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MICRC

04/15/21 9:00 am Meeting

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>> Rebecca: Good morning, everyone. As the Vice Chair of the Commission, I call this meeting of the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission to order at 9:00 a.m. This Zoom is being live streamed to YouTube at [WWW.YouTube.com/MICHSOSOFFICE/videos](http://WWW.YouTube.com/MICHSOSOFFICE/videos).

For anyone in the viewing public who would prefer to watch via a different platform than they are currently using, please visit us on our social media at [redistricting MI](http://redistrictingMI.org) for a link for viewing on YouTube.

Our live stream today included 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 ASL interpreter on your screen, please e-mail us at [RedistrictingMichigan.Gov](mailto:RedistrictingMichigan.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](mailto:Redistricting@Michigan.Gov) for details how to access language translation services available for this meeting.

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People with disabilities needing other specific accommodation should contact [Redistricting@Michigan.Gov](mailto:Redistricting@Michigan.Gov).

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

This meeting is also being transcribed and those transcriptions will be made available and posted on [RedistrictingMichigan.org](http://RedistrictingMichigan.org) along with written public comment submissions.

Members of the media who may have questions before, during or after the meeting should direct those questions to Edward Woods, III, Communications and Outreach Director for the Commission at [WoodsE3@Michigan.gov](mailto:WoodsE3@Michigan.gov) or 517-331-6309.

Members of the media should have his contact information.

For purposes of the public watching and for the public record, I will turn to the Department of State staff to take note of the Commissioners present.

>> Good morning, Commissioners. When I call your name, please indicate that you're present and where you are remotely attending from.

Doug Clark.

>> Doug: I'm present; and I am remotely attending from Rochester Hills, Michigan.

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>> Sally: Juanita Curry.

>> Juanita: Present and I'm remotely attending the meeting from Detroit, Michigan.

>> Sally: Anthony Eid.

Brittini Kellom?

Rhonda Lange?

>> Rhonda: Present; attending remotely from Reed City, Michigan.

>> Sally: Steve Lett.

>> Steve: Present and I'm attending from Lee County, Florida.

>> Sally: Cynthia Orton.

>> Cynthia: Present; attending from Idaho County, Idaho.

>> Sally: MC Rothhorn.

>> MC: Present; remotely attending from Lansing, Michigan.

>> Sally: Rebecca Szetela.

>> Rebecca: Present; attending remotely from Wayne County, Michigan.

>> Sally: Janice Vallette.

You are muted.

>> Janice: Sorry. I'm present; attending remotely from Highland, Michigan.

>> Sally: Erin Wagner.

>> Erin: Present; attending remotely from Charlotte, Michigan.

>> Sally: Richard Weiss.

>> Richard: Present; attending remotely from Saginaw, Michigan.

>> Sally: Dustin Witjes? There are ten of 13 Commissioners present. There is a quorum.

>> Rebecca: Thank you. As reminder to the public watching, you can see the agenda at [RedistrictingMichigan.org](http://RedistrictingMichigan.org). I will now entertain a motion to approve the agenda for the meeting.

>> Steve: So moved.

>> Rebecca: We have a motion by Steve. And, Rhonda, was that you seconding? Or I did not catch who said that.

>> Rhonda: Second.

>> Rebecca: Let's just go with Rhonda seconding. All in favor please raise your hand to so indicate.

All opposed same sign.

Janice, are you opposed to the motion?

Okay, we have a majority in favor, so the agenda is adopted.

All right. Thank you.

We will now review and approve the meeting minutes from the last meeting.

Are there any edits to the meeting minutes?

I am not seeing any. Rhonda, yes, I see Rhonda.

>> Rhonda: It's just one correction under break.

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It had Brittini Kellom, Vice Chair; and it should be Chair.

>> Rebecca: Okay. So we can go ahead and correct that.

All right. So we will correct that on the one area where it describes Brittini Kellom as being the Vice Chair. Other than that, any other edits or changes?

Okay. If not, I will entertain the motion to approve the minutes from last week's meeting as amended per Commissioner Lange's request.

All in -- actually --

>> Steve: So moved.

>> Rebecca: So moved with Steve.

Do we have a second?

Richard, I see that you have seconded.

All in favor please raise your hand to so indicate.

All opposed same sign.

Okay, the motion carries.

Sorry.

Okay, so the motion carries, so we have adopted the prior minutes.

We will now move on to public comments. A few notes about public comment for those of you who are joining for the first time. Because this is a virtual meeting members of the public had to sign in advance to address the Commission. Staff at the Department of State will unmute up to two minutes on a first come, first serve basis. This means 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 the public comment, please note that you will have no more than two minutes to address the Commission this morning.

You can submit your thoughts to the Commission and the public by e-mailing [Redistricting@Michigan.gov](mailto:Redistricting@Michigan.gov). The Department of State will provide your written thoughts to the Commission.

By indicating in that e-mail that you would like to submit your written comment as public comment, it will be included in the online meeting archive for the Commission.

Public comment sign-up links are also posted on redistricting social media pages, on Facebook and Twitter at [RedistrictingMI](https://www.facebook.com/RedistrictingMI).

Now I would like to recognize Sally Marsh, Michigan Department of State, Director of Special Projects, who will call on members of the public to address the Commission.

>> Sally: Good morning again.

I believe we have one public comment participant, so I will instruct that participant on how to participate with you all this morning.

Individuals who have signed up will now be allowed to provide live public commentary to the Commission.

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

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

And if you have audio issues, we will wait a few seconds. And then if we can't resolve those audio issues, we will follow-up with you via e-mail and ensure that you have your comments provided to the Commission.

First in line to provide public comment is Tamara Grice. Please allow a moment for our staff to unmute you. Sorry, Tamara Mitchell.

Please allow a moment for our staff to unmute you.

Thank you for your patience.

Just give us a moment.

You have two minutes.

>> Tamara: Good morning, Commission.

Can you all hear me, okay?

Wonderful, thank you.

I want to thank you for allowing me to speak with you this morning.

I just wanted to come before you because I am a concerned citizen, of course, about redistricting.

I understand the importance of redistricting and how it impacts the voices of the electorate as well of, of course, our citizens who are of vital importance.

I just wanted to reiterate and just point out that when each of you apply to be on the Commission that you certified that you would do something that is very important.

You said that you would perform your duties in a manner that is impartial and reinforces public confidence in the integrity of the redistricting process.

Because this Commission's service is one that is at the pleasure of the Michigan voters, with all deference I encourage you to carry out that particular duty with the rights of voters in mind.

The rights of voters to be respected, to be allowed to ask, to know and to see the processes of the redistricting Commission.

I believe that this is a vital importance to achieving voting boundaries that actually reflect the population in Michigan.

I want to thank you all for committing to serve, getting your time, your energy and your efforts to this very important part of our democracy.

And thank you very much for allowing me to speak to you this morning.

Thank you.

>> Sally: Thank you for providing your comment to the Commission. And that concludes our public comment this morning.

>> Rebecca: Thank you, Sally.

Now we will move on to the any correspondence to address.

Suann, do we have any correspondence we need to address?

>> Sue: There is no correspondence today.

>> Rebecca: Thank you. May we have the Executive Director's report?

>> Sue: I would be happy to share.

Good morning, Commissioners.

Good to see everyone this morning.

I want to give you a little bit more of an update on the contract with EDS, the mapping firm.

We've had two more meetings since last week.

And I have to say that and Chad Bassett has done a phenomenal job working with us to make this contract possible.

He had met with Kim Brace after our team meetings and thinks we are getting close to having the contract together.

Right now I think the main issues are IT security especially with loading the software on Commissioner's laptops.

But I can't thank Chad Bassett enough. He spent hours and hours and hours assisting the Commission. And he does have a regular job with the Michigan Department of State that involves other contracts.

So he is -- has just done a wonderful job helping us to make sure that this contract can be brought to fruition.

Staff did interview executive assistant candidates this week.

And we will be coming back and letting you know how we might move forward with some additional staffing.

And the balance of my comments will be made in the administrative update that is further down on the agenda, so I'm going to move right into the ice breaker today.

And that question is: If you could be a little kid for a day, how would you spend the day?

So I'm going to start with Doug today.

>> Doug: That is a great question, Sue.

I reflected back on my days as a child.

And all I ever did was play baseball.

So if I could, for the day I would round up the guys from the neighborhood and we would go out and play ball for the day.

>> Sue: That sounds like fun.

How about you, Juanita?

>> Juanita: Well, when I was very young, I had two younger siblings that were at least four years younger than I, so I think when I was about 12 or 11, between 9 or 11, 9 to 11 I used to pretend like I was their teacher and there were 50 students in the class so I would name 50 people and they would have to take those to children would have to take turns saying here, here, here, here and I would start teaching them like I was a regular teacher.

So I remember doing that all the time, more than even playing with dolls or anything. I did that every chance I could get.

And I always thought I would be a teacher but here I am.

>> Sue: Juanita, thank you.

Thank you.

We kind of had similar experiences.

I have to say.

I would line up my younger siblings and teach them with chairs in a row.

So thanks for sharing.

How about you, Steve?

>> Steve: I would probably go back to west Tennessee and spend the day on my uncle's farm driving big tractors.

>> Sue: Sounds like fun.

Cynthia, how about you?

>> Cynthia: Can you hear me now?

>> Sue: Yes.

>> Cynthia: So I think as a child I would probably choose to spend the day at a water park.

>> Sue: That sounds like fun.

MC, what would you do?

>> MC: I think there is an it's one of two.

I'm either going to spend my days in the woods, you know my day in the woods I suppose looking for like different plants I could eat and animals and things or I would be in the water frankly same idea just watching the animals and enjoying the wild spaces there.

>> Sue: Out in nature, that sounds like fun.

I think kids should do more exploring today, Rebecca, how about you?

>> Rebecca: Yeah, we had a really nice park near my house growing up.

It was huge and it had three swimming pools and basketball courts, tennis courts, a huge track multiple playgrounds and we used to spend all day there as kids and take a lunch and just spend the day there and that would be what I would do is just pack a lunch and hang out all day and go swimming, play tennis, run around the track and have fun.

Sue: That sounds like fun.

Janice how about you.

>> Janice: I would spend my time in the water at the lake.

There are so many things you can do at the lake, you can swim, you can boat, you can play in the sand.

So it would be at the lake.

And my folks when I was a kid, I did live on a lake so.

>> Sue: Lovely.

Lovely.

I have two kids that live on the lake and I spend lakes and I spend lots of time there in the summer when I can.

And my kids grew up on the lakes.

They would probably agree with you.

Erin how about you?

>> Erin: It would probably be swimming or up a tree reading a book.

>> Sue: Very nice.

I read a lot too.

Richard.

>> Richard: Probably back to my uncle's cottage swimming in the lake fishing in the lake and running through the woods.

>> Sue: Sounds like fun, sounds like fun.

Julianne?

>> Julianne: Good morning Commissioners.

Yes, I would have to say if I could go back and spend a day it would definitely be exploring in the woods and swimming and we used to build forts out of branches we would find so we would pretend we lived in the woods.

>> Sue: Okay, that sounds like fun too and Edward how about you?

>> Edward: Do you know what it's just amazing how kids are an example how we can get along.

Just right there on the playground we can settle disputes, learn how to get along together.

So just going back to those days as kids where if you left us alone in time we would get along and if there was a challenge between us, we would rectify it because Susie, Johnny is our friend and we need to remain friends. So back to the pure innocence of being kids and recognizing everyone as equal.

Those were great times.

>> Sue: That reminds me of the book everything I needed to learn was in Kindergarten so true.

