

ICRC

01/12/21 Meeting

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>> Steve Lett: Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen as chair of the commission I call this meeting of the Michigan independent citizens redistricting commission to order. This is a Zoom webinar and it's 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@redistrictingMI to find a link for another viewing platform. Our live stream today includes closed captioning. We have ASL interpretation available for this meeting. If you are a member of the public watching who would like easier viewing options for the ASL interpreter on your screen, please e-mail us at redistricting@Michigan.gov and we will provide you with additional viewing options. Similarly, members of the public who would like to access translation services during the webinar can e-mail us at redistricting@Michigan.gov for details on how to access language translation services available for this meeting. Translation services are available both in 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 will be available at redistricting Michigan.org for viewing at a later date. This meeting is also being transcribed and those transcriptions will be made available and posted on redistricting Michigan.org along with written public comment submissions.

Members of the media who may have a questions before, during or after the meeting should direct those questions to Anita Kiersnowski. Press secretary department of state. Members of the media should have her contact information. For purposes of the public watching and the public record I will turn to the department of state staff to take note of the commissioners present. Sally, can we have a roll call?

>> Sally: Good afternoon. Commissioners when I call your name, which I will call in alphabetical order by last name, I'd also like to ask that you affirm that you are attending this meeting remotely and where you're attending it from so all you just need to say is attending remotely from and insert where you are attending from it's something that is needed per the open meetings act and sort of the digital remote time, we are in. So we will give it a try this time around. And I will start with Doug Clark.

>> Present and I'm attending the meeting from Rochester hills, Michigan.

>> Juanita Curry.

>> Juanita Curry present and I'm attending the meeting from Detroit, Michigan.

>> Anthony Eid.

>> Hi, I'm present and joining remotely from Oakland county.

>> Great, and Sarah also I forgot to mention this you can all say the county you are attending from too if you don't want to say the city. Just an option for you all as Anthony just did so Brittini Kellom.

>> Brittini Kellom present and I'm attending the meeting from Wayne County.

>> Rhonda Lange.

>> Present and attending from Mairead city.

>> Steve Lett.

>> Present and I am attending from Bonita springs, Florida.

>> Cynthia Orton.

>> Sorry my unmute button wasn't working I'm present and attending from Battle Creek Michigan.

>> MC Rothhorn.

>> Present and attending from Lansing, Michigan.

>> Rebecca Szetela.

>> Present and attending remotely from Canton Michigan.

>> Janice Vallette.

>> Present and attending the meeting remotely from Hyland, Michigan.

>> And Erin Wagner is not present. Richard Weiss is it looks like Richard is trying to log on right now so I will try to come back to him. Dustin Witjes.

>> I'm present and I am attending from Howell, Michigan.

>> It looks like Richard is trying to log on and Richard you are muted if you are trying to talk. We may have to just come back to Richard in a few moments. But that ends the roll call, thank you. There is a quorum.

>> Steve: That gives us at least 11 people present so that is a quorum. The next item will be the adoption of the agenda. Everyone should have received a copy of that. Are there any additions, deletions or new business to add?  
Sue?

>> Sue: The person taking the minutes reminded me that interviews had been conducted under new business so between B and C I would ask that you just correct your agenda to have a number 8 new business and then the C and D will become A and B under new business. Just a technicality.

>> Steve: A technicality without a difference that is good.

>> Sue: Yes.

>> Steve: Anything else?

I have a -- Sue sent me a letter to send to general counsel candidates. Did you send that to everybody, Sue?

>> Sue: I just sent it to you initially. I'd be happy to send it to everyone.

>> Steve: It's not that long. We can read it so put that under new business, I want to talk about that for just about ten seconds is all. Other than that, if we have no further

changes in the agenda, all in favor of the agenda as amended raise your hand. [ Hands raised ]

And Richard who we don't have a video on, Richard are you good with the agenda? Are you there and can you hear us, Richard?

We will assume he is. Okay next is review and approval of the minutes. They were provided prior to the meeting. Are there any additions, corrections or changes that need to be made to the minutes that anybody has?

MC.

>> MC: It might be a question I want to make sure we are not sort of contradicting ourselves with Richard Weiss join at 1:44 and roll call say all commissioners are present it's clear a quorum was met but yeah if it's a technicality so it does not need to be changed.

I was just a question whether we need to modify the minutes in order to sort of reflect that Richard did join at 1:44 join the roll call which is top of page two.

>> Steve: I think if it was not clear before it is now. Thank you. Anything else from anybody?

Okay, if everybody is good with that, we will and approve the adoption of the minutes as presented raise your hand. [ Hands raised ]

Any opposed?

Same sign. Okay, they are done.

Public comment Sally do we have public comment today?

>> Sally: Yes, we have one person participating in live public comment.

>> Steve: Okay, a couple of comments before we do that. That we have discussed. The -- one question that was sent in by a citizen wanted to know if we could acknowledge that emails, public comment that come into us there may be from time to time just like I'm doing right now acknowledging that there are public comments that come in through e-mail. Also all the public comments that come into us are archived and you can find those on the website that we have and you can read them all. So the person that was asking that there you go.

Secondly, one came in asking what restriction and rules are in place to prevent gerrymandering in the future. Well, I don't know what will happen in the future. But I know right now what is happening is there are 13 of us that are going to attempt to come up with a redistricting plan that is not a gerrymandered plan and that is as fair and equitable as we can make it. And in that process, we are guided by the constitutional amendment that was adopted and if you will go to that at your time and that's also on the website and look at section 13, that tells you what we have to look at. There are a number of things this commission will be looking at to make a plan that we hope will be fair and equitable as best we can do it.

A few notes about the public comment for those just joining us or going to participate, because this is a virtual meeting members of the public have to sign up in advance to

address the commission. Staff at the department of state will unmute each member of the public for up to 90 seconds on a first come, first serve basis. This means that members of the public will be called on in the order in which they signed up to address the commission. To those members of the public participating in public comment please note you will have no more than 90 seconds to address the commissioner this afternoon. We will conclude the public comment after the person making the public comment has had their opportunity to speak and it's my understanding you have one today. In the future if you would like to submit your thoughts to the commission and participate in public comment in an upcoming session of the commission, you can e-mail our office at [redistricting@Michigan.gov](mailto:redistricting@Michigan.gov) and we will provide you with written thoughts to the commission. Public comments sign up links are also posted on redistricting Michigan social media pages on Facebook and Twitter at redistricting MI.

Now, I would call on Sally Marsh department of state director of special projects who will call on members of the public to address the commission. Sally?

>> Sally: Good afternoon. So individuals who have signed up to address the commission and provide live public commentary will now be allowed to do so for up to two minutes. I will keep time. After I call your name your screen will change and you will rejoin the meeting as a presenter. This is to the member of the public who is participating today. Then you will need to turn your sound on and video on before you can make those live public comments. And at the time you start speaking your two minutes will begin and once you are done speaking, I will come back on to let you know that your two minutes has elapsed. So for public comment today we have Amin-Ula and give a second to get you on to the meeting. Amin can you hear us?

>> Yes, I can hear everyone.

>> You have two minutes.

>> So I just wanted to thank you for the opportunity, I just wanted to bring up two quick things to the commission. I know it's not on the agenda but I think outreach in marketing is very important. To kind of communicate to the constituents about what is happening especially regarding very detailed things of the Constitution of state. For example the Constitution says that districts should be reasonably as a member of the general public I would really like to know, I would really like to know exactly what ledger the commission is planning on using in terms of measuring the districts. And the other point I want to talk about is the communities of interest as the Constitution also mentions. So I think it's very important to understand how is the community of interest going to be defined. One particular way is like the COVID movement maps we have been seeing recently. Those could be potential way to kind of define the community of interest if you have where people are moving and where they are at. Thank you they are my two points and thank you for the activity.

>> Brittni: Thank you.

>> Sally: This concludes live public comment and I also want to note that Richard Weiss has joined by phone. Richard you should be able to say hello.

>> Richard: .

>> Steve: Richard are you there?

>> Richard: I'm here listening and I have a hammer in my hand.

>> Steve: You got to get a bigger hammer.

>> Richard: I think so because it's too excited I got on for a little bit but it was real sporadic so I signed off and signed back in and now my password went out.

>> Steve: You are here and we will note that and count you in as here.

>> Richard: Cool, thank you.

>> Steve: Help me out commissioners with Mr. Ula's comment the first comment he had kind of broke up and I'm wondering if somebody caught more of what he was speaking to. Than I did. Anybody.

>> Doug: My understanding is the question he asked is how are we going to go about doing the redistricting. And I think at this point in time the answer to that would be that the legislature is giving us 7 criteria to do the redistricting to base off of and we are going to be in the process of hiring some redistricting experts that have the redistricting software and we will work out the details on how we are going to implement those 7 criteria as we go forward.

>> Steve: And the second part of his question was on communities of interest. And clearly, we are going to have a minimum of ten meetings that Mr. U la if you are so listening to determine or at least have input on what a community of interest are and who they are and what they are and what they would like to have so we are working at it. Anthony?

>> Anthony: Yes, he also asked specifically about the compactiveness of each district which is how large they are or how they may sprawl out into many different locations or be rather compact in size and shape. And I think to answer that question you know the first thing we are going to need is the census data and then after we get that we can start making assessments on how exactly we are going to Judge on that.

>> Steve: Right and the other thing Mr. U la if you are still listening you should know is there are in fact computer programs out there that work on mapping and census data and we will be using those as well. Those were all the comments. I could not hear him on that first part but those are good questions from him.

Okay, we are up to the point welcoming our general legal counsel Julianne Pastula and I see her name somewhere. She just disappeared off my screen. Julianne, are you there?

You were.

>> Julianne: Yes, Commissioner Lett I activated my camera.

>> Steve: There you are welcome.

>> Julianne: Thank you so much I appreciate this opportunity and I'm looking forward very much to serving the commission.

>> Steve: The usual first meeting comments by a new member such as yourself is about a half hour dissertation on voting rights act in your case.

>> Julianne: Wonderful let me cue up my PowerPoint and I can get started. I may go a little bit longer than a half hour chairperson Lett if you will accommodate me.

>> Steve: I don't know how you want to be addressed. You may want counsel or esquire but I prefer Steve.

>> Julianne: Steve I will note that.

>> Steve: Most of the other people go by first names and they can let you know if they want something else. Good. I'm being somewhat facetious is there some comments that you would like to give us or ask us questions or whatever you are welcome. We welcome you and look forward to working with you.

>> Julianne: I would like to take the opportunity again to extend my thanks and to thank not only Sue Ann but the department of state members that have really made this transition go smoothly. I know it's still on going. Getting up to speed as quickly as I can. I've already begun drafting documents for the commission hopefully you will see in the near future so you can discuss them in public and weigh in on them in public. I'm listening intently to your meetings and rewatched all your old meetings so I really hope that I'm in a solid foundation to move forward and best support the commission but thank you again and I'm here if you need me. Please call me Julianne. Or if you just need to yell out counsel that's fine too. I'll be -- I'm always listening.

>> Steve: All right and you do realize there is a couple of attorneys on this commission, right?

>> Julianne: I do and we were going to work through that together.

>> Steve: .

>> Julianne: I realize there are some commissioners that are also attorneys.

>> Steve: That is what I meant. Okay, anybody have any questions for Julianne?  
MC.

>> MC: I wanted to extend Julianne comments to the realm of names because Toi and Beth any and Cathleen and Sarah in addition to Mike and Sally I want to give a shout out to those people who have made the transition you know as Julianne mentioned easy to do and it feels like it's inclusive and it's accessible to the public so I just wanted to give a shout out to those folks.

>> Steve: Okay, anybody else got anything for the good of the group or for Julianne? Since she is you know she is on the clock you might as well ask the questions. Sue.

>> Sue: I also want to echo MC's comments. The Michigan department of staff has been so helpful to me as I've transitioned into this position. So I'm very thankful for all the help they have given. Long before Julianne and I came aboard, but the transition has been a lot easier because of their assistance so there is a lot that goes on in the



background that you don't see on the screen. During meetings. But they are working really hard and they are working every day to make sure that this commission is successful. So I appreciate that.

>> Steve: Very good. Anybody else?

Okay, under old business whether it's old or new we have conflicts of interest. And I keep losing people on my screen. Mike and Brittini that is what I was looking for you. This was is or has been your issue. I will let you take it from here.

>> Brittini: Well, it's a question I think it's a us issue but I think I fielded it to Sally and Mike and it was my understanding and also Julianne if the three of them I assume would come together to kind of give us some insight on how we move forward. I know it's a curious day to have this discussion but I think it's worth exploring for sure.

>> Steve: Well it's certainly not any time we have any issue that the commission has it's not an unusual. It's an issue that people on the commission have and we do need to explore it and we thank you for bringing it before us and sticking with it.

>> Brittini: No problem.

>> Steve: So.

>> Brittini: I see that Sally has her hand raised.

>> Sally: Thanks Brittini and I saw Mike there, Mike and I have provided a bit of a sort of informal presentation but just some hopefully some helpful perspective to provide to all of you and we've talked with Sue and Julianne about it as well. So Mike if you are ready, I can share the slides if you would like.

>> Mike: Yes, please good afternoon.

>> Steve: Hi, Mike.

>> Mike: Nice to see you all. It's a very basic PowerPoint but it's one that Sally and Sarah have pulled together just with the hope it would make it you know a little more accessible for people watching from home. And I suppose you know being very basic and starting off the conversation and you know I would be remiss if I didn't both welcome Julianne but also say how thrilled I am to have Julianne on board to give you all the proper legal counsel and assistance that you deserve for your activities.

So Brittini, I appreciated the question. Of course I followed all of the meetings back since September and all of that. And it is a topic that has come up several times. As I was thinking about the various discussions as it has come up, and most recently the meeting when it was last Thursday, and your request to have some additional discussion around that, I had some additional conversation with Sally and Sarah and also Sue and trying to take to heart there was a specific question about conflict of interest. But as I thought about it more and as we talked about it more, it struck me that conflict of interest is one term that and there are actually other things in play. And there is a relationship between these three concepts. They are, in fact, distinct opportunities for them to be interrelated and so I wanted to call those out in different ways. And

forgive me if you know if I'm overshooting or under shooting or missing the mark altogether.

>> Brittini: This is perfect.

>> Mark: We will see how it goes but with that I wanted to thank you. And go into it. Along the lines if we move three different things conflict of interest and looking at conflict of interest first and foremost, I hear this thrown around not on the commission but society in general. Lots of other meetings organizations I'm a part of or have been a part of and folks are I think there is a general understanding that conflict of interest is something people should be concerned about. I don't want to talk any one out of that concern. But for me the key term there is the conflict of interest. And so to think we all have different hats that we wear. So I'm a husband. I'm a father, I'm a son. I'm a brother. I'm also the director here at the Michigan department of state. I have been an attorney in other roles and I believe that I still have a professional responsibility to prior clients. Even if it's not current but on matters where I assisted them in the past so I just named off a few different hats that define me. But each of those things that I just said those are interests some of them can stay longer or work in different ways. You know I don't also have a business on the side. But some of you may have multiple businesses or other things you could add to your list. You know I could think about my involvement in my faith community. There are other things that define us and each of the things may be of interest and the question then becomes conflict of interest hones in on that the conflict of various interests that you have. That you would want to see and when they are actually in and this is the term forgive me for repeating it when they are in conflict and not aligned with each other. And so we will go through some examples of this later on. But you know we pulled Miriam Webster's dictionary a fine place to start and says a conflict of interest is a conflict between the private interest and the official responsibilities of a person in a position of trust. And then by contrast you could have a shared interest. So there are all sorts of examples where you know, something that maybe you go into a line of work because of your background and your history or passions, right?

And you know, all of you would be fortunate to the degree that's the case and all of us would be fortunate if we chose our line of work to really believe in something. The fact we believe in something and we have history or experience with something that may speak to an interest that exists for us outside of our professional strictly speaking professional responsibility but that is not necessarily in conflict with the work you chose. Frankly maybe you chose your work because you have a history there. And so there is a way in which I'm of course speaking to the second bullet point the shared interest where the two things can go side by side and they work you know together or at the very least even if they are not necessarily working together, they are not in conflict. We can move to the next slide.



And so you know some examples of a conflict of interest versus a shared interest. You know you can find a business example you know each of you has each of you took an oath of office when you became a commissioner and swore to things and pulled the Constitution and so if you know just think of the various business demands that this commission already has, right, so I don't know, have phones, have computers, at some point you will be hiring outside counsel, specialized outside counsel at some point. You know mapping software. Things along those lines. Well if one of you happen to you know maybe you or your parent or something, I don't know was a CEO of a mapping company, then that could be a conflict of interest. Because you want there to be good mapping software. For the commission. That is an interest you have. But you would also -- but you might also feel conflicted because you also had this opportunity to vote or do something which could direct more business and high profile business from the submission to your parent or yours or your parents or you know someone that you have some kind of connection with to them. And so that would benefit them in a clear you know example in terms of a business example.

