: .
- >> Anthony Eid.
- >> Anthony: Present, remotely attending from Detroit, Michigan.
- >> Sally: Brittini Kellom.
- >> Brittini: Good morning present and remotely attending from Detroit, Michigan.
- >> Sally: Rhonda Lange.
- >> Rhonda: Present attending remotely from Reed city.
- >> Steve Lett.
- >> Present and attending from Lee county, Florida.
- >> Sally: Cynthia Orton.
- >> Cynthia: Present attending remotely from Battle Creek, Michigan.
- >> MC Rothhorn.
- >> MC: Good morning present attending from Lansing, Michigan.
- >> Sally: Rebecca Szetela.
- >> Present attending remotely from Wayne County Michigan.
- >> Janice Vallette.
- >> Present attending from highland Michigan.
- >> Erin Wagner.
- >> Present attending from Charlotte, Michigan.
- >> Sally: Richard Weiss.
- >> Present and attending today from Muskegon, Michigan.
- >> Dustin Witjes.
- >> Present and attending from Ann Arbor, Michigan.
- >> Sally: 12 Commissioners are present there is a quorum.
- >> Steve: Thank you, Sally.

If Commissioners would take a look at our agenda, are there any additions, deletions or corrections to the agenda?

Sue.

>> Sue: I just want to note that Juanita Curry joined us during the roll call, so she is also present.

>> Juanita: Thank you, Sue.

>> Steve: Thank you for that.

I would note that I am going to add a break after unfinished business and prior to continuing education.

We will have been supposedly going at it for about an hour and the continuing education will be an hour, so that will give us a chance to take a brief respite before we sit down for the hour continuing education.

Having said that, I would entertain a motion to adopt the agenda as amended.

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Erin and Cynthia.

All in favor raise your hand.

[ Hands raised ]

It is adopted.

Next would be a review of the minutes from the March 11, 2021 meeting.

Are there any corrections, additions or deletions from those minutes?

Hearing none, I would entertain a motion to approve the minutes as presented.

>> Cynthia: So moved.

>> Steve: Cynthia and Erin second.

All in favor raise your hand.

[ Hands raised ]

All opposed the same sign.

They are approved.

All right, next we have public comment and it's my understanding we have one person for public comment is that still accurate, Sally?

>> Sally: Yes.

>> Steve: For those of you who have not joined us previously, I have a few comments on how we conduct our public comment portion of these virtual meetings. Because this is a virtual meeting members of the public have to sign up in advance in order to address the Commission.

If you sign up you will have two minutes to speak to us.

For each member of the public who will be addressing the Commission the Department of State staff will unmute you and who will be speaking for a period not to exceed two minutes.

Members of the public who have signed up to speak will be called on in the order in which they signed up.

Please remember that once you are called on to speak you will have no more than two minutes to complete your remarks.

Public comment sign up links are posted on redistricting Michigan social media pages, on Facebook and Twitter at redistricting MI.

And you can e-mail us at our office at [redistricting@Michigan.gov](mailto:redistricting@Michigan.gov).

If you would like to submit your thoughts or comments to the Commission, you may do so by e-mail at [redistricting@Michigan.gov](mailto:redistricting@Michigan.gov) and they will be provided to the Commission.

Sally, would you go ahead and facilitate our public comment, please?

Thank you.

>> Sally: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Individuals who have signed up and indicated they would like to provide live public commentary to the Commission will now be allowed to do so.

Just a couple of notes of what's going to happen next for our public comment participant.

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After I call your name your screen will change and you will rejoin the meeting as a presenter.

Then you will need to turn your sound and video on before you make live public comments.

I will be timing and you will have two minutes a timer will go off and I will let you know if your time has elapsed.

So first in line to provide public comment this morning is Tamara Grice.

Please allow a moment for our staff to unmute you.

Oh, it looks like Tamara might be having issues staying on the meeting.

Let's give it a minute here.

It looks like Ms. Grice is no longer in the meeting, so Mr. Chair, I think you can proceed.

>> Steve: Thank you.

If Tamara is listening, you can certainly sign back up for our next meeting and come back and talk to us.

All right a comment now on public comment statements that are sent to us as anybody who has watched this knows, we encourage members of the public to send us e-mails, mail, snail mail however you want to get it to us for public comment.

In advance of the meetings.

Normally we receive between 30 and 50 e-mails per week.

This week we received over 500, which is a tenfold increase.

We are in the process of obtaining a public comment tool which allows us to better handle and review the public comments.

Until that time, the Michigan Department of State staff is handling these manually. Needless to say handling 500 public comments and getting them to us is a major undertaking.

The MICRC is committed to a fair and independent redistricting process and we do welcome your public participation and your public comments.

MDOS staff continues to process the public comment received and all comments will be forwarded to the Commission and entered into the official record of the MICRC at either this meeting or a meeting next week.

And I would say that we have received a substantial number of the public comments which have been processed to date and specifically pertain to this meeting or other comments from prior meetings.

Public comments directly related to action items on today's agenda have been provided as I just stated.

To the Commission prior to the meeting.

We thank you for your patience as we move forward in addressing the volume of e-mails received.

Your public comment is very important to us and we appreciate your input.

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And those all of the public comments will at some point be posted on the website and in the archives for you to look at.

Thank you for that.

Next would be the Executive Director report.

Sue.

>> Sue: Happy sunshine week Commissioners.

Thank you for your continuing service.

And as part of sunshine week Edward has prepared a resolution for your approval that reaffirms the MICRC commitment to conducting its business with transparency and open meetings.

Proposals for the VRA legal counsel were due yesterday.

And I'm very happy to report that we did receive 7 proposals.

So staff will be conducting the initial review over the next few days and then provide the Rankings and the rationale for the committee by the 26th of March in advance of their meeting on the 30th.

We have a really full agenda meeting again today so let's proceed with our ice breaker which is: Please share one of your favorite quotes.

And I'm going to start with Doug today.

>> Doug: Thank you, Sue.

I have a number of quotes that I really get a kick out of but they are somewhat politically oriented so I'm going to bypass that part of it.

So the one that really stands out in my mind is one from Vince Lombardi who was a football coach a number of years ago.

And his quote was winning isn't everything but wanting to win is.

So that is a good quote to live by.

>> Sue: Thank you, Doug.

How about you, Janice?

>> Janice: Sorry I just said the whole thing without being unmuted.

I have one from Einstein can you hear me?

>> Sue: Yes.

>> Janice: Two things are infinite the universe and human stupidity and I'm not sure about the universe.

>> Sue: Oh, my.

Okay, Cynthia, how about you.

>> Cynthia: So, I didn't read this beforehand so I didn't you know, have mine looked up, the one I have memorized, I really like the only real control in life is self-control.

>> Sue: That's very true.

How about you, Erin?

>> Erin: I like try to be a rainbow in someone else's cloud.

>> Sue: Very nice, Steve?

>> Steve: Actually I have a couple.

I looked up one there are two primary choices in life to accept conditions as they exist or to accept the responsibility for changing them by Dennis Whitley and I thought that pertained to the Commission very well.

And the one that I have for years and years and years and had on the front of my desk sitting, looking at my clients was: It always helps prove how right you are if you wave your arms and jump and scream.

>> Sue: Okay, thank you.

Richard, how about you?

>> Richard: Sorry about that.

I'm not sure who said it.

But it ain't over till it's over.

>> Sue: That's true.

That's true.

MC, what would you like to share?

>> MC: I have a quote from James Baldwin who is somebody I suppose has helped me a great deal with understanding myself as a man in the United States of America. And I used I was a stay at home dad for a long time with both my girls and this was one of my favorite quotes that he said James Baldwin said children have never been very good at listening to their elders but never fails to imitate them.

>> Sue: Very true, Dustin, how about you?

>> Dustin: I also don't know who said it but I believe it goes winning doesn't always mean you're being first.

>> Sue: So true.

Thank you.

Juanita how about you?

>> Juanita: I don't know who wrote this quote either but we rise by lifting others and I just like that quote.

>> Sue: Very nice, thank you, Anthony, how about you?

>> Anthony: So I have two actually.

And y'all know that I'm the resident nerd here so my first one is from Lord of the rings. And it's when Frodo is talking and he is kind of lamenting having to carry the ring and Gandalf tells him basically all we have to decide is what to do with the time that is given to us.

Kind of saying make the best out of the situation and it's not our purpose to decide and the situations that are in front of us sometimes.

And the other is from Hippocrates wherever the art of medicine is loved there is also a love of humanity.

>> Sue: Very fitting for your career.

Thank you.

Brittini.

>> Brittini: So I'm not a quote person.

I am a person that likes like family and friends and loved ones like antidotes from them and this is based on the Bible but I think it would be applicable to anyone let us not be weary and well doing for in do season we shawl reap so this idea of resilience and endurance and keep at whatever you are doing because it will turn out as it's supposed to.

>> Sue: Thank you for sharing that, Rebecca?

>> Rebecca: Yeah, mine is actually pretty easy because I have it actually engraved on a wooden plaque in my kitchen so it's abbreviated version of JFK's man in the moon speech and it's just shortened a little bit to make it more clear but it basically is, we choose to do things not because they are easy but because they are hard.

And it's sort of our family motto and the funny things now my kids are older whenever we are doing something that is hard and I'm frustrated they will look at me like mom we choose to do things not because they are easy but because they are hard.

So that's definitely my favorite.

>> Sue: All right, thank you for sharing that.

Julianne how about you?

>> Julianne: Thank you, good morning to everybody.

I would like to quote Atticus we are going to take it way back that a happy soul is the best shield for a cruel world.

>> Sue: Okay, thank you.

And Edward?

>> Edward: Thank you, Sue.

Dr. Martin Luther king junior states the ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in comfort and convenience but where he stands in challenge and controversy. And then from a communications perspective you can have the right message but be the wrong messenger.

>> Sue: Thank you very much.

So true.

And the one that I've had in my office for a very long time is when the day is over and you have done your best, wait the results in peace.

So from somebody who is a perfectionist and always wants things right, that's a good reminder for me that if I've done my best every day that, you know, the results will come.

So it's reassurance to me so thank you everybody for sharing, giving us those insights into yourselves and back to you Steve.

>> Steve: Thank you, Sue.

All right Michigan Department of State, Sally do we have anything from our wonderful leader at the Secretary of State's office?

>> Sally: Hi again, Commissioners.

So we are in the final stages of procuring the public comment tool that we've been talking with you all about.

I'm hoping to be able to sort of give you more specifics in the weeks ahead, but certainly on track to have that in place before your public hearings which has you know been our goal all along so hopefully, we will have more robust updates in the weeks ahead but just know we continue to work on that.

We are in the final stages.

>> Steve: We miss the updates on the computers by the way.

>> Sally: Do you know what?

I don't.

I'm so glad you all have them now.

>> Steve: All right, any questions for Sally from anybody?

All right, unfinished business EDS appendix resolution.

Julianne.

>> Julianne: Yes, good morning Commissioners.

There was a cover memo and the draft appendix was forwarded to your attention, both of those items will be posted on the Commission's website for the public to view.

And they correspond with the Commission's direct on March 4 to include a racially polarized analyst to the EDS contract so this appendix is before you for consideration.

The cover memo is brief but it walks through where the various provisions were taken.

What I did was since the Commission had adopted the racially polarized voting language for the VRA Council, RFP, the original one, not the one that is currently live, I extracted that racially polarized voting language from there.

And inserted it into the draft appendix.

I expanded and restated compliance and ethical standard language.

And I also lifted out the disclosures from the vendor work sheet and placed those in the appendix.

That will be the place that there is a difference in language that I would like to highlight for the Commission.

And that would be to exempt from disclosure the commercial sale of the city gate software.

So if someone is just buying the software to use and there is no relationship for to conduct redistricting services, kind of like buying MS office, you know, off the shelf so that would be the distinction I would like to highlight and I'm open for questions or concerns.

And, Sue, I believe circulated the corresponding resolution for the appendix.

And I also would like to note that the appendix will be incorporated into the contract that the Commission conditionally approved so when it's finalized it will be one whole document.



Any further changes after that point would be contract addendums and wanted to be sure that is clear too.

Thank you.

>> Steve: Brittini, you want to take the lead on this, please.

>> Brittini: Sure, Doug, excuse me.

>> Doug: Yeah Julianne, I realize I think you have had conversations with EDS as you have written this language.

Given these changes, are they on board to move forward with the purchase order in your opinion?

>> Julianne: So, Doug, actually I did not have conversations with EDS before I wrote the language.

I listened to what the Commission discussion was at the March 4th meeting.

And I took direction from that conversation, so I prepared the draft.

I had no contact with EDS until yesterday afternoon.

Where your staff MDOS staff and procurement staff from MDOS met with the vendor to go over.

And they are -- they did not raise any objections with the language as stated.

Again with that clarification to exempt the commercial sale of that software, that was the request.

>> Doug: Okay thank you.

>> Julianne: Uh-huh.

>> Brittini: I don't know what is going on with my voice today.

Any other questions?

MC.

>> MC: It's less of a question but I really appreciate Julianne, the language sort of the difference between appendix and addendum and I was just recognizing how much you know RFP I guess I'm thinking about the acronyms and I'm recognizing that I think for as we try to understand as Commissioners or I'll speak for myself as I try to understand this I would appreciate an appendix and we may have this on our website but something that allows the people who are listening to us also to understand this alphabet soup we are going to be going through a lot, you know, RPV, et cetera, and EDS so it's just recognizing that the way you laid it out helped me a great deal and imagining as a person watching this and trying to understand it as we get into how this was built just wanting some sort of glossary or some sort of you know tracking the changes if you will with regard to the abbreviations.

Again, I feel like we may have that.

I'm just recognizing that it may be important as we move forward to keep track of it somehow on our website for our education purposes.

So thank you.