If I could go back to being a kid, I would spend the day with both of my grandma's.

I would so blessed growing up to have the most wonderful grandmothers.

So both of my mom's mom and my dad's mom were just the best people and those were some of the most enjoyable times.

Both lived on farms so you know I would go up to the farm and we would spend quality time together.

So that's what I remember most because they were such an important part of my life, so thank you for sharing.

And I'll let Commissioners Szetela return to the meeting.

>> Rec: Thank you very much for that.

Okay we are moving on to the Department of State report.

Does the Department of State have a report at this time?

>> Sally: Hello Commissioners, not much of a report this week but looking forward to talking with you all next week in more detail about many things.

>> Rebecca: Thank you very much.

All right. Next item on the agenda is unfinished business. However, we don't have anything that is unfinished to consider so I will move on to our new business.

The first item under the new business on our agenda is the bid for video production services and the associated resolution.

Edward, do you want to handle that discussion?

>> Edward: Thank you.

Appreciate that, Commissioner Szetela.

This is a video resolution to do a competitive process so that we can have commercials to talk about the redistricting process in addition to commercials.

We also want to promote people to engage on the public comment tool.

On the mapping tool.

So that people can submit suggestions to the Commission for consideration all across the state.

We want to use illustrative examples.

We also want to do some story telling so we will have some vignettes and use them as commercials and use them on our YouTube channel. But the whole idea is to make sure we are communicating to everyone be it inclusive an across community of interest whether you are in rural areas, Native Americans, and minorities, that everyone is aware.

Some people are visual learners, so it's taking in some of the work back to Neil Fleming, in Australia with regards to the back team model, which deals with visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and conceptual. People have two or more learning styles, adults, and we just want to make sure we get the message out in a variety of different platforms.

So this is the purpose behind this resolution and competitive process. And if there is any questions, I can take them at this time.

>> Rebecca: Does anyone have any questions?

MC or Cynthia? MC, I see you are unmuted. Does that mean you have a question?

>> MC: I wanted to acknowledge it seems like after doing some presentations this would be great and would address a lot of the concerns about how people can participate. And, yeah, so I would move that we accept this bid.

Oh, sorry, there was one more question but maybe -- and this is also part of this falls within the budget that has already been determined, is that true? Or is something that would be new?

>> Edward: No. This is part of the communications and outreach budget.

>> MC: I move we adopt or accept this proposal and vote.



>> Juanita: And I second it.

>> Rebecca: Okay. All in favor of adopting the bid for the video productions please indicate by raising your hand.

For, okay, Cynthia and MC, I see you have also designated you are raising your hand. All opposed same sign.

Cynthia, please take your hand raise down. Thank you very much.

I do not see any opposition so the motion carries.

All right. Moving on to our next agenda item. Next agenda item is reconsideration of resolution for to extend the contract to the VRA legal counsel.

It's my understanding that Commissioner Lange has requested and moved that we reconsider the offering the bid to VRA legal counsel is there a second for that motion?

>> Rhonda: Rebecca.

>> Yes, go ahead.

>> Ronda: I would like to make a statement for my reasoning for this before I officially make the motion.

>> Rebecca: Sure. Go ahead.

>> Rhonda: I have it written down so I will stay on track and quick everybody. So I would like to make a motion to reconsider the hiring of Mr. Adelson. But before I make the official motion. I want to take a moment and discuss why.

As you all know, I was on the fence with Mr. Adelson based on nothing but his interview and stated so prior to voting. It was my gut feeling.

After the meeting I was still bothered, so I started digging into Mr. Adelson more, something I have done for every candidate. But honestly did not do the same for Mr. Adelson as he was our only interviewer and I was trying to have more trust in the group as a whole in decisions made by the subcommittee.

As you all know, with every candidate brought forward from every subcommittee I always objected to a candidate or asked to add additional. This time I did not do my due diligence and I apologize.

So I researched Thursday night and I found things that did bother me. For instance, some of this retweets on Twitter. And I have said this before, I don't like blanket statements that put a whole group in one category. I was going to read some of those statements to you, but I don't feel it's necessary at this time.

Okay. Next, I came across an article written by a former coworker of Mr. Adelson at the Department of Justice in regards to the California Redistricting Commission. This was from 2011 and it states, mind you he is talking about two finalists, one being Mr. Adelson and the other person. And I'm leaving that person out because it does not pertain to this.

And he stated: Adelson and blank don't have a nonpartisan bone in their bodies. They are left wing ideologues I worked with when I was at the justice department. They would be ludicrous hires for a Commission whose alleged purpose is to take participation or -- pardon me, take partisanship out of the redistricting process.

Adelson consistently pushed the most radical legal positions possible in the cases I reviewed, positions that went far beyond what the law required.

Lastly as a public comment, which I have always taken into consideration, and, unfortunately, we did not receive until Friday.

The public comment was overwhelming as at times it has been; and, yes, there were some form letters but that doesn't make their concerns any less legit.

During our subcommittee meeting for the VRA Mr. Sells was turned down for what was said to be extreme liberal views and posts.

It can be argued that Mr. Adelson's online footprint is no different.

Also, I must point out that while asking questions to Mr. Adelson Anthony said it best when he said the public needs to have a high level of trust and confidence in his ability to provide objective, independent and nonpartisan advice, which by the number of responses, they don't.

I've worked hard to stay in the middle of the road and make decisions that I feel both sides of the political spectrum can live with while still being able to accomplish the Commission's goals. And I will continue to do so.

With that being said, under Section 9.4 of the MICRC Rules of Procedure I would formally like to motion based on public comment and precedent that was given to other candidates that we reconsider resolution 2021-04-01 titled extend offer for VRA legal counsel and have more conversation on the subject, after which we can have another vote on the offer if the Commission chooses or discuss further options.

Thank you.

>> Rebecca: Okay. Thank you, Rhonda.

So we have a motion from Commissioner Lange to reconsider the VRA bid for Bruce Adelson.

Doug, I see you have a hand up do you have a comment.

>> Doug: Yes. First of all, I would like to second Rhonda's motion.

As you know I am an extreme supporter of Bruce Adelson throughout the process we have gone through so far, but I think the hire is significant enough that we have further discussion on it and get the opinions of the rest of the Commissioners relative to this matter.

And, again, like I said, I was a very ardent supporter of Bruce both on the committee and about his nomination to the Commission as well.

So I would like to second that motion.

>> Rebecca: Okay. We have a motion to reconsider and a second from Doug Clark. Richard Weiss, I see you have your hand raised. Would you like to comment?

>> Richard: I will give that a third for Rhonda's motion.

As you know, you should have all received an e-mail because I had asked our Executive Director a question about Mr. Adelson. And I believe in the e-mail it answers, I think, some of the questions. A couple of the things I found very interesting with the accusations of the public e-mails, and I think some of that has been answered.

But I do agree with Rhonda.

I think we should maybe take another look just because and because of her and her perception of the public I agree with her.

So even though I think Mr. Adelson might be a very good choice because he was hired, according to the e-mail, by a republican attorney on the Commission.

And I thought that was quite interesting since he is a democrat.

So that's all I need to say.

Thank you.

>> Rebecca: Okay. Are there any other comments?

Steve, go ahead.

>> Steve: I'm always concerned, and, Rhonda, don't take in the wrong way, but I'm always concerned when we get a large number of public comments that are similar in nature that someone has an agenda as it pertains to our work that I think is inappropriate.

I certainly agree with Richard, that the comments from Arizona and California clearly indicate that Mr. Adelson did a good job for them.

The other thing in thinking about this is I'm an attorney.

Julianne is an attorney.

Rebecca is an attorney.

And if the three of us can't figure out that Mr. Adelson is feeding us a line of BS, then perhaps we shouldn't be on this Commission.

So we are hiring him for his experience and knowledge regarding the Voting Rights Act.

I can read.

I know all of us can read.

And if we have questions that pertains to some of his advice that he gives us, and understand it's advice, he is not making any decisions.

He is giving us advice.

And I think we can interpret his advice as we choose. Therefore, I certainly don't have any reservations about continuing on with him.

Thank you.

>> Rebecca: Okay. Sue, I saw that you had your hand up next.

>> Sue: Yes. I just wanted to clarify on Arizona.

What happened with the -- first of all, the make-up of the Arizona Commission is you have two republicans and two democrats who are appointed by their parties with one independent who was the Chair who is kind of supposed to be in the middle.

So or maybe the convener of the facilitator the arbitrator, mediator between the two parties.

So when they received their proposal for VRA legal counsel the proposal was from a person who identified as a republican VRA voting rights attorney but within that proposal they included Bruce Adelson as a democrat to balance the proposal, realizing that this was really a partisan Commission and they wanted to have a balanced voice.

So that's how Bruce got hired by the republican attorney to work with the Arizona Commission ten years ago.

Also I would just state that all of their mapping did go through the courts and all of their mapping was approved. And that was the first time in many years for Arizona. So that's it.

>> Rebecca: Okay, Doug, I see that you have your hand raised again.

>> Doug: Yes.

I read through the response from Arizona and I was personally satisfied with the response.

I want to go back to something Steve mentioned about him and Julianne and Rebecca. Being attorneys.

And don't -- I did not pick up on anything.

I think personally and no offense to anyone that any of us probably could have picked up on something that we thought was something that we didn't want to have as part of the Commission.

I didn't pick up on that with Bruce.

I still have high regard for him.

And, I mean, I'm going to go back to my comment with Steve.

Very little that he presented was of legal nature.

And people with street smarts have, I think, the ability to pick up on some of that, too.

And all of us have that, all 13 of us.

But anyway, I looked at the Arizona response and went back into my notes, and I'm personally comfortable with Bruce as we move forward.

I yield back.

>> Rebecca: Okay, MC.

>> MC: Yeah. I was just going to offer it does seem wise for us to redo this because we did get the public comment afterwards. And I think that is where Rhonda's motion and the second and third, right, are very appropriate.

We should reconsider, but I would also agree with Doug, that we've got some, you know, the answers I've been -- I got the answers and I feel like we understand how Bruce has managed whatever partisanship he has displayed and I think that is legitimate. And I think we basically need the expertise and has demonstrated it with citizen, independent citizen redistricting Commissions and other areas. So it just feels

important to acknowledge he is the right candidate, but I think that it's important that we do have this discussion because of the information that came afterwards.

So for public record, so to speak.

>> Rebecca: Okay, thank you, MC.

Rhonda, you had your hand back up.

>> Rhonda: I just want to say that we continuously have done this for every candidate that was hired, especially if they cause an issue with public concept.

And that's what I'm hearing, and I stated some of those were form letters.

I understand that.

But what we are hearing is people want us to stay in our hires to stay as nonpartisan as possible for one.

And that they would not have the competence in us if we hired somebody that they deemed to be political.

I'm not saying anything that people can't support who they want, but we have maintained that.

It's kind of been a precedent that was set.

And we've turned down, again, I say like Mr. Sells was turned down by the subcommittee for having in the meeting, was said to be very liberal views. And when they are the same views by another candidate, which is it okay to give one consideration to one and not the other.

I think it's an issue of fairness.

And the public comment will always mean the world to me because we are supposed to be working based off from public comment.

Is it true that say the republican party put out?

I'm not blind and I'm not stupid.

Yes, they did put out a call for people to contact us.

I read the articles.

However, not all of those were form letters.

We had letters from people that volunteered to get the signatures to get this passed, Stating that they said to the people they collected signatures from that this would be a nonpartisan thing. And don't make liars out of them, so I understand the public's concern and I'm on board.

I had feelings and flags that went up when he was interviewing.

And that was without doing any digging whatsoever, without looking at his Twitter, without doing any digging.