And plenty of business examples, I of course just made this up the example of the mapping company but you get the idea there. Another example we include a fictitious Judge Smith were to proceed over a case which the Defendant that is coming before the Judge and that has been or being tried for some crime or another was a former clients. That is an obvious conflict the Judge is an obligation to serve the people and to look at every matter impartially. But as a former attorney he has an ongoing obligation to you know in certain respects to her client. So that is a conflict. A shared interest you know this example which you all can read but I will read it allowed who may not have access and listening to it, it talks about main street businesses and local tourism Bureau can work together because union supporting construction of historic land scores and signs on Main Street to attract more visitors. This may be an example of what is the old saying like what is good for the goose is good for if gander and writing time looks on both they have common interests and their alignment and work together is not conflicting. You can move on to the next slide.

There is some examples of this work conflict of interest, it's addressing more explicitly in state law. This is the brief of civil reviews but just to acknowledge it's addressing the state law because how could it not be. On one hand we are aware of the term because we hear about the abuses of the term. We hear about circumstances where people had a conflict of interest and we will get to questions like and then it played out in a way that was actually detrimental or perceived to be detrimental to that role, to that person's oath of office, to society at large. And so in turn as is often the case you know laws or constitutional amendments were put in over the years and Michigan has been around since 1837 or something, we became a state. Mark or Sally or whoever. It has been a moment, right?

So you know rarely something new under the sun to turn our constitutional and various laws and the ICRC code of conduct looks into some of these things. I'm not going to fully go into all of this and probably won't say much more than that but to say there is a lot of stuff out there already because this is not a new question that the commission is facing in terms of actual conflict of interest. Julianne, I know has been doing a lot -- much more intensive analysis and you know deep dive on each of these things. And not to be clear to put her on the spot for today but just to say she has been looking into all of that. And you know because she brings a wealth of history working on these sorts of topics in her career and I think it's noted from her prior work and the commission talked about that before. At the very least to know you are in good hands with ongoing legal counsel and her ability to do a deeper dive whether Brittini or anyone else on some of these questions that I'm barely scratching the surface on but at least wanted to look at some of these concepts. Next slide, please.

And so there has been a question of perhaps ethics and integrity so I said you know it's there are various and reference to this in the Constitution and reference to various state laws how could there not be. Well not every conflict of interest is really criminal. It becomes a question of what happens next. So it is you know kind of the key way in which this plays out is that individuals who have a conflict need to disclose that conflict. They need to be transparent about that conflict. And so if one of you happen to be related and this is entirely hypothetical as far as I'm aware the example I gave earlier if one of you or a close family member owned a mapping company or something like that, that, that is something you would absolutely want to disclose. And you really need to disclose to your colleagues on this commission. You know, it might be that your family members mapping company or hypothetical family members mapping company might actually be the best around and the best for service and quality and the best on price, right?

And so there is not a prohibition per se just in general I'm speaking about Government in general on this commission of 13 people working with an individual mapping company that happens to be related to one of you who was randomly selected to serve on this commission just because of that. And so how would this play out?

Well another example and again just broadly talking about Government you would disclose that. It would be fully transparent, everyone else go through the RFP process that person should not be on the review subcommittee and that person should not vote on the final contract. And so if the rest -- if the other 12 people decide that they find you know this one company is the best you know provides the best service and has the best value and everything else then I'm not aware kind of offhand generally speaking to be a clear legal prohibition or bar of the commission of the other 12 doing some work with that.

Now, there are other considerations to take, you know, other things to take into consideration on that but strictly speaking does it play?

It does. And I'll get to that in applications of that I think in the next slide or the one after that.

Which is to say these are not new things in terms of the actual conflict. There may be situations where again you are all randomly selected on some public boards or public commissions people sometimes are selected for the commission precisely because they have experience in that industry. And you know sometimes people want someone who has the experience because they can be a better regulated or some people get to really understand the business you know, however you know wherever one comes at that if you, you know, look at it there is you know look at Governor appointees, different governors over time and commissions there are lots of examples where people will sometimes be picked precisely because they have experience in the very subject matter that you know they are being appointed to. And so that sometimes may very clearly be a conflict of interest and everybody knows that up front so they disclose that and then there is a way, there is some presumably thought this individual may be able to add value despite their conflict of interest or frankly because of their conflict of interest depending on one's vantage point.

So again, we talked about sustaining and recusing ourselves and consistency and code of contradict and move into that the next one, thank you. It does talk about the ICRC code of conduct a little bit. A lot of this talks about the obligations of the commissioners. And may very well I think one of the things this came to mind for me would be, you know, now that you have staff does the code of conduct cover the officers of the commission and not just the commissioners themselves? And not just the officers perhaps other employees who maybe have not been hired yet. Just you know something to be thinking about, to be mindful of as you know, this commission continues to grow and develop. Moving on to the next slide, please.

So here conflicts or ethics the application of some of them, kind of alluding to this sort of circumstance where you know from the Michigan State housing authority that provides assistance and not just public housing that is the type of but provides all sorts of assistance to communities across the State of Michigan, sometimes for you know, for profit development in certain communities where the market isn't there. Sometimes for a nonprofit developments to provide specific assistance to you know individuals or other distinct communities that peaks their interest actually.

And so it would not be uncommon or unheard of for a private developer to be appointed on the board. The chances that one private developer has any interactions with state Government is you know or with you know affordable housing that is done by the state housing development authority. It could or could not happen. But we would certainly want to be clear and up front about that, acknowledge the conflict of interest or the potential for a conflict of interest up front. And frankly what can easily happen that private developer probably uses a bank. Definitely uses the bank for their development. And so if you know if the state housing development authority was looking at an entirely

different project and the question was which bank should we sell our historic tax credits or something like that, who should we be working with for that, that can be a circumstance where even though the state housing development authority wouldn't be doing business directly with this private developer the fact they could use the same bank would be something that should be disclosed and the person should recuse and sustain and should not be involved in that.

This next example is a little tribute that may be more specific to this commission and a lot of the frankly just the clear history of this commission. We are talking about state Government employees and acknowledging that it is frankly common for civil servants and appointees to have a partisan background it's not a prerequisite but protections for each individual state employee in the first amendment right of affiliation to have their own free speech and other things. So even if or even if or when I'm aware of an employee at the department of state I wouldn't be able to I have no interest in doing this but I wouldn't be able to have any sort of recourse or retaliation or anything like that for anyone for their political speech first amendment protecting political speech outside of the workplace because of their first amendment protected political speech and wouldn't be able to go after that.

What you know it's a clear separation of Government work from personal. This is not the only reason for it but it's certainly related to some other things we talked about as the importance of value that comes both to the employer and to the employee of having separate Government e-mails, having separate Government computer versus personal computer and same thing with phones. To be clear that when you are on the clock you are serving the people of Michigan. Your salary is paid for by the taxpayers and we have a fiduciary responsibility to do the work of the people and to do it you know without intention to party affiliation or anything else.

But when you are on your own time, and/or when you know Sally and I are on our own time and using our own equipment and e-mail and computer we have not lost our right as citizens, citizens of the state and citizens of the country to be involved in you know free speech. So there are things like that said I acknowledge and I think this is, you know, Brittini and others where you know there have been questions that come up here that have been you know, not the first time I've heard them but it feels a little bit different for me as a lawyer practicing in the public sector being involved with this commission because of you know, not only the process for your own random selection but also the very genesis of where this like why this commission exists and concerns from the voters, not the legislature, the voters who created this commission to address what they perceive to be abuses and over reach from partisan interest.

So you know, the mere involvement of somebody in partisan like you know having a partisan history like having you know either worked for or donated to someone in either political party, I don't see that as being an inherently a conflict of interest. I do note the additional complexity that there is, you know, the opportunity for public perception as it

relates to that for this commission in ways which are admittedly distinct from almost anything else that I see within state Government. And then perhaps the last slide, please.

And then there is a distinct question here which is consistency. I and I actually think as I thought back and reviewed some of the older meetings where this discussion was coming up, it can appear a few different things are happening I think at the same time as at least from my vantage point some commissioners raise concerns on people and kind of address speaking to and maybe not intentionally but maybe speaking to a slightly different issue, are we being consistent. And I think there was actually an exchange which I thought was very striking. At one point if my memory serves me Brittini in a prior conversation, in the deliberation around general counsel there was a question about like are we being consistent, have we applied the same processes for the general counsel review and deliberation as we had for the executive director one. And that is a fair question and again as one citizen appreciate that the seriousness with which each of you is obviously taking your responsibility and your oath of office. So I may pause and say thank you very much for your thoughtfulness. Each of you for how you're handling this.

I was struck especially in reviewing it by I think it was Anthony had said if I memory serves me responded and said at least again if I got this correctly at least from his vantage point he thought we were being consistent and consistent as individuals so that some of you had expressed an interest for each of the candidates you have considered along the way and being concerned about perhaps public comment about partisanship and some of you explicitly said that you know for various reasons that you explained yourself you, you know, factor that in but it was not a controlling factor for you. And some of you were very concerned individuals some individuals had expressed concern about partisan donations and some of them some of you said that was not a concern for you. Some of you, you know, you have shown how you can walk folks through your thought process and your thought process at least I'll say it as you know an outsider is watching all of your meetings dutifully and it does seem to be consistent each of you individually.

That is just my take. But I remembered Anthony saying that and I went back and saw that and I think there is something to that and what it brought to mind for me is I don't know that this slide fully captures it but this idea of group consistency versus individual consistency. And so in a certain respect you know group consistency thinking about the fact that you know you were called the very first time you went to interview someone. Sally relayed here are some standard questions and should agree on standard questions and you were asking folks the same question so you give equal opportunity to every candidate and don't ask easy questions of one person and hard ball questions to somebody else you are consistent and there is an absolute value of fairness which I think is if I may what I hear in your question Brittini but again I might be wrong on that



button and being consistent there but there is individual consistency which acknowledges the diversity of thought which is absolutely by design for the citizens who voted for this and the people who put it together which is to say 13 of you for a reason and four who affiliate with one party and four who affiliate with another party and five who don't affiliate with a party for reason for geographic that is built in for a reason and all of that brings each of you with your own approach and everything else. I fear I'm talking too long to the public but just to say I don't know if this is helpful. I hope it is. And you know or a waste of your time but just to say that idea of fairness really strikes me as being you know right at the core of the questions that I for one hear coming from the commission when you talk about conflict of interest this is actually what comes to mind for me more than necessarily like a real conflict and it's this question of are you being consistent as a group and then are you individually handling you know your business approaching that for each candidate or each decision.

With that I will stop talking but happy to engage additional questions.

>> Brittini: No, Mike, I think that was profound. I think particularly the first slide we were distinguishing because conflict of interest that in some ways is overused so I think defining these terms is exactly what I wanted. Because again I love that I'm a part of a group and I love that I'm a part of this commission. And the diversity that we all bring. And I think for me it's about finding that magic balance which was the last slide of are we going to lean towards our individual opinions and getting you know that sort of consistency or are we kind of where is that magic?

Where is the balance. And then with that just making a decision of what that's going to look like. And I think at least for me it's important going into especially when we think of hiring but then more broadly the job that we have to remap when it's how we make decisions and what is that standard. So we are fine with it being 13 individuals that are coming together and kind of you know professionally duking it out and sorting things out these are the basic standards and are still individuals and discussing what our opinions are but then we are doing truly what is the good of the order and not this weird mix of what we are all coming together, you know, differ speeds, different times of day, whatever, and that comes into play. Then that's okay too. I just for me I just wanted to make -- have that be out there and make a decision and I think the work that you provided with that presentation is amazing. If anyone else has any other thoughts please do share. Especially Julianne because I'm happy that you're here. So, yeah.

>> Julianne: Thank you Brittini. I will let the commissioners go first or if it's appropriate to speak now I'm happy to do so.

>> Brittini: You are here.

>> Julianne: Perfect. Thank you. No, I definitely agree with Mike and appreciate the PowerPoint. I agree that the constitutional amendment does provide the strong foundation to guide ethical behavior just by the qualifications of the commissioners and the goals of transparency and ethical behavior are woven throughout it. Just to remind



the commission it's a very fact specific inquiry talking about ethical questions and conflict it's very nuanced because you have to look at it of the facts of that situation only between if there is a personal or a financial interest that abuts with a public duty. So I know historically or to date the commission has been discussing this in line with hiring practices and interviewing candidates and what not. The policies that I'm drafting for your consideration is going to address more that the operations going forward. So I really do believe Mike that Mike's guidance today in particular his examples were very helpful to the commission at this stage of where you are in your deliberations. But moving forward I'll make sure that the conflict of interest act that is in the state law is really the mechanism by which that will serve as the foundation for the commission's conflict policy and will build it out from there together. Is that helpful as well, Brittini?

>> Brittini: I think so for sure because I think my question as both of you have articulated and Sue understands as well it's twofold and hiring the most and I'm not afraid of a direct answer there and I know you give us all so much leeway and autonomy but if there is a more direct answer of what we look for with hiring and shared interests versus conflict of interest and where that plays in but I think moving forward of course Julianne that is -- that is what we need as well.

>> Julianne: You are just highlighting this is again just another point in the continuing discussion on this really critical topic.

>> Brittini: That makes sense for sure.

>> Steve: Anybody else got any questions for Professor Brady?

Or professor Pastula.

>> They are not professors don't do that.

>> Cynthia: I wanted to thank Mike and Julianne for the enlightenment.

>> Steve: Well if they are not professors they should be. They did an excellent job you are correct Cynthia.

>> They should be for sure.

>> MC: I will offer to this is where I feel we exactly as we learn we also are educating the people who are watching us and I feel like it's really crucial work and really appreciate about the public service that is going into this. That presentation was, yeah, I realized not just for us. Really appreciate it.

>> Uh-huh.

>> Julianne: I think to Mike's example of that even the presence of a conflict you have to weigh it and it may not equate to a total prohibition and I would like to give an example where it might equate to a total prohibition if you were someone who had very serious advocacy that was your passion and part of the restrictions that the commissioners that you commissioners have agreed to is for five years after you are released it puts restrictions on running for partisan office and you agreed by applying for the commission and taking an oath and fulfilling your public duty to subject yourself to that prohibition willingly and if that is something that an individual would not be able to

do then they either should not have applied or as they went through the process they should have they should have dropped out because you have to agree. There are some things that you can't follow through on and those should be weighed too. But that again is where that nuisanced inquiry comes for the balancing test with each situation. Thank you.

>> Brittini: Thank you. I think when I was -- we were talking it made me think I'll just speak for myself again I don't know enough about some of the entities that have come up. Like for instance the board of how this commission was developed. So I don't know what their set boundaries were after they finish their time or those sorts of things. And not just that specific organization but it could come up in a different way later. So I think that would be something for me to research because you know I don't know their code of conduct and the things they agree to when they got together to form that entity.

>> Steve: We are at our time on that. Thank you again for your presentation. We appreciate that. We are at the determined communications and outreach interview questions and Sue Ann I think you gave us a list that you prepared; is that correct?

>> Sue: I did prepare a list. I had Sally, Mike and Sarah review it and they made a few suggestions to it. There are ten questions. And certainly this commission can add, delete, edit, change whatever they would like to so I would welcome any input.

>> Steve: The floor is open. Doug.

>> Doug: It's a question for you, Sue. Are any of these questions, the questions you did that you asked them when you went to your interviews with them to narrow down the field?

>> Sue: Several of these are similar. Of course I asked them why they were interested in the position so I would say one, two, um, somewhat three but not really. But these have a little more detail to them. I got a general sense and then I did a lot of very specific questions like what are your experiences with social media? With website content?

Some of those kinds of things. And I think these are a little more strategic. I did ask the political party question number nine that you as commissioners have not heard these answers so I felt they were important enough to afford you that opportunity.

>> Doug: I just did not want to see a repetition of the ten or 12 or questions that you asked them before.

>> Sue: I had 18 actually. And they were pretty specific and, you know, we did kind of a rapid fire of 30 seconds per question. So I was just trying to get a general sense of where they were and what their skill set was and what they would offer this commission and I think these will give an opportunity for the commission to really hear who understands the strategies that is needed and the skill set.

>> Doug: Okay.

Thank you.

>> Steve: Juanita?

>> Juanita: .

>> Steve: You are muted. Take your mute off.

>> There you go.

>> Juanita: I don't believe.

>> Steve: You went back to mute.

>> Juanita: Okay, I don't think I received that, Sue, so if you would send me a copy of that some time or another today.

>> Sue: I would be happy to. That was sent out with the meeting notice so I'm sorry you did not receive that.

>> Steve: Is there number one is there any discussion on the questions?  
Are we happy with the kind of the questions for the people?  
Any questions on the questions?  
Cynthia.

>> Cynthia: I'm just wondering do we think we can accomplish that many questions in the time allotted?

>> Steve: Well, I was going to get to that but yeah.

>> Cynthia: Probably has the best idea.

>> Sue: Well if you have 30 minutes, you're going to have probably 20 minutes realistically for ten questions. So I think they can be answered in two minutes a piece.