>> Julianne: That is a great suggestion MC and I try to do that in the memorandums I present to the Commission but certainly a separate document with a dictionary for lack of a better word like you had in the orientation materials that were provided to you was very helpful in associating the meanings with those terms because they are terms of art. And I will also say the racially polarized voting and the racial bloc voting rather than get into the nuisances there we just put both in.

So that was how we solved that issue.

>> Brittini: Any other thoughts or questions?

>> MC: I would move to accept the resolution if there is no other comments yet.

>> Brittini: Erin second.

>> Steve: Okay any further discussion?

Not seeing any, all in favor of the resolution signify by raising your hand.

[ Hands raised ]

All opposed the same sign.

It passes.

Julianne, anything else in regards to that?

>> Julianne: No, thank you, Mr. Chair.

Just to let the Commission know it will go back to the MDOS procurement staff that is working on behalf of the Commission.

And the notice of intent will be posted but the Commission is authorized the base contract in addition to the addendum that the Commission wanted so we will keep the Commission posted in the future on the contract status.

Thank you.

>> Steve: Okay, we are up to continuing education.

And we are awfully early.

Where are we with that?

Sue.

>> Sue: Steve, you can go right down to the unfinished business.

It's continued in number eight down below the continuing education and let's see how far we can get.

>> Steve: Okay, that was what I was going to do.

>> Sue: Good.

>> Steve: Logo colors resolution 2021.02.15.

Director Woods.

>> Edward: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Let me put the presentation on the screen.

Okay is everyone able to see it?

Can you nod your head.

All right, great, thank you.

At our last meeting, we had a consensus design, not on the colors but we made a decision that we liked the design right here.

But not the colors and you asked us to go back to the drawing board and change the colors.

And we have two options to provide you.

With regards to colors.

This is the first one.

It's a cobalt which is a purplish blue and it retained the orange.

And then the second one that we have and we can go back and forth is the blue and we changed the orange to red.

It's the same blue but we changed the orange to red.

So this is the two logos that we have.

For discussion for today.

Once again, it's the same orange and the blue was changed to a cobalt which is a purplish, a deep purple and then the second one is the same blue as before but we changed the orange to a red.

If there is any questions, I can take them at this time.

>> Brittini: I don't have a question I just think for me logo one just thinking about the other comments that were made in terms of what inferences people can make with the design, with the color choices, but those that is my vote.

I would vote for the cobalt and Doug.

>> Doug: Yes.

To me Edward, the purple and the blue were basically the same color.

I mean, we all see colors differently so they seem to me they both seem blue but I still don't like my opinion the state being blue.

I think we should eliminate the blue out of the logo at all so and eliminate the red as well.

I mean they both give a connotation that I don't think we want to give so I wanted to voice my opinion on that.

I yield back.

>> Brittini: Rebecca.

>> Rebecca: Is it possible to see them side by side?

I don't know if you have a slide with both of them on there.

>> Edward: I can do that.

Just give me a second.

>> Rebecca: That is my only comment so feel free to go on to someone else.

>> Brittini: Any other thoughts, Cynthia, yes.

>> Cynthia: Yeah, I agree with Doug.

I think it still to me it depends on what screen you're looking at I suppose and all kinds of different things but it still comes across blue and I think just coming off of the year we have I think we should stay away from red and blue.

Unless we are going to do plaid or something but I just think there is lots of other colors with, you know, that could green, whatever.

Just I think it would be better.

>> Brittini: MC, thank you Cynthia, MC and then Doug.

>> MC: Edward, I believe that the reason that you're trying to give us some blue is because of the color association it has with let's say the subconscious or whatever marketing research R you have is that accurate?

>> Edward: That's accurate as well but based on the concern last week you know I asked them for a cobalt and what I'm frustrated about just so you guys know is I'm looking at it on a 4K monitor and I know the screens are not the same with the state computers.

And I can assure you I did not keep the same blue.

It is a true cobalt but we've had this frustration you know the whole week because everyone can't see the same resolution.

>> MC: And yeah, I was going to offer I feel like because I'm going to just echo what other people have said.

I feel like purple and let's say a purple that can be like I can so the purple that is on our current redistricting logo that is on the Secretary of State's website that purple I think does signify I think there is something more that's even I guess it seems to be deeper right, deeper significance even than whatever the historical marketing research says about blue and trust or whatever.

I feel purple and that color purple resonates a lot with building bridge between blue and red and the significance of those colors and it just feels that it's important and I guess I'm thinking about that purple is a color that feels like it could work.

And I couldn't tell the difference between the orange and the red frankly either so whatever that is my comment.

>> Brittini: Thank you, MC.

Doug.

>> Doug: Yeah, Edward, I had mailed you over a suggestion were you able to get that mocked up?

>> Edward: The vote, Doug, Commissioner Clark was to keep the design but change the colors.

So I was trying to honor the vote of the Commission.

>> Doug: Okay, just for everybody's knowledge, this suggestion was to take because there is a controversy between red and blue.

Take the UP and make it blue and put white stars on it and the lower peninsula red and white stripes like a flag.

That is a suggestion I sent over to Edward.

I yield.

>> Edward: I have the side by side.

>> Brittini: Go ahead.

>> On mine I can tell the difference between the blue but that is my eyes and the screen.

>> Edward: But it's a deeper purple and the reason why the graphic artist asked us to go deeper than the color is for contrast for those who might have visual impairment.

They want you to go deeper than the orange or the red.

So that they can see the contrast or if we have to print in black and white the contrast is more distinct.

>> Brittini: Thank you, Edward.

Steve.

>> Steve: I think I agree with whoever is saying not to use blue and red.

The design is fine.

I think we should use different colors so that regardless of cobalt blue or sky blue or Robin eggs blue or whatever, I would like to see different colors than blue and red.

>> Brittini: Blue and orange or okay.

Rebecca and then Sue.

>> Rebecca: I actually really like the cobalt with the orange.

I think it looks very crisp and clean.

I personally am not a fan with the purple with our original logo I just think the purple with the orange is you know maybe it's because I have reviewed a lot of marketing documents, I just don't think the messaging on there is very clear and I think the purple is kind of sickly.

I don't know I don't care for it.

I think the darker blue with the orange looks nice and crisp and clear.

I don't think it has the strong political connotations that the red with the blue does and I feel like that very much is sort of presenting republican versus democrat and as an independent I can tell you there is lots of other political views other than republican and democrat.

So I definitely don't like the red with the blue but I just don't know what you would change that cobalt and orange too to come up with a better logo that would still look good and still from a print perspective be visible and you know have strong color messaging other because if you change it to purple, I think that is sort of an odd choice, if you change it to green with the orange, I think those colors just are not complimentary so I like the cobalt with the orange.

>> Brittini: I would have to again agree unless we did something, I'm not definitely a fan of black and white unless we switch to something that was monochromatic and a darker shade and lighter shade and there are so many.

There are a trillion colors.

Go on and on with this.

Poor Edward.

Doug.

>> Doug: Yeah, poor Edward.

We will give you a hard time on all this.

And yeah, I'm going to throw a wrench in all this.

I mean personally I like what we were using better than what we have got and I know we did a vote last meeting.

But the logo we have been using on the stationary is one I always liked.

So I would like some comments on whether we should revisit that vote and take another look at the logo we were using.

>> Brittini: Okay thank you I personally did not enjoy the purple and the orange but that is just me.

Rhonda.

>> Rhonda: I don't like either color I'm just going to be honest and say that quick I think we need different colors and going to Doug's I honestly liked the original logo too. We had been using it for a while.

It's what people were used to.

With seeing our letterhead and such I guess I really don't care one way or another particularly but if it comes down to this one and colors, I do think we need different colors.

>> Brittini: Thank you, Rhonda.

Sue?

>> Sue: The original logo doesn't say anything about the Commission.

So it really was appropriate for when the Commissioners were selected or before the Commissioners were selected.

It was more about process.

But it does say nothing about the independent citizens redistricting Commission.

And this is your logo.

This is your identity.

This should be on your business cards.

And if possible, if we can get this resolved today, it's important because we are stopping Edward from moving forward with his work during the weeks that we are debating colors, et cetera, on the logo.

So whatever you can do to resolve this would be much appreciated.

Thank you.

>> Brittini: Thank you, Sue, Anthony then Cynthia.

>> Anthony: Yes, so I'm looking at this on a pretty good monitor and on my screen number one does look like a more dark purple rather than a blue.

So I like the first one.

But you know from what it sounds like it sounds like a lot of people would prefer to go with a color similar to the purple that was on the Secretary of State's selection logo.

So do you guys want to do that just so we can move this along?

Or pick number one, be good if we decided what to do so we can give Edward some clarification going forward.

>> Brittini: I think we should definitely decide.

I'm going to -- can we hear from Cynthia and then Edward?

>> Cynthia: Well, I agree that when we see them side by side, I can tell that one is a little more purple than the other and I can tell that one is more orange than red.

But people are not going to be seeing things side by side.

They are just going to have one.

So I just really feel it's a small thing and, yes, we need to get it taken care of but I think we should just try maybe green with purple or something that isn't red and blue.

>> Edward: Thank you.

One other thing I just wanted to make sure you know purple, I wanted to really clarify it's not a blue, it's a true purple.

If you like I can show you the green so that you understand why we didn't present it.

The other thing that we need to understand to be ADA compliant and for the visually impaired the darker the color the better the contrast.

And so you know we went, we put that through there and so that is the reason why the existing color is not the best choice because it does not provide the contrast.

Now, for the other slide you mentioned green Commissioner Orton, let me pull that one down for you so that you can see why we did not recommend that to you today was and I will show you why in just a second in terms of how it looks so let me see if I can.

>> Brittini: Edward are you fine with taking Dustin's question as you are pulling the color.

>> Edward: Thank you Commissioner.

>> Brittini: Dustin.

>> Dustin: Okay, I don't want anyone to take in the wrong way I honestly cannot believe we are debating about colors today.

In all seriousness.

If you look at our flag our flag colors are red, white and blue it's not purple and blue it's not orange.

It's not nothing.

If you look at the color on like the top part of the flag any way there is more blue than basically any other color anyway.

This is in my opinion is kind of ridiculous that this is something that we are going back and forth on.

Like and the contrast is fine.

Like I mean it's a thing a Michigan blue or dark purplish color on a pen that is off red or slightly orange color.

I see that this is just something that we don't really need to be wasting our time on in my opinion.

And I'm sorry if that sounds harsh or rash but I do agree that this is holding up Edward from doing his job and we are just putting way too much time into something that we do not really need to be doing.

>> Brittini: Dustin I think that is fair.

I was having some of the same thoughts to be honest.

I think we spend a lot of time deliberating on small things, I understand the intention behind it but again, yeah, I think it's a clear dark color and a clear orange but again that is my vision.

Rebecca and Richard.

>> Rebecca: I think Richard might have been first Richard do you want to go first? Okay all right I was just actually going to say why don't I just move to take a vote on logo one and see if we have support to push it through that is the cobalt and the orange.

>> Brittini: Thank you, Rebecca.

Richard.

>> Richard: I guess I would have to agree with Dustin too.

I don't want to be rude on it but I think we are spending way too much time on this. I do like Doug's idea about maybe the stars and the stripes and that kind of covers everything and I don't see where that would be such a bad idea but I do believe Mr. Woods has a point about contrast.

So maybe they can come up with something quick on that.

Thank you.

>> Brittini: You are welcome I think honestly the flag might be more contentious if we are arguing about red and blue then drape a flag over Michigan that seems odd to me. But again it's what we vote on.

>> Dustin: I second Rebecca's motion.

>> Thank you, Dustin.

>> Steve: Is there any further discussion?

Hearing none the motion is to vote on acceptance of the cobalt blue and the orange. Everybody.

>> Purple.

>> Steve: Purple.

>> It's purple.

>> Edward: I want to make sure it's clear.

>> Steve: Purple the motion is not the blue but the purple and the orange.

All in favor raise your hand.

[ Hands raised ]



12345678.

I see 8.

All opposed same sign.

[ Hands raised ]

123.

3?

4, 4.

8 to 4.

I believe that passes.

Okay.

>> Edward: Then I have a couple announcements, Mr. Chair if I can just make them at this time.

>> Steve: Certainly.

>> Edward: Just want to remind you when you get your press calls please refer them to me so we can work with the messaging and do that.

I also want you to know that we will be sending you calendar appointments.

I know we have been coordinating with you with the respective groups, but in the interim just so you have something to hold on your calendar look for something from the outreach calendar that will go ahead and do that.

I will update that starting today and tomorrow.

So all the appointments that you have whether it's at a city Commission meeting, township meeting or a speaking engagement you will have a hold from the outreach calendar so that is not my calendar but it's an outreach calendar that we are using for communications and outreach just so that you have it.

And my colleagues, Sue and Julianne also have access to that as well.

And so you could just see that.

I was trying to make it more efficient because we are getting a lot of requests.

I mean I just want to share that with you and we are trying to stay on top of it but we are getting a lot of requests and it's going to pick up.

We've already started getting our proposals in for our public hearings.

And booking those sites.

I reached out to some of you.

But and I appreciate those.

I got back with me.

I need to know your availability.

We had a meeting yesterday with our statewide affiliations with regards to doing town hall forums while we are out on the road.

I know some of you have work commitments and will not be able to be there the whole time.

You might come in for the public hearing and come out, that is fine but I need to know my availability because sometimes we have more requests than we have bodies. And that is proven itself on Monday nights when we have Commission meetings, I should say when they have Commission meetings.

Sometimes we don't have enough bodies to cover especially if they are all at 7:00. So it presents itself as a real challenge.

I know your schedules are busy.

And I want to acknowledge that.

I know you have families and commitments.

But I do want to know the flexibility so if one of these state affiliation calls us and they are looking for dates to see if I can have Commissioners available it's easier for me instead of going back and forth to do it than if I know your availability for those eight weeks in May and June.

So just wanted to share that with you because that's kind of important.

Next week we need to talk about our public hearing times.

And the process of and right now what I would like to propose that we look at a window between 10 and 8.