There were things that I was uncomfortable with.

And I even reached out to our legal to ask one question that we've had repeatedly, which I brought up repeatedly about conflict of interest.

So it's not something that was based solely on the public comment; but public comment is very, very important.

>> Rebecca: Thank you, Commissioner Lange.  
Julianne?

>> Julianne: Thank you so much, Madam Chair.  
Yes, I just wanted to make a couple I think important clarifications.

So the -- when we realize the public comment came in and I think this background for transparency purposes is very important. So when we knew the public comment had come in, and the Commission had not yet seen it, we notified procurement to not forward the contract because we wanted to make sure the Commission had the opportunity to have this discussion.

So I think that is an important point.

I think the other point that I'd like to clarify is that the Arizona Commission had two general counsels.

So they hired two of me.

So a republican version of me and a democratic version of me and the republican attorney as Sue indicated is the one who contracted with Bruce and brought Bruce on to the team.

Now, this transparency that the Commission, that the Michigan Commission operates under ensures the fairness regardless of the political meanings of the individuals.

I know Commissioner Lett made the point that Bruce doesn't make the decisions, the Commission is making the decisions. And I think the same thing followed true with the line mapping consultants is that really working together in good faith towards the goal of maps that meet the constitutional criteria decided by the Commission?

Now, the disclosures were critical.

That is why staff added the disclosure language and reporting language to the RFPs is because it in this environment you're not going to find particularly working in the subject areas individuals who have who are nonpartisan.

Really, it's the transparency and disclosures on the system and all of the work is done in public with public input and public decisions. And I feel that the mission and the way in which the Commission does its work also has an important part to play in this.

I was trying to think if there was something else, I needed to address that had been raised.

And I don't think so. I will yield the floor as well. Thank you, Madam Chair.

>> Rebecca: Okay, Commissioner Clark.

>> Doug: I'd like to make a couple comments relative to the work of the subcommittee which consisted of Rebecca, Anthony, Brittini and myself.  
We got to the point where there were two individuals, we were considering one was Bruce and one was Brian sells and one of the individuals had indicated they wanted to move both of them forward to the Commission for interview and I brought up the point we are not obligated to bring multiple people.  
We are obligated to bring best person.

If there was a best person and if not, it would be 0 people, we would recommend we interview and we would start over again.

But in the discussion, we all felt head and shoulders over Brian, and that Brian's views were -- in our opinion were extremely liberal and Bruce's were not. And that Bruce would give us the better candidate, so we selected to bring just one person forward for the Commission based on our analysis of the two individuals. And I still support that as I go back and look at my notes and their responses and so forth.

And once we brought Bruce to the Commission, I'm supportive of his responses in the interview. And I think we made the right decision. I will yield back.

>> Rebecca: Okay. Any other comments?

Go ahead, Erin.

>> Erin: I just wanted to say we had the same public comment regarding James Lancaster, regarding Mr. Sorg, which was, you know, scorching on both instances, I think.

And we would be remiss and not considering the public comment regarding Mr. Adelson.

I do have one question, Sue. I don't know if this is an option, but they did bring up the fact, the public, that we could hire or they would feel more comfortable having a republican as well in the position Mr. Adelson is interviewing for. And the current budget, what we have left, does it even encompass the fact that we might have two VRA analysts?

Is that an option?

>> Sue: There is some money available in our budget at this time.

We feel that it may be utilized based on what we know at this time.

If the Commission felt very strongly about hiring a second VRA legal counsel, you certainly are able to do that.

We did receive seven or eight proposals for this bid.

There wasn't anybody, I believe, in that group that identified as being republican.

However, you know, I think when you put a bid out for proposal you follow the process, that's what we have done.

And I will yield to Julianne who can explain more of the legal aspects of this.

>> Julianne: Madam Chair, I will join.

Thank you, Executive Director Hammersmith.

So of the seven proposals received, we had two qualified that met the 80 point threshold. So it was Federal compliance Mr. Adelson and Mr. Sells who we have already touched on, so those were our only two bids.

Again, this is the second time that RFP was released.

The first time we received no responses.

So this is the second go around.

I would also like to highlight I don't believe I think Mr. Adelson worked under his Department of Justice administrations that were democrat. I don't believe he identified as democratic leaning or he didn't identify that way in his interview.

But I do support what Sue said, that we -- of the proposals we received for individuals qualified in this area, in this specific area of the law, I don't believe even in research in Arizona, in California and in individuals that operate in this area or firms that operate in this area that you have that political leaning.

I think what you see is the firms that responded to our RFP that were -- that had a mixed composition of attorneys because they were larger. They were larger firms is that -- that's litigation experience.

It's not -- it was not Voting Rights Act experience.

So I just think that is an important distinction to make as well.

Thank you, Madam Chair.

>> Rebecca: Okay. Mr. Weiss, go ahead.

>> Richard: As usual I believe our committees have done a good job again. We selected two people and only one we brought forward.

I guess my question is there that much information on Mr. Sells that is positive or negative and I was wondering if any other Commissioners have any other information on that gentleman?

Thank you.

>> Rebecca: Doug, do you want to go ahead? And, Rhonda, I thought I saw your hand up, so I will come back to you.

You are on mute, Doug.

>> Doug: Sorry.

I want to comment what Erin said about hiring two VRA attorneys.

I think that is detrimental to what we are trying to do as an organization.

I think what we will do is get ourselves in a situation where we will have one republican oriented and one democrat oriented and come back with different solutions and we will sit here and argue about the different solutions continuously.

Every time we have to get the two of them together to try to sort something out.

I don't feel that is a workable solution.

I think, going back to what Julianne said about the attorney firms that submitted proposals, I 100% agree with her, and you have litigation attorneys and not people who specialize in VRA necessarily. They may have had a little experience in it, but not significant such as Bruce and Brian have.

So I would support her comments on that as well.

And for Richard I -- relative to Brian's background, I would have to go back and research the points at this point, not research them but try to pull them up. And in my mind, there were some significant ones that led me to believe he was more liberal than -- a lot more liberal than any of the other candidates, so I yield back.



>> Rebecca: Okay. Rhonda, go ahead.

>> Rhonda: A few questions.

One would be for Sue or Julianne regarding the RFPs.

Just for clarification because I heard did another RFP come in like three minutes after the deadline that wasn't considered?

Was it literally that close?

>> Julianne: Sue, I'm unmuted and I feel like I can just -- yes, Commissioner Lange, there was one additional response that, again, was not timely.

So what we have done in the past, again, consistent procedures modelling the behavior of the Commission, when we have received late questions about RFPs where people are trying to decide whether to bid, we have accommodated those questions to the extent we have.

I think for one we did the VRA counsel.

We presented some answers to questions during the session.

So we certainly accommodate that, but the proposals are very clear about the timing.

And so if a proposal is untimely, the official response to the RFP per the procedures and the RFP itself it is not considered.

>> Rhonda: Did it come in literally that close though?

That is my question.

This is curiosity kills the cat because in my mind with technology I experienced during the presentation last night there can be a lag. So I was just curious if the information I was given was accurate, if it was literally like something that close like within three minutes of the deadline.

>> Julianne: I would have to pull the notice. And I'm happy, I can give you that answer in just a moment.

But I do know it was a very short period of time and what we did as staff was look to see whether they were in a different time zone or if there was some reason that that and they were not.

They were in the same time zone as us.

So hopefully that answers your question.

Madam Chair, I did have one other thing that I did forget to mention so when it's my turn again I can go back in the cue.

>> Rhonda: My other quick question, Richard, were you asking if there was anything online about Mr. Adelson or Mr. Sells?

>> Richard: Mr. Sells mostly, if you had gotten or received or did any digging on him over and above what Doug had mentioned.

>> Rhonda: I saw the same things on his Twitter as what Doug saw as far as that goes.

>> Richard: Okay, thanks.

>> Rebecca: Sue, did you have a comment?

>> Sue: Yes, I do.

Mr. Sells is the lead counsel in the Georgia proposals that were recently passed regarding voting rights. So I think some people mentioned or felt that that was going to be a pretty comprehensive job for him. And possibly he would be much more controversial than another candidate.

A couple other things I think, Erin, in regards to hiring another VRA counsel. We have to be responsible with taxpayer dollars. So I think we would probably be in trouble there for not using the dollars wisely as long as this Commission feels that they are able to discern what is being proposed, and I believe we have capabilities here that they can.

Also I want to mention that Bruce Adelson did disclose before the Commission asked about his political contributions.

There were three or four small contributions.

They were to both major parties.

So he, I don't know, I don't think there is anything major there.

Again, those were small contributions.

So I think that's all I have at this point.

And my recollection is the other RFP that came in was several hours late, not a few minutes.

But that is my recollection.

We can get that information for the Commission though.

>> Rebecca: Okay. Steve, go ahead.

>> Steve: I call the question.

>> Rebecca: Well, I have one more comment. I was waiting for you guys to finish.

So my kind of thoughts on this are I think sometimes we have to practice the art of discernment because we receive a lot of comments on something it's not true.

In this instance we had lots of comments about Arizona and they are supposedly being a debacle in Arizona and it was a big disaster. But when we reached out to the Arizona Commissioners and asked their opinion, they said that was absolutely not true and actually he did a wonderful job. And not only did he do a wonderful job, he did such a good job they were able to get their maps to pass judicial scrutiny on the first pass.

So I think there is an issue as we are hearing comments about Arizona that are just fundamentally not true.

And then I think the same comment could be made about campaign donations. There were multiple comments that were sent to us, claiming he has got this vast history of democratic donations.

And as he disclosed during the hearing and as we can see for ourselves that is simply not true.

He had three very small donations to Jocelyn Benson who he had a prior relationship with.

They were less than \$300 total, I believe.

And then he had another donation back in the 2000s to a republican person who is running for Judge.

Again, very deminimis.

And the total amount of donations he made over the last 20 years are 400. So when you have comments where people are saying he is an extensive democratic donor and has this long history and we can look and say those comments are not true, I think we need to weigh that and consider it just like we would if we were judges in a courtroom is just because someone is saying something doesn't mean it's accurate.

In this case I don't think these comments we received are accurate.

Now I have not dug too far into his Twitter.

I didn't see anything there, so maybe there is more.

But I just think as a Commission sometimes we are going to get comments that are, in this case, I think politically motivated and not based in reality and they are just about creating buzz and negativity about someone who I think is the most qualified person for the job based around all objective measures we looked at.

And I think it would be, you know, a disservice for us to just get distracted by comments that we can verify are not accurate to begin with. So those are my thoughts. Any other comments? Go ahead, Julianne.

>> Julianne: Thank you so much, Madam Chair. The timing for the receipt of the late proposal it was just after 4:00 p.m.; but the proposals were due at 3:00 p.m., so that was one hour late.

The item that I forgot to mention again was that the VRA counsel will be working in conjunction with the RPV analyst and doing that work, so that is another -- I know when Commissioner Lett mentioned that everyone would be reading the materials and reacting to them, again, the data side of it and the statistical support would also be in conjunction with another consultant that the Commission has retained.

And those would be my final comments.

I wanted to make sure the time was confirmed as received an hour late.

>> MC: VRA voting rights analysis and RPV is racially polarized voting.

>> Julianne: Thank you, Commissioner Rothhorn. Yes, and I made a note to myself to not do that this meeting and I have gone and done it.

Yes, the Voting Rights Act counsel discussion that we are having right now to hire legal counsel for that purpose would be working in conjunction with the consultant Dr. Handley that will be serving as the Commission's analyst for the racially polarized voting analysis.

Thank you.

>> Rebecca: Okay. Any other comments?