>> Steve: Okay, Doug?

>> Doug: Yeah, I think when we did the general counsel questions, we were like 12-15 questions. And the time period might have been a little longer though.

>> Steve: Okay, everybody seems to be semi happy with the questions. Who is going to -- who are going to be the questionnaires?  
Who is on the committee first off?  
Juanita?  
Janice and Cynthia. You guys want to be the questioners?

>> Juanita: I don't mind but I need the questions in front of me. I don't have them.

>> They are in the link in the chat.

>> Juanita: But my link won't open.

>> Brittini: Juanita, I'm sorry.

>> Juanita: That is okay.

>> Cynthia: Can you open the chat that is down below on the bottom of the screen?  
There should be a red number by it.

>> Brittini: That is the one that I was --.

>> Juanita: Glasses on.

>> Brittini: The last ditch effort would be to screen shot it and text it to her is the only thing I can think of.

>> Juanita: That is hard to do because I can't get it.

>> Brittini: It's on the Zoom screen says participants and chat and share screen and if you click on the chat icon like Cynthia said it should pull up.

>> Juanita: It did not pull up.

>> Brittini: Yeah, Doug.

>> Doug: If Juanita can't do this, I would gladly fill in for her if that would be acceptable.

>> Juanita: I don't mind doing it. I just don't have the questions.

>> Cynthia, I'm wondering, Juanita, you can't get into your e-mail right now? Is that the issue?

>> Juanita: I got some -- I'm in the chat part but it's not bringing up any questions.

>> Rebecca: What about teams do you have teams on your computer because I just dumped it into teams to see if maybe you could get it through there.

>> Dustin: I wonder if Juanita is like me, I literally can't access anything because my password is not set.

>> Juanita: If I do, I will mess up everything so I'm just going to let it be but I do have -- I had some different questions on here from MC and from I guess they were chatting with Sue but I don't have that, no. She said she would give it to me so if she sent it to me, I can take a couple questions here and there. Let me see. .

>> Sally: Commissioners in the interest of time I might recommend that you kind of come up with a plan A, plan B. We can work behind the scenes to try to help Juanita to see the questions but just you know noting the time, it might make sense and just for your consideration to kind of come up with a plan Juanita if you can't see the questions and we are not able to help you see it then if you are a plan for that as well.

>> Steve: Let's do Cynthia and Janice.

>> Janice: Yes.

>> Steve: And then if Juanita take Juanita in at the end if she has got questions by then. If not, Doug volunteered to ask so Doug you can go third. But make sure that we've got Juanita in that loop if we can do it, okay?

>> Cynthia: Should I do the first three?

>> Steve: You and Janice figure that one out.

>> Janice: That is fine Cynthia whatever ones you want to do it doesn't matter.

>> Cynthia: I will do four, five and six.

>> Steve: Okay, that leaves Doug and Juanita to do seven, eight, nine and ten. Sue.

>> Sue: Anthony had his hand up some time ago and I just didn't want him to get lost in the conversation so if he had something different to include here now is his chance.

>> Steve: Yes, thank you, you guys jump around I can't keep track. They keep moving people on my screen. Anthony.

>> Anthony: No, that is fine. My question wasn't about who is doing questions. It's more so how are each of you planning on using this question sheet?

Like is everyone going to rate like you know one to five, one to ten or are we kind of doing what we have done previously where you know we kind of give our opinion on each answer?

>> Steve: I certainly plan to listen to the individual and their answers. I don't -- I personally don't rate like you do, so I'll give an opinion on who I think is best at the end. However, I think however you as an individual want to do it, do it that way. Okay, we are ready to go. Let's get Janet Lebson excuse me on. Hopefully. .

>> Brittini: It always takes a while for them to cycle back up.

>> Cynthia: Steve, are you going to like introduce or am I doing that?

>> Steve: No, I will. Sally: Miss Lebson can you hear us?

>> Ms. Lebson: I can, can you hear me?

>> Steve: Good afternoon.

>> Ms. Lebson: Good afternoon, evening, yes, thank you.

>> Steve: I murdered your name to start with but now I have it Lebson so I think I'm correct. Welcome.

>> Ms. Lebson: Thank you.

>> Steve: My name is Steve Lett I'm the chairperson of the commission. And we are glad to have you here today to speak to you and have you more importantly speak to us. We will have a series of questions that we will be asking and there will be primarily three people asking questions, but as has been done in the past if an individual commissioner wants to ask a follow-up question, we certainly do allow that.

Before we get started, are there any questions that you have of us at this time?

>> Ms. Lebson: I might have a couple questions, but I would be happy to wait until the end because they might be answered in the process.

>> Steve: Well, that would be amazing in our course of conduct, but we will certainly give you an opportunity to ask any questions that you want. Okay, our first questioner is Cynthia Orton.

>> Cynthia: Hi Janet.

>> Hi Cynthia.

>> Cynthia: So can you tell us why you're interested in this position and the work of redistricting?

>> Ms. Lebson: Yes, what originally interested me about the position was I really wanted to get back into public service. I really found it rewarding when I was a public servant before. And I felt like I was pretty well equipped for that type of work. And then when I read about it, when I read the job announcement it was very easy to see um that this was the kind of position that could really fundamentally promote democracy in our country. And that seems like a very important work that I would be honored to be a part of.

>> Cynthia: Thank you. And what are your top three personal qualities that you feel make you successful?

>> Ms. Lebson: Well, I think the ones that I put in my resume I spent a lot of time thinking about those because I've, you know, at this point in my career I've done my resume a bunch of different times and I tried to think of the things that seem to apply with all my different clients when I was consulting and on my previous employers what seemed to apply the most universally. And that's how I came up with the three that I have on my resume as far as leadership support and relations building and persuasive writing are all skills, I have used throughout all my different assignments and all different requirements. And I think if I had to pick one out of the three it probably would be the relations building one.

>> Cynthia: Okay thank you. And the last question for me describe your experience developing the strategic media and educational campaigns.

>> Ms. Lebson: It was a fundamental part of my job when I was a public affairs specialist so that was probably about ten years of my career to do pretty extensive outreach planning whenever we needed to have public engagement on an important policy. And so I think I describe that in the supplemental questions but basically, we always had a component that had to do with media relations. No matter what that was a given. We always had a component that had to deal with reaching out to the appropriate Congressional folks too. But then in addition to that depending on what the policy was we would have to identify different audiences who would be effected by the policy or people who would perceive that they were effected by a policy. And that kind of thing. And so that is how we get more into the targeted areas. And then once we did that, we would develop the messaging really get down into the basic facts about an issue. You know, we are always dealing with a lot of very technical information that had to be distilled and explained clearly and simply. And from there we would get in to developing the actual communications tools, the content creation phase where you would use all that messaging to do website content, frequently asked questions, news releases, and that kind of thing. All the different social media tools. And making them work together and reinforce each other.

And then in addition to that, there were other components for efficiency such as scheduling, you know, having a timeline who is going to do what and when. Budgeting if there were budget considerations that needed to be made. And when it was all said and done it really did facilitate the communications work and kept everyone very well coordinated. And united in their messaging because often times I was an agency spokesperson but often times there are many other people involved with explaining issues to the public as well. So that's kind of the gist. We did that routinely, all the time. In my previous jobs.

>> Cynthia: Thank you. That's all the questions from me. I think Janice is going to be next.

>> Janice: Welcome Janet my first question is describe a public information campaign you developed and the communications method you utilized.



>> Ms. Lebson: Okay, can I ask you is that -- are you distinguishing from what Cynthia just asked me?

Are you it sounds like the same question and I want to make sure I'm answering you correctly.

>> Cynthia: Janice question is about specific.

>> Janice: She asked about developing strategic media and I wanted to know about a public information campaign, an actual one that you did.

>> Ms. Lebson: Okay gotcha. I guess the one that would be the most significant and complex was one called the Centennial campaign. Which was a multiyear communications initiative to raise awareness of national wildlife refuge and not getting in the substance of that but that is probably just enough to say. A lot of people don't know about them and we were trying to increase visibility. We were also trying to expand strategic partnerships, partners who could really help with the actual work that takes place on the refuges and help improve our outdoor recreational programs for example. And we also were trying to get more funding from Congress. And so as a Government agency we weren't allowed to lobby but we were allowed to consolidate information on all of the needs, funding needs around the country and package them up in a persuasive way and work with our partners to present that to the appropriate people in Congress to get actually it turned out to be a \$50 million funding increase eventually. There was national component and there was a grass roots component in terms of the work with partners too. There were about 26 I think national partner organizations we worked with and then about 200 community grass roots groups. So we were creating a lot of bridges, trying to really garner the rallying power, all these people who wanted more awareness and more investment in refuges.

>> Janice: What communications methods did you utilize while you were doing that?

>> Ms. Lebson: We worked with the media. So it gave us a really great opportunity with it being the 100th anniversary of refuges so national magazines, state magazines, newspaper reporters, radio shows, TV, all did specials a lot of different media outlets did special features to highlight the history of the refuge system and what was available about it using that opportunity to get that special feature coverage.

>> Janice: Okay, and then my next question: How would you approach the role of steering public communications and engagement for the new redistricting process in Michigan?

And what methods would you utilize to reach Michiganders across the state?

>> Ms. Lebson: I gave a lot of thought to that. In particular after reading the U of M close up I guess their acronym is like close up. And recommendations that were on the website, it was focused on the communities of interest and engaging them and what really struck me about it was they were saying that that really had not been done in a formalized way before. And that it required a lot of thought and care to identify those groups so that you can engage them adequately. I think one thing that's a little tricky of

course is the obvious thing is with COVID going on you know all of these ten public meetings that need to happen very soon I guess you would almost have to come up with a plan for actual public meetings and then a contingency plan for Zoom-style public meetings or maybe even a plan of some kind of a hybrid since things could possibly change in the next six months or so.

So I think that is inherent challenge as everybody knows but if I pretend it's going to be public if I was planning for that I would of course call all the media outlets in Michigan, would be, you know, a given. And obviously for -- if we are promoting all the public meetings at once you kind of do the blanket approach. If you are targeting them one by one you of course start getting in those areas. I noticed that the secretary of state's office worked with partners to get the word out about the opportunity to serve on the commission. And so that's assuming there are some partner groups there that could be engaged again for getting the word out. They had recommended in that U of M close up to pursue working with the groups that had encouraged people to participate in the census. That seemed like a logical thing to do as well since it's kind of an extension of that and very much related. But it does seem like -- I don't know if the secretary of state's office has already done any research on the communities of interest but it did seem like that was a strong recommendation in that report to dedicate some energy to that, to make sure people are fairly represented, who haven't necessarily been in the past. And I saw that they were recommending that other logical way of reaching out through the local entities you know the townships and the cities and the counties and all of that so.

>> Janice: Thank you and my last question do you have prior experience working with media firms or companies?

And do you envision paid media playing a role in the communication strategy for this commission?

>> Ms. Lebson: I do have experience working with PR firms. That Centennial campaign that I mentioned a minute ago we had a very large PR firm contract that did include some media outreach although we did a lot of it internally, I have to say. We had the contacts and the relationships already. So it was more effective really trying to do it internally than parsing it out. I did also work as a subcontractor with another PR firm that was doing media work. I have to say it wasn't very effective either. So maybe I have not had the best of luck. But I have worked with them and in terms of this effort, I guess it kind of depends, again, on whether it's physical meetings or Zoom meetings. It might make that answer different because I mean I don't have any experience organizing public hearings on Zoom. I think probably everybody is going to say that. So I would need a lot of help.

I don't know. What I just said in answer to that other question, there was a lot of -- there were a lot of different targets right there so it is a lot of work. And I suppose I want to answer you very -- I want to be straight up. I think I would have to give it a lot of

thought and see some things can be parceled out well and some things you're better off not. So I don't know how to answer that specifically until I got into it.

>> Janice: Thank you and then Juanita are you ready?

Do you have the questions?

You're muted.

>> Juanita: MC can do my questions for me. I see the questions but I can't get to them right now.

>> Janice: Steve is going to do them?

>> Juanita: MC.

>> Janice: No MC.

>> Doug: I was going to do it Janice.

>> Janice: Doug okay great.

>> Doug: I was going to fill in. Welcome Janet.

>> Thank you.

>> Doug: Good to have you with us this afternoon. I was not on the subcommittee that went through the communications and outreach director resumes. However, I spent considerable amount of time going through them. So I have a good understanding of them. Let me ask you first question have you ever had to speak with the media during a crisis?

>> Ms. Lebson: Yes.

>> Doug: Can you provide an example on how you handled it?

>> Ms. Lebson: Well the issues I was working on were controversial so for example the forest management issues in the northwest where it was kind of like timber and salmon were drivers of the economy in the same way that the auto industry is a driver of the economy here. So anything you did that affected timber, the timber industry was a really big deal. And in general the way I handled my ongoing rapport with reporters on issues like that is to make sure that it's very ongoing, so you know, it's not like if we are about to come up with something then call the reporter who I don't really know or something like that. I would be working with them all the time to understand the kind of stories that they want to cover. Because a lot of times they have a certain angle they want to do it. And I would be -- I considered it kind of like background information on an ongoing basis. So for example if you have a really complicated controversial issue like forest management issues that were going on for 20 years, it really has to be -- you have to be providing the information in an ongoing way. I found, too, when I was working in Oregon with, you know, media across the state versus media at the national level, that they were extremely competitive with wanting to get the story first. And so often times we are not waiting for an announcement but we are trying to get it a couple days ahead of an announcement. So accommodating them I guess in all these different scenarios was an important part of managing the controversy. Making sure that I could explain the rationale for the decisions we made is really at the heart of all of it. Like I

never saw it cause a Government official to try to persuade anybody. But I did see it as my job to carefully explain why we were doing something and why we thought it was in the overall public good which I think is really different from, say, working at a membership organization where you tend to have a slice of people with a certain set of interests. It's harder to go the broader route and sometimes you're making decisions that pit one group of people against another et cetera. So as long as you can explain it that's probably more than half the battle. And that's why I did like in my answers to Cynthia, et cetera, when doing really careful job with the outreach planning, I would spend a lot of time figuring out how to distill the information so that it made sense. So we could quell the controversy.

>> Doug: Generally in a crisis you are involved with more than one person or more than one group. How do you coordinate that in your management of the crisis?

>> Ms. Lebson: Well, that is a good question. In Oregon, in that job I was telling Sue anatomy first interview we so often had people in the White House president's council on environmental quality or office of management and budget, the interior secretary's office, the lawyers at every level constantly causing us to recalibrate what we were doing. And I don't -- I just kept -- I kept a list of who needed to know what and when. And I had to -- whenever something changed, I was kind of the hub for the wheel. I would have to contact all the Congressional offices and contact the -- there were probably about a dozen major reporters in the state so it was not a million at least, excuse me I need to clear my throat. Talking too much. I beg your pardon. Kind of goes with the territory, I guess.

So tribes were a big one. I just I had my list of people that I had to contact every time something changed. And I don't know how -- I would use e-mail a lot of times or certainly phone calls too. I was just going through lists.

>> Doug: Okay can you describe the basic steps you would take to organize public hearings and engage with those who are participating and do you have specific ideas for engaging different communities and communities of interest across the state?

>> Ms. Lebson: I'm not sure I can say something in addition -- additional to what I've said in the other questions that came up in the other questions. I think I have given a lot of thought to that question about communities of interest. Because I saw how important that was. And you know I don't know if I should duplicate and I was talking and the secretary of state's partners, the organizations that working with the partners the secretary of state's office worked with to announce the opportunity for the commission. Working with the groups that promoted the census participation. Obviously, the media. I think there is some opportunity to work with the Congressional offices as well. Because I know they often have my Senators and congresswoman communicate on Facebook everyday about a million things so there might be that potential too.

But I think that is all part of the public engagement strategy. That you all are imagining for eight, ten, 15 I guess altogether public meetings.

>> Doug: Okay, great. Are you affiliated with a political party?

And have you made political contributions?

And how would you conduct yourself and achieve the goals of our commission in a nonpartisan manner?

>> Ms. Lebson: I'm a registered democrat. I have not supported any candidates or the party. I don't actually feel very loyal to the party itself. I just happen to align more with the positions, the platform of the democratic party. I forgot the second part of your question I'm sorry.

>> Doug: Have you made any political contribution is one of them and how would you conduct yourself and achieve the goals of the commission in a nonpartisan manner?

>> Ms. Lebson: That's right, that's right. It seems fundamentally like the whole point of this commission is to be able to rise above that and think objectively about all these things and just make sure that people are fairly represented that serves everyone of any party so it seems like the very essence of what this is all about. I do have that ability to be objective. I think even from growing up there was always a lot of public debate in my family. Public policy debate is what I meant. And that was just kind of part of our way of life. And my dad used to take ridiculous positions on things and make me argue the other side and things like that. So I think that really prepared me well in a personal way that translates into the professional realm because it really helps me seek to understand different points of view and it helps me understand frankly because I've already done a lot of debating and I know that there are valid points of view. From that perspective.