Obviously, there will be some breaks.

There will be meal breaks but you know we can figure that out.

But we are trying to make sure we can accommodate first, second and third shift workers.

So just kind of wanted to share that with you.

I'll be calling each of you over the next week just so I can finalize a schedule because I just want you to know this is -- we also need to know if you are going about hotels.

I mean, this is not something that we can just do at the last-minute.

This is something with regards to meals.

If you're bringing someone with you, that's fine.

That's fine.

You know if you are bringing your spouse or significant other so that we can count the meals that we need to plan.

Knowing that we have a state per diem contract, knowing we have the state lodging.

You know, sometimes you might want to stay at home.

Sometimes you might want to stay you know in the hotel.

We need that information and so if we can just take a look at your schedules, think about it over the weekend.

And I will start calling you on Monday.

But I mean, I need this to plan.

It doesn't mean you can't change your mind or anything along those lines.

But just give me a starting point because people are making requests for individual Commissioners where they are saying who do you have available and I just need to know what my flexibility is.

So that we can make this trip as smooth as possible.

Because as you know the devil is in the details and it's the little things that create frustrations and we are trying to avoid those early.

So if there are any questions, I can take them at this time but we have doubled our list and we are waiting for a few more to join us.

But we have about 30 statewide partners that are working with us and so you have the 30 partners with 13 Commissioners with multiple dates, it's just me.

You know, so I'm just telling you, I need your help and hopefully I said that respectfully, kindly.

But I need your help.

And if you are not available, which is fine, I just need to know who is available so that they can pick their options.

So thank you for listening to me.

Mr. Chair, and if I have any questions, I can take them at this time.

>> Steve: Doug.

>> Doug: Yeah, Edward, can we get on the agenda a discussion on this 10:00 to 8:00 timeframe that you're talking about for the public hearings?

>> Edward: Sure just a suggestion but, yes.

I adjust it this week and we will talk about it next week.

>> Doug: Yeah, whatever works for the Commission and yourself.

But yeah, I have my opinions on it and I'm sure others do as well.

So thank you I yield back.

>> Steve: Rhonda.

>> Rhonda: I brought this up but I just want everybody to know that I brought it up will we be provided a list of the places that are requesting town halls if there is specific people they are requesting, can we get a list of that so we can see where these are located and stuff before we commit?

>> Edward: Sure.

As I shared just so I can share it with everyone else I made the formal request yesterday during our communications and outreach meeting.

And so that's what I did.

But if you would like to see them, we do not have any requests right now.

I'm asking our partners to set up requests.

Knowing that we are going to be there for the public hearings in May and June, it just makes sense while we are there because of the concern about cost to see if we can do some town hall forums when we are in the UP, when we are in northern Michigan, when we are in western Michigan.

That's the -- I'm trying to be proactive so it's not like I have those requests and yes, I just made the request yesterday with regards to that.

It does not mean we can't do town hall forums while we are not on the road.

Maybe clear it does not mean we can't do town hall forums on the weekends it's just we are out for eight weeks.

While we are out and if you are available, I'm just trying to maximize the time so that we can be -- so I can address the concerns about costs while we are on the road.

>> Steve: Rhonda, go ahead.

>> Rhonda: So I misunderstood when you said a lot of requests have come in and they're requesting people already.

>> Edward: Right, speaking engagements in April that people have made requests for and I reached out to Commissioners for those.

I'm not -- I have not gotten town hall requests.

I'm getting speaker requests.

What I'm trying to do is be proactive with the town halls to see who's available.

I think there was some meetings that I'm trying to set up with Native Americans and others and just would like to suggest, hey, this week we are close to this area.

Would this work if we could get a Commissioner or two if you want to set up a town hall forum while we are on the road in these areas.

>> Rhonda: So is your plan just to do the town halls while we are doing the public hearings?

Can we not do town halls in April or July?

>> Edward: We can do town halls in April or July I'm just trying to be efficient because of the concern raised about money to say, hey, we are in town here, so I'm being proactive.

And knowing that I have a team of 30 statewide organizations that are willing to help us as a part of that, I was just trying to take advantage of that.

But we can do town halls whenever the Commission wants to do them.

This is just a proactive stance on my part based upon the Commission approving the public hearings last week.

>> Steve: Anybody else?

MC.

>> MC: I really hear that Edward.

And I appreciate I guess I'm just remembering that we did pass a budget and we are trying to stay within that budget and I appreciate that it's not easy to coordinate all these things so, yeah, just wanted to acknowledge I really appreciate you trying to do that.

>> Edward: Thank you.

>> Steve: Okay we are at the point in time that the continuing education is set to begin.

Sue, are they ready?

Because I want to take five or ten minutes here before we start.

>> Sue: Let's take our break.

If we take a ten-minute break then they will be starting pretty close to on time and that will give the MDOS staff time to make sure we get all the presenters on board.

>> Steve: Very good ten minutes we will be back at five minutes after the hour.

[ Recess ]

Okay, Sue, looks like everybody is back.

Please introduce our guests.

>> Sue: Okay we are very pleased to have Matt Grossman arrange our continuing education for us.

He is from Michigan State University and you're going to hear from him a little bit later. He is going to give you a little bit of homework for next week but he has arranged for three panelists this morning to present.

And Matt I was unsure if you wanted to do the introduction of these guests or if you wanted me to if you are with us.

>> Matt go ahead.

>> Sue: Okay, first of all we have Tom Ivacko and we have met him before.

He is from the University of Michigan center for local state and urban policy known as close up at the Gerald Ford school of public policy at the University of Michigan.

So he has directed the center from 2001 and before that he spent 11 years with the American national election studies at the U of M.

So he has a couple of degrees from U of M, so go Maize N Blue. We appreciate Tom coming back to present once again on the topic of communities of interest this time.

And many of us did watch the webinar that was done by the U of M students and staff. We appreciate that.

Also with Tom today is Marina Martinez and she is civic engagement initiative's director for the Michigan Nonprofit Association, also known as MNA alphabet soup world.

Prior to joining MNA in 2020 she served a Detroit city Council member as her chief of staff.

And prior to that she was with the Kresge Foundation and deputy director for a nonprofit in Paris so she brings a wide degree of experience and has a master's in public administration in nonprofit management from Oakland University.

Also joining us is Susan Smith.

She is with the league of women voters for Michigan.

She is their vice president of advocacy.

And is a past president of the league and has been working on redistricting reform in Michigan for the last decade.

She is a retired central Michigan University business professor and administrator where she spent 20 years and while in Mount Pleasant she was on the board of education, on

the city Commission and she also served as the mayor so again she is a breath of experience and service to community and to our state.

So I'm going to let Tom I believe take it away and we will get some information on communities of interest.

Thank you.

>> Tom: Thank you, Sue.

Hello Commissioners.

It's great to be back with you again and thanks very much for this chance to discuss communities of interest or COIs.

Mariana and Sue and I will each speak for ten minutes and leave about 20 to 30 minutes for Q and A as needed so I will start us off just briefly we have been doing a close up and also talk about some issues that we think the Commission should start to consider as you prepare for the public engagement phase of your work.

So let me see if I can share my screen here.

Are you seeing my screen?

Okay, great, okay, so at close up we have done research and outreach related to communities of interest.

Starting with the project in 2019 and 2020.

Which produced our report to you last August.

Among the key findings in that report was the deficit of knowledge across Michigan about our new approach to redistricting in general.

This is highlighted by our local Government survey which had responses from over 70% of Michigan communities.

And we found that over 41% of their local leaders were unfamiliar with our new approach to redistricting.

It's safe to assume there is even less understanding specifically about communities of interest.

Either as a concept or about the role in redistricting in Michigan.

Another key finding was the absence some kind of intervention the Commission would be most likely to hear from the usual players which are large, well-funded organizations.

The types of groups that have professional staffs, perhaps have lobbyists, and certainly have extensive experience influencing public policy.

By comparison and types of COIs you would be unlikely to hear from are few resources that lack professional staffs that don't have lobbyists and observe overlooked and marginalized in this.

Michigan is a big diverse state and community of interest is a new policy idea for us. it's a complicated one so it's going to take time and sustained effort to get to widespread understanding of this new approach especially for the types of groups that are not normally engaged in policy making.

And there is not a lot of time to do this.

So that takes us to interventions.

Efforts to help spread that understanding.

First, I want to say we are impressed with the outreach plans developed by Mr. Woods.

They are broad, they are diverse.

They are proactive.

And we believe they will be effective.

Nonetheless we think having needed more groups helping to spread the word will be needed.

Glad to see Mr. Woods very collaborative approach.

It's going to be very effective.

Especially given the tight timeline before public hearings start and spreading the word this their networks will be helpful.

So interventions.

Our report last August also noted that there is no existing database of COIs in Michigan. So late last fall we began to build one over 6 or 7 weeks a team of students at Ford school constructed a database of 1200 potential COIs across a broad range of topics as you can see, they include religious groups, community resource groups such as community foundations, Kiwanis club, United Way, and so on. And economic groups such as Chamber of Commerce, economic development organizations, business associations and so on. And as you can see, there are many types of groups too. And we are sure this is the tip of the iceberg. Even while we are not at all sure that it's representative of the population of potential COIs across the state.

For comparison, a report on California's experience in 2011 showed this breakdown of COIs that were mentioned in testimony and written submissions to their Commission. At any rate after building the database we then sent information to these groups about Michigan's new approach to redistricting.

About the concept and the role of COIs in that new approach.

And about the idea that these group themselves actually can be COIs.

We have heard back directly from 30 to 40 groups so far and many more attended the late February webinar.

And that brings us to the last slide about what we have been doing at close up. Which is in addition to that targeted outreach to potential COIs we have undertaken additional broader educational outreach efforts through events and webinars. Again, all designed to help spread awareness and bring more people in groups and communities across Michigan into this process.

That February 25th webinar with voters not politicians had about a thousand people register and the archives video has had almost 1700 unique views so far so from this

along with the growing volume of e-mail feedback that you're receiving we know there is a lot of interest about this across Michigan.

Before I turn this over to Mariana and Sue, we want to provide some additional thoughts for the Commission to consider as you begin focusing on public engagement. I should say there could be legal implications to some of these, so I will leave that to the legal experts.

But looking ahead we will start with your upcoming public first is the question should speaking opportunities simply be on a first come first serve basis?

It's not necessarily clear that's how best to serve everyone's interests.

Or for ensuring that you get an accurate picture of interest across Michigan.

Of course everybody in Michigan has the right to submit their views for your consideration but public hearings are not the only way to do that.

So will meetings continue until all have spoken or will there be a hard end time?

If the meetings do have hard limits it's possible that not everyone who shows up to speak will have the opportunity since some groups might try to pack the house.

So we considered we suggest that you consider structuring the public hearings in some way.

Perhaps into three broad groups according to the priority ranks in the institution communities first and local Governments and finally unaffiliated individuals.

And depending on how many people turn up at the public hearings it may be desirable to put limits on speakers for one group until all groups have had a chance to speak.

Another potential issue of testimony is truthfulness.

Hopefully everybody will be honest and most will be but you heard from California Commissioners who described someone testifying in their 2011 round in a pretty clearly disingenuous way.

And in their case, it seemed to be so obvious that Commissioners were confident and simply identifying and dismissing such testimony.

And perhaps a wait and see approach here could work fine too.

Still at our recent webinar we had a question about whether groups might try to gain the system here in Michigan and we say it's worth some consideration by the Commission.

Heading into the hearings.

So one possibility to encourage honest testimony would be to require those who submit testimony to acknowledge or pledge in some way that it is truthful to the best of their knowledge.

However some might be concerned about intimidating or scaring off people who don't normally engage in the policy making process so another possibility might be simply to make it clear that you expect honest testimony, reserve the right to conduct due diligence follow-up and could disregard testimony if you have significant concerns.



And finally an even more challenging issue you should start to consider is how you eventually will deal with potentially competing COI interest or simply overwhelming number of COI submissions if that turns out to be the case.

California had extensive public engagement the signs here look like we will too.

So suppose that hundreds of COIs end up submitting their interest and there is no way to satisfy all of them how will the Commission deal with that?

One approach for now is again wait and see cross that bridge if and when you come to it but we suggest some consideration now would be worthwhile.

So one possible approach would be simple math choosing maps that minimize the number of COIs that are split across the lines or the number of people whose COIs are split and some COIs will be bigger than other ones.

That approach could have unintended consequences and I don't think we would recommend that simplistic of a decision rule.

For one thing it assumes all COIs are equally important for redistricting, perhaps that is the case but perhaps not.

So another possibility is for the Commission to wait some COIs as more important than others.

Of course this could get thorny but the question would be whether all COIs could be considered equally important for the purposes of redistricting or whether some might have greater need for protection than others.

For instance would you give weight extra weight to a COI based on environmental pollution?

Such as PFAS, poisoning their water sources compared with other COIs whose interest may be on less dire issues.

PFAS example is median urgent need for effective reputation.

And a need that might well last consistently throughout the entire decade that the maps would be in place.

By comparison other types of COIs may have other intermittent needs for effective representation and for issues that may be less dire than toxic water pollution.

Clearly these would not be easy decisions for the Commission.

And so one last idea we want to put on your radar for now is possibility that in some cases at least a fostering negotiations or discussions among COIs in areas that may be particularly challenging for you to map.

Having COIs talk amongst themselves perhaps with some Commission sponsored moderator or mediator to see if they can find common ground on particular district designs, they could recommend to you might be another option for particularly difficult situations so of course this is a lot to put on your plate.

These are not easy issues and won't be easy decisions.

Commissioner Witjes I have an easy button too.

I love this thing but I think this probably won't be the place for it.

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Nonetheless we think that it would be good topics for the Commission to begin wrestling with in the coming weeks so with that I will turn it over to Ms. Martinez and the nonprofit so you can get up to speed.

>> Thank you so much and for the opportunity to speak to you and tell you about Michigan Nonprofit Associations redistricting initiative.