We have Steve's request to take the vote at this point.

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So we have a motion on the floor by Commissioner Lange; seconded by Commissioner Clark to reconsider the prior decision to offer a contract to Bruce Adelson and his company for -- I'm sorry, Julianne. Go ahead.

>> Julianne: That the two steps, so this is just whether the vote should be reconsidered.

>> Rebecca: Right.

>> Julianne: This is not for clarity and the public and the Commission. This is not whether you approve or disapprove of the Federal compliance contract.

This is only whether you want the revote to occur.

>> Rebecca: Yes, so we are taking a vote on whether you want to reconsider the vote.

This is not a vote on whether or not we will ultimately hire Bruce Adelson and his company.

All in favor please indicate by raising your hand. All in favor for the motion to reconsider, just to clarify.

So, okay.

All right. All opposed please so indicate by the same sign.

So I'm seeing that the motion does not carry. I see five against and four in favor. Can somebody confirm for me that was accurate?

>> Julianne: Madam Chair, I have -- I don't believe I was able to view Commissioner Rothhorn.

>> Rebecca: He was in favor; then it was me, Steve, Doug, Juanita and Janice who voted opposed, so that was five opposed.

Rhonda, Erin, MC and Richard were in favor; is that correct, everybody?

If I'm wrong, please raise your hand and let me know I got that wrong.

>> MC: Correct.

>> Rebecca: Okay. So by my calculation the vote does not carry.

>> Rhonda: Is Cynthia still here?

>> Rebecca: She is not.

>> Rhonda: Okay.

>> Rebecca: All right. Motion does not carry.

All right. Give me one second here to get back to my agenda.

Okay, moving on to the next item on the agenda, we have updates from General Counsel Pastula.

>> Julianne: Thank you very much, Madam Chair.

I'm going to move on to the legacy data petition, excuse me the legacy data memo as well as the petition to the Michigan Supreme Court.

So there was a memo circulated, dated April 14th regarding the legacy format data.

As you recall, the census data that we use for redistricting is the granular sent Tuesday bloc data referred to as PL94-171 or just PL data.

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This is the information the states need on total population and voting aid population at the smallest geographic the census bloc level, which is, again, what the Commission will be using for redistricting purposes.

The legacy format data is the August release of data.

The August release will provide the full PL data set from which the consultants will be able to extract the relevant data for redistricting software.

The release on September 30th is the same data that will be provided in the August release.

It's in a different format.

It's a tabular and referred to in the Bureau census. Bureau refers to as a user friendly format.

Under Federal law we should have received the PL data by April 1st, 2021.

We are all very familiar with the delays in receipt of the data; but, again, as a foundational basis, I wanted to highlight that the August data and the September data is identical data just in different formats.

So, with that background, let's address the legacy format data issue.

On March 25th when I first presented that the legacy format data was an issue, we didn't have the information or the background necessary to advise the Commission.

This is the update from March 25th.

The legacy data issue was first raised mid-March in the Department of Justice response in the Ohio litigation suing the Census Bureau.

In late March, the Commission, the MICRC adopted a request for relief for inclusion in the petition to the Michigan Supreme Court.

The relief that you adopted on March 25th did not take into account use of the legacy format data for two very important reasons.

First, as I just indicated, the lack of detail combined with the uncertainties on the release, the release date and other variables made it impossible to make a determination at that time whether the format data could or should be used.

And, even more importantly, on March 25th it was unnecessary to make that determination particularly given the lack of information about the legacy format data because you're utilizing an August release data still does not have a meaningful impact on the Commission's ability to meet the November 1st deadline. And that is still true, and relief is still needed. However, the legacy format data, the information we have will enable the Commission to interact with 2020 census data in advance of September 30th.

So since the end of March, as I indicated, this legacy format data issue has been explored more fully.

Based on the research and analysis that has been done, it is appropriate for the MICRC to utilize legacy format data that is expected to be released in August for the following

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key reasons: First, I mentioned before it is identical data in the August and September releases.

There is just one set of census data.

The legacy format files are fully reviewed and subject to the same quality assurance processes as the September data.

It's expected to be released the third week in August.

I know the communications say mid to late August. The Census Bureau has clarified their expectation is that it will be released the third week this August.

And your Election Data Services, EDS, the consultant has estimated a seven-ten-day processing time, which will still result in the MICRC obtaining census data earlier than September 30th.

And, lastly, EDS will be performing a reconciliation of the legacy format data with the September release data to verify the data integrity.

That will be another seven-ten-day processing time.

So how does all of this impact the request for release to the Michigan Supreme Court?

The first draft of the petition that was provided to the Attorney General's Office did not reference legacy data because it hadn't even been raised as an issue until the March 12th filing in the Ohio litigation.

The draft was subsequently amended to include legacy data as first a reference then as a potential avenue. And now, given the additional information and clarity, potentially as an avenue to pursue to access census data prior to September 30th.

You will recall the MICRC will also have access to alternative data sets such as the community survey data and population estimates as well.

So today's focus is on the legacy format data that is used by MICRC and the request to amend release to reflect its use.

So consistent with the Commission's vote on March 25th, the draft petition currently reflects two requests for relief.

The first being an extension of 72 days from the release of census data expected on September 30th. And that is to propose and publish proposed plans that will start then start the 45-day public comment period clock.

The extension, the second relief that's reflected in the current draft of the petition is that the extension would also run from any additional Federal delays.

This would be if the census data was delivered after September 30th.

Now, given the recent clarity on the ability to process and use legacy format data, Michigan Department of State has requested a corresponding accommodation in the request for relief that the Commission discussed on March 25th. But, again, was not formally requested or formally approved, which is what the request is today.

If the Census Bureau and the request for relief would be that, quote, if the Census Bureau transmits redistricting data to the State of Michigan earlier than September 30th,

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the Commission will make every effort to expedite the process and adopt final plans by a corresponding number of days in advance of the January 25th deadline.

So, with this language, the MICRC would use its best efforts to release the preliminary and final plans of corresponding number of days as received in advance of the 30th.

The MDOS stands behind and stands by the Commission's request for 72 days to work with the census data.

This aligns with the current language of additional Federal delays that's already been adopted. And it formalizes, again, the MICRC's intent to return unused days to the Michigan Department of State and the Bureau of Elections.

Therefore, it's remembered -- recommended that, pardon me, the MICRC utilize the legacy format data released in August. And, two, the MICRC adopt the proposed resolution modifying the request for relief to the Michigan Supreme Court to encompass the best efforts language to release the preliminary and final plans of corresponding number of days it is received in advance of September 30th.

It's also important to note, and this is my last point to the Commission before I respond to questions, it is important to note that the relief sought is only from in the petition. The relief sought by the Commission and the Secretary of State via the petition to the Michigan Supreme Court with an anticipated filing date of next week. April 20th, I believe is the updated filing date, that the modification of any election-related statutory deadlines is under the purview of the legislature.

So this request would only be for the constitutional deadline relief.

I would also like to inform the Commission that yesterday 2021 house bills 4642 and 4643 were turned in yesterday.

These bills will be read in during the house session, which begins at Noon today. And they will be available on the legislature.Michigan.gov website after they are formally read in this afternoon.

I reviewed those bills.

And they -- house bill 4643 amends the -- adjusts the filing deadlines for nominating petitions or filing fees for county boards of Commissioners for solely the November 2022 general election.

It moves it from the 15th. It moves it consistent with the same as the candidates for State Representatives.

The house bill 4642, again, only shifts the filing deadlines in regard to the 2022 general November election. And it would shift the filing deadlines from the 15th Tuesday before the primary, the August primary, which is April 19th. It would shift the filing deadlines to the 12th Tuesday before the August primary, which is May 10th. This is in addition of 21 days.

In the chart I believe it was referenced as May 14th, 25 days. But it actually would be, the proposed bills have it May 10th, the 12th Tuesday, which is 21 days. These would

include nominating petitions for Office of the Governor, for Congress. And there were other provisions in the bills, but I believe those are the ones that highlight and correspond to the work the Commission and the Michigan Department of State is trying to effectuate to ensure that the new maps can be used for the elections November 2022.

Thank you, Madam Chair. And I'm available to answer any questions.

>> Rebecca: Thank you, Julianne.

Are there any comments or concerns around our general counsel's presentation?

I'm seeing none. Do we have a motion to adopt the resolution on the table?

>> Steve: So moved.

>> Rebecca: Do I have a second?

MC, it looks like you are seconding or is that a comment I'm seeing? I just want to clarify.

MC, could you clarify if that was a second?

>> MC: Yes. I am seconding it.

>> Rebecca: Okay. So we have a motion to adopt the resolution presented by Steve Lett and seconded by MC Rothhorn. This is to adopt resolution 2021-0411, which pertains to the dates and deadlines for the petition to the Michigan Supreme Court. All in favor please raise your hand to so indicate. And MC if you could -- thank you, MC.

All right, all opposed same sign.

All right. The motion carries.

Resolution is adopted.

Julianne, was there a legislative and case update in addition to what you just talked about?

Is there something else?

>> Julianne: There is. And I would also like to -- there is a case update.

A case and legislative update. And I would like to note that Attorney Brady has indicated that the Governor is not moving.

It remains April 19th.

It's not affected, obviously, by the MICRC.

So that August primary is shifting, as I stated, the three weeks from April 19th to May 10th.

I just want to make the clarification. And I believe I did say Governor, and that is not encompassed.

It would be the Congressional and State district elections.

So the case and legislative update, I will keep it brief to be on schedule.

First, the Open Meetings Act.

The MICRC will continue to meet virtually through April 30th based on the State of Emergency in Ingham County.



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There has been no movement on Senate Bill 207, which was introduced on March 4th. And it is still in the committee on Government operations.

This bill would extend the deadline to conduct virtual meetings for any reason through June 30th.

We will continue to monitor that bill and verify the status of local states of emergency not only in Ingham County, but in the locations of the upcoming public hearings as well.

Second, last Friday, on April 9th, the Oregon Supreme Court granted an extension to its legislature on its constitutional deadline for submitting new legislative and Congressional district maps due to the delayed census results.

There are two bipartisan committees in the House and the Senate which are responsible for drawing those maps.

If the lawmakers in Oregon, again, they have a different system, are unable to agree on maps, the responsibility would rest with the Secretary of State to correct the plan.

Their constitutional deadline was July 1st. The Secretary of State's would have been August 15th.

And those have been shifted to September 27th and October 18th.

Third, the We the People Act, I'm still monitoring that; and it is still pending in the Senate with no activity since our last update.

Thank you. And, as always, I welcome questions.

>> Rebecca: Okay. Are there any questions or comments for our general counsel?

Okay, all right, seeing none, next item on our agenda is actually to take a break.

So we are a little ahead of schedule.

Do we want to break now and pick up in ten minutes?

Okay, all right, so we will take a break, a ten-minute break and we will return at it is 10:12 right now according to mine so let's say 10:25. We will return at 10:25.

Thank you, everybody.

[ Recess ]

>> MC: Letting you know I'm here with the hand raised.

>> Rebecca: Thank you, MC.

>> Juanita: Rebecca.

>> Rebecca: Yes.

>> Juanita: Hi. My computer is saying that it's getting ready to restart. Is there anything I can do to stop it or should I allow it to happen?

>> Rebecca: You should have the option to like delay or ignore for an hour or two normally.

>> Juanita: I put it on delay, but they put it back in like they are going to do it in a few minutes.

>> Rebecca: Just do it again and see if there is a drop down. And there is a drop down for one hour or two hours or three hours and just try it.

>> Juanita: It says restart in snooze and I cannot do it.