>> Doug: Let me go back to the question on political contributions. Have you made any of significance?

>> Ms. Lebson: No.

>> Doug: None at all?

>> Ms. Lebson: No.

>> Doug: Okay that is fine.

>> Ms. Lebson: Okay.

>> Doug: One more question before we let you ask some. I looked at your resume and there is a gap on your experience of about three years. So have you not worked in the past three years?

>> Ms. Lebson: I moved back to Michigan primarily for personal reasons to take care of a family member.

>> Doug: Okay you don't have to get into the personal reasons.

>> Ms. Lebson: I know but that is really the reason for that. Why we moved here. And I have been doing volunteer work, but I have not been doing any paid work.

>> Doug: Okay great. So let me have you ask us any questions that you may have.

>> Ms. Lebson: Well, one question I had that was pretty important to me is I wanted to make sure I understood where this job was going to be located. Another one was

just I wanted to make sure I understood what the full staff of the office would be for doing all this work.

There was some information in the job announcement, but I figured I would ask in case anything had changed or evolved.

>> Steve: Well, that is a good question. And you're number three if you happen to be hired. We really -- you know, we are as they say we are building this plane as we fly.

>> Ms. Lebson: Yeah.

>> Steve: And where we will be physically located right now, we are all in our various homes.

>> Ms. Lebson: Uh-huh.

>> Steve: If we eventually land in an office, we have not discussed that. My guess and it's purely a guess since we have not discussed it is going to be somewhere like in the central Michigan area, Lansing, or down towards the southeast side where the population centers are. So the answer to your question is we have no clue.

>> Ms. Lebson: Laughter.

>> Steve: There is a staff of three people we hired being the general counsel and the executive director and the communications director, they are not going to do the typing, et cetera. We are going to have staff. So what it's going to look like we are really flying the plane.

>> Ms. Lebson: Do you all envision you will have -- you will want to have support, communication support for what -- I mean specific things that you're doing?

>> Steve: Well, and the other commissioners may have a better answer than I. But I envision that the communications is going to resolve primarily around the communities of interest and trying to figure out what those are, who they are and where they are.

>> Ms. Lebson: Uh-huh, yes, yes. Well and I suppose, you know, when I was talking about all that earlier because of the effort that was made to be fair in picking the commission you all probably are a wealth of knowledge about communities of interest too, who should be identified and reached out to. I should have said that earlier. But.

>> Doug: There is only 13 of us and we don't count. .

>> Ms. Lebson: Pretty amazing over 9,000 people applied, right?  
I mean.

>> Steve: About 9300 of our closest friends.

>> Ms. Lebson: Well congratulations on being picked and I should say also thank you for your service. No matter what you decide about this job. I really mean that just as a citizen.

>> Steve: Come back and ask us that in November.

>> Ms. Lebson: Yeah.

>> Steve: Anybody else?

Any other questions?

Anybody else have a question for Janet before we go on?



I would like to thank you. I appreciate you taking your time and meeting with us. And you know we will be announcing a decision. It's not going to be today. So if you want to watch something else go right ahead. But we will get back and make a decision shortly. Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

>> Ms. Lebson: I wish you luck. I know it's a really important one and I very much appreciate being considered and no matter what you decide I wish you luck and thank you.

>> Steve: Good, thank you.

>> Ms. Lebson: Good-bye.

>> Steve: Okay, I have a comment for our questioning. And it comes from my lawyering. While we have nine questions, they are really questions that have multi parts. And I think we would be better served if when you are asking your question ask the first part, let them answer and ask the second part and let them answer. What we will find I think when you ask that first part, they may answer the second part or and the third part. So and then they don't forget what was it that the third part was that I'm supposed to answer. Just like Janet did with Doug's last question. What was the third part you asked. So I think we would be better served doing that. But that's just a suggestion. You can ask your questions however you want.

Janice.

>> Janice: I need to take a break. Can we take like a half a minute?

>> Steve: Sure. Let's take five. We will be back here in 5:42.

[ Recess ]

MC all four deer are out there right now. MC: They are checking on you as a commissioner and saying hey, I heard about you.

>> I'll jump on Rhonda do you find it relaxing to watch them?

>> Rhonda: We were talking about it earlier. I don't put out my bird feed and stuff until after hunting season and ever since I put it out, I did not see any during hunting season and ever since I put it out, I have the same ones that come in like every day and there is one particular one that will make like four trips a day. I think it watches me for when I put the food out so it's relaxing. Get a lot of rabbits and squirrels and birds and I love it.

>> We don't get the deer too much. I live in the city. We do have deer come through but I found out during the summer my neighbor two doors down P puts out proper deer food every day and know she will feed them. I just have a mineral lick in the back if you are desperate and want the good stuff a few doors down and I love watching them. I think they are so beautiful.

>> They are.

>> You know you are not supposed to feed deer?

>> Rhonda: DNR rule change.

>> Steve: What you do is you feed the swirls.

>> Rhonda: I do that too. I do the swirls and the birds. And I can't help it if the deer come in.

>> Sue: I think they keep the recording running during the breaks sometimes so I think the recording is on.

>> Julianne: It says live.

>> Steve: I believe that so everybody can know what our idle chitchat sounds like.

>> Juanita: My computer is about to snooze or restart. How do I do it? I'm hitting the button but it won't do it. This is my second, third time trying to hit it so it won't restart. Can you hear me?

>> Rhonda: Does it have a schedule to restart for later? Is it giving you that option.

>> Juanita: No.

>> Doug: Is it MS Dos or Apple.

>> A minute and 14 seconds before it restart.

>> Julianne: Does it say postpone.

>> Juanita: It says snooze and I did it twice and now it won't do it.

>> Brittini: You are supposed to be able to snooze it or delay it like remind me later or something like that.

>> Juanita: It won't Brittini. It won't do anything now and I was putting it on snooze for the last 15, 20 minutes now it's trying to not do anything.

>> Brittini: The helper side of me wants to teleport and help you with your laptop.

>> Juanita: This laptop is crazy. I did not get my questions until recently. Now here it goes again it's going to cut me out so if you guys don't see me that is what is happening.

>> Doug: What kind of machine do you have?

>> Juanita: A state machine.

>> A Dell?

>> Juanita: Someone else had used it before.

>> Brittini: I hope I did not volunteer to get a laptop that works like yours. Sorry not sorry.

>> Juanita: Trouble.

>> Steve: Is everybody back?

If you are not back raise your hand. Cute Dustin.

>> Brittini: That is what you get Steve. You set yourself up for it.

>> Steve: Who are we missing?

Julianne.

>> MC: Richard may be on the phone.

>> Steve: I think we lost Richard.

>> Rhonda: We are missing Janice.

>> Steve: Uh-huh, okay, a questioner so we cannot start without.

>> Richard: I'm here listening to every word and I'm trying to get on this computer here to get this thing to work but I haven't had much luck so far. We are keeping playing with it while I'm listening.

>> Steve: Okay Janice is back. Cynthia is here and Juanita may or may not be here. Don't see her now. If she comes back, we will know she is back. Okay we are up to Edward woods if we can get him on, we will get going. And everybody remind me after we finish with Mr. Woods, we will take another five minute break. There is no sense of tying ourselves to the chair. I forgot. I appreciate that reminder.

>> Brittni: I'll remind you, Steve.

>> Steve: Okay, Mr. Woods take yourself off mute so we can talk to you. There you go.

>> Mr. Woods: Thank you Chairman Lett how are you today?

>> Steve: I'm wonderful. I'm okay any way. Welcome. We appreciate you're being here and participating with us on our search for a communications director. And today's game plan is we have a series of questions. I assume you have been watching so you probably know what the questions are going to be. And we are going to have three people ask the questions. And if other commissioners wish to expand on some of the questions or some of your answers we will -- we are able to do that. At the end we will give you an opportunity to ask us any questions. So the first questioner is going to be Cynthia I believe.

>> Cynthia: Hi Edward. Could you please tell us why you're interested in this position and the work of redistricting?

>> Mr. Woods: Okay thank you so much for that question. First and foremost I want to thank the committee for the opportunity, for this interview. I'd also like to thank the communications community chaired by commission Curry and Orton and Commissioner Vallette and Sue Hammersmith for the prescreening interview. The reason I applied for this particular position is this provides an opportunity to do something that is bigger than yourself. Something that can actually make a difference where we are all working together as relates to civility on one common goal to ensure fair redistricting. So as public servant as a two time elected official from a nonpartisan standpoint serving on lake Michigan board of trustees and Lansing community college board of trustees, I've always enjoyed doing something that is bigger than myself when we can all rally together for a common goal.

>> Cynthia: And can you tell us what do you think your top three personal qualities are that make you successful?

>> Mr. Woods: Definitely public speaking I do a lot of public speaking I've been a spokesperson and have the Michigan department of human services and management and budget for the city of Benton harbor for Michigan works for the Michigan association of association executives and in my role as the Lansing area safety Council. So as a

public spokesperson I think that is one of my gifts that I can do. I think event planning. There is a lot of public hearings and logistics that goes with regards to that. My experience doing by Michigan first and the poverty summit really speaks to event planning, working with a team, logistics, making sure people are heard. Whether we are doing whether it's language issues in terms of hearing in your own language, whether it's accommodating people with disabilities, whether it's making sure that the form we are using is accessible by public transportation, logistics event planning which I think ties directly into the public hearings that this commission is required to do. And then last but not least writing whether it's press releases, talking points, social media calendars, all those three things I think are germane to this position and it's something that I think ties in well.

>> Cynthia: Thank you. And describe your experience developing a strategic media and education campaign.

>> Mr. Woods: Sure, let's take a look at by Michigan first.

By Michigan first our goal was to increase the amount of business that we did with Michigan businesses with regards to state contracts 25,000 or more. Because that's under the per view of the department of management and budget at the time. Now known as department of technology management and budget and what we had to do is we went across the state showing people how to do business with the State of Michigan. We gathered partners together. That could assist with helping to facilitate contracts. We worked with community colleges to identify locations. Where people could come and hear the presentation. The reason why we work with community colleges because they have the technology already available. People knew where they were. They had an established relationship with the entrepreneurs, small businesses including women and minorities. To ensure that we brought everyone to one location to do that we did campaigns. In terms of identifying how easy it is to do business with the State of Michigan frequently asked questions, facts, categories, where to go for information. That was hugely successful. I think by the time we ended it was about 99% of our contracts, 25,000 or more were done right here in the State of Michigan.

>> Cynthia: .

>> Mr. Woods: If I can I'm going to take that glass of water you provided me thank you commissioner in advance it's infused with limit.

>> Cynthia: I think Janice has a few questions now.

>> How are you.

>> Janice: Welcome Edward and I think you may have answered the first part of the question to describe a public information campaign you developed when you talked about by Michigan first. Did you have another one you wanted to talk about?

>> Mr. Woods: Sure let's talk about the poverty summit we did the poverty summit at Detroit at Cobo Hall and the way we did that is we worked with a lot of different stakeholders so we identified the stakeholders that dealt with poverty all across the

State of Michigan. At the time I was with the Michigan department of human services. I identified the stakeholders and put them in a database so we could have them so we could distribute e-mails and let them know what was going on and then what we did is we talked about food assistance. Also known as the supplemental nutrition assistance program. The SNAP and we did that as a build up to the poverty summit because it was right during the economic downturn here in Michigan due to the auto industry. And what we wanted to share with the people who were descending in poverty were not chronic people but people who needed a hand up, a hand up and so if you know with food assistance you do not have to -- you can own your own home and have a car and still qualify for food assistance. So we wanted to put a human face so that people know hey these could be your neighbors. Hey this could be someone one of your family members. And by doing that with regards to poverty we were able to go all across the state. We did a food assistance challenge where we had people participate and get involved with it and we went place to place to see how many people could live on 25 a week with regards to food assistance. I'm sorry to report that I failed. And it made a humanization to the issue of poverty in our state. We did that. We worked with our stakeholders and then we were expected to get 500 people to come to the poverty center. We ended up with 2500 people because of our campaign.

>> Janice: And what communication methods did you utilize when you did those?

>> Mr. Woods: Sure we used something that was called VOCUS and it's SYSION. It's a media platform we can communicate with media reporters because we went to each of the media markets at time. We used a Facebook page to connect with our excuse me our media partners. We had relationships with all media partners in 7 areas and able to get on phones. We actually went to the different media markets and did campaigns there where we identified people in the community. And did testimonials. We had stakeholders speak. We did frequently asked questions. We did fact sheets. We did press releases. We did talking points. We had newsletters that went to stakeholders. We had newsletters that went to the legislatures. It was a real comprehensive and integrated plan that we did to make sure that it got out if by chance we did something at the state level, what we would do is we -- I would set up a file transfer protocol site and that file transfer protocol site would be raw video footage that broadcasters could use because we were concerned about news getting to northern Michigan in the upper peninsula that is one television market. We would give them the raw footage and they could edit and make it their own because the stories in the state they could localize because we did go to northern Michigan and host an event where they could keep the story going, so we tried to look at every conceivable way and my team and I to make sure we got the message out and people had the facts with regards to poverty and why they should participate in the poverty summit.

>> Janice: Okay my next question how would you approach the role of steering public communications and in communications and engagement for the new redistricting process in Michigan?

>> Mr. Woods: Well, this is some uncharted waters but this is also not a time to be an entrepreneur. So this is where teamwork comes in. Really, really, really, really handy. And you know when you work with the commission having worked with the city of Benton harbor, having worked with other boards and commissions then having been on a board and commission, you got to get buy in. And so I can give you some plans and some ideas but I think like one of the challenges is how are we going to define communities of interest?

And what is the process that we are going to use for that?

And what does that look like?

I think some of the challenges is this is now January 12th.

you know how are we going to get up to speed with our communication efforts and be more inclusive and get people involved?

We have a pandemic COVID-19. You know how are we going to get involved with communications and open up other possibilities so that everyone that wants to participate has an opportunity to do so. And so what I would do is probably come working with Sue Hammersmith as executive director and saying here are some ideas that I think we can consider but it would just be some recommendations and ideas knowing that the commission has the final say. But showing you the research and the documentation with regards to that. For example, you know Facebook has eight out of ten users. What are we doing with the social, we use all three social media platforms or should we really focus on Facebook and look at Facebook as the platform because it's an inner active platform and it's the only one that has an interactivity where you can communicate and keep people engaged over a sustained period of time. And with eight out of ten people in America using Facebook and the biggest myth in my research when I looked at it is that we see a lot of young people 34 and under are using Facebook. Grant it they may not be 13-17 but 34 and under are really using Facebook so how can we maximize that and do what relates to communication. What about templates? Let me show you templates and some ideas. My job to sum it up succinctly bring recommendations based on my expertise and research so that the commission can make some decisions working through the executive director.

>> Janice: Thank you. So you said that you would use Facebook. Are there any other methods that you would utilize to reach Michiganders across the state?

>> Mr. Woods: I think we can do some videos to get your increase in Facebook. Usually pictures and videos increase and that can also be something that we can use secondary. Instagram we can do that and use secondary on YouTube as well. Many people go to YouTube for how to. And so I think we would need to brand that in terms of how to draw maps to submit for redistricting. How to communicate with



commissioners with regards to plans or ideas. So I think our YouTube would be more of a how to because it's a more of a video searching platform. In terms of how that works and so I would look at that as a how to. Twitter is more of a broadcast service just in time with regards to that and so I would suggest you know we can look at all three but I would recommend using Facebook and maximizing that, knowing that we could use the page, knowing that we could use groups where people have special interests so they can get involved and we can have as much engagement as possible. So I'm open to using any and all platforms the commission desires but I also want to make sure they know which one we can get the most bang for the buck.

>> Janice: Thank you and this is my last question: Do you have any prior experience working with media firms or companies?

>> Mr. Woods: Yes, I do. I've contracted with media firms or companies. We have worked together in crisis communications. Working with the Michigan Department of Health and human services. I'm sorry that is the current department. The Michigan department of human services I have done a lot with child death. We have had unfortunate incidents we had to bring firms in to help us with regards to brand management. We've also done things with regards to contracting. So I'm very familiar with doing are. FPs request for proposals so that we can identity through a needs assessment what we need and putting that out for bid.

>> Janice: And do you envision paid media playing a role in the communications strategy?

>> Mr. Woods: There are some opportunities. When we did the poverty summit, we really worked with minority media and women owned media to make sure in addition to traditional media and there is agencies that you can work with that can give you a bulk rate if you buy in volume. And so I think we would do a supplement of paid media as well as you know media that we can get complimentary. I think we would work with that. But I just think that really has to do with the relationships that we build in the market. Obviously, op eds are free and there are some other things that we can do. But I mean I think it would be a mix to be honest with you.

>> Janice: Thank you. Doug, I think you are next.

>> Doug: Before we.

>> Steve: Before we go to Doug Juanita you are back. Do you have question capability?

>> Juanita: .