I will go ahead and share my screen so bear with me.

I'm usually faster at this.

Okay let's see.

Apologies.

Can you see my screen?

Can you just let me know you can see my screen?

Okay thank you.

So good morning again.

Thank you so much for the opportunity to tell you about our redistricting initiative.

As yep.

>> Sorry to interrupt you it looks like you are on the presenters view instead.

>> Mariana: Got it, thank you.

Let me see.

There we go.

Can you see it now?

>> Sally: It's still on presenter view if you go to the display settings and just say I think it's mirror image or at the top once you go to presenter view you can adjust, I think.

>> Mariana: Okay can you see it now?

Great, this is not what you want to do right before a presentation so apologies for that.

Yeah, so again my name is Mariana Martinez I'm director at Michigan nonprofit MNA and let you know a little who we are we are a nonprofit organization dedicated to serve non-profits across the state.

And we do this through advocacy, technology services, and civic engagement and I'm here to tell you about our redistricting initiative.

So before I get a little bit more into that I wanted to give you background as to how we got started into this work.

In 2017 we launched an ambitious campaign to mobilize non-profits to help Michigan get a complete count in the 2020 census.

This was a unique nonpartisan, multi-racial initiative that helped us, that was supported by private and public funding.

Yeah apologies.

And MNA got involved because historically the census has disproportionate people of color, immigrant communities and low income populations.

This as you know has led to inequality and political power and private sector investment for these communities.

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And so utilizing the same at the very essence utilizing the same infrastructure MNA is now mobilizing nonprofits in the same way to transparently achieve fair and impartial maps for Michigan specifically to promote racial equity so communities of color are a voice and not locked out that occurs at the Federal state and local levels.

Here is a high level explanation about what our initiative is and begin with fundraising of course.

It's important to note that we continue to fund raise efforts to ensure that we expend the work that we are doing and reach more nonprofit organizations therefore to be able to reach more communities across the state.

And education and awareness is essentially the most important thing that we are doing through a cohort of nonprofit organizations in different cities in Michigan and also doing evaluation we feel that is extremely important because it helps us learn from our you know best practices or you know for our civic engagement work in the future.

And so for communities of interest as you heard or as you know it could mean a lot of things and you're going to hear hopefully from a lot of people so for the purposes of our initiatives communities of interest mean three things we are reaching out to communities of color, immigrant communities and low income communities.

So how are we doing this?

We have a cohort of 20 nonprofit organizations.

We are providing and actually these 20 nonprofit organizations represent populations that are that include African/American populations, the Latino and Hispanic Communities, Arab American, Asian American and Pacific Islanders, Bangla community, Caribbean, African community, people with disabilities and LGBT communities. So the nonprofit organization represent these communities.

So here is a map of where we are.

It is important to note that during the RFP process for the mini grants we are with providing to the non-profits we received an over whelming amount of interest from all over the state unfortunately with the with the funds that we had available we were unable to meet that need.

But I wanted to let you know that because it is important to note that community leaders and communities are very interested in getting involved in this effort.

And so we had to unfortunately narrow down where we have to work with the non-profits we are working with and these non-profits are located mainly in Detroit, Flint and Grand Rapids.

It's important to note that we continue our fundraising efforts like I mentioned to expend the work on to different areas.

And so here is just I wanted to show you a little bit of who our cohort is.

Organizations that are based in Detroit, Grand Rapids, as well as Flint.

So how are we doing this?

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We are providing them with resources and tools such as a communications tool kit that includes a social media campaign that basically explains what the redistricting is.

Redistricting doesn't resonate in the same way that say census does.

So it's important that we explain it in different ways.

So that people can understand what that is and ultimately participate in the process that is ultimately what we are looking for communities to do.

We are also providing technical support around the dissemination of the community strategy so how are we doing you know helping them and supporting them and how to disseminate that message, how to you know how to disseminate the tools et cetera.

An important components of this is the translation of materials.

It is extremely, extremely important that our communities hear the message and in their native language.

It's not the same nevertheless hearing about redistricting or understanding what that is.

You know, even less so in a different language or in a language that it's not their own so the translation materials is something we are working very intentionally with to ensure that the message gets to the communities that you know, normally don't usually hear about these processes.

And then we provide continuous updates.

I feel I know you all because I watch you for every meeting so we are following behind very closely on the decisions that are made with the Commission.

And so we provide updates to the cohorts so that they know what important decisions have been made and created newsletters so they know when decisions are made or important updates that are happening so they can intern disseminate that to their communities.

And here I wanted to just point out a little bit of some of the initiatives that they themselves are doing.

The ingenuity that some of the nonprofit organizations are doing are amazing so I wanted to highlight with you so you know how motivated people are to ensure that our communities are aware and educated on what redistricting is.

So Facebook live sessions for example that is your traditional in the new world we are living in but what is up chain messages for example to tell you about and tell communities about what redistricting is and when to talk to you, how to talk to you, how to engage with the Commission.

But for example map contest parks weather permitting that is something that we heard organizations are going to be doing, partnering with organizations, providing coffee hours, et cetera, et cetera.

But some are also very you know interesting like Tiktok videos to get attention or gain attention from youth from the youth for example.

And/or attending basketball games and talk about redistrict after a game to ensure they have the full focus.

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So so with that we wanted to just ensure and let you know our leading with equity and inclusivity at the forefront and the main goal of this initiative is redistrict pop lakes that have been historically under represented and underserved and provide the necessary tools like I mentioned that everyone participates in the redistricting process so our north star our north star is essentially to let to arm the non-profits so they themselves provide that information to their communities and ultimately have communities participates in the process.

With that, please visit our website.

There is a lot of information there that we posted as well as translated materials about what redistricting is, et cetera, don't hesitate to go visit those and yeah, I'm hoping if you have any questions there are a lot of things that we are hearing from the community that are important for the Commission to take into consideration and consider.

For example language access while giving and providing the public hearings language access is very, very important and I know that is something you are looking in to.

But, accessibility for people with disabilities I know sometimes the two minute Mark it's important to ensure that everyone's voice is heard but people with disabilities some people may have speech impediments and that may not be sufficient time for example.

And just ensuring that we are reaching the digitally divide communities right.

A lot of with this new norm we have limitations about being in a virtual world while not everybody has the capacity or are tech savvy so just ensuring that we are very intentional about reaching the digital divided communities.

It's very important.

With that I will pass it on to Sue and hopefully at the end if you have any questions, we will be happy to answer those.

Thank you.

>> Sue: .

>> Sue.

>> Sue: Good morning Commissioners, I'm having difficulty and it says that the host is okay thank you.

There is always challenges in this virtual world we are living in.

And I'm wondering if we could please start the video.

Thank you so much.

I'm Sue Smith.

I'm vice president for advocacy of the league of women voters of Michigan.

And I'm very pleased to have this opportunity to talk with you for a few minutes about our communities of interest project.

Before I do that though I would like to take a few minutes to talk about the league of women voters.

We are a nonprofit organization that encourages the informed and active participation of citizens and Government.

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The league does not support or oppose parties or candidates.

You might be familiar with our nonpartisan voter guides and our candidate forums.

We do take positions on issues after studying them and taking some kind of consensus redistricting reform is one of those issues.

The league was formed in 1920 and we are now in 50 states.

We have 27 local leagues in Michigan.

With 2500 members.

Covering 40 counties.

Membership is open to anyone 16 and older.

The league also works to increase understanding of major public policy issues through education.

I'm here today to tell you about our communities of interest project which is the latest part of our long-term project to reform redistricting in Michigan.

That effort began in 2011 when the current maps were approved by the legislature.

First, I'm going to describe the content of our plan 25 town halls which will be held across the state.

Then I'll tell you about the local league teams we put together to identify and support communities of interest.

We are going to concentrate our efforts on COIs that are not supported by an existing organization.

Next slide, please.

The league is taking a two-pronged approach to communities of interest.

Number one, we are going to be hosting town halls in hopes that COIs will self-identify themselves.

And secondly, we have recreated and trained over 100 league members who will operate in teams looking for and identifying COIs in their communities.

Our town halls are aimed at the general public.

They will be all across the state and they will be put on by our 27 local leagues.

We are well equipped to do this because we have been informing the public about the dangers of gerrymandering and advocating to end it since 2011.

We provided educational programs to hundreds of people across the state.

And in 2017 and 2018.

And we supported the passage of proposal two which created the MICRC and established the criteria that you will use to draw the district lines.

We also provided educational programs about the 2020 census first by in-person presentations.

And starting about a year ago by providing copies of census Bureau materials to food banks so they could put them in their bags or boxes.

To inform those who might not otherwise realize how the census affects the services they receive.

In Washtenaw County alone we estimate we reached about 3,000 people.

These presentations also created connections between local leagues and other non-profits with similar goals.

We hope those connections will increase interest in our town halls and our efforts to reach communities of interest.

Next slide, please.

The town halls will use a common presentation explaining the process of drawing district lines, how gerrymandering effects the outcome of elections and how the constitutional amendment passed in 2018 strives to ensure fair maps.

The presentation will describe the MICRC, how members were selected, the process of drawing the maps, and the criteria which must be followed.

We will focus on communities of interest stressing their importance in the hierarchy of criteria.

Second only to Federal law.

The characteristics of COIs and some examples.

Finally the town halls will focus on the importance of the MICRC's public hearings.

What the schedule is and how people can participate.

COIs who are interested in finding out more or who would like our help in writing and giving their testimony or drawing maps will be encouraged to contact the local league.

Next slide, please.

I mentioned that we have a two-pronged approach.

First was town halls and second is our local league teams.

Over 25 local league teams which cover 40 counties have been recruited and trained. For example, one team of seven covers Washtenaw, Lenawee, and Livingston Counties.

The goal of the local teams is to identify local COIs, contact them, and offer support in the form of training.

We are seeking COIs that are not already represented by another organization.

As I think I have mentioned we have trained over one hundred of these local league members in how to do this work.

They in turn now will educate COIs on how to write and give testimony.

How to draw and submit maps.

And the importance of their participation to our having fair maps in Michigan.

We hope the town halls will spark self-identification by COIs but we will also identify them by reaching out to individuals and groups with whom we have already made a connection.

Or by searching for them using techniques similar to those used by close up.

At the state level the league is coordinating with several other groups similar work.

The Michigan Nonprofit Association for example, voters not politicians and others.

I would like to close by mentioning a town hall that happened in Detroit last week.

In conjunction with the Detroit public library.

Following a presentation of the information about redistricting and the Commission and how it works, we had a discussion of communities of interest.

About 60 people participated in the virtual meeting.

And one of the interesting communities of interest that was brought up was the area in Detroit, the southwest area of Detroit where air pollution is causing public health problems.

As you might know that particular part of Detroit has very high levels of air pollution with a result that many people especially children are experiencing high levels of asthma.

There is also pet Coke stored along the ground along the river.

Other communities of interest we have heard of as we begin this work include the people in Midland and Sanford in the middle of our state who experience flooding from the tobacco river dams broke and now some of those folks are looking at mud flats instead of a lake.

On the west side of the state we find that there are groundwater issues.

I know that Commissioner Lange raised the possibility of reaching out to the Chippewa tribe in the Upper Peninsula in the Sault Ste. Marie area.

There are many of those tribes, in fact, there are 16 federally recognized tribes in Michigan.

We will be reaching out to them as well.

That concludes my presentation and at the time that it's appropriate I will be glad to try to answer any questions anybody might have.

>> Tom: Thank you Sue and Mariana for both the press takes and the work that your groups are doing.

So I'm serving as moderator for the panel and so we still got some time here for questions from the Commissioners if anybody has a question.

MC, yeah, please.

>> MC: Thank you all and I'm guessing many of you are volunteering so yeah, I just appreciate that yeah with the work you are doing whether it's paid or volunteer it's fantastic and thank you.

The question I have is: Because we have as we approach these public hearings and league of women voters talked about town halls so I think the language matters.

The idea a public hearing is different than a town hall and trying to help us understand the difference.

Right and excuse me when I say help us understand I'm asking you if you have input from your constituents from the people you are reaching out to in terms of COIs do you get the feeling that there is a status difference?

Is there any feedback that you have for us as you discuss town halls or as you reach out are these public hearings sort of like oh, we have to be there?

Right because of whatever.



And are there way we can address and I'm looking at the ways we can use these public hearings and sort of level the playing field because there are so many ways to give input.

And it was you know I think Tom you suggested how do we structure the public hearings so if we are going to have a live public hearing with all 13 of us do you have any feedback, I guess is what I'm asking?

Any thoughts on what your people are saying with the people you are reaching out to are saying they want in these public hearings or the town halls for that matter.

>> Tom: Mariana would you like to go first and among us your group has been most directly in contact with the broadest number of COIs so far.

>> Yes, thank you and I like to point out MNA we are providing the resources, this is non-profits truly in the front lines all we do is lift the voices so from what we are hearing it's important to differentiate you are absolutely right I think town hall town hall is definitely a word that is used very commonly with now in this new virtual world. And organizations use it very frequently.

So I don't think there is forgive me if I'm not understanding your question but they are not confused there is no confusion between what a town hall or when an organization is offering a town hall and it's also in the fliers that they and you know social media campaigns that they use announcing the town hall who is going to be in it and public hearing so those two I would say there really is no confusion.

And then your second question forgive me was if you what is important.

>> How we can use public hearings the communities of interest.

>> I think it's about hearing and ensuring who is at the table, ensuring this is at the core of our democracy and ensuring who is at the table and we are hearing the communities louder voice in the room.

It's not necessarily the voice that needs to be heard and all voices need to be heard when considering places right Porsche it into population et cetera I know that was a big conversation that is something to consider but to give the space to ensure that the two people who showed up representing a small community their voice is like coming in with ten people and providing in turn who is at the table rents the communities where you are.

Just given the space is what they are looking for to be heard and express what is important for their communities.