>> Rebecca: Yeah, snooze it because otherwise we will drop below what we need.

>> Juanita: It's on snooze, but it's not moving around or doing anything now.

>> Rebecca: Okay.

>> Juanita: Before it went to that.

Like it's determined to do what it want to do.

>> Rebecca: Yeah.

>> Juanita: Hopefully not.

Let me hit snooze again.

Well, let's hope that it doesn't go off.

I'm trying to figure out how can I work it where it doesn't do this when we are working.

This is the second time it's done that.

>> Doug: What I do is the day before the meeting, Juanita, I go in and force the updates to go.

>> Juanita: Okay. And how do could do that, Doug?

>> Doug: Give me a call after the meeting and I will walk you through it.

>> Juanita: I will.

Good.

I can't even turn it off.

>> Rebecca: We are still waiting for a few more people to come back.

>> Juanita: Rebecca it's going to knock me out. It's almost -- I think it's going to knock me out.

>> Rebecca: Okay. Sally indicated that Sarah will call you in if it restarts on you.

>> Juanita: Okay, all right.

>> Rebecca: So it looks like Anthony has joined us and we are waiting for -- I'm just waiting for Janice. Anthony, could you state what your location is? Where you are dialing in remotely from?

>> Anthony: Yes. Dialing remotely from Wayne County, Michigan.

>> Rebecca: Okay.

>> Anthony: For some reason I thought we were meeting at 11:00 today.

I got notifications on my phone, I have the wrong time.

>> Rebecca: You are here now, so let's get restarted with our meeting. It's 10:26 and everybody appears to have returned at this point.

All right. The next item on our agenda is administrative updates from Executive Director Hammersmith.

>> Sue: Yes. I just wanted to share a little bit about where the items that the staff is working on. And some of these are in collaboration with the Michigan Department of State, so we are all working together.

We've had lots of discussion about the public hearings and how they will proceed. And on April 29th we will do a dry run for the public hearing so everybody has an opportunity to see some of the logistics involved, how these public hearings will work, the ways that

public comment can be made and how this process will be a little unique to what we are used to doing now because we will have both live and in-person public comment at a public hearing and virtual public comment.

And also with the in person Commission meetings they will be held at 5:00 p.m. and those will be different because they will be one-hour meetings, so you will have a different agenda for those.

I do have on the agenda for tomorrow a sample agenda for those one-hour meetings that we will hold prior to the public hearings.

And, also, the other thing I put on the agenda for tomorrow is a chart that shows the difference between public hearings and town hall meetings because I've heard others in the public mix those terms. And I want to make sure our Commission and the public is clear on how they are similar and how they are different opportunities for getting our message out.

Next week we will have some discussion on the public comment process or the ways that we can handle that. And I'm hoping that MDOS will be ready possibly to share their public comment tool that is being developed so it's in the works.

I know that they have a lot of involvement in the public hearings from handling the registration, doing -- taking care of the order for public comment. Et cetera, so this will be in much collaboration.

There are a few things on our radar also.

So the process for accepting and incorporating communities of interests, this is a really important discussion and that we will try to have before we engage in public hearings.

We are going to talk a little bit more about the mapping contract progress because once that contract is in place there will be some steps that we will want to follow.

Michigan Department of State has offered the services of a member of their strategic vendor management team.

So as the contract progresses, we will have checkpoints to make sure that the progress is going well, the payments are in accordance with the work that they have promised to us.

We also want to talk about a process for interacting with consultants.

So just as an example, does every Commissioner go to a consultant with their suggestions?

Or do we use a central point?

So Commissioners would reach out to either legal counsel or myself and make those suggestions that we can then forward to the consultants.

Again, these people are working by the hour, so we want to be very careful with the budgeted money that we have, that we are spending for these services.

Another thing we are looking at is group presentations for public comment.

So, for example, instead of 15 or 20 people coming to us from a community of interest. Possibly there is a group that could come to us with those comments that would be collaborative and comprehensive with one presentation.

This might be a little bit longer.

They might want to do a regional or a whole statewide map, those kind of groups.

We think there may be a place for this.

California used two days of public comment for this purpose, so we are looking at that to see if that might be something that would be of benefit to the Commission as you explore that area.

The other discussion we would like to have is a decision-making process going forward for mapping.

So, for example, do we determine consensus before we ask the line drawers to move lines on a map?

Or do individual Commissioners all request their or I guess it's, you know, 180 degrees.

First of all, individual Commissioners could all make recommendations for mapping or lines being moved.

Or, first, we could have a process where there was consensus made and then as a whole the Commission would make a recommendation where mapping lines or moving mapping lines. So those are just a few of the things that we have on our radar.

I would like to ask the Commission if you have other areas that you feel we should work on especially on the short term?

>> Rebecca: Anyone have any feedback for Sue about what comments or what they might work on, what the staff might work on in the future?

>> MC: That was kind of funny. I unmuted and there was feedback.

Anyway, Sue I'm thinking about how we either how we address communities of interest to sort of define them more and what I believe I've heard from Julianne, which I kind of have been playing with in my mind is not a definition that might exclude people accidentally, but a process and codifying sort of a process that allows people to be as included as possible. And I think I'm getting a lot of feedback, so I'm muting.

>> Sue: You are getting feedback. But yes, it's more about process than a definition, the Constitution does define, but says it really doesn't include everything that could be considered.

So, yes, it would be a process for how we incorporate those comments.

>> MC: What I'm suggesting, I suppose, is we have to make that as clear to the public as possible and I think for ourselves what that is as we move into these public hearings.

>> Sue: I agree wholeheartedly, yes. Thank you for your clarification there.

>> Rebecca: Sorry. I was on mute there. Any other comments for Suann?

All right. Thank you very -- oh, go ahead, Anthony.

>> Anthony: As far as when we get to actually drawing the maps, I think, you know, Sue brings up a very good point, you know, that we are going to need some sort of process in order to, you know, move it along with and -- just move it along and try to, you know, get it done.

But I think that's going to be hard to do until, you know, we get out and hear what the public has to say about it.

So I'm just wondering if anyone has thoughts on how we want to work together to achieve that?

>> Sue: I would welcome thoughts, but I think we need to have a full Commission discussion at a future date where we would actually discuss decision making processes and how the Commission wishes to move forward.

>> Rebecca: I agree.

>> Anthony: I agree.

>> Rebecca: All right. Any other comments our Executive Director?

All right. Thank you very much.

We will move on to our next agenda item, which is communication and outreach updates.

Edward Woods, I will hand that over to you.

>> Edward: Thank you, thank you, thank you. Good morning, everyone.

How are you?

I hope this day finds you well. And just want to go over our communication plan and then have some discussion with regards to our public hearings.

We had our communications outreach meeting yesterday, and I want to share the results with you.

Our scheduled presentation of Richard Czuba will not take place until 11:20. And it seems like we have some additional time on our agenda, but he is not scheduled to be here until 11:20 so I will -- I'm engaged on conversation and hopefully we can make some progress as relates to our communications and outreach efforts.

Last week if you remember I shared with you the communication plan.

We did look for public comments.

I didn't see anything in public comments with regards to the communication plan at all.

The desire was to get as many people in the public to provide feedback as well as share this with our communications and outreach team.

Are you able to see the plan on your screen?

Perfect.

There was no change here to proposed communication outreach plan.

We didn't change anything here related to mission vision and core values.

No change to the background is all.

Obviously, no change to the methodology.

No changes to the key findings.

The only change from goal number one, based upon the feedback of the Commission that was initiated by Commissioner Clark, is we changed objective three in fairness to read emphasize that MICRC requires hiring and mapping decisions to include at least one affiliate from the democrats, independents, and republicans.

We know for hiring we need one, but for mapping we need two.  
And so that is the change.

If there is any questions or comments, Madam Chairperson, we can discuss those at this time.

>> Rebecca: Do you have any comments?

Any further changes for Edward?

We can see if anyone has their hand up.

All right, I don't see any comments for you, Edward.

>> Edward: All right. Just want to go through the process.

Heightened awareness stayed the same.

Model transparency in the redistricting process stayed the same.

>> Rebecca: Uh-huh.

>> Edward: Increased engagement in the redistricting process stayed the same.  
So just wanted to share that with you.

Then here is our plan was to present to the Commission last week, which we did.  
Received feedback and public comment, which we did.

And then have with regards to a Commission vote. And then these are the platforms.  
You know, we wanted to make sure we were providing information and in many different ways as possible so people can understand and participate in the redistricting process.

And, of course, we are always willing to add to the platforms.

We are always willing to add to the platforms.

But this is the list that we are using at this time.

If there are not any questions, Madam Chairperson, I would appreciate if the Commission would approve our communications and outreach plan.

>> Rebecca: Okay, any comments?

Feedback?

Concerns?

Changes? Go ahead, Erin.

>> Erin: Hello, Edward.

I noticed all of that seems to be based on technology-driven points.

What are we going to use to reach those communities of interest that do not have access to the technology?

>> Edward: We will definitely have print, so a lot of those information sheets and fact sheets in addition to coming off the website we can also mail.

So if people need information, we can definitely mail it to them and put it in their hands.

So I'm not sure if that is answering your question. But we are trying to get ads in terms of local newspaper ads. We have a proposal coming in from the new Michigan Media to make sure we have ads available.

We have print. Some of the things will be radio, so people have radio, so they will be able to watch it on radio.

We will also have television Commissions as well as part of the video production services contract.

So we will have information available to all of the areas, even though they may not have technology.

>> Rebecca: Rhonda, did you have a comment?

>> Rhonda: When you say you can mail it to them, is that mailing it to them if they request information or are there going to be random mailings done out to citizens?

>> Edward: Mailing if they request information, but we can also look at a mail campaign.

That is an excellent idea that we could consider, especially in some of the rural areas. So definitely looking to -- we can definitely consider that.

I think that is a great idea, so thank you for that. And, excuse me, if a Commissioner has an idea where that would be beneficial, please share that with me because I don't want to think I have all the answers. So if there is an area known, I would rather hear it 300 times than not hear it at all.

>> Rebecca: Thank you, Edward. Sue.

>> Sue: Edward had mentioned the communication and outreach team. He has a group of about 30 organizations that he is meeting with every other week and he has mentioned this before, but I just want to emphasize. These groups have stakeholders throughout the State of Michigan. So, you know, everything from the League of Women Voters to the Township Association. These people are getting information on a regular basis about the Commission and its work and how they can engage people they know in the community. So I think that is a tremendous outreach. There is United Ways and community foundations in every county across the state.

Certainly they are statewide. The League of Women Voters is doing a great job. MNA is engaging people in the process. So in many respects this outreach is also what will help to get the message out no matter where anybody lives in the state.

>> Rebecca: Okay, thank you.

>> Edward: Commissioner Rothorn put something in the chat.

>> Rebecca: MC Rothorn is asking whether the advertising includes billboards like what I would see if driving?

>> Edward: Yes.

>> Juanita: That is a good idea.

>> Rebecca: Yes, it does.

Okay.

Any other questions, comments for Edward?

Okay. Can we get an entertain a motion to approve the resolution that Edward had presented to us?

It is resolution 2021.04.12.

Communications and outreach plan.

>> Erin: So moved.

>> Rebecca: We have a motion by Commissioner Wagner. Can I get a second?

>> I second it.

>> Rebecca: I believe that was Commissioner Curry seconding.

All in favor please raise your hand.

>> Edward: I think Commissioner Curry did the first and the second, so I just want to make sure people are hearing the voices.

>> Rebecca: Erin, I thought Erin Wagner did the first.

>> Erin: I moved.