>> Steve: You're muted. I can't hear you. .

>> Juanita: Sorry what question are you all on?

>> Steve: We would be up to your question seven, eight and nine.

>> Juanita: Yes. Hi Mr. Woods, how are you?

>> Mr. Woods: Fine commissioner Curry and thanks again for chairing this subcommittee I did not have a chance to greet you when I was on at the beginning of the broadcast.

>> Juanita: I have a few questions for you have you had had to speak with the media during a crisis. It sounds like you just did that one though.

>> I cited that as an example but let me be a little bit more specific with regards to that question. Yes, unfortunately I had to deal with child death and with child death it's really important that the department of human services that you work in concert with your legal counsel as well as the executive director to make sure that we are putting out the proper message and also not compromising according to the law. And so there is a lot of things that I had to work with to deal with to make sure that we protected the integrity of the department so there would be trust as relates to child welfare. But also making sure that we were being open and transparent as much as we could as possible. It's definitely a balancing act with regards to that. But I was under the guidance of legal counsel and working with the executive director. And people want answers. You know when people unfortunately babies are in a microwave people want answers. When children are found cut up in storage people want answers or someone dies, they want answers. So those are the types of crisis that I dealt with. I don't expect us to deal with that here as a commission. But I just want you to get a perspective of the realities of the crisis that I had to deal with.

>> Juanita: Okay, describe the basic steps you would take to organize public hearings and engage in individuals in participating?

>> Mr. Woods: Sure. As relates to public hearings I would like to first of all we are required to do ten that I'm aware of but I think we should do more. And what I would try to look for is a central location that is accessible to people with disabilities. That is common, that is known. When I did the by Michigan first, I used my leveraged my relationship with community colleges because I was a former trustee at lake Michigan college and former trustee at Lansing community college and had a great relationship with the community college association so I would look for a facility like that. Usually with community colleges you don't have to worry about technology because they have the technology equipment already there so that helps cut down on some costs and efficiencies. In addition to that you want to make sure that you have someone that can do sign language, someone that can also translate in terms of people who are coming. You really want to build with that. When we did the poverty summit, we worked a lot with access in Detroit. Worked a lot with Hispanic organizations not only in Detroit but in Grand Rapids to make sure that people can hear in their own native language but also communicate back in their native language so that they can be a part of it and not be secondhand. It's really important that we can integrate them in real time so that the engagement is just as real for them as it is with someone that speaks English. You want to make sure that you have security proper security available in terms of the

assessment with regards to that. Bathrooms are accessible you have plenty of bathrooms for the crowd you have at hand. I mean, it's a whole checklist that I work with from a logistics and event planning point that I had with the Michigan society of association executives and what we do with the Lansing safety Council do you have enough rest rooms in the vicinity that is close for the amount of people that you have. You know, knowing that this is COVID we would obviously work with the local health department to make sure that we are doing the things that we need to do in this era. Now that it's COVID-19 how do we work with the technology to ensure that people that can't come are we using Zoom, are we going to Use Street yard. What type of platform are we going to use, how are we going to engage people so we have that aspect aren't the social media aspect and include Facebook if you have Facebook or whatever other social media we are using in addition to YouTube and a checklist where is the press going to be, who is doing the interviews with the press after the press is done. If there are some comments this come in the public comments from this particular area, are we read did to address those comments, those public comments that come from the particular area so that we are on top of it. Does something happen in the news we need to be made aware of that can come up all of those things coming off the top of my head based on prior experience are just things you have to be ready for at a moment's notice because the communication outreach job is more than just a spokesperson you also have to anticipate and facilitate to make sure the commissioners are getting the information they need to have during the public hearings because that is why they are being called.

>> Juanita: Okay good. Do you have specific ideas for engaging different communities and communities of interest across the state?

>> Mr. Woods. Definitely a list of stakeholders and I worked with the association of executives and Sue Hammersmith got references from me today that can speak to that. But the whole stakeholder engagement on a statewide level but also a local level is how you're going to do it because you have to build trust. And that is what we did with the poverty summit. I feel I can replicate that for the redistricting. We got to work with you know the Michigan Municipal League, the Michigan Township Association, the Michigan Association of Counties. You know, you're talking about you know different affinity groups, faith based communities how are we working with that. The League of Women Voters and when I did the difference of opinion radio show for ten years in Benton Harbor, they asked us because of our integrity to do their candidate forms because they knew we were ballots so we would bring all those, I'm sorry did something happen because I can't see myself. It says Richard Weiss has started screen sharing.

>> Steve: We can see and hear you just keep going.

>> Mr. Woods: So bringing stakeholder engagement and putting that in a database segmenting that based on where we do our public hearings and doing that so we can stay in contact with them has been very successful and worked for the poverty summit

and there is no reason why it can't work for here as well and I also look not just for united ways and these Salvation Armies, these groups across the state but there is also local grass roots groups that are unique to different communities and areas that have more of influence than some of the well-known groups that people talk about off the top of their heads. Like Benton harbor we had information sharing exchange which was unique to them.

You got to find those diamonds in the rough because they have a lot of credibility in the community and can help us in our commission.

>> Juanita: All right Mr. Woods are you affiliated with the political party and have you made political contributions to any of them?

>> Mr. Woods: No.

>> Juanita: Okay, how would you conduct yourself and achieve the goals of the ICRC in a nonpartisan manner?

>> Mr. Woods: Well I think the first and foremost is you got to build trust and Steven Colby says the success of any organization is how quickly you can build trust and that trust you know happens to be staying on message. You know, the criteria is based on these seven factors staying on message. How do we define communities of interest. Staying on message. I think the way you build on trust to stay on message to be open and transparent about receiving input then you execute the job in a spirit of excellence and integrity so that what represents the commission that's what I'm doing. Because I am a reflection of you. I'm not -- I don't have time to develop my own brand or develop my own style. My brand is the reflection of this commission. And so your code of conduct is my code of conduct. How you want to communicate and the tone is how I communicate in the tone because the mission is always bigger than the individual.

>> Juanita: Sounds great. Do you have any questions for us?

>> Mr. Woods: Yes, I do have a question when I read the job posting it said it was a limited term appointment and when I noticed limited term appointment based on my state Government experience it means that you have a state contract. Is that the case? Would I be considered a state employee?

Or not?

>> Juanita: We will let Steve answer that.

>> Steve: You will have a contract with us, the commission. And you are kind of in another world as far as being a state employee. You are not a civil service employee. Though some of the civil service provisions might apply to you. You're not in the retirement system. You are not in the healthcare system. Does that answer your questions?

>> Mr. Woods: It does not sound like that is a limited term appointment by the state. That I'm accustomed to but that is good to know.

>> Steve: Well the limited term really reflects more on the fact that this commission is limited term. We will run through -- we have to have the plan developed and approved

no later than November 1st but we are anticipating based upon experience of other states that there are going to be legal challenges and the communications and executive director and general counsel will probably run past that in 2022.

So that's kind of -- this is not a job in which you know you are going to be here for the next 20 years. That ain't going to happen. So that is kind of what we mean by limited term. Being the employee of the commission so to speak you don't get all the panoply of state Government benefits.

>> Mr. Woods: Okay.

>> Juanita: I believe I'm through with my questions.

>> Steve: Do any of the other commissioners have questions?

Rhonda you have your hand up.

>> Rhonda: Yes, I do thank you Mr. Woods. I have just a couple of questions for you. And one just came up. I'm curious with hearing what you just heard about this being a more or less short term job and I see you're currently employed, would you have a problem leaving your current employer if you were offered employment?

>> Mr. Woods: No, not at all. Limited term with the state Government just so I'm used to that. You know, with regards to some of that. So that is just not the issue. It's just that understanding what that means in this context. Just so that we are very clear with regards to that. Because it -- it just helps you know in terms of expectations. Obviously, negotiations. If I was fortunate enough to get the position because you know, I'm interested in the position. I'm interested in doing a great job. I just want to know, you know, what I can expect to be honest with you. To be open and transparent.

>> Rhonda: My second question is kind of a follow-up to a question that was asked about how would you approach the role of steering public communications and engagement for the redistricting process you talked a lot about Facebook and possibly YouTube being good tools. Can you tell me how you would reach out to people who say are older or elderly who may not be on Facebook or communities that are very rural that might not have access to Internet?

>> Mr. Woods: Right, that's just one form of engagement. Working with our stakeholders, like for example, Michigan Rehabilitation Services, the disabilities committee is a very close knit community so if you are connected with them you could identify some of the resources that people may need with regard to that, having said that I'm not saying everyone is disabled. Senior citizen centers, I've done stuff with area agency on aging who has you know the pulse of through Michigan works. That has a pulse to some of the seniors. You have centers. You have AARP. I mean, there is different ways of connecting with people. They have children or some way with regard to an e-mail list. Sometimes you know working with churches. They have ways to access so you could be rest assured if we are doing this, I am a huge proponent of not being inundated with social media knowing there is a digital divide in rural areas and if there is not a digital divide there might be a lack of knowledge.

I did personal development for the Michigan association of executives so I understand how adult learners work and how to communicate using the vaxi mod call kinesthetic conceptual to make sure things are said at a sixth grade level so people can understand and using examples to relate and rest assured we will be very aggressive and not make any assumptions that people are getting information because we use one or two mediums. That is where that stakeholder involvement in going in communities and seeing who we can trust to do that because just because it works on one community it does not work on another and that goes back to the point, I believe commissioner Curry was asking me is we got to go in communities and see who has the trust of the people so we can build upon that trust so no one is left behind and everyone that chooses to will have an opportunity to be engaged in this process.

>> Rhonda: Okay, thank you.

>> Steve: MC.

>> MC: My question is about your background Edward. Is it lake Michigan Lake Huron, Lake Superior is it a lake?

>> Mr. Woods: It's lake Michigan this is taken from Warren dunes and I just wanted you to know if you hire me the sky is the limit. The sky is the limit. I want to engage each and every one of you. I want to be a part of the process. I'm excited to be honest with you with regards to this opportunity. Because we can really make a difference. I don't care what is going on in Washington. What's going on in the capitol. We can make a difference.

And we can do it the right way. Using every available tool and every available connection network that we have across this state. Because we are doing some good work and I really would enjoy being a part of that with you.

>> Steve: Anybody else?

Well, I have to take a point of personal privilege with you, Mr. Woods. I looked at your board of directors and your advisory board, et cetera, et cetera. And there are ten people on there that I know professionally, personally or am personal friends with but I'm not going to tell you which ones. Any other questions you have of us?

>> Mr. Woods: No, I just want to make sure I just lay the case in terms of why you should consider me. I believe I'm an ideal candidate because I'm a great spokesperson, public speaker and educator doing professional development with regards to adults. My interpersonal relationships and collaboration skills I'm an excellent writer event planner and logistics we talked about social media but I also know how to do video production and using pinnacle shooting film and just doing things like that. I think the intangibles you get with me is I'm a two time nonpartisan elected official. Both in southwest Michigan but is also here in the greater Lansing area working with community colleges. And then I've already shared with you the logistics. I think that is just invaluable. I think at the last meeting chairman Lett and in complete honesty I did



not listen to the other interview because I thought it was my job to sell me based upon my qualifications. So.

>> Steve: You have done a very nice job.

>> Mr. Woods: The record can speak for itself and I think those intangibles would be an excellent fit for this commission and the goals it's trying to achieve to ensure voters not politicians establish the redistricting lines for the State of Michigan in a fair manner and I come in there knowing the challenges that we might lose a Congressional seat. You know, that is not lost to me. Knowing the challenges of what was said in the report from the University of Michigan and studied the report that came from California knowing where we are right now. In terms of the date and how we need to make up ground I understand that. I understand the challenges of COVID-19. I understand the challenges of being accused of bias. And all these things that can happen but I still in spite of all those challenges I think the mission outweighs each and every one of them and working together I believe we can make a difference for the State of Michigan. So thank you so much for having me. And giving me this opportunity to be considered.

>> Steve: Well said. We thank you for being here and giving us your time also. You have a good evening. Oh, you didn't watch so I will them you we won't make a decision tonight. So we won't have an answer but as soon as we do, we will let you know whether you are the chosen one or the non-chosen one we will be back with you. Again, thank you and have a nice evening. Good-bye.

>> Mr. Woods: Thank you.

>> Steve: Okay as I said and if anybody's curious there are ten people on his board for the Lansing safety Council who I do know. I won't call them and they didn't call me so take care of that.

Let's take I said we would take a break between every one and we will do that because it's late in the evening so we will be back here at 6:26. [ Recess ]  
I saw in the chat that Cynthia was having issues with her Internet. Anybody having issues?

Stable as usual?

Okay.

>> Cynthia: I'm here but I turned my video off to try and stay connected.

>> MC: I'm with you Cynthia and even have had to go to the phone the virtual network because I thought I had enough Internet connectivity in my house, I'm the only one in my house and I'm still having problems.

>> Doug: Where do you get your Internet from?

>> MC: A local provider called Metro net but part of me is wondering if there is so much streaming happening. I remember sort of when before COVID I thought when people are at home and streaming there is a band width a lot is used for streaming their Internet or TV programs. And because everyone is working from home not everyone but many people are working from home and I don't know if it's the same argument and

other people are not experiencing it so I don't know what is going on with me today but I'm going to turn off my video again.

>> Doug: All the kids are playing Fortnite is the problem.

>> Steve: MC you got to pay the bill.

>> MC: Dog gone it thank you for reminding me.

>> Steve: We all back or getting back?

>> MC: I'm here but my video is off.

>> Steve: Your video is on. You need another sign. Okay looks like we are all back, I think. So let's have Mr. Sorg.

>> Cynthia: While we are waiting for him, I have a message that my Internet is unstable so if I drop off somebody will have to pick up my questions.

>> Steve: Okay.

>> Mr. Sorg: Good evening.

>> Steve: Good evening Mr. Sorg pleasure to have you with us this evening my name is Steve Lett I'm the chairman of the ICRC commission and we have a number of people here who want to hear from you. The set up will be that there will be three people to ask you questions that we have determined that we would like you to be able to address and if other commissioners along the way have questions to expand on those, they will do so and at the end we also have a time for you to ask us questions and any questions that we may want to ask of you at that time.

Any questions before we get started?

>> Mr. Sorg: No other than if you can please call me Walt.

>> Steve: Walt I will be happy to do that. And we have who is first up Cynthia I believe.

>> Cynthia: So hi Walt thanks for joining us today.

>> Mr. Sorg: Thanks for staying up and missing your dinner.

>> Cynthia: So will you please tell us all why you are interested in this position and the work of redistricting.

>> Mr. Sorg: Redistricting has been the focus of my life outside the home for the last decade really. I started working on the issue in 2012. And over the years just kept at it and kept at it until we were able to put together the coalition to make it happen. It's my passion and something I felt strongly about for a long time and I'm excited so far everything we hoped would happen with the process that we created through the ballot proposal is happening so far and I'd like to see it through to a successful conclusion.

>> Cynthia: Thank you. And can you tell us your top three personal qualities that you think make you successful?

>> Mr. Sorg: I think specific for this position I would not have a steep learning curve. I'm familiar with the issue itself and the process that you have to go through. Also my knowledge of state Government and my knowledge of the media with which we are going to have to work. And the communities around the state that have a special

interest in the subject of redistricting. They were critical to the campaign that we put together. My existing network will facilitate community outreach when I was talking with Sue last week, I noted that her network through the nonprofit world really supplements the network I've got which is more through the advocacy world on the both the partisan and the nonpartisan side. There are a lot of people out there. I don't think there is going to be a real challenge to get people to show up at the hearings the challenge is the putting on the hearings and try to keep them running under a hundred hours each and based on the discussions I have had with California commissioners you will be very popular people when you go on the road. I should apologize to you when the amendment was being drafted nobody could have perceived we were or predicted we would have a pandemic and that certainly was not taken into consideration when some requirements were put in the amendment. There is going to be a real challenge there in figuring out what has to be done given the circumstances and still not opening up the commission or its maps to a Court challenge because you didn't do enough on the public hearings to comply. The third thing I would say is that go back to Howard Stern likes to call himself the king of all media and I'm not nearly as brash or modest as Howard Stern but I have a lot of immediate I've been a newspaper and produced live and syndicated and done broadcast news reporting and done some website development but I would not call myself a web developer but I can put up a quick and dirty website and I have managed advising campaigns and if my skills are not sufficient for a particular task and there are my can't do within my own I can find people that can provide me assistance that I need to get it done properly.

>> Cynthia: Will you describe your experience developing strategic media and education campaigns.

>> Mr. Sorg: Whether than dwell on proposal two which is tempting because I'm proud of what we accomplished I will talk about a very small project I've been working on fairly recently as a consultant for the Ingham County drain commission and doesn't sound very committing but the commissioner has been working with the environmental group which I'm on the board of directors for a very major environmental rehab in the east Lansing area. And we have been developing an education campaign for the community and specific audiences to make people aware of what this project is all about. And to make them understand first of all why we are -- why we are spending \$40 million on this project. And also what the benefit is to the community.