If I could speak to the purpose of the town halls is to educate the public about redistricting about communities of interest, about the Commission and about the fact people can participate as has been noted earlier and it's surprising how people in the State of Michigan don't know anything about this so public or town halls are a very good way to educate the public at the local level in the community where people are already aware of the league and used to going to these town halls public hearings are the best opportunity for people to give their testimony as opposed to the town halls because from

what we have heard from Mr. Woods there are going to be where stations can go to submit written testimony and maps and do not anticipate that kind of facility or opportunity will be available at town halls and I think they are both important and serve different purposes.

The approved list that was voted by the Commission last week public hearings are located in such a way that people who want to make comments and submit testimony and their maps can do so and it seems to me that that is probably the best way since the Secretary of State says there is a tool to help the Commission to manage all of the testimony they are going to get everybody has an idea there has to be a systematic way to collect it so it's effective in communicating it and they can take consideration when actually drawing the maps so does that answer your question, MC.

>> MC: It does and it's not a new question but what I'm interested in is how do we use the public hearings especially town halls to complement and compete and using resources so as we and what are some steps and that is what I'm thinking about it's not a different question but I don't think I framed looking at complementing and not come not competing and clarity.

>> Sue: I'm glad you made the distinction Mr. Woods said he is meeting with the league of women voters and MNA and many other groups to coordinate that is being done and conversations and best way for complement or supplement the public hearings.

We definitely don't want to compete.

We are trying to offer additional opportunities to communities to find out more about redistricting the Commission communities of interest and so forth but what we are wanting to do is to encourage people to participate in the public hearings.

>> Mariana: I would an a complement and the town halls as I complemented to the public hearings it's really an opportunity to expand right and it's not competing but it really is an opportunity to see if the public hearings were not enough and we are not reaching you know as far as we wanted to, that is an extra opportunity to say okay we did not hear from this community or this community is important to ensure that we are there or there was high demand to be present there so I think that certainly compliments and it helps and assists in ensuring you are hearing from communities of interest.

>> Tom: Anthony.

>> Anthony: So what as far as how informed the public is so far, what has been the consensus to this point?

I know I for one have seen you know quite a lot of miss information online about you know what we as a Commission do.

And even like you know how we are constructed.

I've seen people say that you know every member of the Commission is on the democratic side or every member of the Commission is on the republican side and I have seen a lot of miss information that needs to be clarified.

I'm wondering if y'all have you know seen the same thing?

>> Tom: I'll just jump in quickly myself and say I personally I have not seen a lot of that.

And I haven't heard directly from people we have been in touch with asking questions to follow-up on those kind of things.

But in general, I think what we picked up on is just the lack of understanding about communities of interest.

This is one of the other things that was in our report to the -- to you Commissioners from last summer is we recommended that you flush out the description of communities of interest a little bit further.

The description in the Constitution is very broad and I think flushing out a little bit further might be helpful in the ways that would I'm not sure that is you know the biggest thing on your plate.

But the biggest thing in my mind is from previous research we have done at close up we know because Michigan is a big diverse state, diverse in a lot of ways, it takes time for information to spread and flow across the state.

Flows at different rates for different kinds of communities and so this idea of you know a very large outreach campaign I think is key.

I think Mr. Woods approach collaborating with statewide organizations and so on is key. I think it's on all of us who are not part of the Commission to be clear that we are doing our own work.

We are not speaking on behalf of you to keep things clear.

But yeah, we are in an age of miss information.

There is no way around that and I won't be surprised to find people that are purposefully spreading that miss information or it just you know because of the age we are in spreading.

I haven't heard a lot of it myself yet but I think having that on your radar is the right thing to do.

>> Mariana: Yes, thank you for that question.

That is very important to ensure that we address it.

I have not heard miss information to be honest or that being a big issue.

I'm certain that is happening.

For us it's more essential education around what redistricting is.

As I mentioned redistricting does not resonate in the same way that census does and so it's more about the whole education of what the process is for us or from what we are seeing and how to explain it in simple terms before we even get to explain what the Commission is or who they are or how that is composed.

It's the whole process.

And as far as communities of interest you know communities community leaders, they know what is important in their communities so I think that is important to mention

because it's not necessarily about what you know, what they to find out whether or figure out what is important.

They know what is important in their communities.

Figuring out for organizations that work statewide collaborate with and Mr. Woods has done amazing job at reaching out and to figure out what is the best way to provide that feedback so.

>> Sue: I haven't heard what you have heard specifically, Anthony, but of course there is always a need to tell people how it does work and that is why part of our presentation at the town halls will include an explanation of how the Commission members were collected and the fact that it's for democrats or republicans and five who are neither so people who are given that information to the incorrect information that is either out there deliberately or just from ignorance.

>> Tom: Doug.

>> Doug: Thanks, Tom.

By the way I just had a power outage so if I ask a question that has been answered I will go back and review.

I have questions for Tom and Sue.

Tom, during your presentations you talked about waiting communities of interest and you talked about minimizing the number of communities of interest.

And the way I perceive this and many others could is what we do if we take that approach, we are choosing winners and losers.

Yeah, you want to comment on that?

>> Tom: Yeah.

You know I think this is a potentially very thorny issue.

I think you know you are having that on your radar is appropriate.

And at some point, I think the Commission is likely to have to debate the importance of various and debate maps and debate whether to move a line this way or that way and those could have implications on voters.

And so no matter what you try and do unfortunately the outcomes are going to have winners and losers.

If you, you know, one option as I say if you get a thousand communities of interest submitting a request to map according to their interest you are not going to be able to satisfy everybody.

So the important thing I think is for you to spend some time amongst the 13 of yourselves talking about that.

You know as I say one decision rule is very simple math just tell your map designer to tell you how many COIs are split in the maps, they provide you.

Get maps that, A, splits 700, maps that B splits only 300, you can decide we will split the few COIs but that could open up people gaining the system if people know that is how you are going to do it will that lead to a lot of people submitting small COIs that

yeah maybe are real, maybe they are not, maybe they are important today but won't be important tomorrow.

I think it's inevitable that sooner or later you are going to have to have some difficult discussions about what citizens in Michigan are asking you to do for them.

And what I would say is if you decide to explore kind of waiting COIs, I would recommend you know hearing from board experts about the pros and the cons of that and you know I think one implication for now is what you ask COIs to submit to you. You know, I would encourage you to ask them to tell you what are the interests that bind them.

What are the implications of having poor representation about those for them.

And then you know as I say I think sooner or later you're going to have to have some difficult discussion about those.

>> Doug: One other question for you Tom.

You had indicated a number of COIs that you had identified throughout the state and you had categorized them.

At some point in time could -- would that be available to us in electronic format?

>> Tom: Yes absolutely.

I should be clear we are sharing that database with people who are trying to engage with COIs.

So, yes, absolutely we are happy to share that with you.

>> Doug: Okay.

>> Tom: I want to be clear is that we think of these as potential COIs so our students just started digging into public information sources.

Most of it just online web searches identifying what seemed like potential COIs and building this contact database.

It's likely that you know the majority of them will not engage in this process.

But clearly a good number will.

>> Doug: Okay, fine.

And I have a question for Sue.

You are doing a lot of work reaching out and trying to gather information only COIs.

Is there some specific set of data that you're looking for such as where do these communities of interest live, you know, geographically down to the census part level even.

And what other types of data are you collecting at this point for your organization?

>> Sue: As I mentioned we are trying to go about this in two ways.

One through the town halls.

We are trying to make people aware of the opportunity if they think they are a COI.

To make their case to the Commission at the public hearing either by submitting testimony or maps or maybe both.

The other way is we are asking our league members to talk with people in their communities.

Are there communities who share a common issue?

Now one way to think about this is to ask yourself why is it that communities of interest are so high in the list of priority?

Now everybody of course has their own answer to that but as I think about it, it seems to me that the only reason would be they want to provide a -- the people who wrote the proposal wanted to provide an opportunity for people who had issues, a group of people who had an issue they wanted to be addressed by either the state legislature or the Federal Government.

And those people would be most effective in influencing their representative if they were all in the same district as opposed to being split up among a number of districts.

Because if people are split up among a number of districts, they are not going to be very important in terms of numbers in any one district.

So if they are all in the same district, their voice will be amplified and it's more likely that their representative whether it's in the state legislature or the U.S. Congress will be hearing what their interests are and trying to address them in the appropriate way.

So it's a matter of amplifying voices of people who share common concerns or common issues.

I mentioned the public health issues in southwest Detroit.

They live in a particular area.

They could be in a particular State House instead of being split up or they could be all be in the same Senate district.

They could all be in the same Congressional district.

When the lines are drawn, how will those communities be treated?

I'm not sure I answered your question, Doug, but if I didn't please ask me something else.

>> Doug: I'm having some connectivity problems can you hear me, Sue?

>> Tom: I can.

>> Doug: Okay, yeah you did answer.

Thank you so much.

>> Tom: I see we are coming up, on our time with you.

Are there any last questions that the Commission has?

Okay well thank you very much for your time and again thank you very much for all of your hard work.

It was a pleasure being with you again and if we can do anything further don't hesitate to reach out to us.

Thank you very much.

>> Mariana: Thank you.

>> Steve: Thank you to all of our presenters Sue and Mariana and Tom and Matt.

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We always appreciate seeing Matt.

He always brings in interesting people.

We are getting to know everybody personally.

Appreciate it.

Ed, do you have a comment?

>> Edward: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I just want to thank Matt, Tom, Mariana and Sue for collaborating with the communications and outreach.

They have been invaluable.

Consistent and always available to take calls and I just want to greatly appreciate and thank them for their contributions they are making to get the word out about the redistricting process.

>> Steve: Okay thank you.

Appreciate all the work.

We took one break, but I think we can go on to key provisions for constitutional amendment with Julianne and then probably take a break before new business.

Julianne.

>> Matt: Before that I'm going to provide some instructions for the assignment is that all right.

>> Steve: Absolutely.

Thank you.

>> Matt: All right, so you were all sent instructions for what we are going to be doing next and I will post them as well for you to follow along.

One of the first Commission requests was to try to understand mapping and to get your hands a little Dairy think trying it yourself so we want to make sure that everyone is able to do that.

And gets on the same page.

So next week the state demography Eric and I will be back with you all trying to map communities and draw districts as a group.

But you really do learn more by trying it yourself.

So sorry I'm the teacher.

Asking you to do a bit of homework.

As soon as you can.

And I have sort of two assignments for you which I hope you can do very quickly.

By Monday.

So the first one is to draw Michigan communities.

And this is not the software that is going to be used by your mapping consultants but it will be closer to how citizens and groups will submit maps to you.

So you will see the process from their point of view.

So I've also linked to drawing a community in Michigan and thanks to my student, Wyatt Ledman, for the written instructions so everything I'm going to say is also written down and if anyone has any questions definitely reach out to us.

So on the written instructions for drawing community in Michigan goes through all this and you will reach a page that looks like this on director and you first have to click draw communities.

Then we are going to draw communities built out of block groups so we will click this right here and we are going to then get a map of Michigan that looks like this.

Now the benefit of drawing these communities is that we will be providing a lot of information to you about the communities that you submit.

So the demographer will look through what is the demographics, what is the economy of the areas that you submit look like, what are the landmarks, how do they compare to local Government boundaries so by submitting these in advance we will be able to collect all that information for you before we start talking about it.

Now, the we would like you to draw your community as you define it. We would like to get a variety of communities.

If you are uncomfortable drawing your own community if you could just draw any community in Michigan with which you are familiar.

It does not matter what the size is.

This is not a district.

This is a community as you would define it.

So by default when you click on it you will get a tool like this and you will be able to move around the state.

You be able to move up close and back to find the area that you want to draw a community.

Right now just for an example I'm going to draw one of my favorite areas in Michigan around sleepy bear dunes.

>> Mr. Grossman, I'm sorry to interrupt. Can you put it in full screen.

>> Matt: Am I not in full screen?

>> Brittini: It does not appear to be but I could be incorrect.

>> Matt: Okay other people can't see me.

Can you see it now?

>> Brittini: We can see it.

It's just small and I don't know if that green button in the upper left.

>> Matt: I will stop and I will just share that window.

Does that help?

Okay, so we are going to draw a little bit of a community around sleepy bear dunes and to do the drawing you have to click this little paint brush right here.

And you starts out with this sort of big brush so you know it's drawing pretty big right away.



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If you want to you can go down to a smaller brush size and then you are able to maybe pinpoint somewhat smaller things but you will notice a few things we are dealing with census blocks here so these are somewhat large geographies.

You can see the islands are attached to nearby land areas.

And here is what I've drawn in terms of a community surrounding sleepy bear.

If you make a mistake, you just can use the paint brush I'm sorry the eraser and you can click that and it will unclick that so you can redo or undo anything you want.

Once you have drawn a community that you want to share, the only other part of this assignment is to make sure you click the share and you will get a URL.

I'm asking you to copy and paste that URL in an e-mail to me.

If you don't and my e-mail is on there if you don't reach me, feel free to e-mail Sue or anybody else and they will pass it along to me.

Now once you have shared that, I'll be able to see that and so if you want to keep drawing afterwards that's fine.

Now there are some other features in here so for those of you who are gung-ho you can use them and Mark particular places.

You can tell me about the community you have Dawn and we will use all of the information you submit but all we are interested in just as a starting point is for you to actually map an area that you consider a community.

And submit it to us and we will put them altogether on a map and we will be able to tell you some information about the communities that you have drawn.

So that is the first hopefully not that difficult assignment.

Any questions on Michigan community submission before I go on to the next one?

All right, so the next assignment which is on a separate sheet is to draw a district in Ohio.

So let me make sure that you have the right instructions in front of you for that.

So these are the instructions and I'm going to list you to a pointer.

Okay so why are we doing our friends in Ohio?

Well, we thought that it would be a little bit premature to start drawing districts within Michigan and move lines around so we thought it was useful to practice on Ohio.

And we want to go through a full exercise next week where we actually draw Ohio's Congressional districts.