>> Rebecca: It was Erin Wagner. So Commissioner Wagner moved to accept the resolution. Juanita Curry seconded.

All in favor please raise your hand to so indicate. And Curry and Rothhorn, if you can indicate by putting up your hand or verbally indicate if you are in favor.

>> Juanita: I'm in favor.

>> Rebecca: All right. All opposed same sign, please.

All right. The motion carries. The resolution is adopted.

>> Edward: Great, thank you.

The next thing I would like to talk about is our communications and outreach team, and really would like to give them a shout out and thank them for their support. They are providing invaluable feedback in how we can do outreach and make sure we leave no one behind.

At this point we have Access ACLU from Michigan, AARP Michigan, APIA, I'm sorry, American Civils Liberty Union, Michigan Retired Personnel Michigan, Asian Pacific Islander American Vote Michigan, the Campus Election Engagement Project, The Campus Vote Project, the Council of Michigan Foundations, the Detroit Hispanic Development Corporation which services the state. The Hispanic Latino Commission of Michigan, EMH Michigan, the Jewish Community Relations Council, American Jewish Committee, the League of Women Voters of Michigan.

The Michigan AFLCIO, the Michigan Association of Counties.

The Michigan Association of School Boards.

The Michigan Association of United Ways.

The Michigan Community College Association.

The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services Aging and Adult Services, which works with the Area of Agency on Aging across the state.

The Michigan Department of Civil Rights.



The Michigan Farm Bureau Association.

The Michigan Library Association.

The Michigan Municipal League.

The Michigan Nonprofit Association.

The Michigan State University Extension Centers.

The Michigan Roundtable for Diversity and Inclusion.

The Michigan Statewide Independent Living Council.

The Michigan Township Association.

Michigan Voices.

NAACP for Michigan.

Progress Michigan.

Small Business Association of Michigan.

And Voters Not Politicians participate in our biweekly communication and outreach meetings.

We met yesterday. And some of the concern with the spike in COVID-19 and in-person meetings,

The options that we are going to have available. We did share with them that they are hybrid meetings.

We did share with them that we will be following, you know, COVID-19 guidelines as relates to mask wearing as relates to sanitization stations, six feet distancing, along those lines. So just wanted to share that with you because temperature checks, the -- you know, obviously if people have a fever that is registered would more than likely turn them away. But that is a decision made by the Commission, not by me as staff. But if we do do temperature checks of people that exceed the threshold, you know, are we allowing them in, are we not allowing them in, you know, guidelines say you don't.

But at the same time health departments have jurisdictions in those areas. So we just want to make sure that the Commission is, you know, hearing some of these concerns.

Some of the concerns was with regard to the surge of COVID here in Michigan. And should we be doing -- should we be having in-person meetings in the first place.

And so they like the idea of the hybrid model so people have an opportunity, but just kind of wanted to share with you some of the concerns.

We spent and had about a 45-minute meeting yesterday. And about half of the meeting was really kind of spent on this particular topic to hear the feedback. And it was a mixed bag to be honest with you. But just wanted to share some of the concerns about our statewide affiliates who have members or affiliate organizations across the state.

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

We've had really good discussion about how we can make sure our graphics are tagged so people on the Internet who are blind, that it reads to them. So just trying to make sure that our materials are accessible and available.

We talked about translation in terms of translating. Obviously, with our meetings we do Arabic and Spanish. But making sure our newspaper ads, our information sheets and what have you are properly translated so people can get ahold of that information and read it for themselves.

So just a real robust group as I share. This group is open to any and everyone. And it has a statewide organization that has members or affiliates across the state because we want to make sure we leave no stone unturned as it relates to that. There are a few organizations that I didn't read, that we are seeking commitments from in this biweekly process.

So I just want you to know that these meetings are open to the public.

Commissioner Lange and I had a meeting where she was able to get some of the tail end, so Commissioner Lange can share something.

We did a meet and greet with our team. So, as you know, Sue Hammersmith and Julianne were a part of that as well.

And I want to thank them for joining. But if any of the three would like to comment on what I've shared, so before we get into a broader discussion, that would be appreciated.

>> Rebecca: Go ahead, Commissioner Lange.

>> Rhonda: Just for clarification, I was a part of the meeting. I had a meeting scheduled with Edward. And I always log on early, so I kind of popped in unexpectedly on their meeting. So I did not want anybody to think I was a regularly scheduled member of it, but it was informative for sure.

>> Rebecca: Thank you. Any other comments for Edward?

>> MC: A question maybe about the public relations -- excuse me, the public hearings versus the town halls and if the concerns were about both, Edward?

>> Edward: More so the public hearings because that has been their job and obviously, we are able to provide feedback to the Commission with regards to the redistricting process and ideas in terms of how they would like to see the lines drawn. So and the conversation was for the public hearings.

It was specifically, that is what we were talking about at the time.

With the town halls, most of them are opting, as you very well know, for the virtual formats with the League of Women Voters. Right now they are doing some virtual town halls that Commissioners are participating in. And I want to say thank you to that.

Voters not Politicians is working with the University of Michigan next week. And we are working with cohorts and others. So definitely the public hearings was the topic of the discussion.

>> MC: Thank you.

>> Rebecca: Okay. Suann.

>> Sue: I just wanted to say it was a real pleasure to be involved in the meeting and see so many statewide groups involved and concerned about the process of redistricting.

I think that a great avenue for bringing people to the table, bringing people to the public hearings and enabling them to give public comment. So this is a wonderful initiative that communications and outreach Director Woods has embarked on. And I'm just really impressed that he has brought so many people to the table.

>> Rebecca: Thank you.

Any other comments?

All right. The next item on our agenda, thank you, Edward. I'm sorry, were you not done, Edward?

>> Edward: I have a few more updates.

>> Rebecca: Go ahead, Edward. Sorry.

>> Edward: I just wanted you to know that the Oxford shirts were an example.

Those were not the Oxford shirts we are looking at.

Some people are asking what are Oxford shirts and wanted people to know they are the button down shirts, so when we get there, I will make sure I send that information to you. But just wanted the people to know that was a picture illustration, an example. That is not what we are looking to do.

And then with regard to the name badges, I need to know your names as you would like them printed.

Those will be very helpful when we do do our public hearings for who gets access to our Commission rooms in terms if you want to sit down, get a bottle of water or what have you with regards to that.

And, once again, those will be magnetic in nature so they do not put pinholes. So I want to make sure it's clear. And it's an example and it's not T-shirts.

If you have not given me the name, how you want it printed on your name badge, obviously, with your e-mail addresses, you don't have your middle initial, some people prefer their middle initial and some people don't. Some people prefer a suffix. I'm Edward Woods, III associated with my name and some don't. And just wanted to make sure if you want a formal name or a short name to give people that opportunity with regards to that.

So if you could send that e-mail back and let me know, we can get that process ordered so we can have the badges in time for the public hearing.

And I got from some but not all.

>> Rebecca: Commissioner Clark.

>> Rebecca: You are on mute.

>> Doug: I'm sorry.

Edward, could you explain why we decided to spend money on the shirts and what the shirts are going to look like?

>> Edward: Well, right now we are in the process of looking, you know, for the shirts.

The idea for the shirts is when we go out to town hall meetings or you are doing presentations at rotary or what have you, that there would be an opportunity for you to, you know, identify and promote the Commission.

If you look at our survey, only 24.3% actually knew about the Commission. And so when we go out, you know, so far when we have gone out people wear basically whatever. They decide they want to wear. And if you look at my background, it's a virtual background.

I have, obviously, lighting and a green screen kit in order to promote that.

The shirts are considerably less than that. So if you were to present from your home, or what have you, it would be another way to market who the MICRC is doing, not only virtual, not only in person, but also with the presentations.

So trying to be cost effective in terms of what are our options and in terms of doing that. And, you know, a lighting kit could be 75 to 80 bucks. And that shirt will probably be half, if not more than half that cost.

>> Doug: The -- one follow-up question, Edward.

The meetings I've attended, the town hall, I'm sorry, the city council meetings and such, I've always -- and I think Anthony has, too, worn a coat and tie.

And I thought that was the more professional type of attire to wear.

Why wouldn't we just continue doing that sort of thing?

>> Edward: Well, it's a mix.

I mean, it's a mix.

Some would like to wear coat and ties, but like when you go out to different communities, I always think the message, the message is also enhanced by the appearance of the messenger. And in some places coat and ties are appropriate; but in other places when you go out, you know, a more casual look is appropriate.

And so I was trying to find something that would work both ways.

You know, not just a Polo shirt but something a little bit dressier that can be used in both settings.

You can always use it with a sport coat, so it has some flexibility. And if you want to take it off later and come in with a sport coat, I mean there are some options that you can do with regards to that.

So, I mean, if the Commission is not in favor of it, obviously, we move on.

But the whole idea was to provide opportunities to increase the work of the Commission in light of some of our market research that we shared the key highlights last week, in light that we cannot get everyone in home studios and do some other marketing in terms of what I have behind the scenes what can we do.

Like I said, it's just an option, that we can do it and be cost effective with regards to the promotion of the MICRC and its work.

>> Doug: I yield back.

>> Juanita: Can I ask a question?

>> Rebecca: Yeah. Go ahead, Juanita.

>> Juanita: Concerning the Oxford shirts, are we getting, you know, you wear it once or we are going to be gone, how will we be wearing a shirt -- one shirt, is it one shirt per person? And how do we keep it clean? And when you perspire and sweat and whatever and would that be feasible? Just asking a question, is that feasible when we hit the road and stuff?

>> Edward: That is something we need to talk about as a Commission. With regards to that, I think you bring up a great point.

Obviously, the cleaning of the shirt would be the responsibility of each individual person. But you do bring out a good point if you are on the road is one shirt enough.

So thank you, Commissioner Curry. And that is something we will take under consideration in terms of the best way to move forward on that.

>> Juanita: I was just really kind of concerned about that or do we just wear our own clothes? It really to me doesn't make any -- to purchase more than one shirt of if we can use the money for something more pronto to what we are, you know, more -- something else to more -- that could advise us a little bit better than the shirt. Because if you wear it once, I'm not saying me, but sometimes we perspire and sometimes we sweat and we have to come out of the shirt and then we are going to be out of place and we got to get more together on the shirt attire.

That may be a problem.

>> Edward: Okay. I was not looking for you to wear it to meetings, just mainly whether or not you go out and do presentations. But thank you.

>> Juanita: Okay.

>> Rebecca: Okay. Rhonda.

>> Rhonda: I'm going to give my personal opinion, which I always do.

I think the shirts are not necessary.

When I go out in the public, I dress appropriately and I want to be comfortable.

I don't want to be told what to wear.

I want to wear what is going to make me comfortable interacting with the public.

However, the name tags, I do agree with you on.

I do think that that would be a good expense to show. It serves the same purpose and shows who we are. And, like you said, would get us into what -- other areas.

But as far as the shirts, I'm really, me personally, I'm not on board with it and I just wanted to put that out there.

I understand where Edward is coming from and what he is trying to say as far as marketing.

But I'm just a regular citizen. And I personally don't want to be marketed. And I have a hard enough time being in front of the public. So, when I am, I want to be comfortable in what I'm wearing. And I think I would be more comfortable in my own clothes, and that is just me personally.

It's no offense to your idea or anything.

>> Juanita: I agree.

>> Rebecca: Okay, Doug.

>> Doug: I completely agree with Rhonda. And I think it's more prudent not to spend the money.

I yield back.

>> Edward: Great. I appreciate the insight and feedback. And we can just move on and other directions if that is where the Commission would like to go.

One of the things -- well, I think there was two people, I'm sorry.

