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MICRC

03/11/21 1:00 pm Meeting

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>> Steve: Good afternoon. As Chair of the Commission, I call this meeting of the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission to order. This Zoom Commission meeting is being live streamed to YouTube. For anyone in the public watching, who would prefer to watch via a different platform than they are currently using, please visit our social media at redistricting MI to find the link for viewing on other platforms.

Our live stream today includes closed captioning. We have ASL interpretation available for this meeting. If you would like easier viewing options for the ASL interpreter on your screen, please e-mail us at redistricting@Michigan.gov and we will provide you with additional viewing options.

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This meeting is also being transcribed and those transcriptions will be made available and posted on RedistrictingMichigan.Org along with written public comment submissions.

Members of the media who may have questions before, during or after the meeting, should direct those questions to the Communications and Outreach Director, Edward Woods, III, at WoodsE3@Michigan.gov.

For purposes of the public record and for members of the public watching, I will request the Department of State staff to take notice of the Commissioners present. Sally, can you please take a roll?

>> Sally: Good afternoon, Commissioners. When I call your name please unmute yourself and please say the city or county that you are attending remotely from. Doug Clark.

>> Doug: Present and I'm remotely joining the meeting from Rochester Hills, Michigan.

>> Sally: Juanita Curry.

>> Juanita: Present and I am remotely joining the meeting from Detroit, Michigan. Thank you.

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>> Sally: Anthony Eid.

>> Brittini Kellom.

Brittini: Present and attending from Detroit, Michigan.

>> Sally: Rhonda Lange.

>> Rhonda: Present and attending remotely from Reed City.

>> Sally: Steve Lett.

>> Steve: Present attending from Lee County, Florida.

>> Sally: Cynthia Orton.

>> Cynthia: Present attending remotely from Battle Creek, Michigan.

>> Sally: MC Rothhorn.

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

>> Sally: Rebecca Szetela.

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

>> Sally: Janice Vallette.

>> Janice: Present, attending from Highland, Michigan.

>> Sally: Erin Wagner?

Richard Weiss.

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

>> Sally: Dustin Witjes.

>> Dustin: Present and attending from Ann Arbor, Michigan.

>> Sally: 11 Commissioners are present. There is a quorum.

You are muted, Mr. Chair.

>> Steve: Thank you.

Sally, I appreciate that.

For those of you who have not joined us previously, I have a few comments on how we conduct our public comment portion of the meetings.

We do not have any public comment today.

But for those of you who may be interested in doing so, because this is a virtual meeting, members of the public have to sign up in advance in order to address the Commission.

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

Public comment sign-up links are posted on Redistricting Michigan social media pages, on Facebook, and Twitter at RedistrictingMI.

And you can e-mail our office at Redistricting@Michigan.Gov.

If you would like to submit your thoughts or comments to the Commission, you may do so by mailing us -- e-mailing us at Redistricting@Michigan.Gov and they will be provided to the Commission.

You may also mail them through the Postal Service at a Post Office Box which we have on our website.

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At this time, I would say that we do receive e-mails from people, public comment that they want us to look at, and we do look at them.

And, in response to some of those, I have a couple of statements for the good of the public viewing.

The question has arisen as why -- as to why the Commission is hiring a mapping firm. The Commission is tasked with the important responsibility of creating new electoral district lines that will go into effect for Michigan's 2022 elections.

The Commission is currently in the process of hiring a map drawing consultant with familiarity and expertise in redistricting and map drawing software.

Because redistricting and map drawing is a complex process that requires expertise in mapping software, it is common practice, including among citizen-led redistricting Commissions, that a map drawing expert be hired to aid in this process.

This expert map drawing consultant will work for the Commission to perform the line drawing function at the expressed direction of the Commission.

Michigan's Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission and its authority will instruct the line drawing consultant on how and where to draw the lines.

The map drawing consultant will use their software to draw the maps and lines as the Commission instructs.

While the line drawing consultant may draw on their redistricting expertise and experience to advise the Commission, all line drawing decisions are made by the Commission itself.