And so we didn't want anybody to think that you know we are jumping ahead to do anything in terms of the drawing of the districts.

But Ohio is also likely to lose one Congressional district.

And so going through a somewhat similar process that we will be.

So when you get to Ohio, it will look like this.

And I want you to click the draw Ohio Congressional districts built out of precincts.

So you will notice that this is a different geography.

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These are different units and not census blocks and they are out of electoral precincts, so you will get a sense of what they look like in comparison to the communities of interest.

And the format is going to look very similar.

But you will be able to see that you're trying to draw districts of a particular population size.

So once you learn how to use the tool it should be the same.

You can go in and out and today I'm just going to draw a district around Dayton so we are on the same page here.

So again you will go to the paint brush to do that.

And you can just start drawing.

Now you can see that these are smaller geographies so if I want to go in, I can go all the way to just do one at a time if I want to move one at a time to add that.

And again to erase similarly you can erase one at a time.

But you will notice that we are trying to reach a population size here.

So unlike the communities where we want a variety of populations, we want some that are big and small, here we are trying to reach this particular size and we are asking you to draw at least one and hopefully two Congressional districts by Monday so that we can take a look at them and provide some information and use them as a basis for doing it together as a group.

Now eventually this exercise is going to turn into you all submitting an entire Congressional district of Ohio but that is going to be a couple weeks down the line. For now what we just need is the first couple.

And the benefit to you is we are going to provide a lot of analysis of those districts once you draw them so we have all the kinds of people you have been hearing from and other experts have agreed to analyze your maps of Ohio so we will get things like ideas about compliance with the voting rights act, ideas about partisan balance and compactness measures, some are likely to compare them against algorithmic drawn maps by computers to see how your maps compare to those.

We will be able to get all that information for you on these kind of practice map maps that you draw so we will practice not just drawing them but also evaluating them.

On various kinds of criteria.

But I want you to try not to worry too much about that now.

We know that you're unfamiliar with the Ohio geography.

We just want you to draw districts.

The only requirements at the moment are that they are equal population districts.

So that is what we want you to concentrate on.

So let me just real quick finish drawing this district.

If you messed up anything you can just push this undo button or the redo button.

And you are going to start to make some mistakes as you go out further.

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So we are seeing just as I'm trying to draw around Dayton, we got sort of the obvious parts and now we will have to move out from there to try to get to our population marker and we are going to have to decide kind of who should be in Dayton versus elsewhere.

So a couple hints.

We can highlight unassigned units if we want to see if we missed any spots.

I missed a splotch right here that would not be contiguous and we can also once we draw a district, I will just show you that so we have a district that is of a close to ideal size now.

And so once we do that, we can move on to a second color for the second districts.

And I can actually lock already-drawn districts if I want to.

So that I'm not drawing over this blue district if I wanted to draw next to it.

All right and once you finish with one or two districts, again, you just click share.

It's going to give you a URL and I just want you to e-mail that to me and anybody that you e-mail to Sue or whoever will forward it to me.

Again the benefit is we will be able to do some analysis of these districts.

We will tell you more about them.

And you will get a sense of what it's like.

And then next time we will do the hard part which is actually figuring out how to make all these districts fit together so you notice for example I left some room over here so we are going to have to include this in another kind of districts.

Real quick let me try to finish drawing a second district.

See where we get.

See you know how big this district has to be in these rural areas to get close to the same population as the other districts.

Maybe I will start drawing around here.

And I got pretty close there.

So, again, all I have to do is click update and I've saved this map at this particular place.

All your maps will be public and will provide lots of additional information on them.

If you want to get more in depth you are welcome to use the other tools here so we have other data layers and can add things like racial data and Presidential election data we can start to look at the evaluation.

It looks here for example like I've drawn two overwhelmingly white districts.

I have drawn one district that is overwhelmingly republican and one district that might lean republican and Presidential voting at least.

So you can start to look at that but we will provide all that information for you so all I want you to do is make sure that you can draw two contiguous districts that are similar population.

And then hopefully we will get some variety and we will be able to do some analysis from there.

All right questions for me?

Cynthia.

>> Cynthia: Just to clarify we only are using population data when we are trying to make these, so we are trying to meet the population requirements but then they will be evaluated by experts using all kinds of different.

>> Matt: When we do it next week, we will slowly add criteria in the simulation so when we are doing it together, we will add in county boundaries then we will add in racial data and try to draw a district that would comply with the voting rights act, et cetera.

So and so that's why I'm asking you to only draw one or two districts now because eventually you are going to draw a map and then you might want to start including all of that.

You're welcome to look ahead if you want to play around with district and look at some of the other data that is available but the only requirement for the assignment are two equal population districts and a community in Michigan of any size.

>> Cynthia: Okay thank you.

>> Matt: And I think somebody else had a question Anthony.

>> Anthony: It's not really a question.

I just want to say thanks for the instruction and I think this is a you know a good little activity for us to do to kind of get our feet wet.

It's not going to be perfect you know it's the first time that we are going to be putting pen to paper.

And they are just examples.

I just want the public to know these are just it's practice for the real thing.

>> Matt: Absolutely and none of these communities that you submit are official communities of interest.

They are simply how you think about a community in Michigan.

And obviously I drew sleepy bear dunes and we don't want anybody up there to think that is how they would define the community.

That was just an example.

And similarly you know maybe the Ohioans won't complain quite as much but these are just example districts and we are just going through the process of seeing the complexities of trying to draw maps so we see it from the public's perspective.

Any other questions?

So we have the written instructions, we also may be able to provide some video instructions and if you have any question at all, just send it along and I'm happy to do it and I might even send you a little video tutorial if it's too complicated.

So thanks.

>> Steve: Thank you Matt.

We always appreciate this and I'm sure that getting into the weeds we will get lost. But that's the way we get started.

Very good.

Now I think we can take a break.

This will be an opportune time with the time we have spent and the time we have left so we will take ten minutes and come back at 11:31.

See you all in ten minutes.

[ Recess ]

Let's wait a couple more minutes.

Evidently Doug is having some technical difficulties.

And I don't see Brittini back.

And then Julianne, you will be up.

Okay I think we are ready to go.

As best as we can be.

Evidently Brittini has something she has to deal with so next on my list was or is key provisions of the constitutional amendment.

Julianne.

>> Julianne: Thank you, so much, Mr. Chair.

And I know we are running a bit behind schedule so I will be very brief.

But I wanted to take and make two points before I start.

The first on the EDS appendix.

If I wasn't clear it will be formally presented to EDS now the Commission approved it to get their response so we will keep the Commission apprised of that status.

And secondly, as to your map drawing that was just discussed just want to reiterate that under subsection eight of the Constitution the Commission can't draw any Michigan plans until after the public hearings have been conducted.

So again, you know, key focus on that Ohio drawing and really focusing on not being in Michigan.

But I will thank you for letting me share those thoughts and I will share my screen and we will finish this presentation.

We got through the first top three criteria on February 18th so we will go ahead and finish through the third criteria which we just had continuing education on again is the communities of interest.

Requiring reflecting that states diverse population what they may include but cannot be limited to populations that share cultural or historical characteristics but do not include relationships with political parties and comments on candidates.

So no single set definition is as the communities of interest are driven by local circumstance and examination of the shared interest as identified by that community. It's intentionally very broad.

Therefore I would encourage the Commission to reframe the question to how will the Commission incorporate communities of interest into their work through the public hearings, through outreach and going forward in its work.

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Examples include ethnic racial and economic groups or groups of people on a geographic area with common political social or economic interests.

And again, if a community of interest coincides with race or ethnicity compliance with section two of the VRA will be required.

The fourth criteria is partisan fairness so that is partisan gerrymandering where a district line is drawn to favor or disfavor a political party, candidate or incumbent.

So in a map without substantial partisan bias both parties would have similar opportunities to win.

Now you look at partisan bias on a statewide level and not on an individual district by district level.

And how would we look at that and measure it?

I have listed common uses statistical measures used for partisan fairness.

I am not going to go into those.

Mostly for a variety of reasons.

But I would like to highlight that the tests focus on determining fairness again at a statewide level and in a map without substantial partisan bias both parties would have similar opportunities to win elections.

So symmetry is speaks to voter success.

That it would translate to the same electoral success.

So if you had, if one party won a percentage of state and translate to a number of seats in a subsequent election if a different political party one or would that same outcome occur if a different party won that same percentage of statewide votes, it would not translate into the same number of seats then that map would provide asymmetric opportunities between those parties.

For a map to be responsive it would be the extent the electoral outcomes change in electoral outcomes would shift voter preferences.

So in a responsive map if a party wins increased share of states votes statewide the share of seats would also increase.

So it's staying with partisan gerrymandering.

The common cause is Rucho case from 2019 the U.S. Supreme Court held that partisan gerrymandering is incompatible with democratic principles.

They held that the Federal courts cannot review because they are non-justiciable questions and this really it means that judicial review of redistricting is suspended in a state where racial gerrymandering is unconstitutional at the same time partisan gerrymandering is not.

So you've heard me reference in the past 2017 case filed by the league of women voters against in Michigan alleging that districts were found to be partisan gerrymandered.

Lower Federal Court panel agreed it was appealed and unfortunately the decisions got reversed based on this holding in the Rucho case.

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So the district maps were allowed to low and stand as originally drawn.

The fifth criteria incumbency.

The proposal that created the MICRC shifted the responsibility again away from the partisan state legislature.

So the Commission is intended to operate without influence from existing legislatures and give the state maps the opportunity for a fresh start.

Even prior to the common cause case that I just mentioned, Federal courts were very reluctant to address partisan gerrymandering cases.

There was a Florida case a league of women voters of Florida that over nearly four years in the state courts, the Florida Supreme Court held that the this was a challenge against their 2012 Congressional plan that the plan was drawn with the intent to favor a party or incumbent and so the Court held that process the maps were tainted.

So the Florida Supreme Court held that their Florida Constitution prohibited the intent, not the effect.

So if the map would favor one party or another it's not per se unconstitutional unless there is proper intent in that map.

The sixth criteria is very straightforward the political subdivisions trying to maintain those bound driveways Michigan has 83 counties, 276 cities, 257 Village's and 1240 townships.

This criteria must be weighed against other higher ranked criteria and also being sensitive to the boundary splits.

The Commission already received public comment on this particular criteria.

The 7th and final criteria of compactness in that the general principle the constituents within a district will live as near to one another as possible.

U.S. Supreme Court case quote I like reapportionment is one area which appearances do matter when the Supreme Court gives guidance, they will know it when they see it it's always worth quoting, I think.

In practice many judges do use an eyeball test when they are looking at the districts. And then how compactness will be analyzed is based on the legal challenge that is advanced against the map.

I will stop there because again I know that we need to get on to other action items on the Commission's agenda but I do appreciate the opportunity to finish off of those last four criteria and I had more cases to talk about but again in the interest of time I'm sure we will have a chance to circle back on each of the criteria so thank you very much Mr. Chair.

>> Steve if you are speaking.

>> The host is sending me a message I have to unmute myself and I have just done that so next we are up for election for new Chair and vice Chair for the next six months.

And I would ask Suann to help us with this since I don't want to.

>> Sue: Okay, typically a staff does not take part in running a meeting, so I'm just facilitating here.

Your conversation.

And thank you for the opportunity.

And would ask if there are any thoughts about how to proceed with electing a Chair, your Chair and vice Chair are elected for six month terms.

This is exactly the sixth month Mark from electing your Chair and vice Chair.

So today is the day to do that.

And I would entertain any recommendations for how to proceed with the discussion or any motions that you might have.

Rhonda.

>> Rhonda: Why don't we do it like we did before where we take nominations.

>> Sue: Okay that is one option.

We will consider that.

Juanita, do you have something else?

>> Juanita: .

>> Sue: You have to unmute yourself, please.

>> Juanita: If I were to vote I would vote that Steve Lett and Brittini are doing a great job and they should be left doing that job.

That's my vote if I had to vote right now.

>> Sue: Okay Erin did you have something?

Did I miss you?

Okay Cynthia.

>> Cynthia: I agree they have done a great job thank you very much Erin and I mean Brittini and Steve, sorry.

But I think when we did in the first time there were several people that were interested in the opportunity, so I think whoever is interested should let us know that and then nominations for others.

>> Sue: MC did you have something different?

Okay I see your hand.

You have a hand there.

No?

Okay.

Rhonda.

>> Rhonda: I just received a message that Doug has a comment so I don't know.

>> Sue: Doug, please pop in on the phone.

>> Doug: I'm on the phone.

Can you hear me?

>> Sue: Yes.



>> Doug: Okay, yeah, I lost power in my house so I had to come back in on the phone.

But yeah, I would recommend we continue on a six month basis again.

And rather than take some other approach like rotating and that sort of thing.

And then take nominations and see where the interest is and even though both Steve and Brittini have done a good job but I think maybe it's time to give somebody else a chance to share in this responsibility, so I yield back.

>> Sue: Okay, then moving forward, is there someone who would like to nominate anyone or someone who is interest would like to express an interest in running for Chair or vice Chair position?

>> Doug: This is Doug I'd like to nominate Erin if I could, please, if she is interested.

>> Sue: Erin would you please unmute yourself and let us know if you are interested.

>> Erin: That is fine.

I was going to nominate Anthony.

>> Sue: Okay.

>> Anthony: Nominate me for what?

>> Sue: I think we are starting with Chair is that what everyone is thinking?

Okay.

>> Anthony: Well I really appreciate the nomination.

I'll have to decline.

I think that Steve has been doing a fine job.

>> Sue: Other nominations or people who are interested in serving?

Dustin?

>> Dustin: I'll nominate Brittini as Chair.

>> Sue: Brittini your thoughts.

>> Brittini: I accept.

I can also have a nomination too though?

>> Sue: Yes, you may.

>> Brittini: I was going to nominate Rebecca for Chair.

>> Sue: Rebecca, would you accept.