>> Cynthia: Okay thank you. Janice has some questions now.

>> Janice: Welcome Walt.

>> Good evening, thank you.

>> Janice: My first question is describe a public information campaign you developed.

>> Mr. Sorg: There have been so many over the years certainly that one that the initial campaign that we developed for proposal two is really critical to our success. It was determined early on we needed to get out in the field right away and stage town

halls all across the State of Michigan because we had an education problem and polling said two thirds of the state did not know what redistricting or gerrymandering was and we needed to do education and get the word out in the communities second we needed to recruit a volunteer team statewide because we needed thousands of people to collect signatures on petitions so we put together town hall meetings and operating on fumes we had no money to work with so we could not use paid media reinforcement and we were able to set up 33 town hall meetings in the space of 30 days. I was the speaker, the presenter at probably half of them. We had three people initially doing our presentations. Later on we developed a speaker's Bureau where we trained other speakers in the issue so they could make presentations on our behalf and we could continue to reach out. We relied primarily on word of mouth free media or earned media. Rather than any paid media because we could not afford paid media and also, we had very small core of volunteers initially who were willing to help us with the community relations so we could reach out to that network and they would then reach out to their networks and get participation. In the end we had input on the initial redistricting plan from I think 2000, 2500 people and it was very critical really in the drafting of the amendment. A lot of what we learned at the hearings went to the Amendment. It was successful and we went from who the hell are you to 61% of the vote in a matter of about six months.

>> Cynthia: Thank you. You said town halls. Were there any other communication methods that you would like to tell us about that you used?

>> Mr. Sorg: Well for various projects we used a variety of things. Obviously, we kicked off the that campaign with a news conference in Lansing. Because we knew that's where we would find the media that was most knowledge about the issue and because I had enough credibility with the Lansing media that would be covering it that they wouldn't just totally laugh us off. Because basically we were a bunch of political nobodies who had no money, no organizational strength or anything else. And we were saying we going to change the Constitution this year so we needed to use whatever credibility we could have. So we relied very heavily on earned media in the initial days. Other campaigns depending on the budget you use various tactics. Years ago I had clients we had the commodity and produced food and primary project we did a syndicated program on PBS stations where we would cook and used Michigan products to cook and showed people how to best utilize Michigan products. And it went over very well and lasted for two years on PBS in Michigan on all of the stations and fed me well for a couple of years as well which is most enjoyable. But every project did require a different blend of outreach depending on your resources. Not every project doesn't come in with the same resources whether it's people resources or financial.

>> Janice: Thank you how would you approach the role of steering public communications and engagement for the new redistricting process in Michigan?

>> Mr. Sorg: My favorite question when trying to put together a communications plan for any project is one what is the audience and two what is the message? And that would be the beginning of the project. Along with assessment of what resources we have available, you know, what is available through the secretary of state's office what is available through third parties but reaching out to the constituent groups that are going to be most interested in dealing with redistricting. And we have ten million people in Michigan and I'm pretty sure you don't want all ten million to show up at the public hearings so we want to hear as best possible to get the word out to those groups that have the most that have the strongest interest in the outcome of the process. Who have the strongest interest in making sure that the communities of interest as you define them are meet what they think is appropriate. And the way I would do that would be by basically using other groups and trying to leverage their communications channels so that we are not trying to reach people directly especially through paid advertising which I don't believe the commission can afford. But rather by going through the networks of other organizations whether it's the AARP. Or the NAACP. Or ACLU or voters not politicians. Or any group that has got a true interest in this.

Part of it would be part of that research would be getting with the groups that help pass proposal three because obviously they have a huge interest in election good Government issues and this certainly is a good Government issue. But that would be my general approach. It's going to be specifically defined though by the location of the hearings. Because every community is going to be a little bit different, who do you reach out to do you call the rotary club or the Kiwanis is it the Chamber of Commerce is it a combination of the above, who are the key Government leaders to reach out to at the local level those sorts of things.

>> Janice: Thank you and my final question do you have prior experience working with media firms or companies?

>> Mr. Sorg: I have quite a bit actually I was involved with the advertising campaigns supervising or developing advertising campaigns when I was at the state bar years ago, they wanted to do an image campaign for lawyers which was of moderate success, it was kind of a pet project of the president of the bar at that time. And also, we had a very large advertising campaign when I was with the commerce department on Michigan's I'm and as a place to do business.

It was a major focus of the first year that I was at the commerce department and that was a multimillion dollar campaign. We hired ad agencies in both cases for those. For voters not politicians I worked very closely with the we hired a media firm as soon as we could afford it because we did not have the resources internally to do all the things that needed to be done. I was directly involved in the selection of the firm that we hired. One of the letters of recommendation or one of the references that I listed on my

resume Meijer is one of the principal of the firm and we worked together on projects for many years.

>> Do you envision paid media playing a role in communications for this commission?

>> If there is paid media, I think it will be pretty nil. Your budget is very tight the legislature made it tighter than we intended and I don't know if you are familiar with the games they played in the appropriations process to reduce it but my sense is the legislature will be reluctant to give the commission any more money than it has to as required by the constitutional amendment so I would be very leery of spending any money that doesn't absolutely have to be spent because you will spend a lot of money initially at least on the consultants who are the most important going to be the most important hires that you make in a lot of ways. And there is going to be obviously additional staff. And what you have got to spend is not a lot -- really does not allow for a lot of advertising.

>> Janice: Thank you that is my last question. Juanita?

>> Juanita: Good evening Walt, can you hear me?

>> Mr. Sorg: .

>> Juanita: Can you hear me?

>> I can hear you just fine.

>> How are you Walt.

>> I'm very fine thank you.

>> Do you have prior experience working with media firms or companies?

>> Mr. Sorg: I believe we just discussed that.

>> Juanita: Well do you envision paid media playing a role is that the same question?

>> Yes.

>> Juanita: Have you had to speak to the media during a crisis.

>> I worked for the legislature for ten years absolutely. Probably the most interesting crisis I had in ten years I got a call from a reporter one afternoon as I'm sitting at my desk typing away at the computer and said you may not have heard that yes but your boss the speaker of the house just quit. I knew as soon as I heard that, that it was a negotiating tactic on his part when he was getting in a snit with the caucus he would threaten to walk away because he knew he had leverage if he did that and I had to talk the reporter down a little bit so the reporter understood what it was and I had to do it in a way that would not make the speaker look pedantic or throwing a temper tantrum or anything else so that is it in terms of the crisis. We ran into them regularly on the commerce department working on large economic projects because it's really competitive between the states with big factories in and things like that and we would regularly have to knock down things that were planted by other states or by competing companies and those sorts of things. A lot of that was a lot of the response was based on having relationships with the people that were covering you. And for them to know



that they could talk with you and get an honest answer even if it was not an answer that they could use in print or that they could quote you on.

>> Juanita: Okay, describe the basic steps you would take to organize public hearings and engage individuals participating in them.

>> If first step is working with Sue to figure out where the hearings are going to be. The logistics are going to be very challenging because of what was put into the Constitution. In light of what we are dealing with right now with COVID. I have been noodling around with it a little bit and thinking very possibly the best way to do it would be find out how many college basketball arenas are available because social distancing for a live public hearing will be massive and I forgot the number I think it's 20 people per thousand feet so you need a lot of square footage to get a lot of people in if room and a problem trying to figure out how to schedule speakers because you don't want to sit in there 10, 12, 14 hours for a hearing I'm sure and you very well may have that demand especially in southeast Michigan. There are going to be people that deal with these hearings from various interest groups who are going to treat you like the dead heads used to treat the grateful dead and follow you from town to town and want you to testify. One night we had the opportunity to have dinner with three of the California commissioners and the horror stories we heard from them were just fascinating. But there will be a lot of people that show up. You can pretty much quickly learn how to spot the ringers in the crowd but you are going to have a lot of folks there. The other thing in this environment I think it's getting to be very critical to coordinate very closely with not just the health department and probably through the state health department because it would be a little easier but the Michigan State police. We are going to need security at these hearings. I would not have envisioned two years ago but after the last week especially and the tensions over something as silly as wearing a mask. It's probably best to over plan rather than to under plan on something like that. We have just seen the result of under planning and so once the schedule is set up the rest of it is sort of like a checklist of these are the things you need. You have to have enough bandwidth you will be doing live television programs from every one of the venues because it's required basically that you stream every one of these hearings live and producing a live TV show on the road, I've done it not often but I've done it and it's a bit of a challenge. You have to have enough bandwidth and have enough equipment. And you've got to have you possibly have to bring in some day workers to help with it a little bit. So that is pretty much it's kind of a checklist after you have advanced the site so you know what you are getting in to.

>> Juanita: Okay, do you have specific ideas for engaging different communities and communities of interest across the state?

>> Mr. Sorg: Absolutely. I think it's probably the most efficient thing to do is go through the various advocacy groups in the state on behalf of all sorts of groups of people whether they are ethnic groups political groups educational groups, business,

labor, there is a lot of them out there and they are more -- they will be more than happy to spread the word in their groups this is going to be out there because they want to have an impact on this process.

It also gives us the most bang for the buck if we leverage their assets which I'm pretty sure they are going to want to do that. On top of that the media is very interested I've got in the last couple days e-mails from a couple friends of mine in the media who are going to be covering this issue rooting me on a little bit and there will be a lot of media interest primarily from the political media in Lansing but also from reporters around the state. We found that when we were doing the town halls, we had a lot of interest from reporters in towns that I did not even know existed almost in the State of Michigan, I thought I knew every place in the state but we got tremendous response and virtually all positive. I have worked a lot of Government and political and advocacy public relations community relations over the years. It was the first time I ever worked on a project where I had virtually no negative push back and it was just amazing.

>> Juanita: Are you affiliated with a political party and made contributions.

>> I'm basically a democrat. My contributions and my vote and my work has been across the board during the last cycle I actually did some Mark for a friend of mine who was running as a republican for the prosecuting attorney in Clinton county. I suspect Steve may know him. And he was a little leery in the beginning because he thought I was a partisan. And that's the only way I thought. It's also one of the reasons why I asked some friends of mine from republican administrations to send letters of recommendation if they would be willing to do so and I believe two or three former department directors in Milliken administration sent letters and Judge Peter Houk the former Judge of Court of claims I know sent you a letter, he told me he would. As well as some other folks. I literally have spent the last eight years working on a process to take partisanship as much as possible out of redistricting. And I'm retired basically. And I'm not about to take whatever reputation I've developed over the last few years and toss it down the drain as the last act of my life. And yes, about contributions too. In the last cycle I'm not a big contributor 25 here 50 there in the last cycle probably the ones I gave the most money to were to democrats or my state representative and my representative in Congress. A republican, the gentleman I worked for in Clinton county. And the mayor of Lansing who is nonpartisan.

>> Juanita: Okay I think you have almost answered this question but I'm going to ask it again.

>> Okay.

>> Juanita: How would you conduct yourself and achieve the goals of ICRC in a nonpartisan manner?

>> Mr. Sorg: One of the things I need to be aware of all the time is the difference between a policy making position and an administrative/get it done position. And I view this position as the latter. Probably the best example of how I try to conduct myself

working for the commission is the example from Georgia in the last election. The election was certified basically a Governor and secretary of state and elections person who strongly supported President Trump in his campaign and gave him money and when push came to shove hey, they said our job is to certify the vote as it is and steadfastly certified the vote and the president came up a little short in Georgia that is pretty common in Government Secretary of State Benson operates the same way and does as every Secretary of State in the country as best I can tell. That is the differentiation. My private life is my private life and my private political views are my private political views and has nothing to do with what the commission will do. One thing I would do is very much to keep myself separated from any policy decisions you have to make including a decision or providing guidance on communities of interest. I do have some ideas on communities of interest. We spent months talking about it. So clearly, I have ideas. I don't want you to hear them in any way. I don't want to influence you on that. The whole point of having a commission of you folks is for you folks to figure that out, whatever you come up with is fine with me.

>> Juanita: Do you have any questions for us?

>> Mr. Sorg: I watched every one of your meetings because of my interest to see if this thing was going to work because we were very nervous those of us who put this together in the first place and so I've been delighted with what's going on. The only other thing I wanted to say is I wanted to shout out to the ASL interpreter Brittini hi Brittini I'm a fan. I see her a lot on the Governor's news conferences on COVID so I just wanted to say that. She is the better part of the show sometimes than the Governor.

>> Steve: Thanks Walt we appreciate that.

>> Juanita: We are back in the hands of our chairman.

>> Steve: Walt, any questions of us?

This is your chance to ask.

>> Mr. Sorg: No, you have answered a lot of my questions during the previous meetings and the ones you have not answered in the previous meetings I'm pretty sure you don't know the answer.

>> Steve: We don't know the answers to a lot of stuff.

>> That is the beautiful to this process you guys are inventing the wheel and that is exciting to and put together a plan that is fair and independent and not tinged by the partisan ship but get the make the rules for the next commission.

>> Steve: Hopefully we will do a good job and we are building this thing as we are flying the plane.

>> Good luck to you and hope it's not a 737 max.

>> Steve: You did mention my name as knowing the prosecutor up in Clinton county but I wanted to be sure I don't know you and you don't know me; is that correct?

>> Mr. Sorg: No, I only knew that because you mentioned at one point until recently you lived in Dewitt, I think.

>> Steve: No I lived in Lansing.

>> Mr. Sorg: And all the lawyers here know each other, I'm four miles from the capitol in case you were wondering about that. That is where I live.

>> Steve: Anybody got any questions for Walt?

Before we, yeah, Brittini.

>> Brittini: Hi Walt I have a question.

>> Hi, sure.

>> Brittini: How would you describe your approachability and ability to develop rapport?

>> Mr. Sorg: I like to think it's good. As I mentioned one of my strengths is networking. I was able to bring a lot of people to the table for every project I've worked on really by reaching out to my network. And developing strong relationships. Some of the people that I worked with 40 years ago when I was on legislative staff are still friends today so I think that probably speaks well to it. But I like working with all sorts of people including people I don't agree with. I think I mentioned at one point in the paperwork that I sent in my father was a worked in both the Nixon and Regan administration as a political appointee and he and I had interesting political discussions over the years but we loved each other and we always got along great and we knew how to talk shop without getting angry.

>> Brittini: Okay, that makes sense. I think I have another question that you alluded to and you seem to have a very strong answer about how would you keep you know you have a vested interest and a lot of information as it comes to the commission, how would you keep that separate if one of us were to have a question about the process since it have very new to us?

>> Mr. Sorg: It would depend on the question. If it was something where I felt I was not crossing the line into telling you how to do your job, it was just informational I would certainly answer it on the spot. If I was not sure I would go to Sue or go to Julianne and ask them maybe to field it. Or perhaps refer you elsewhere for the information. But I don't want to get into a situation where I'm giving legal opinions on the amendment even though I helped write the darn thing. It was not the cheap drafter but I helped write it. Or you know I could possibly tell you a little about the history and intent but beyond that I would be very, very careful of crossing the line because it would taint the process that we worked so hard to create.

>> Brittini: I have two more, sorry.

>> Good I'm not going anywhere.

>> Brittini: Can you describe any up to date, current tools that you utilize when it comes to community outreach and like public relations besides radio?

Who are things that are current trends that you can talk about that would be exciting for folks reaching out to us and vice versa?

>> Mr. Sorg: I'm basically retired. So I'm not doing a whole lot. I do a little bit of consulting most of it volunteer. But one thing I did just kind of on the Lark when this whole COVID thing started going kind of a fanatic on the health precautions I started a Facebook group just from nothing so that people could get -- could relate what businesses were and were not practices COVID safety. And that thing just kind of took off. Initially we made it as a public group which was a huge mistake and got trolled hugely but that has grown into 4, 5, 600 people and we are swapping information. We do not allow political discussion or boycotts of businesses we just share information where you can go safely. Somebody my age is very concerned about the possibility of an infection so that is one thing I have done basically on Facebook. I mentioned I did run for county commission a couple years ago which I consider a nonpartisan job even though you have to run on a partisan ticket and doing things like animal control and the health department and keeping the streets clean and the sheriff's department and stuff like that. But that was basically a one man campaign. I did develop my own website which was not the classiest in the history of the world but functional and developed my campaign and print materials did the writing and design with the help of a couple of friends. So those are a couple of recent projects I worked on. By the way I got creamed in the campaign and lost two to one in the primary.

>> Brittini: At least you are not a sore loser that is okay.

>> A friend of mine lives two blocks away from me and he won.

>> Brittini: The last question and I don't want to take up the time talk about diverse communities you worked with that are more broadly connected especially with everything going on in the world, I'm very interested to see how people bridge the gap.

>> Mr. Sorg: One of the most interesting things I have done two things let me mention. First for a little while I was an Uber driver after I was retired and getting bored and the nice thing in Lansing you spend time on campus and meet people from all around the world. Most customers for Uber were actually international students and that was fun because I got some guy in there from Saudi Arabia what are the hot songs in Saudi Arabia right now. Who is hot there?