Each map drawing session will also occur during open public meetings. And the Commission will solicit public input throughout the process.

If you have further questions about the map drawing process, I encourage you to explore the frequently asked questions section of our website, Michigan.gov/MICRC, Which features a section on creating district maps.

You may also review the RFP submissions from map drawing consultants which outline their proposed methods for line drawing.

These RFP submissions may be found at the meeting materials and archives section of the Michigan.gov/MICRC.

I would further note that in addition to the Congressional districts that we will be drawing, which will be 13 or 14 depending on the sentence or census, we will also be drawing districts for the State Senate and the State Representatives.

So there are more than 14, 13 or 14 districts to be drawn.

Additionally, in my remarks today, I would like to address the remuneration or payments that the Commission is receiving.

As Chairperson of the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the MICRCs for their hard work, efforts and investment to ensure fairness, awareness, and transparency and engagement in the redistricting process.

Nearly six months ago we embarked on this journey to ensure voters, not legislatures would ensure a fair process for redistricting.

Knowing the investment of time and our dedicated resolve in doing this work, we reviewed the Michigan Constitution of 1963, Article 6, Section 6, Subsection 5 to identify and appropriate salary.

It states, quote, each commissioner shall receive compensation at least equal to 25% of the Governor's salary, close quote.

At our MICRC meetings, Saturday, October 17th, the Commission discussed the appropriate salary with this requirement in mind.

The Commission voted and passed to set Commissioners compensation at 35% of the Governor's salary until the Commission is dissolved. And, in addition, reimbursement of Commissioners' cost and expenses be reimbursed according to the State of Michigan guidelines.

The Commission continues to honor this vote and has not received any pay increase whatsoever since setting its compensation.

Once again, I would like to thank my colleagues for their commitment, dedication to ensure fairness, awareness, transparency, and engagement in the redistricting process.

At this time I would turn to our Director, Executive Director, Sue Hammersmith, who I understand has an ice breaker for us today.

Oh, excuse me, Doug.

>> Doug: Yeah, I'm looking at the agenda, I think we skipped item three and four.

>> Steve: You are right. I got carried away.

Adoption of the agenda.

Has everybody had an opportunity to look at the agenda?

Are there any additions or corrections or suggestions for deletions?

Hearing none, I would entertain a motion to adopt the agenda.

>> Dustin: So moved.

>> Steve: Second?

All in favor raise your hand.

[Hands raised]

The agenda is adopted.

We have two sets of minutes to review.

>> MC: It may be worthwhile to just recognize who was the second, was it Juanita or Doug, both had their hands up, for the minutes it may be easier if we acknowledge that now.

>> Steve: I will pick Juanita.

March 4th and March 5th. We will take March 4th first. Are there any corrections or additions or deletions from March 4?

If not, I would entertain a motion to adopt the March 4th minutes.

>> Dustin: So moved.

>> Steve: Dustin.

>> Cynthia: Seconded.

>> Steve: Cynthia seconds.

All in favor raise your hand. [Hands raised]

All opposed same sign.

Adopted unanimously.

Friday March 5th. Are there any corrections, additions or deletions?

Not seeing any, I would entertain a motion to adopt the minutes as presented.

>> Dustin: So moved again.

>> Steve: Doug just beat you by a hair, so we will take Dustin as a second, Doug as the motion. All in favor raise your hand.

[Hands raised]

All opposed the same sign.

They are also adopted.

Now, I think I'm caught up, and we are up to the Executive Director ice breaker.

>> Sue: Okay. Just a very, very brief report this morning.

First of all, good afternoon and thank you for your continuing work towards developing fair and non-partisan redistricting. You are appreciated.

Provided for your discussion today are two resolutions. One will confirm the locations for the public hearings.

And another to adopt the budget.

Also, I just want to remind you that the proposals for the VRA legal counsel are due on March 17th.

So we are waiting better replies on those proposals.