>> Rebecca: I would not accept a nomination for Chair, I would accept a nomination for co-Chair.

>> Sue: Okay, I don't Julianne can correct me but I don't believe we have an opportunity for that in our rules of procedure, but please let me know for sure.

>> Julianne: So thank you, Sue.

The nominations just come from the membership so you can nominate yourself or others and certainly respecting Commissioners Szetela request to not be in the running for Chair would be appropriate if we are at this time talking about nominating and voting on the Chair.

Does that help, Sue?

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>> Sue: Yes, I mean there is no provision for a co-Chair.

>> Julianne: I think she means vice Chair.

>> Sue: I think that is the question provision for a co-Chair or would we have a Chair and a vice Chair.

>> Julianne: Thank you for the clarification are you speaking to vice Chair Commissioner Szetela.

>> Julianne: That is what I thought at that time it would be appropriate to consider it and members of the public watching we are in rule 7.0 of the Commissioner's rules of procedure.

>> Sue: Okay, are there other nominations?

We have Erin and Brittini who have both accepted nominations.

Any other nominations?

Cynthia.

>> Cynthia: I know when we did the first round of this Dustin was interested, so he is not interested now.

Just wondering.

>> Sue: Thank you, MC.

>> MC: Thanks for bringing that up Cynthia Rhonda do I remember you were interesting and if so, I would nominate you.

>> Sue: I see a head shake.

>> MC: I like the nomination and I don't know if I have to move for nomination and if that is appropriate go ahead Julianne.

>> Julianne: Thank you Commissioner Rothhorn if I can get collar toy to reiterate Brittini accepted a nomination and Erin has accepted nomination for the Chair and I know there was discussion about Commissioner Lett if there was going to be a nomination either from himself or another Commissioner that had spoken that topic.

>> Steve: I would continue if that is what the people want but I will leave it up to the Commission.

>> Sue: I think you need a nomination though correct.

>> Julianne: I need the magic words.

>> Steve: I nominate myself.

>> Sue: All right.

>> Julianne: Thank you.

>> Sue: Okay we have three nominations.

Are there any other nominations?

All right, I was not there for the first.

I remember watching the video but that was a long time ago.

Did you simply vote for each one of the three?

And then take the top two and have a runoff if needed?

Am I correct on that?

>> Doug: That is how we did it.

>> Sue: That would certainly require a roll call vote so I would call on Sally.

There are three nominations for Chair of the Commissions.

It would be Commissioner Steve Lett, Commissioner Erin Wagner or Commissioner Brittini Kellom.

So if you would vote for one of those three and if Sally would help us with that.

>> Sally: Hello everyone I want to clarify first before I call the roll.

I believe last time the candidates had the opportunity to speak before voting.

I don't know if the Commission wants to do that at this time or just vote but I wanted to ask before calling the roll.

>> MC: I would appreciate that.

Thank you for bringing that to our attention I would appreciate that and 60 seconds.

>> Sue: Okay, who would like to be first?

>> Steve: I'll go first because I don't have anything to say other than you all know how I rock so.

>> Sue: Thank you, that was sort.

Brittini how about you.

>> Brittini: I was going to give it to Erin since I already have a position but I will speak. I think it would be a wonderful opportunity to continue to semi represent my peers here in the Commission but also help to facilitate the business that we have in the meetings. So that is my short speech.

It's been a pleasure thus far serving you all.

It has really been fun so thank you.

>> Sue: Thank you Brittini and Erin.

>> Erin: I had nothing to say to be honest.

I was hoping that either Anthony or Dustin who wanted to be Chair before would accept the nomination.

And I thought it was good to have an independent as a Chair and one of the other parties as co-Chair so thank you.

>> Sue: Thank you.

All right, I think, Sally, you may conduct the vote now.

>> Sally: Thank you everyone.

I will go in alphabetical order by last name starting with the last person who voted and approved the meetings so I will start with Brittini Kellom.

>> Brittini: Brittini Kellom.

>> Sally: Rhonda.

>> Erin.

>> Sally: Steve Lett.

>> Steve: Steve.

>> Sally: Cynthia Orton.

- >> Cynthia: Erin Wagner.
- >> Sally: MC Rothhorn.
- >> MC: Brittini Kellom.
- >> Sally: Rebecca Szetela.
- >> Rebecca: Brittini Kellom.
- >> Sally: Janice Vallette.
- >> Janice: Brittini.
- >> Sally: Erin Wagner.
- >> Erin: Oh, I'll say myself.
- >> Sally: Richard Weiss.
- >> Richard: Commissioner Brittini please.
- >> Sally: Dustin Witjes.
- >> Dustin: Brittini Kellom.
- >> Sally: Doug Clark.
- >> Doug: Erin.
- >> Sally: Juanita Curry.
- >> Juanita: .
- >> Juanita, you are muted.
- >> Juanita: Brittini.
- >> Sally: Anthony Eid.
- >> Anthony: Steve.
- >> Sally: I have majority vote for Brittini Kellom, seven Commissioners.
- >> Sue: Okay thank you very much.

We will move then to the vice Chair position.

Are there any nominations for vice Chair?

Rhonda.

>> Rhonda: Well my thoughts are since the first six months we had a democrat and an independent hold the chairs, I'm going to nominate Erin so the republicans can have some representation too.

>> Sue: Okay, other nominations?

Dustin.

>> Dustin: A switcheroo and nominate Steve.

>> Sue: Okay, other nominations?

>> MC: Is it understood each of them have accepted Erin and Steve have you each accepted the nomination.

>> Sue: I was operating under a really broad assumption if they accept the Chair, they would also accept a vice Chair position but if I'm wrong let me know.

>> Julianne: I think you should confirm it.

>> Sue: Please shake your head or confirm one way or another and confirm.

>> Steve: Sure.

>> Sue: And Erin.

>> Erin: Yes.

>> Sue: Are there any other nominations?

Yes, Janice.

>> Janice: We nominated Rebecca and she said she would be vice Chair so I would nominate her.

>> Sue: Okay, other nominations or persons interested in being the vice Chair?

Anthony.

>> Anthony: Yeah, I'll nominate myself for vice Chair.

>> Sue: I'm assuming you have talked to yourself and it's okay you will.

>> Anthony: Yes.

>> Sue: Okay, any other nominations?

If not, then would anyone like to give a vice Chair nomination words, speech?

I'm going to just start with the order you were nominated, Erin, anything else you would like to say?

>> Erin: No, thank you.

>> Sue: Okay how about you Steve.

>> Steve: Well with the wonderful group that has been nominated I'm going to withdraw.

Somebody else can have a shot.

>> Sue: Okay, Rebecca.

>> Rebecca: Just thank everybody for nominating me and I hope to do a good job if you vote me in.

Thank you.

>> Sue: And Anthony.

>> Anthony: Yeah, so if you all recall back six months ago that seems like we have not been together that long.

It's hard to believe that we have.

But I did run urgently for the vice Chair position.

I see the role as vice Chair as a facilitator.

You know to facilitate group conversation and keep the agenda moving and keep you know trying to hear everyone's voice in the process.

I also think I work pretty well with Brittini so far and I think we would be a good team.

That's all I got.

>> Sue: Thank you, I'm sure you kept that under your 60 second limit.

So okay then there are three people nominated for vice Chair.

They are Erin Wagner, Rebecca Szetela, or Anthony Eid.

We will proceed in the same manner with Sally from the Secretary of State doing the roll call.

>> Sally: Hello everyone.

So starting with the next person in alphabetical order by last name.

>> Rhonda: I'm sorry Sally Cynthia has her hand up.

>> Sue: Cynthia.

>> Cynthia: Can we have discussion for a minute?

>> Sue: Yes.

>> Cynthia: I agree with what Rhonda said I think there has been a democrat and an independent I think a republican needs to have equal time in leadership.

So.

>> Sue: Okay any other discussion?

>> Doug: This is Doug I support what Cynthia just said.

And I've got one point of clarification.

I'm assuming we these are going to be six month positions and we will vote again.

>> Sue: That is correct.

That is the way the rules of procedures are set up.

>> Doug: Okay thank you.

>> Sue: Not rules of procedure, you voted on them so obviously you could change them if you wanted a change but that is what has been established.

Any other discussion?

Okay, Sally, you may do the roll call vote then.

>> Sally: Thank you, everyone and thank you Commissioner Lange for stopping me.

Appreciate it.

All right so alphabetical order by last name.

Rhonda Lange.

>> Rhonda: Erin.

>> Sally: Steve Lett.

>> Steve: Rebecca.

>> Sally: Cynthia Orton.

>> Cynthia: Erin Wagner.

>> Sally: MC Rothhorn.

>> MC: Erin Wagner.

>> Sally: Rebecca Szetela.

>> Rebecca: Myself Rebecca Szetela.

>> Sally: Janice Vallette.

>> Janice: Rebecca.

>> Sally: Erin Wagner.

>> Erin: I guess myself.

>> Sally: Richard Weiss.

>> Richard: Commissioner Rebecca.

>> Sally: Dustin Witjes.

>> Dustin: That would be Rebecca Szetela.

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- >> Sally: Doug Clark.
- >> Doug: Erin Wagner.
- >> Sally: Juanita Curry.
- >> Juanita: I think everybody is great.

I guess I'll go with Erin.

- >> Sally: Anthony Eid.
- >> Anthony: I'll go with myself.
- >> Sally: Brittini Kellom.
- >> Brittini: This is a tough one.

Rebecca.

- >> Sally: Give me one moment while I double check the vote.

I have a tie with six votes for Erin and sorry Erin Wagner and six votes for Rebecca Szetela.

- >> Anthony: I'll change my vote unless someone else wants to vote again.
- >> Julianne: That vote failed so the runoff election did not come and the runoff is the

top two so that would be Erin and Rebecca.

- >> Sally: Thank you general counsel.

I will call the roll again.

Steve Lett.

- >> Steve: .
- >> Sally: You are muted Commissioner Lett.
- >> Rebecca.
- >> Sally: Cynthia Orton.
- >> Cynthia: Erin Wagner.
- >> Sally: MC Rothhorn.
- >> MC: Erin Wagner.
- >> Sally: Rebecca Szetela.
- >> Rebecca: Rebecca Szetela.
- >> Sally: Janice Vallette.
- >> Rebecca.
- >> Sally: Erin Wagner.
- >> Erin: Myself.
- >> Sally: Richard Weiss.
- >> Richard: Commissioner Rebecca.
- >> Sally: Dustin Witjes.
- >> Dustin: Rebecca Szetela.
- >> Sally: Doug Clark.
- >> Doug: Erin Wagner.
- >> Sally: Juanita Curry.
- >> Juanita: Erin Wagner.

>> Sally: Anthony Eid.

>> Anthony: I'll go with Rebecca.

>> Sally: Brittini Kellom.

>> Brittini: Rebecca.

>> Sally: Rhonda Lange.

>> Rhonda: Erin.

>> Sally: I have seven votes for Commissioner Szetela.

>> Steve: Okay is the elections are over and we have a new leader Brittini and if I had a gavel, I would turn it over to you but I don't.

But it's your meeting.

Thank you.

It's been a pleasure working with all of you as the Chair of the Commission.

And I'm sure it will be interesting as we continue on.

Thanks everybody for all the support, thank you.

>> Brittini: Steve it was a pleasure and I was going to let you finish off the meeting so thank you and I have learned so much and thank you all so looking at the agenda we will move to redid sunshine week resolution, no we did not do sunshine week.

So we are at sunshine week resolution.

Sorry we did a preview of sunshine week.

We had not discussed it so let's move to line item B and under new business.

>> Sue: Would you like me to take that or Edward?

Edward drafted this sunshine week resolution and it does basically reaffirm the Commission's commitment to openness and transparency and there is a resolution provided for you and it would be a nice thing to adopt this.

I think we are getting a lot of public comment in this area asking us to be this way when the Commission already operates in an open and transparent manner so you know if anybody has questions or would like Edward to weigh in please say so.

Do you have something to say?

>> MC: It's written and I like that it's sunshine.

Let's spread some sunshine and I would offer that we I guess I would move to the resolution but I do appreciate that it's sunshine week and maybe we want to verbally share it but I guess I also want to move us along so I was hesitant to move to the resolution without understanding if there is an intent to read it for public for the interest of the public or for us otherwise, I would move, yeah, that we adopt the resolution.

>> Brittini: Edward.

>> Edward: You can put it in the public record as part of your minutes but we also want to send it out to our gov delivery as a resolution that has been approved by the Commission once it's approved.

Yes, definitely a part of the minutes.

>> Brittini: Okay great do we have a second to MC?



Richard and Erin.

Okay, second so we have a second.

Okay and moving on now from the resolution to the legal and Federal legislative update from General Counsel Pastula, Julianne.

Cynthia sorry I did not see your hand my apologies.

>> Cynthia: I think we need to vote still on it.

>> Brittini: I apologize I split my screen and I totally got confused.

So I would like to take a vote for the sunshine week resolution, excuse me and Sally can you help us with that?

>> Julianne: Madam Chair, if you would like the voice vote that can certainly be called.

You can also you have the options for raising the hand of assent or a voice vote of ayes or nay.

>> Brittini: We will do a voice vote because that is faster so go ahead.

>> Julianne: And if I could also just request that the show of hands is very helpful on Zoom for us to do our work behind the scenes.

>> Brittini: So thank you with the show of hands if you are voting to approve the sunshine week resolution as presented.

[ Hands raised ]

And by my account that is majority, if you disapprove and do not want to approve the resolution same sign.

And the resolution is passed.

So now moving on excuse me to the legal and Federal legislative update by general counsel Pastula.

>> Julianne: Thank you Madam Chair.

I have just a couple items to cover.

I'll try to get through them as quickly as possible for the sake of time.

First, I would like to indicate the potential dates relative to the joint petition with the Secretary of State's office to the Michigan Supreme Court will be presented to the Commission next week and I will be providing an update on the census data next week as well.