>> Rebecca: Edward, I'm wondering for our name badges, are those going to have the logo on them as well? Or maybe could we go with a bigger name badge that does have the logo, so it is more identifying than a name badge.

>> Edward: Sure, we can do that.

>> Rebecca: Steve, go ahead.

>> Steve: I have a suggestion, let's put it this way.

I kind of like the shirt idea, but I would like to buy my own. So if you have something in mind, and others would want to have a shirt, I think we should have the option to purchase one if we wanted to wear one.

>> Edward: Sounds great. You were reading my mind, Commissioner.

>> Rebecca: I like shirts, too. And I went to school where I wore a uniform for 12 years. So to me a uniform is a comforting thing, and I link kind of having a uniform style.

Doug, did you want to add something?

>> Doug: No, I don't.

>> Rebecca: Okay, any other comments?

>> Edward: Great. I want to reiterate that I'm the communications and outreach director, Edward Wood, III, unlike Fox News who had me listed as a Commission. I just want to make sure you all are clear of that correction, was apologized by the reporter. But we are doing fact checking, you know, with reporters and doing things.

As you know, we have gotten a lot of attention over the last week or so with regards to news media coverage and things along those lines. So just wanted to let you know with regards to the media coverage that we are going to start next week providing daily reports so that you guys can get clips on a daily basis versus a weekly basis. So start looking for the reports on a daily basis instead of a weekly basis starting next week.

Obviously, we are getting a lot of coverage and a lot of requests. I just want to remind you we have a communications policy. And if you can direct the press to me, and then we can go ahead and get those things scheduled. If you don't mind just remember to direct the press to your communications and outreach director so that we can then schedule the interviews.

We are getting requests from Reddit. We are getting requests nationally, and not just statewide. And so I just want to really make sure that we get a handle on that and making sure that if they are calling you, please refer them so that we can get the thing scheduled and make sure you have the information you need as relates to the -- for these upcoming press events and press interviews as well as presentations.

So I wanted to share all of that with you.

And the last thing is, as your communications and outreach director, one of the things that is great about this job is that we can always refer people back to the video. I mean, if they want to know what you said, I don't have them call you. I actually refer them back to the YouTube channel so they can accurately hear what you've said during the meeting.

And so this transparent meetings provide us opportunities to show transparency. And so I'm just letting you know, sharing with you that, if anyone has a comment, or something they would like to have with regards to what a Commissioner said, we always refer them back to the video to reinforce the transparent process and the deliberations on how the Commission works.

There is no secret what anyone said. It's very clear, very transparent, and we provide that every single time. And so just wanted you to know that's why we are responding to Ann's questions that way, is they can go directly to the video.

We also share our strategic plan as relates to our mission and our core values, and that the Commission speaks with one voice. And after the Commission speaks, we reiterate how we follow our core values, how we follow our code of conduct. We reiterate our mission in terms of our mission, it will not be deterred just in case there is a split vote or it might not be a unanimous vote, we share that and focus on that. And are very deliberate and disciplined with regards to that. And so just really wanted to share that with you in terms of when comments are made and things are done and how those are being addressed by your communications and outreach, why you see and what you see in the press.

So if there is any questions on that or feedback, you know, welcome, I welcome that.

If there is something wrong or something we don't feel the press has gotten right, you can be rest assured, I can call them and we have a conversation with regards to that to make sure that things are accurate and reported accurately with regards to the media.

>> Rebecca: Okay. Any feedback for Edward?

Juanita.

>> Juanita: He is doing a great job. I just think he is doing a great job.

Keep it up.

>> Rebecca: I agree, thank you.

Doug, go ahead.

>> Doug: You are doing a great job, Edward.

I got a question for you.

A number of weeks ago we had our pictures taken what is the plan on using those?

>> Edward: The plan is to get those on the website along with your videos.

We had a couple pictures that need -- where people have asked, they want some things done. And I need to submit those changes so that we can get those done.

Otherwise, I think at this point I've heard from everyone. I'll double check to make sure I have, that they have approved. But I know a few need to have some touchups to be honest with you, Commissioner Clark. And that will be a part of the revamping of the website we are doing in collaboration with MDOS and should be done by the end of the month. And we will have a dedicated page that has the Commissioners on there and the short bios you approved and the introductory video.

And a shout out again to Walter Marsh with the MDOS team who put the videos together. He has been working very hard in editing them and making you guys look like celebrities; but, more importantly, citizens of the Redistricting Commission.

>> Rebecca: All right. Any further comments?

All right. Thank you very much, Edward.

Are you having any more updates? I don't want to cut you off again.

>> Edward: No more updates.

You know, I think what Sue said what we are doing tomorrow and then the public hearing run through on the 29th, I think will be helpful. And I think you all will appreciate what's happening with the public hearings and what we are trying to do in the hybrid format.

We just need to be on alert for spikes and surges with regards to COVID. And, if necessary, just want to make sure the Commission knows that our backup, if we have to have spikes in COVID, would be the month of July.

We are not going to try to reschedule later in that week or something like that if we have a problem or a challenge. We would just use -- come back to the Commission and schedule those in the month of July.

>> Rebecca: What is the criteria that we are using to decide whether to reschedule? Is it just based on if there are Government orders with respect to public meetings? Or do we have some sort of internal standards that we are using or are we just relying on Government guidance, C.D.C. guidance?

>> Edward: Let me defer to my partner, our general counsel, to make sure I don't say the wrong thing.

But I'll say I trust what she says.

>> Julianne: That is an excellent question, Madam Chair.

Yes. The determination would be made based on whether there was a declaration of State of Emergency in that particular location.

That's what we are monitoring.

And those determinations are made based on the public health guidelines and the local health orders as well.



So we have to take all of those things into consideration.

Again, if the facility says they are not holding events, so that could be just as likely. So we are prepared to deal with that in the manner that the Communications Director Woods indicated and reschedule for the month of July.

>> Rebecca: Thank you. All right. So having completed our updates from Director -- Executive Director -- Communications and Outreach Director Woods, we have a presenter coming at 11:20, which is ten minutes from now. So why don't we just take a quick ten-minute break and let everyone take care of personal needs and then we can come back for the presenter at 11:20.

So it's 11:10 right now and if we take a break and return at 11:20, then we will proceed with Mr. Richard Czuba to do the market research report for us, sound good? Everybody take a quick break.

Thanks.

[Recess]

>> Rebecca: Looks like everybody has rejoined and we will reconvene. It's 11:20 and there we go.

It's my understanding that, there he is, that Dustin has joined remotely, Commissioner Justin Witjies has rejoined remotely. Can you please unmute and let us know where you are joining remotely from?

>> Dustin: Sure can.

I'm attending remotely from Ann Arbor, Michigan.

>> Rebecca: Thank you very much.

All right. We are going to move on to the next item on our agenda, which is the presentation and market research report from Richard Czuba, I hope I'm pronouncing that right, and from the Glengariff Group.

Edward Woods, would you like to handle starting this?

>> Edward: Sure. Thank you so much, Commissioner. And I just want to welcome and introduce to the Commission non-other than the founder of the Glengariff Group, Richard Czuba. He has decades and decades of experience in market research.

As you know, the Commission commissioned him to do a statewide survey with regards to the redistricting process.

He has been a tremendous partner, very helpful insights. And I hope as you listen to his presentation with regards to market research survey and the results, and if you have any questions, he will be sure to answer them at this time.

We will be having a press conference with him at 12:15 p.m., that will be aired publicly on our Facebook page.

Once again, we will be having a press conference with him that will air on our Facebook page at 12:15 p.m.

So, without further ado, let me present to this great Commission Richard Czuba.

>> Richard Czuba: Thank you, Ed. I don't think I can start the video. You guys have to do that for me. There you go.

Thank you.

My name is Richard Czuba, president of the Glengariff Group.

What I'd like to do today is I'd like to go over the highlights of what we see in the survey we conducted for you.

There is a lot of numbers in this survey.

What I want to do is not get you lost in numbers but leave you with what some of the big themes are that we see in the numbers.

I recognize for many of you this may be the first time you are looking at a survey or interacting with a survey.

Just some general overviews for you.

First of all, this is a 600 sample random selection survey.

Meaning tens of thousands of phone numbers entered into a computer system.

Respondents are randomly selected.

These are registered voters.

These are not likely voters. These are not modelled voters. This is the broadest possible net of registered voters in Michigan.

The margin of error is plus or minus 4%, that comes with 600.

What I would urge you and caution you as you look at this, look at the big themes in the trend lines of what the research says.

Don't spend a lot of time looking at, for example, what we call the cross tabs, which is in the back, all those lists of numbers by Congressional district.

Because Congressional districts in Michigan, because they are equally proportioned, represent 42-44 respondents in the survey.

That's not a big sample size.

So look at the bigger themes of the broader survey.

So, with that, I want to start. We asked the question of what people knew about the redistricting change, the 2018 amendment and the process.

53% of voters were familiar with the 2018 amendment and were aware of the change in the redistricting process.

Having said that, that means 47% of voters are not aware of the process or the change.

Not surprisingly, when you look at those who consider themselves highly engaged in the political process, that number increases to 63% for awareness. But even amongst those people, 37 percent, the most engaged people, 37% said they are not aware of the redistricting changes.

There were no significant differences we saw on this question based on partisan affiliation.

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We also asked the question had you heard of the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission.

24% had.

That's one in four voters.

75% have not heard of the Commission.

Even amongst the most politically engaged voters only a third have heard of the Commission.

And I highlight these, because as stewards of this process I think you need to go in wide eyed that you have a lot of work to do to build awareness amongst voters both of the redistricting change and of the Commission itself and its work.

Even for those 24% who had heard of the Commission when we asked them this an open-ended question, what do you know?

Only about one-third of those people could say something specific.

The rest said I've heard of them. I know they exist. But they couldn't point to something specific.

And for those that have heard of the Commission, 54% say their work is very important, 35% say somewhat important.

But, again, that's only one in four voters, but the ones that do know about you believe your work is important.

So of those voters who have heard of the Commission, 42% have had a positive impression.

13% have a negative impression, 43% have no impression at all.

Again, there is a lot of work to do to build awareness amongst the voters.

One important note on that question of favorable or unfavorable impression, nearly all of the negative responses thus far come from the republican side of the aisle.

Particularly those who identify as what we call strong republican voters.

And to define it more narrowly, we ask a question of political philosophy and we ask it because neither party is monolithic and it helps us divide up the party each side of the aisle a little more to understand specific pieces of the party.

Those who identify as what we call Trump republicans versus classic republicans were much more likely to be negative.

Let me explain for just one moment why we ask these questions.

Of what is your partisan affiliation, what is -- you know, we asked what we call the political affiliation or philosophy question.

And that is do you identify as a Sanders democrat, a democrat, an independent, or republican or a Trump republican.

As I said, neither party is monolithic. And it helps us understand elements within each party for messaging.

But if we have learned anything in the past year, it is that we all talk, interact, live within social bubbles.

And whether it's by region or who we interact with or where we get our messaging, it all impacts what we are hearing, how we are hearing it and how we are responding to it.

So these questions are not intended to single out a particular group.

It is simply designed to help you understand, to help anybody understand what language or messages are most important to different types of people.

And helps you communicate better with those people, target messaging to them that really resonates and matters to them.

So you will see in this survey, and I would urge you to read the key findings portion of the survey, we ask a lot of what we call 1-10 questions. How important is this to you personally on a 1-10 scale? One means it's not important and 10 means it's very important.

How to read these numbers what we call the scores.

If they rate in the 6s, 6.0 to 6.9, ah that is a middling number.

If they are in the 7s, those are good numbers.