And for our ice breaker today my question is: Do you have siblings? And, if so, where are you in the lineup according to your ages?

So who would like to start?

Richard, would you like to start for us this morning?

>> Richard: I believe I can handle this. Yes, I'm the oldest.

I have a sister that is five years younger and a brother that is ten years younger.

>> Sue: Five years apart, huh.

Doug, how about you?

>> Doug: There were three other siblings in my family, and I was the first born.

I had a twin -- had a twin brother.

And so he had the same birth date.

And I have a sister and a brother, another brother that are ten and 11 years younger than I am.

>> Sue: And thank you.

Rhonda.

>> Rhonda: Does this include step siblings?

>> Sue: Yes.

>> Rhonda: Because I have a half-sister, my brother is deceased, and I have two step siblings.

So I guess I don't know really the exact ages of my step siblings, so I'm going to say I'm the oldest at this time.

My brother was older than me though.

>> Sue: Thank you. We have a lot of the oldest here. Steve, how about you?

>> Steve: I have one sibling, a sister, who is ten years older than I am, Lives up in the Marquette, Michigan area. And she moved out when she was 18, and so that made me eight. And I always like to say I was an only child with a sister.

>> Sue: Something like that, huh?

Okay. Thank you.

MC.

>> MC: The oldest brother, so I have another brother.

>> Sue: Thank you.

>> MC: I also have half-brothers. I should acknowledge that, too. So I'm probably, gosh, I'm in the middle then with the half-brothers. So they are significantly -- not significantly, that is never a good thing to say, right, older than I am.

>> Sue: Okay. All right. Rebecca, how about you?

>> Rebecca: Okay, so I'm the middle child.

Older brother who is two years older, sister who is two years younger, so I'm smack dab in the middle.

>> Sue: I'm the middle child, too. They are okay.

Janice.

>> Janice: I'm the youngest.

I have a brother and a sister.

My brother passed away about 20 years ago, but I still have a sister alive.

>> Sue: Okay. Thank you.

Juanita?

>> Juanita: Yes, I am -- my mom and dad, there is five of us, and I was the middle child, two above me, a year apart, and two below me a year, two years apart. And I have two half brothers and sisters on the outside, and I'm the middle child.

I've always been forsaken.

>> Sue: Okay. That's okay, being in the middle.

Cynthia.

>> Cynthia: I have two older brothers that are nine and ten years older than me, so I'm the baby of the family.

>> Sue: All right. Dustin, how about you?

>> Dustin: I have a brother who is two years younger than I am, so I'm the oldest.

>> Sue: Brittini, how about you?

>> Brittini: You are getting all in our business today.

>> Sue: You don't have to tell anything.

>> Brittini: No, it's okay.

I was raised as an only child and have a host of half siblings.

I'm unsure of where I fall in the lineup, but probably closer to the younger end. But there are tons of us. I wish I knew more of my siblings.

>> Sue: Okay. Thank you for sharing. How about you, Anthony?

>> Anthony: Yeah, so we have a large family.

I have a brother who is 12 years older than me.

A brother who is two years younger than me.

Another brother who is three years younger than me. And then the only girl is the youngest. She is the princess of the family.

She is seven years younger than me.

>> Sue: Thank you for sharing. Edward, how about you?

>> Edward: I'm the oldest of three.

>> Sue: Okay. Thank you.

And, Julianne.

>> Julianne: Good afternoon, everyone. I am the only daughter, so I have all brothers.

>> Sue: Okay. Thank you for sharing.

I grew up in a family with five children.

I was the second after my oldest brother, but the oldest daughter gets to be the other mom, right? So I was kind of like the other mom of the younger siblings. So that is how I grew up with five in our family. So thank you very much for sharing today.

And remember my door is always open, call me any time with questions, concerns, issues, happy things. Whatever you would like to share, my door is always open, so thank you so much.

>> Steve: Problem is we don't know where your door is, Sue.