Second to inform the Commission that there was a hearing yesterday in the case Daunt versus Benson this case was dismissed in July of 2020.

And the hearing that occurred yesterday is in regard to the appeal of that dismissal. The case was originally filed in Michigan Federal Court in July 2019 prior to the opening of the application period for the Commission.

The case challenges the Commission's formation and alleges that it's unconstitutional, particularly the membership criteria restraint on the first and 14th amendments.

The secretary Benson's office has been defending this action since its inception and, again, was able to successfully get a motion to dismiss adopted by the Court.

It has a very long and procedural history.

I would like to note that a national advocacy group intervened as a Defendant by leave of the Court, that group in Michigan is known as voters not politicians.

There were Amicus brief filed on certain motions from the league of women voters and also other entities.

The case was consolidated with a case filed by the Michigan republican party that also challenges the constitutionality and more on the procedure history but I would like to get and extract out what is relevant for our discussion and our consideration today.

One thing that the Plaintiff asked for when they filed the case was for a preliminary injunction to stop the secretary's office from all Commission related proceedings during the litigation and in that is the action, the motion where league of women voters filed an amicus joining in against the preliminary injunction.

The other entities would have been common cause, leadership now issue one equal citizens foundation and the center for the study of presidency and Congress and represent us.

In November of 2019 the Court denied excuse me the Court denied the request to issue a preliminary injunction.

That decision was also appealed.

There is lots of appeals in case.

It's a very exciting case.

I'm sure hopefully law schools will study it in the future.

And the denial was upheld by the sixth circuit Court of appeals of April 2020.

As I stated previously the July 6, 2020 dismissal is what was argued yesterday in Court.

We will be monitoring it for a decision.

How does this impact the MICRC?

So currently not at all.

The request to halt the formation of the Commission was rejected and that rejection was upheld on appeal that was the motion for preliminary injunction.

That issue is settled.

Therefore it is appropriate for the MICRC to continue its open work and open and transparent process including holding your public hearings, encouraging public participation in your meetings. And, again, making sure the public knows that the MICRC is steadfast in its commitment to ensure fairness, awareness, transparency and engagement in the redistricting process while the Court considers the appeal of the dismissal of the case.

So I'd like to also acknowledge the work of the AG's office, in particular Heather Meingast and Erik Grill. Erik, Mr. Grill, did the oral argument yesterday at the Court on behalf of the SOS, the Defendant in case.

And Graham Crabtree, Anabelle Harless and Paul M. Smith were the attorneys for the intervening Defendant that also argued in support of the secretary's position.

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Other Federal litigation, I thought that was the most important one to touch on initially so that the Commission was aware that that is happening and until a decision is rendered really, we are proceeding according to plan.

Other Federal litigation update, I mentioned before that Ohio the state of Ohio had filed a lawsuit against the census burrito compel it to release data by the original deadline.

Since that time Alabama has also filed Federal suit in Federal Court.

Challenging not only the delay in the release of the data like Ohio but they are also challenging the use of differential privacy.

I know the Commission has heard that term before.

From our continuing education and expert presentations.

This is the statistical algorithm that scrambles of the persons particularly at census block level it's the first time this algorithm is being used and there is much discussion about it.

Since the 2000 census the Bureau had been using data swapping to protect individuals identities as a way to it's referred to as noise with quotes.

Noise into the system.

So that Alabama joined that litigation effort.

As far as legislation, the HR1 for the people act was introduced in January of 2021 and passed by the house on March 3rd of 2021.

It was received in the Senate on March 11th. At 791 pages it's much shorter than the final COVID relief bill. But I would like to state for the record that I did not read all 800 pages.

I focused in on title two, election integrity, Subtitle E, which is redistricting reform.

The proposed legislation would -- Federal legislation would create 15 member independent redistricting Commissions for all of the states to follow in regard to Congressional redistricting.

And it sets forth eligibility requirements, plan criteria the roll of the courts plan enactment.

It has no effect on the districting for state or local offices that is in section 2434 of that proposed legislation.

And I'm very pleased to report that under the current version of the legislation adopted by the house in section 2401 subpart C it exempts states with certain with independent redistricting Commissions that meet certain requirements which the MRC appears to meet those criteria.

The first is publicly available application process.

The second is disqualification for governmental service and political appointees.

Third screening for conflicts.

Multi partisan composition is the fourth criteria.

The fifth criteria relates to redistricting itself criteria which we are in alignment with.

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The sixth is a requirement for public input and 7 is the broad based support of the approval of the final plan and the Federal legislation only requires one vote from one major party and one unaffiliated.

Another is payments for state to carry out redistricting 2431 there is a formula provided states with one member do not receive the payment, would not be eligible, states with existing Commissions would need to certify their Commission and meets the requirements that I just went through briefly in order to receive the payments to be able to conduct redistricting activities.

Two other important provisions I wanted to just mention I found of note again in the redistricting reform section it's a very comprehensive bill on election and voting legislation but I wanted to focus for our purposes here today just on the redistricting portion.

There is a ban on mid-decade redistricting that is in Section 2402 and Subtitle H would incorporate the residence of incarcerated individuals at the last place of residence before their incarceration for purposes of being counted.

If it is adopted but I the Senate and is signed into law, this would be effective in the 2030 round.

So this is the most significant legislation regarding elections and redistricting currently at the Federal level.

I would note that the November 2020 elections that we just had, had the largest voter turnout in more than a century and 73% of the electorate cast their ballots before election day either on absentee or early voting.

So nationwide at the state level over 40 states have introduced bills in this current legislative cycle that impact election or voting in the following areas.

Voting by mail or absentee voting.

Early voting and voter registration and voter ID.

I think it's in excess of almost 300 bills at this point.

And the bills vary on restricting or expanding access in those areas.

But I thought it was important to note for the Commission not only the volume of proposed legislation but also its scope.

Thank you.

That will conclude my remarks on this topic Madam Chair.

I can answer any questions.

>> Brittini: Thank you, Julianne.

I really appreciate your thoroughness and making sure we understood everything and like she said are there any questions?

>> MC: I think I heard the term mid deck but I wasn't sure if that was -- did I mishear it?

I don't know what it refers to.

>> Julianne: So through the Chair Commissioner Rothhorn mid decking is done at the state level in between the census, the sent Tuesday every ten years.

>> MC: Sorry it was decade.

>> Julianne: Decade, yeah, I apologize.

>> MC: I forgot the last part got it, thank you.

>> Brittini: Any other questions or thoughts?

>> Julianne: Thank you for the opportunity to provide again a very brief summary I could have talked about the sixth circuit appeal case.

Or any of it for much more extended but I thought the snapshot was an important item to consider.

Thank you.

>> Brittini: It is.

I appreciate it as always please keep us updated on our toes about what is coming.

So next we have future meetings and agenda items.

I take it that Ms. Sue Hammersmith will guide us through that.

>> Sue: Thank you Commission Kellom.

>> You are welcome.

>> Sue: Yes, so you have received some homework to be done by Monday.

So please do your mapping of Ohio.

And turn that in to either Matt or me if you want to send it to me, I will make sure that he gets that.

And then Eric Guthrie, who is the state demographer, and he will be here next week to talk about the underlying data behind those maps.

We also will have Julianne request she mentioned for date relief that is going to the Supreme Court that will be available and there has been a request to get the public hearing times to the Commission by next week, so Edward will be working on that portion.

Possibly have more locations and in place for us so we are sure about locations also.

Those are the main topics that I have on the agenda for next week.

If there is anything else, they want to discuss I think MC may have something.

>> MC: Matt told us Monday was the deadline for the homework not necessarily the future meeting is that true?

>> Sue: He would like the homework by Monday.

He has some experts who are going to look at what is provided and then give some feedback at our meeting next week.

>> MC: Okay thank you.

>> Sue: Any other questions, comments, suggestions?

Julianne.

>> Julianne: Thank you.

I just wanted to last week I briefly mentioned that there was a bill introduced in the Senate to extend the deadline to conduct virtual meetings.

For any reason through June 30th.

I double checked the status of that bill just this morning and there has been no action since it was referred to the committee on Government operations on March 4th.

Again the current accommodation to conduct virtual or remote meetings expires on March 31st so I just wanted to provide that update to the Commission.

Thank you, Sue.

>> Sue: Thank you, Julianne if you note at the end of your agenda.

Again, the current accommodation to conduct virtual -- virtual or remote meetings expires on March 31st. So, I just wanted to provide that update to the commission.

Thank you, Sue.

>> Sue: Thank you, Julianne, if you note at the end of the agenda, all of the future meetings have been extended to accommodate the commissioner wishes for more time for discussion. So, on March 25th, we're going to start, with your approval at 12:30 and end at 4:30. We have extended that an -- our and on March 30th, follow the VRA legal council meeting from 8 to 9:30. And any commissioner is invited to attend that meeting or watch that meeting and watch the Committee do their work. And then on April 8th, we will have to cancel that meeting if we have to pivot on April 1st. That's why we moved April 1 to March 30. So, on April 8th, we will have to cancel that meeting because there is no way that MDOS and your staff can find a location, get all the technology in place in order to be able to put that kind of a meeting together. Which has a lot of technical concerns that we'll have to make sure we deal with to get everything right. So, if -- if that happens, you'll have notice. You'll have a week's notice. And then on April 15th, we will go from 9 to 2. And depending on what happens with virtual versus in-person meetings, we will have VRA legal counsel presentations on the 8th or the 15th. That's the best plan at this point to forge ahead and get the business handled. Julianne, do you have something to add?

>> Julianne: I do. To follow-up on your comments, the commission has options to certainly if a vote for the March 25th meeting would be in order since it's your next meeting, if you are going to start earlier. Again, the time frame indicated on your agenda is 12:30 to 4:30. And the reason that's important would be for the public notice, for the public meeting notice. This would be different -- a different time for beginning than -- than is noted in your regular meeting schedule. So, if the commission could act on either that discrete meeting notice time change or if the commission wanted to act, again, on the full complement of the changes that the executive director raised. That would also be appropriate. But it's entirely up to the discretion of the commission. But again, if you want to start at 12:30 next week, I would ask that a motion would be brought and acted upon. Thank you.

>> Thank you, Julianne. Is there a motion for that change? Cynthia?

>> I motion that.

>> Thank you. And Rebecca, you're second. Okay. Let's take a vote with hands since that's the favorite. If you're in favor of the March 25th date as presented with the time -- oh. Okay.

>> Julianne: You answered my question, madam chair.

>> Brittni: With the time, please signify with a hand. By my count, that's majority. If you are opposed, same sign. And the vote passes. Our next meeting date will be March 25th from 12:30, new start time, ending at 4:30:00 p.m.

>> Julianne: Thank you, madam chair.

>> You're welcome.

>> Sue: And that was only for the 25th.

>> The April 8th change.

>> Sue: The 30th is also different from the meeting time. Typically we're 9 to noon or 12 to 1. So, those meetings have all been extended that are at the bottom of your agenda.

>> Brittni: If we could, yes, Julianne?

>> Julianne: I thought the commission had adjusted the regular meeting from April 1st to the 30th. That action has been taken. Verifying again that action has been taken. But that is my recollection that I will be double checking. I know there was no action taken on the 8th or the 15th.

>> Brittni: Just on the two dates, then.

>> Sue: There was a motion to begin at 9:30 that was approved at the last meeting.

>> Brittni: Perfect.

>> Sue: I don't know that the extension was approved. But the commission can do that with the agenda as well.

>> Should we vote on the dates with the extension of time as presented at the bottom?

>> Dustin: I would say so moved to that.

>> Brittni: Thank you, Dustin. MC with the second. Go ahead.

>> Julianne: To restate, the motion by Dustin, seconded by MC. And the motion is to extend the March 30th meeting time from 9:30 -- it was moved earlier. To extend to 1:30 and to adjourn the April 8th meeting and then the April 15th meeting will be from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

>> Brittni: Correct. That's my understanding. Thank you for restating. With a show of hands, if you vote to approve those changes as presented, please raise your hand. And that's a majority by my count again. If don't like the changes want to suggest something else, same sign. And those times and dates are accepted. The change of the 8th, the extension of the 30th. Go ahead, Julianne.

>> Julianne: I apologize, we might need to retake that vote. The April 8th vote was contingent to having to meet in-person. Which was written on the form. But when I was

reciting it, that was not clear. The April 8th date would only be adjourned if it was an in-person meeting. I apologize for that confusion. So, I would recommend re-taking the vote to extend March 30th, 9:30 to 1:30. April 8th, from 12:30 to 5:30 which would be canceled if in-person meetings are required. And April 15th from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

>> Brittni: Okay.

>> Steve: So moved.

>> Brittni: Thank you, Steve. Can we have a second to Steve? Richard gave a second. Let's vote again, gang. So, if we're in favor of those switches as presented, please raise your hand. That's a majority again by my count. All opposed. Same sign. Again, thank you, Julianne, for being so diligent about that.

>> Julianne: And I apologize, for clarity's sake I think in this instance it was better to just re-take the vote. Thank you.

>> Brittni: It's okay. You're fine. So, if I'm tracking, Sue, do we need to address the agenda items?

>> Sue: I think we've already done that. We've talked about upcoming meetings and what we're planning.

>> Brittni: Just making sure. I don't want to goof again. Okay. Next, I have announcements. Any announcements for the good of the order? I see shaking heads. I see some stares. Okay. No announcements. Well, the last thing, not to drag it on, number 11, is adjournment. So, if we have nothing else, if we've all had a great time and want to enjoy our earlier Thursday, can I have a motion for adjournment? I got Erin with the motion and Juanita and Cinthia with the second. And I would like the call -- I would like to call the meets adjourned at 12:39.

>> Can we vote, please? Can we vote, please?

>> Brittni: I was too excited. I'll take a vote for adjournment. All those in favor? Raise your hand. Majority. And all those opposed? See ya later.

[Meeting Concludes at 12:39 pm]