If they are in the 8s, those are strong numbers.

And if you go over 9, that is rarefied error. And those are really unique numbers to see in polling when you are looking at such a large cross section of different opinions.

So I've attempted to point out in the report how some messages are more important than others to specific voters.

That will help you understand as a Commission why some voters react strongly to some messages and not so strongly to others.

But I'd like to focus on what I think are some really crucial messages that unite voters. Let me start by pointing out the message that neither party gets an unfair advantage, comes in at 9.2.

As I said that is rarefied error.

That is one thing in this environment we are living in that unites pretty much all Michiganders.

And that is neither side should get an unfair advantage.

The other message that ranks 8.9 and a strong message, citizens are in charge instead of politicians, that comes in at 8.9, very important message.

But it's this message that no one gets an unfair advantage, that resonates across all the demographic groups.

It unites Michiganders essentially. And there are three messages I would really urge you to pay attention to and focus on.

No one gets an unfair advantage.

The process should be transparent, so citizens can see how decisions are made and have a voice this those decisions.

And, third, that the process should allow for citizen input.

Those three messages, all three rank at either 9.3 or 9.4.

Again, rarefied error in terms of messaging, in terms of what is important. And as a Commission, if you are looking for what unites Michiganders, those three messages really unite Michiganders.

So let me focus on engagement.

We asked voters whether they think their engagement in the process will have an impact on your work.

48% of voters said they do believe their engagement in the process would have an impact, but 31 said they did not believe it would have an impact.

And 21% just aren't sure.

So you're looking at a majority of voters who either don't think it will have an impact or are unsure about their impact.

Again, looking at through that partisan question democrat and independent voters are much more likely to believe their participation will matter.

But the Commission, and I think it's important for you to know, will face far more skepticism from the republican side of the aisle, from their voters about whether or not their participation will have an impact.

There are also big age differences.

Younger voters do believe their participation matters.

Voters over 65 are the least likely to believe their participation will matter.

We asked voters how much they would be paying attention to this process, 38.7% of voters, so 39% of voters said they pay very close attention.

52%, a majority of voters said they would pay some attention.

But it wasn't going to be close attention.

I don't think these are surprising in any way, doing lots of focus groups over the years with voters they all say the same refrain, our lives are busy.

They are very busy. And so they will pay attention, but there is going to be a lot of people who are not intimately involved. And I think that's important to remember.

What they are going to be doing is checking in on you.

They are going to be looking at news stories.

They are going to be gauging what they view as your performance on those three messages I said.

But 38%, and that's I think a high number, said they would actually participate in the process.

We asked voters how they participate.

Overwhelmingly the two highest ways they participate are by following news stories and by accessing your website.

Those are, you know, the news stories in particular are going to play a very important role here.

It's going to be crucial for voters to gauge how you're doing even if they don't have a lot of time to participate.

This report lays out how people want to participate also.

We ask that question.

Is it by e-mail, is it by attending meetings, is it by news stories.

And I think that information will be particularly helpful as you look at it to understand how different bubbles interact with information and messaging.

And I'd urge you to look at that.

There are some really interesting differences. For example, older voters are much more likely to turn to news stories.

Younger voters are much more likely to want text messaging.

Same with more populous voters.

They are more interest in getting text messaging information.

What I'd call voters who are more classically republican or democrat and less populous those voters are very much going to follow news stories.

That is a really crucial way they are going to follow this process.

But I do want to sum up with the final question we asked on this survey, which is an open-ended question.

And by that we mean we don't offer any answers to that.

We record what they tell us and we code those answers into categories.

And we asked them: What is the single most important thing they want from this redistricting process?

And there were two answers that rose overwhelmingly to the top.

One, that the districts are fair.

And, two, that nobody gets an unfair advantage.

That's -- those are the overwhelming lenses by which voters will assess the work that this Commission does.

And, with that, you know it's the broad brush.

I went through this quickly.

I realize there is a whole lot of numbers in here that I would urge you to look at.

I will turn it over for questions.

>> Rebecca: All right. Thank you very much for that.

That was very informative, Rhonda Lange, do you want to go ahead first?

>> Rhonda: Thank you, thank you, Mr. Czuba.

I do have a couple of questions. When I looked over the data, and Lord there was a lot, so I understand what you mean.

I was curious with doing the process of calling these, is there data pertaining to the counties where respondents actually answered the calls?

I'm asking this because if there is a large group from a certain area that has not heard of this Commission or is not comfortable with the Commission, that would kind of be something that I would like to know because then concentration could be made on that area also.

So my first question is: Is there a way of knowing, say, counties in which?

>> Mr. Czuba: We did not look at it by county we looked it by Congressional district. The one thing I would say in response to your question this is not, you know, when you are at 24% awareness of the Commission, you've got broad work to do across the entire state.

That's a low level of recognition of the Commission.

You know, double the recognition of the process and the change in redistricting.

But even there, you know, I think what you're looking at isn't a regional issue as much as it is an interaction of voters with the political process.

You know, this is something we see regularly.

Those less engaged in the process aren't following all of this.

And that's the real challenges with those voters to reach them and to talk to them.

>> Rhonda: Okay. And my second question you said that there is, like as far as politics goes, there is a kind of a sphere. And it's not one size fits all. Can you kind of give me an idea of what exactly -- because you said that there is -- where is my notes, that there is a large percentage of, quote, unquote, Trump republicans that don't trust us.

So I'm kind of curious what is this as far as the scope goes? What determines if somebody is a traditional democrat or a Sanders democrat or a traditional republican or a Trump one so we can kind of focus on this particular type or ideology doesn't trust us? What can we do to make them trust us?

>> Mr. Czuba: This is a self-identification question.

These are how individuals identify themselves.

You know, so for example, when somebody says we ask what political party do you tend to vote more for.

They say democratic, for example. We say would you call yourself a democrat or would you call yourself a Sanders democrat?

On the republican side we ask: Would you call yourself a republican?

Or would you call yourself a Trump republican?

What that really does on that spectrum is it gauges people more towards a populous bent and helps to understand. And there are different -- the key and one of the key importance's there is the way that voters on that part of the spectrum of each party communicate.

And I think for Ed Woods, who is your outreach and communications head here, he is -- that is going to be really important information to understand.

One of the other questions you will see in that survey we ask is: Where do you primarily get your news from?

And you see that really is a very important tool to understand how to talk to different individuals in the spectrum.

I don't think it's a surprise to anybody that we have very bifurcated media now.

And that media and these messages really, you know, if you are looking to get to specific types of individuals, of voters, the type of media they watch is really important. And this provides kind of a guidebook, a play book how to reach them.

>> Rhonda: Okay, thank you.

>> Rebecca: Doug, go ahead. I'm sorry, I was on mute.

>> Doug: No problem.

And I don't know if this question is best addressed by Richard or Edward.

We've got pages and pages of data.

What is the best way for us as a Commission -- as Commissioners to utilize this data?

>> Mr. Czuba: I can jump in. And, Edward, if you would like to add.

First of all, I think the best way is to understand what voters are looking for from you.

And that is those key three messages I mentioned.

I think it is important for everybody as stewards of this process to understand what voters expectations are of the process.

Secondly, you know, I think it's really important to measure how much people know about you.

And are you being effective in communicating?

And I think, as I've said, you've got a large challenge ahead of you.

In a very short time.

To get voters to understand that what you're doing and who you are.

I mean, that is your first challenge is to just engage them.

Your second challenge is to make sure they understand the rules you're playing by.

So that you have credibility and they have trust in you.

For Ed's purposes, I think there are a lot of blueprints on how to use different routes of communications tools and how to use different types of media to reach people and who specifically should be reached with each tool or with each media.

>> Doug: Thank you.

>> Edward: Commissioner Clark, just to add upon that, one of the things that we wanted to do, and Commissioner Lange obviously answered as a part of her questions, we want to know the key messages that resonate across the state throughout each and every spectrum and then also identify what we can do to show through our process that we are ensuring that there is no unfair advantage.

How can we point to the public feedback is actually being considered.

And then how can we demonstrate transparency.

So, obviously, with the communication plan that you approved today, they really focused on those key messages when we first started out, you know, we started out with the acronym of fate, fairness, awareness, transparency and engagement as a part of our communication process.

This market research now gives us the evidence of what we need to do instead of thinking or speculating or imagining the messages that we need to have.



And so what I do want to echo is what Mr. Czuba said earlier is that we cannot look at the cross tabs.

They are not statistically significant when you look at 50 people in each Congressional district.

So I don't want anyone, you know, taking a leap of faith or reporting that as facts, and we will definitely be sharing that in the press conference that the cross tabulations are not statistically significant.

But what is statistically significant is the statewide sample and what they expect this process to be as relates to key messages.

Once again, all of those weighed in well over 90% in those that were surveyed, which is, for me, you know, it gives us a lot of integrity and transparency and what we need to promote, no unfair advantage, public feedback and transparency.

So, Richard, I don't know if I need to say something if something wasn't clear. But if you could just follow-up with the Commission with regards to the remarks I just made, that would be great as our expert.

>> Mr. Czuba: Yeah. I would just add on to that, as I said, and I tried to make clear in this environment, it is rare to find messages that work across aisles, across divides. You have some messages that really unite Michiganders.

And I think it is important not just as the individuals directing this process, you're responsible for really making sure voters understand what you're doing and these three messages that are central to what you're doing.

That is what is going to give you credibility if they think that you are living up to those three messages.

And I would urge you as you move forward to really pay attention to what voters essentially have said in this research.

>> Doug: Edward, as part of your work, are you going to go through this data and summarize what the strengths are and what the things are that we should be working on?

Or is that something that you would expect the Commissioners to do?

>> Edward: Nope, that is something that, you know, we have done. We kind of highlighted that in our communication plan, with regards to the key findings from the market research.

In terms of outlining that, but that is something that will be a part of what your communication outreach team will do, something that will be a part of the public relations consultant we are hiring in terms of implementing the information from this report.

So, yes, that will take place.

>> Doug: Thank you. I yield back.

>> Rebecca: All right. Any other comments?  
Just taking a quick look here.

Okay, I don't see any additional comments.

All right, thank you very much for that presentation.

And for the data.

I thought the data was fascinating.

I could spend all day reading it honestly.

It's very interesting.

All right. Thank you very much for your time.

And I appreciate you doing that work for us.

>> Mr. Czuba: You are welcome.

>> Rebecca: Moving on to our next agenda item, if I can find it. Go ahead, Edward.

>> Edward: I just want to share we will be posting the Commission report to the public website after the meeting, so people, members of the press, you can have access to it. But just a reminder that we will be doing a press conference that will be aired live on our Facebook channel at 12:15 p.m.

Thank you.

>> Rebecca: Thank you very much for that.

All right, next item on our agenda is future meetings and agenda items.

Any comments about that?

Executive Director Hammersmith.

>> Sue: I think I covered that earlier, so I think we are set there.

>> Rebecca: Okay. Next item is announcements.

Does anyone have any announcements or thoughts?

All right. Let me just check next screen. Seeing none, I will entertain a motion to adjourn. All right, Erin Wagner has moved to adjourn.

Can I get a second?

Doug Clark has seconded.

So we have a motion to adjourn. All in favor please so indicate by raising your hand. Those of you who are on the phone if you want to verbally indicate, please do so, that would be Juanita Curry and Dustin Witjes.

I'll give them a second.

>> Dustin: Yep.

>> Rebecca: That was Dustin.

All right. All opposed same sign?

All right. The motion carries. We are adjourned.

See you guys tomorrow at 11:00.

Have a nice day, everyone.

[ Meeting concludes ]