>> Sue: It's right behind me. See. I mean, there is doors behind me and on the other side of the door is a flip chart that my eight-year-old granddaughter drew that says keep out in a Zoom meeting, just saying.

>> Steve: There you go.

All right, general counsel report, Julianne.

>> Julianne: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Good afternoon.

My update today has four brief components.

First, my work on the remaining policies and procedures as well as the petition to the Michigan Supreme Court is ongoing.

Secondly, I anticipate circulating potential dates associated with the request for extension from the November 1st deadline to the Commission in advance of either the March 18th or March 25th meetings that will be an action item on the agenda.

Third, consistent with your direction on March 4th, provide the draft language for the addition of the racially polarized voting analyst to the contract to the Commission for review in advance of your March 18th meeting.

This will also be an action item on the agenda.

I was hopeful that it could be distributed prior to today's meeting, so I apologize it could not be circulated with the appropriate time for the Commission to review.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge that next week is Sunshine Week. This initiative was launched in 2005 by the American Society of News Editors, now known as the News Leaders Association, to promote open Government. So I would like to highlight that not only has the MICRC adopted policies that enshrine the pro disclosure and intent of Sunshine Laws, it also operates pursuant to the requirements on transparency and disclosures set out in the Michigan Constitution, which establishes a stringent process to create transparent, fair, and nonpartisan maps.

These structural requirements not only promote transparency and public participation, but also serves as important checks and balances, including the random selection of the 13 Commissioners conducted in an open process, the conduct of your meetings and hearings inviting wide participation by the public throughout the State, receive and consider submissions from the public which also become part of the MICRC's official record.

It sets forth a process and criteria for drawing of maps by the MICRC. And it requires support from Commissioners of both major parties as well as those who do not affiliate with either majority party for key decisions and, most importantly, the adoption of the final maps.

But the foundational component and purpose is shifting the responsibility for redistricting from the partisan legislature to the Independent MICRC in accordance with the open and transparent process and protocols set forth in the Constitution.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

>> Steve: Thank you, Julianne.

Communications and Outreach.

Edward.

>> Edward: Thank you, Mr. Chair, just want to thank each and every commissioner for participating in our weekly meetings that we have with the local Governments across the State of Michigan.

I'm getting great feedback and interest, but also follow-up to see how they could be a part of our education and informational sessions for the town hall forums.

So just want to express my appreciation.

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We are now close to 80 presentations that we've had just with local Government that are scheduled.

In addition to the 80 that will be done by April, we are also getting requests for speaking engagements across the state as well.

So people are appreciative that you are out and about and willing to make presentations.

So I want to thank you for doing those as well. And as they come in, we will continue to get those scheduled.

But we are close to about 100 when you add our local Government meetings and our requests for presentations that we are getting.

So that's a good number.

And I just want you to know what is taking place with that.

Secondly, I want to remind you, if you have not done so already, to select your pictures and turn those into me so I can get them edited.

If you have not done so already, please remember to select your pictures so I can get those edited as well.

And that's all I have for this time. Mr. Chair, I have two presentations a little bit later.

>> Steve: Thank you, Edward.

Sally, does the Secretary of State have anything for us today?

>> Sally: Hello again, Commissioners. I'll be very brief just to share that we have been working to procure the public comment submission tool that we had talked to you about now several weeks ago.

We hope to be able to share an update, an exciting update on that next week. So hopefully you will hear more from us then.

>> Steve: Thank you, Sally.

All right. Back to Edward with some unfinished business.

Some more information on proposed public hearing locations, Edward.

>> Brittini: Richard had a hand.

>> Steve: I'm sorry.

>> Brittini: Your animated hand is up, Richard.

Okay.

>> Steve: Okay, Edward.

You are muted Edward.

>> Edward: Can you hear me?

And can you see the presentation?

All right. Thank you very much.

Once again, we had an update proposed schedule public hearings.

And when we revised this, how did we do it?

We did it with input from the Commission.

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Reevaluation of access to urban, suburban, and rural areas. Maximize access to communities of interest. This is not in any ranked order. Impact of COVID-19 because we do believe that we will have social distancing and masks requirements.