Or students from China and talk with them. The -- the other thing I did at Michigan State University. A little before that I was very involved with the athletic department and I produce the TV programs for both the basketball and football coaches back with health coat and put you with a diverse population students are all over the place. Communities within Lansing I handled the primary outreach for voters not politicians with the Latino-X community through an education called lead. And I also we did a lot of work with the Detroit chapter and the state chapter of the NAACP among others. I most recently did some volunteer work for the petition drive to amend the Elliot Larson civil rights act to extend those protections for workplace and housing discrimination to the LGBTQ community. That opened up a whole new world to me. I have not had a lot of contact

before then with people who did not fit in the standard niches of a sexual identity and it was very eye opening and very worthwhile for me.

>> Brittini: Thank you.

>> Steve: Okay, anybody else?

Well we would like to thank you for taking your time to meet with us. And I guess we would like to thank you since we are on this commission for shepherding the commission into existence. Good job.

>> It was an honor to be a part of that process and it's a thrill to see it working.

>> Steve: We will not have an answer this evening. We will be discussing this after everybody has interviewed and we will get back with everybody as to what our decision is. So you will hear from us sometime in the near future.

>> Mr. Sorg: I may be watching Thursday morning you never know. Thanks so much.

>> Steve: Have a good evening.

>> Mr. Sorg: You too.

>> Steve: Okay, as I said we will take another five-minute break and then we will take our last interview. See you back here at 7:06.

[ Recess ]

Julianne: Hi Steve how is the weather in Bonita springs, Florida.

>> Steve: Today was about 70 and raining. But other than that it's actually been a little cool for Florida.

>> Julianne: For Florida.

>> Steve: So it's kind of going up and down. We get in to the low 70s and then down in the 60s and then back up in the 70s.

>> Julianne: We are mid-30s up here generally speaking and overcast. So I think you're still nudging us out a bit.

>> Steve: I look at and I live up in Interlochen and you guys really had a mild winter.

>> Julianne: Even in your home area which generally has a significant amount of snowfall from what I understand.

>> Steve: We don't have any.

>> Julianne: That is amazing.

>> Steve: The ski hills will barely make snow.

>> Julianne: Oh, my goodness.

>> Juanita: Steve, are you staying there for a while?

Steve: We will be down here a while.

>> Juanita: That is good.

>> Steve: We go back to in-person meetings I will be there.

>> Juanita: You have to come back in.

>> Dustin: I can't seem to restart my video.



>> Cynthia: I had that problem and did you do up arrow at the stop video and I have a U SB camera and an integrated camera I had to switch it and switch it back.

>> Steve: There you go.

>> Dustin: Stopped it going and you see me.

>> Cynthia: I don't know if you are frozen or I am frozen.

>> Dustin is frozen. You are not frozen.

>> Brittini: Dustin is coming back slowly. I can see him moving, yep, it's just really like robot. It's a connectivity issue it looks like.

>> Juanita: When are we getting those new computers?

>> Rebecca: Not soon enough.

>> Steve: Juanita got hers fixed.

>> Juanita: I don't know how I did it. There is so much wrong with this I can't keep up with what I'm doing I keep messing with stuff and it comes back on. I don't know. I have no clue.

>> Doug: I got an e-mail that said that the computers were being shipped.

>> Rebecca: Fancy.

>> Doug: The person said they would be in contact by the 25th of the month.

>> Juanita: Good.

>> Doug: Six of them were being shipped and I don't know why he sent them to me and said they are being shipped to Lansing and you need to be there to accept them from Fedex. Well, I don't have access to any of the buildings.

>> Juanita: Yeah.

>> Sally: Let me follow-up with you about that offline.

>> Brittini: Call Sally.

>> Doug: Good.

>> Steve: Okay is everybody back?

We have to set up a count off system so when I say that we can count off. At any rate it looks like we are. Bill Froehlich, if we can get him on, we will move on. Mr. Froehlich.

>> Mr. Froehlich: Good evening Steve, how are you?

>> Froehlich his name is Froehlich.

>> Steve: Is it Froehlich.

>> It's Froehlich thank you, Sue, good catch.

>> Steve: Thank you. You are -- hey I'm 50/50. I ruined your name and I ruined the first one so I'm doing well. First and last. I'll go with Bill I didn't do too bad on that.

>> Like the weatherman you get it right half the time.

>> Steve: Well if you are lucky.

>> Mr. Froehlich: That's right.

>> Steve: Thank you for being here. Thank you for applying and we will have some questions. I don't know if you have been watching. If you have you will know what I'm

about to say and if you haven't, we are going to have three people that will ask you various questions. And if any of the commissioners want to do some follow-up questions along the way they are certainly welcome to do that. At the conclusion of the questions, we will have an opportunity or give you an opportunity to ask us anything you would like and also to have the commissioners ask anything they would like at that time also. So having said that we will get going unless you have something preliminary that you would like to ask us.

>> Mr. Froehlich: No, not right out of the gate but if you know if I'm lucky enough to be chosen Doug I'll see what I can do to help with that computer and maybe we can facilitate that and dispersal appropriate for you.

>> Steve: Okay Cynthia take it away.

Cynthia: Okay, hi Bill. Can you tell us why you're interested in this position and the work of redistricting?

>> Mr. Froehlich: Absolutely. Thanks for the question Cynthia. You know I have long been interested in politics and the political workings, in Government and all things related. I've taken some great interest in this commission. And even had considered applying it beyond the commission which I did not ultimately do. But it's really been on my radar for a long time. And having watched most of these meetings over the past several months I feel like I know you and that is really only strengthened my resolve and interest in them. I feel like I have you know already so many questions for each of you, for Sue, for Sally and Mike and would really love to hop on board and be a part of that. But my interest in the political workings of you know just the way that our society has kind of approached really everything that we are facing and the way that those issues really impact all of us on a level that we probably don't think about very often has always interested me. I think I did my first political interview of a candidate when I was 16 or 17 years old. I grew up watching the state of the union addresses with my parents. And it's really always been of interest to me. And I recall thinking in years passed as I lived in Michigan as well as redistricting has come up and we would see lines drawn. It was always very interesting and something seemed off to me about the fact that politicians were drawing their own lines. And so the idea that this is a citizen led group was particularly exciting to me. And so I'm just grateful for the opportunity.

>> Cynthia: Okay thank you and can you tell us what you feel your top three personal qualities are that make you successful?

>> Mr. Froehlich: Yeah, number one I would say motivation. I'm really driven and dear to tackle this position, to join in the cause and the effort to do this redistricting process. Of course motivational only goes so far without the skills, so that motivation I think is tied into the ability to tackle complex issues. And to share them with an audience, to share them with stakeholders. That is particularly important. Relationship building and networking would be a second piece to that puzzle. Really, I think that is one of my strengths over 25 year career in 20 years here in Michigan and knowing a lot

of the key players in our communities. I'm up in northern Michigan as you probably know up in Traverse City so a lot of my connections are rural but that doesn't mean I don't have those connections throughout the state. Whether it's you know, folks who work out of Lansing, whether it's media markets in Detroit and Grand Rapids. And Flint I know people in major markets and cities. So the communities are not foreign to me by any stretch. And then, third, I would say public speaking and maximizing opportunities for that. And that really is kind of all-encompassing with things like event planning and addressing the crowd and making sure that those pieces are all lined up the way that we want them to be. That is really a lot of I think what this position is calling for. So the ability to do it then, to do it successfully would be a third.

>> Cynthia: Okay thank you. And can you describe your experience developing strategic media and education campaigns?

>> Mr. Froehlich: Yeah, I think Sue and I talked about this a couple weeks ago. I think one of the things that jumped out to me about this question or this point is that for me every day at work as a journalist and as a reporter is strategic. There is constantly a strategic effort and thought process behind what I do, you know, every single day when I walk in the door. Who is my audience?

Who are the stakeholders who are we trying to reach with this message, what do they need to know?

And even if they are not you know paying attention to make that information available to them and so we can educate them. So really that's part of the daily operation of what I think I do. And another I think a good example of that experience would be a public affairs radio program that I hosted here in northern Michigan for a time. And we had a potential audience of about 500,000 people. It was public affairs, current events almost all of it was nonpolitical. Again maintaining my nonpartisanship in that role. But that was everything from education to housing to ballot initiatives and taxes and that was a circumstance where we were constantly evaluating but then also reevaluating our audience and our stakeholders so it may change from hour to hour, day-to-day, topic to topic. And so I think that is really laid some good groundwork for me as well.

>> Cynthia: Okay, thank you. I think Janice has a few questions now.

>> Janice: Hi, how are you tonight?

>> Mr. Froehlich: I'm doing well Janice, how are you?

>> Janice: I'm doing good the first is describe a public information campaign that you developed.

>> Mr. Froehlich: Yeah, I think you know, as you may have witnessed or experienced or even in these interviews, I'm not exactly sure what you heard tonight I think one of the challenges is defining the public and who is your audience and who are your stakeholders. Obviously again on a daily basis I'm making an effort to inform the public so by stretch of that definition it's a public information campaign but I think a good

example was my role as the president of a condominium association board and we took on a very contentious issue with the developer of our condo association. We were on the verge of going through lawsuits. We ultimately ended in mediation. But I was not only the president of the board but then I was also kind of our residents in our association. This was on going for well over a year as we tried to separate ourselves from the developers. So there were, you know, monthly meetings, I can't swear to the fact of whether they were exactly every month but regular meetings with that audience. And really trying to disseminate that information in what was a really challenging and stressful time. And have a lot of people on edge.

>> Janice: Aside from regular meetings were there any other kinds of communication methods that you utilized?

>> Mr. Froehlich: Not in that particular example. I mean, this was gosh maybe it was ten years ago before the advent of social media. And we were relatively a tight knit community. But in other examples, I mean, as I said the radio program, working TV news I have written for print. I work on the web. I do social media now with Twitter and Facebook and less active on Instagram but I do know how to use it. And public access television which I think is a probably under rated and under discussed medium that it should be available to us or you as the commission. To make use of that as well.

>> Janice: How would you approach the role of steering public communications and engagement for the new redistricting process in Michigan?

>> Mr. Froehlich: Well, I think the communities of interest is a key portion or a key element of that puzzle. Really defining what the communities of interest are. And certainly I do think that falls on not only the commission but mine as well from us and identifying age groups and cultural backgrounds and whether it's you know a tourism community in the Grand Traverse or the Western UP or eastern or Detroit and different audiences and someone who has experience in the State of Michigan and has driven all I'd say four corners but with the U P I can say all eight corners of Michigan. And really knows kind of the lay of the land. And has the potential as a researcher. Someone who like I feel like I'm someone who likes to dig into those issues and really tackle what are those communities of interest going to be. Making sure they are on your radar. And making sure that, that is something that you are also cognizant of and keeping that on the forefront too and really helping you think of those things that maybe you have not thought of already.

>> Janice: What methods would you use -- well, I'm sorry what method would you use to utilize, to reach Michiganders across the state?

>> Mr. Froehlich: Well, I think the media is our key method here. And fortunately they are very interested and going to be very interested in what we are doing. Whether that's again broadcast, print, the exclusive online sources. I think local newspapers, small town newspapers are going to be a great resource for us as well especially as you get into rural communities. Township halls and Governments not necessarily the elected

officials themselves because I think that creates the potential for a conflict we don't want to get in to. But things like Facebook is going to be a big one as well. So those are really kind of the key outreach methods I would say. And really with COVID I think Zoom has kind of become a mixed blessing for this commission. I can -- we can maybe touch more on that in a minute but I can foresee the advantages to Zoom and having some of these public input sessions conducted virtually. Because we don't have that availability to be face-to-face right now. And you could very easily conduct you know your ten required sessions in the spring or summer you know obviously not too late down the road but in person a little later down the road but start virtually and really start to get input sooner in a virtual format while that seems to be the requirement of society right now.

>> Do you have prior experience working with media firms or companies?

>> Mr. Froehlich: I do. I've been in journalism for again 25 years. 20 plus years in professional television. And radio as well. So I do have familiarity with both advertising and radio and TV. Public service announcements are another big tool I think that we can use. Those are the you know the free 30-second spots that you see on TV or hear on the radio for typically a nonprofit group but I think that a public service announcement is definitely an option. I would like to use all of those free media and options that are available to us again public access TV or PBS station another good one where we can actually trade some programming for them and make ourselves available to them to get the word out. And in a more appropriate and fast fashion.

>> Do you envision paid media playing a role in the communication strategy of this commission?

>> Mr. Froehlich: I don't think so. I think it's a good back up plan to have in our pocket but I don't think that needs to be a focus for us. I think there are plenty of -- as I said plenty of interest in what we are doing. Plenty of free opportunities for us to season public and taxpayer dollars. There will plenty of avenues for us to try first. If we do a circumstance a month or two down the road from now where we just don't have interest, what do we need to do to get more interest in what we are doing?

Then we could explore that. But I just don't foresee that being the case. I think again using taxpayer dollars we need to be responsible about that. And that would not be my first choice. I think there are plenty of ways we can get the word out without resorting to that.

>> Janice: Thank you and I think Juanita you are next.

>> Juanita: Good evening Bill, how are you?

>> Mr. Froehlich: I'm doing well Juanita, how are you?

>> Juanita: I'm great. I'd like to know have you ever had the occasion to speak with the media during a crisis?

>> Mr. Froehlich: You know, that is an interesting question because as a member of the media I don't speak to the media during a crisis. But I certainly have been around

my share of crises, crisis over the years and certainly have been in a position to speak with an audience during a crisis. Whether that is a car accident or a deadly fire or the death of a well-known figure. You know, that's something where really the presentation and the level of comfort with the media comes in handy. And I think that is something that I excel in. We had a situation here in northern Michigan I want to say 8 to 10 years ago probably closer to eight but I'm sure it made the news down there. We had a dam removal process up in northern Michigan where they were removing several dams along the boardman river and one was supposed to be a slow draw down I believe over several days where they were just draining the water out of the dam and during the process the dam just broke and it released four days of water in less than an hour, I think it was. And that was really a crisis of the moment. And again it wasn't me directly addressing the media. But I was addressing the public during a crisis and it was you know dangers about homes flooding and the potential for that. Similar to what happened with the dams in Mid-Michigan here recently. So there is familiarity with that. You know, the other crisis I think maybe goes back to the time with the lawsuit and the contention with the condominium complex that I was working with there. But those are probably two of my best examples for you.

>> Juanita: Okay, that would have been my next question for you, but you seem to have answered that pretty good. Describe the basic steps you would take to organize public hearings and engage individuals who participate in them?

>> Mr. Froehlich: Sure identifying the CIOs the communities of interest is really a great first step to that. I do like to think this is a team approach. You know, and that would be in partnership with Sue and myself and obviously you on the board. Certainly I would not feel the need to harp on that necessarily unless that was asked of me and I'm not sure I would be comfortable doing. First off, we need to identify the communities of interest. That is probably going to be a process that evolves as we go. I think I heard Steve maybe earlier tonight say something about you know building the plane while it's still flying or while it's still in the air. That is something that is an evolution that still will go on for the next nine months. But identifying those communities. Identifying the places in which we can hold those meetings. The logistics of that are going to be very important. And then really identifying the methods in which we are going to get the word out. But also get the word out to folks maybe who can't be there. I also feel like there is no reason why we can't hold an in-person meeting and also share it on Zoom at the same time. Especially if we have got capacity limits or restrictions on how many people can attend. There is really no reason why we can't make that a virtual option for folks as well. And then you know we maybe would need to talk with Mike or Sally about public comment issues. But really to reach the maximum number of people possible that would be particularly important, I think.

>> Juanita: Okay, well, do you have a kind of specific idea for engaging with the different communities and communities of interest across the state?



Because I know you talked about just doing it but do you have a specific idea that you would do to engage them?

>> Mr. Froehlich: Well I think I have touched on it a little bit. I mean, the knowledge and the background and familiarity I have with the media markets all across the state are really a good first step. I mean that starts with not only news relations or Facebook posts or Twitter posts things of that nature that I know that the commission and the Secretary of State's office is already using but again the news releases and one on one contacts. And I'm actually I'm a fan also of direct e-mail and just phone calls. It does seem like phone calls are almost a lost art at this point but you know pick up Tim who I know who works in Lansing or Lindsey who I know works in Flint or Dan in Grand Rapids. I mean, those are specific approaches we can do to just get the word out and actually make sure we are on people's radar. Again, I don't think of all the problems that we may be encountering in the next nine months I don't think getting word out is going to be one of them.

>> Juanita: Okay, Bill are you affiliated with any political parties and have you made any political contributions lately?

>> Mr. Froehlich: I'm not affiliated with any party. I'm unaffiliated. As a registered voter no party affiliation. No campaign donations. I know there is hundreds of Froehlichs in Michigan but I'm not related to any of them so if my name has popped up anywhere it's not me. I have no immediate family in politics. I've had extended family in local public offices. Both republican and but no I don't have any affiliation and really, I think that's also a strength. I know you got multiple candidates to interview but I do think that is a strength that that is not a liability or a red flag or a decisive issue that you know would be something that we would have to address coming right out of the gate.

>> Juanita: Just say for instance if you had to, to take care of that, say for instance if you had to do it how would you go about achieving the goals of the ICRC in a nonpartisan manner?

How would you do it if you had to do it?

There rose an occasion where you had to do it?

>> Mr. Froehlich: Well, I think directly to answer the question the way you phrased it that is the job. I mean we do have to do it in a nonpartisan manner. I do think we need to capitalize on you know, the nonpartisan nature of this. To express that. If we are going to make members of the commission available to the media we want to identify, you know, who the media can turn to. Obviously, we want you know your buy in and your support if you are willing to take questions at some point. Or whether that is Sue or some designees but again the openness and the transparency is really key I think in terms of, you know, you're talking with Juanita and she identifies with party A and Steve identifies with party B and really to put that out into the forefront making sure that everyone knows and also handling those media inquiries in a way that helps them understand who all of you or who all of us are in terms of our backgrounds.

>> Juanita: Okay, well, Bill do you have any questions for us?

>> Mr. Froehlich: I did actually I did have a couple of questions. I wanted to because of something I heard on a meeting a couple of weeks or maybe it's been months know it's all kind of a blur there was a discussion or question between you as a commission about the role of public relations versus journalism. I would love to address that if you have a specific question of me. Or if not, I would love to you know just give you kind of my quick two cents on it. But I'm curious whether you know you any of you think that is a concern?

And if so, I'd like to address it or again I can just make a statement to it.

>> Juanita: I'm sure we would be interested. Yes.

>> Cynthia: Can I just ask a question.

Of course.

>> Cynthia: The way I remember it which could be wrong I think at least at one point we were talking about difference between communications director and outreach. So I would be interested to hear your take on that.

>> Mr. Froehlich: Sure. I remember that discussion also and that was very early on but I remember it because I just listened to it last night as I was going back and listening to some of the meetings again over the last several days. Yeah, that was to separate discussions as I recall. But communications and outreach I'm glad to see the notion that these are mixed. Communications again someone in that meeting that you referenced Cynthia was putting the message out and outreach was taking that information in. Both of those are critical to this kind of a position. And I'm glad to see that those are kind of under the same umbrella as you presented them in the job description and the duties. I really think you are doing yourselves a huge favor by mixing those and in the same office and separating them would slow you down and frankly you don't have that kind of time to waste. But on the PR versus journalism angle someone had said something to the effects of crafting a message in public relations versus what I want to say to that is that, A, many, many journalists, most of the journalists by the majority I know who have left the career have gone into public relations so there is a huge overlap there. But also as a journalist we are crafting a message. We are not just taking it off the news release and you know spewing it back out to the audience. We are crafting that message daily trying to better understand who the stakeholders are so I think that is particularly important. And I guess lastly on that topic I think my strengths is the ability to help prepare you and prepare Sue for the questions that you might encounter and I think that is a strength of a journalist. That you are going to be fielding a lot of questions. And it really would help to know what's coming down the line. And again without that you know partisan background, without me ever having taken Sides or you know represented a person of a political party and also, I guess plus the other strength would be 20 years here in Michigan knowing

Michigan issues as opposed to kind of being scattered and not working here and living here for the better part of 20 years.

>> Steve: Thank you. Anybody else have any other commissioners have questions for Bill?

Rhonda.

>> Rhonda: Hi, Bill. I just have a quick question. Looking at your resume I see you're still a news reporter for nine and ten news which is my local channel only out of Cadillac. Just curious knowing that this is a short term position per se, about a year, would you have a problem leaving your job to come to work for us?

>> Mr. Froehlich: No, not at all. And I know I fully expect that would be part of it. This is obviously a position that would demand full time attention. I would, you know, out of respect to the company where I've been working, I you know would like to not pack up and leave tomorrow. And give them a little bit of notice. But I'm absolutely willing to work in you know willing to start working immediately come Thursday available to me and would love to help you out right away and transition into the full time position rather quickly.

>> Rhonda: Thank you.

>> Steve: Anybody else have anything?

Bill do you have any questions of us?

You gave us a little synopsis of journalism versus PR. Any questions?

>> Mr. Froehlich: Well, yeah. I guess one other comment/question if anyone would like to address it but then I guess I'll ask that first are there things that you would like to see that the board would do or the commission would do to enhance transparency at this point?

Are there things that are not being done?

I don't have a you know laundry list of suggestions but one that just occurred to me as I was going back through past meetings and trying to watch was to link up agendas with those meetings and to link up you know what we call the time code of when you discussed communities of interest. Well that was one hour into this meeting so people can find it more easily especially when you have a three, four, five hour meeting that gets really daunting so that transparency would be important to me. But I don't know if there are other transparency issues that have jumped out to you.

>> Steve: The other commissioners have their voice in it if they want. No, that has not been something that we have talked about. Basically everything we do is on Zoom. So it's pretty hard not to be transparent. And if it's not on Zoom then it's transcribed and it's on the Internet. However, you know, the point of linking up the issue and a timeline we kind of have it on our agenda and the agendas are posted. So they are kind of there I'm assuming that I'll ask Sue, are they timeframes that are on our agendas on the agendas that are posted to the Internet?

>> Sue: Yes, those timeframes are on there. But I understand what he is saying. It's like an index so if I want to go to the presentation on communities of interest, even though there might be an agenda which may or may not have been followed strictly, you would know that that starts at, you know, one hour and two minutes into the Zoom meeting which may have been three or four hours.

So I think it would help the public find things they might specifically be looking out if there is an interest. It's kind of the same way we are talking about our resolutions to help people find things that we voted on so we don't have to go looking back through a lot of minutes. So I think anything we can do to help organize meetings, help organize public comment I think that will be helpful to us in the long run and also to other people who are interested.

>> Steve: I will figure out how to index them somehow. Thanks Bill. Anything else?

>> Steve: What.

>> I'm sorry Julianne.

>> Julianne: I apologize so it's not really, I just wanted to clarify it's not really an issue with transparency everything the commission is doing is available online. I think what is being reference as Sue said is more of a convenience or an index or reference ease of reference issue rather than a categorized as a transparency issue. To clarify they.

>> Steve: Yes. All right.

>> Mr. Froehlich: That is fair that I said that. My last question or comment was just yeah, I'm sorry was just whether or not you actually wanted references. I've seen in the supplemental materials that many people that attach those or references or letters of recommendation and that was not really part of the initial ask from Secretary of State's office so if that becomes an issue, I'm happy to provide those. I did not want you to think they didn't exist.

>> Steve: Okay very good. We will let you know if we do. Having said that, we appreciate your taking your time this evening. It's kind of late, but being a reporter you're not -- you're not on a 24 hour clock or maybe you are on a 24 hour clock so you are always available. At any rate thank you and as I've said before this evening, we while we are going to discuss this somewhat this evening, we will not make a decision this evening. And we will get back with all of the candidates with our decision shortly. Thank you very much and have a good rest of the evening.

>> Mr. Froehlich: Thanks to all of you. Great to talk with you finally.

>> Steve: Okay, all right. We've got about 15 minutes left. For a short discussion regarding this position but I have a very brief thing on the letter. We have -- did everybody get this letter from Sue about to send to the other applicants for the general counsel position, no, it's short I'm going to read it. It says thank you for your interest in the general counsel position with the Michigan independent citizens redistricting commission. The applicant assessment and selection process were challenging for the commission because of the quality of the applicants. Since all meetings are available

live on YouTube and are recorded for later viewing you may already be aware that the commission has selected another candidate. However, we wanted to express our appreciation that you gave both time and energy to submit your application and interview for the position.

You are wished the best on your future career endeavors sincerely it's set up for my signature but I thought Julianne should do it since she got the position but that is not very nice. Have we had the other chairperson sign these like Cynthia or Janice or Juanita on our prior letters?

Or did I sign them all?

>> Sue: You signed the executive director letter. That is the only one we have sent out.

>> Steve: I can do it again. I have no problem doing that. If one of the subcommittee members wanted to do it, I certainly would defer to them.

>> Cynthia: It would be great if you did it as the chair.

>> Steve: All right that is taken care of. Sue and I will finish that up. Okay, we got 15 minutes to talk about these interviews. It let Brittini lead the discussion.

>> Brittini: Why thank you, Steve.

>> Steve: Not let you. It's your job.

>> Brittini: I don't care. I'm not particular like that. So what anyone want to share first impressions or something that stood out?

Doug you go right ahead.

>> Doug: I'd like to hear what our subcommittees, the three people on the subcommittee their opinions and who they thought rose to the top on the interviews.

>> Brittini: That is a good suggestion subcommittee don't be afraid to be honest as well as polite and kind and Cynthia and Juanita and you can jump in no pressure.

>> Janice: Go ahead Juanita.

>> Juanita: .

>> Brittini: Juanita, you have to take yourself off mute.

>> Juanita: Okay, listened to all three of them and.

>> Brittini: Four, we listened to four.

>> Juanita: One of the four was when my computer went out so.

>> Brittini: It's true it's been a long meeting it's okay.

>> Juanita: Other than Woods.

>> Bill Walt and Janet.

>> Juanita: I got here Janet I heard a little bit of here. But the one I enjoyed the most and I thought would probably be good would be Woods, Mr. Woods. He seemed more favorable. I enjoyed Walt because he was more knowledgeable. And he said he was retired so he probably wants to retire real good. I don't know. But my person would be Mr. Woods so far.

>> Brittini: Thank you Juanita. And Janice you are next.

>> Janice: My thoughts is Walter was probably the most qualified. He was an excellent speaker. I mean, it just kind of came right out which is somebody I think we need with communication. I did like Mr. Woods. Both of them I mean when they talked about what they needed to do to do the meetings I mean they knew what to do. I mean they thought of things I did not even think of like the health department or the police department and all those people. So those are my top choices Woods and is it Sorg?

>> Brittini: Sorg.

>> Janice: Those are my choices.

>> Cynthia: So I'm not quite sure. I'm going to have to go back and watch again. I came into it having studied their resumes and their answers to our supplemental questions. I came into it with a certain idea of who I thought. And now I have a different idea. So I just have to go back and watch the interviews again.

>> Brittini: That is okay you are allowed to change your mind. That is the beauty, beauty of an interview and come off the paper.

>> Cynthia: I think we had four really good candidates.

>> Brittini: You all did your job for sure and all the gratitude and appreciation for the subcommittee Rhonda I think has a hand a partial hand up.

>> Rhonda.

>> Rebecca: I noticed you took yourself off mute and I didn't want to forget if you had something to say, okay.

>> Rhonda: I was looking at my notes so I apologize I think all of them actually interviewed really well. I was surprised though on one of our questions on all of them and it was the one about the three personal qualities. I almost expected to hear personal qualities like honesty and integrity and things like that. So it seemed like everybody took a different approach to that and it kind of surprised me. But that's okay. If we are looking at tops, I'm going to say that my top one was probably Mr. Woods. He was very direct. I reviewed his resume. He had experience not only with communities of interest but with open meetings act and Freedom of Information Act. It seems that he was very knowledgeable. That he also had experience going to Government officials when needed. I don't know. He stuck out to me and I know in previous meetings it was mentioned about how this commission were a very diverse commission and maybe some of our hirings need to represent that also. I don't know. I feel he was my top pick. Thank you.

>> Brittini: Thank you Rhonda. Someone else, Rebecca then Dustin I'm sorry Rebecca.

>> Rebecca: That is okay, so I sort of echoing what everybody else had said I was really impressed with Mr. Woods and Mr. Sorg and loved Mr. Woods presentation and enthusiastic and I love Sorg's experience and they have a plan what they need to do to be effective for us so those would be my top two right there and obviously we will see I



think we have two more candidates we are interview and see how they compare but those are my top two.

>> Brittini: I think that was it Rebecca. I think we just have those. And someone else correct me if I'm wrong. The subcommittee and Sue may know.

>> Juanita: I thought Taylor.

>> I thought we had Andrea coming in.

>> She dropped out.

>> She declined.

>> Rebecca: Okay, all right.

>> Juanita: Then we have two Sorg and Woods.

>> Brittini: Dustin I would love to hear what you have to say.

>> Dustin: So my top two Mr. Sorg and Mr. Woods. I feel that Mr. Sorg here already knows a lot about what we are doing so his ability to communicate with the media in any respect and also communities of interest is going to be much easier of a task for him since he is so well versed alongside with his experience. And Mr. Woods I just enjoyed his interview. He seemed like a very personable kind of individual which to me is going to be a very important quality when dealing with said media and other outlets during this whole process. But those would be my top two in that order.

>> Brittini: Thank you. Anyone else?

Anthony.

>> Anthony: So I'm with Cynthia where I'm going to need a little bit of time to organize my notes. And you know, organize them to communicate them more effectively. But just off the top of my head there were two candidates that I thought stuck out, you know, stuck out, out of the bunch. I do think there are pros and cons to all four candidates. So I think you know when we get ready to discuss this on Thursday, we should keep that in mind too.

>> Brittini: Thank you Anthony and MC and I don't know if I missed and Richard if you are somewhere in the virtual meeting space if you have something to say just message or come back but MC share, please.

>> MC I also had Ed Woods and Walt Sorg and I think Ed beats out Walt basically because of the current ability to use like in his interview I think I got the sense that he was current. I really like the idea that he was using YouTube as a way to help I think he addressed sort of like how we get our people like our citizens to give us input we can actually use as a commission, right, so that YouTube video that how to really spoke to me. And I think that is it's just smart.

Then he also used the idea that this idea of a bank right a file share I think he called it where upper peninsula was able to keep the create a local.

>> Brittini: Communications.

>> MC: That local communications and having that bank. It just felt smart use of technology and again because Walt is retired, I think you know there is no doubt that

each of them has a network and again Ed just strikes me as somebody who is going to leverage more current technology and frankly that whole idea with the each of them, right, basketball arenas is what Walt talked about and Ed talked about the excuse me community colleges. But that, yeah, I really felt basketball arenas in the community college win. And the final piece is again where Ed stuck out for me was like that idea of the image or the background struck me. He was looking at his appearance and it was unfortunate Walt had that sort of a blob it didn't quite work out. The background the visual and what I'm suggesting I suppose is it felt like a refinement that was practiced and current with Ed and it was you know still sort of like Walt was trying to I think he was I think he did an awesome job. Would be a great number two but Ed wins for me.

>> Brittini: Thank you MC I see Richard did you have something?

Just asking.

>> Richard: Yeah, I'm on the line. Yeah, I'm leaning towards Walter and Edward both. I guess I kind of want to do a little more thinking on this but I like both of them myself so kind of goes with the rest of the group so.

>> Brittini: Thank you, Richard.

>> Sure.

>> Doug: I feel the same way as Richard. I thought the two top candidates were Walter and Edward.

And I could see a definite difference between them and the other two. I'm kind of leaning towards Edward at this point but I want to put a little more thought into it.

>> Brittini: Thank you everybody did I miss anybody who wanted to say anything?  
It's 7:57.

>> Juanita: Did you have anything to say?

>> Brittini: You were not going to let me -- so my initial thoughts I think Walt has a wealth of experience and he could potentially really support us in some of you know his knowledge and he was clear to say that he wouldn't let that bleed into his job so I appreciate that. However, I shared sentiments of MC and many of what you all have shared in terms of being personable. And there was something with Mr. Woods that just felt like he has no problem kind of engaging not just with us for an interview but like stepping into any community. And not because you know he is a person of color and stepping into many communities and being able to dig in and kind of unearth what we need. There was something about the way he presented and I really enjoyed the fact that he was current and in public relations. That is not my expertise but I do know a little about it and I think being able to manipulate and use all platforms for our betterment is a plus for sure. So for me my one would be Mr. Woods and then a second choice would be Mr. Sorg just in terms of how they interviewed against others.

>> Steve: Okay, we have reached the witching hour and we are back here Thursday at 9:00 a.m. And Sue we are going to obviously continue to talk of this candidate. What else is on our agenda Thursday?

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>> Sue: It depended how this meeting went tonight for us to determine. So we've got lots of things to talk about, I think. So maybe our meeting will go a little shorter, maybe not but let's forge on and we will get an agenda out to you tomorrow.

>> Steve: Okay, thank you everybody. This was a long meeting and the interviews I thought went very well. Bill had a little communication problem from Traverse City. He is obviously not on their new super max cable system up there. They are building out. But everybody had good questions. Everybody had good answers. Everybody did a nice interview. So thanks everybody. And we will see you, well, I suppose since the one guy wanted us to vote on everything that we should do that. So I'll entertain a motion to adjourn. Rebecca.

>> Rebecca: Motion to adjourn I move to adjourn.

>> Steve: And Anthony Juanita seconded it all in favor raise your hands and wave good-bye.

>> Hi good-bye.

>> Steve: Good-bye.

[ Meeting concludes at 8:01 p.m. ]