A review of public comments.

Cost estimates.

Collaborate with local Government and/or community organizations to host town hall forums.

So knowing that we could not go everywhere, we did note that we could have educational information sessions where the Commissioners could go across the state to provide those.

I got a lot of input from the Commission, so trying to put all of that and summarize that together.

There was also concerns about timing and travel days and so just want to share what I have at this time.

Each of the areas represent a district, so that we have the equal population. And we did add two to address the concern of rural areas as well as the concern that was raised about Southeast Michigan. I'm sorry, Southeast Michigan in terms of the Northern Oakland County Area.

Our proposal, and these sites are subject to change, but they are just suggested sites, but we do want you to look at the dates. And I want to make sure on this particular slide that this date is correct.

Okay, good.

May 4th is a Tuesday.

It would be at Tree Top Resorts. And the reason why I'm giving you first and second is that we can get possibly a discount by hosting, identifying our second place for the public hearings.

So Tree Top Resorts in Gaylord suggested spot.

Marquette in the UP first and second hearings on both of those areas.

So what I'm proposing is 16 sites for the first public hearing. And 8 sites for the second public hearing. Once again, 16 sites for the first public hearing and 8 sites for the second public hearing.

Muskegon and Grand Rapids. Grand Rapids would host both.

And, once again, we are looking at Tuesdays and Thursdays. On Thursdays we would have our meetings, our weekly meetings in the respective areas in addition to doing the public hearing.

Once again, we would have our weekly meetings on Thursdays in these respective areas in addition to the public hearings.

We are looking at basically eight weeks, two times a week.

The following week we would be at Jackson Community College.

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And looking at Kalamazoo. We wanted to make sure we had something more in the rural areas, that could address Southern Michigan and so we moved it to Jackson. And then also we got some public comments and have Kalamazoo as relates to Wing Stadium just a suggestion.

Second place Midland.

Grand Banquet and Convention Center and then in Lansing at the Lansing Center on May 27th.

Pontiac on June 1st. Pontiac on June 1st and Flint.

Novi on June 8th. And Dearborn on June 10th.

Detroit at Wayne County Community College Northwest on June 15th.

And the TCF Center, formerly known as Cobo, on the 17th.

Bluewater Convention Center on the 22nd.

And then Warren at the MRCC Banquet Center on the 24th.

Once again, that gives us 16 proposed sites for the first public hearing.

One in each Congressional district now and then adding two, which would be one in the Northern Michigan and one in Northern Oakland county and Southeast Michigan.

And the recommendations is to approve the 16 proposed sites for the first public hearing and approve the 8 proposed sites for the second public hearing.

Mr. Chair, I can take any questions or comments.

>> Steve: Rhonda.

>> Rhonda: Well, I've been preparing for this for three weeks, so bear with me a second.

This was an updated list from the last list we had and was not able to review it prior to this meeting.

I do have a problem with it.

I'm just going to say that, and I just want to drop some facts real quick.

When you look at one meeting in the UP, the UP has 16,377 square miles.

Just the UP.

There is over 311,000 citizens that live in the UP. You're proposing one meeting, which people would have to travel hundreds of miles to get to if they are on the east side of the meeting -- of the peninsula.

We also discussed communities of interest.

And when it comes to the UP, we have a pretty big Native American population.

Chippewa County has 16.1% Native American population.

Mackinac County has 16.6%.

Schoolcraft has 9.3 percent.

All of these counties are on the east side of the UP.

When we look at Northern Michigan, if you took an imaginary line and drew it from Manistee County across to Iosco County, which does not include my county. I'm in Osceola County, so that would not include Osceola or Mecosta.

Just the northern part of the state there are 506,658 residents there. You are proposing one meeting in Gaylord for over half a million residents in which, again, they would have to travel hours to get to, if they were not near Gaylord, or hundreds of miles.

I do have a problem with that. I understand we are getting public comment and I totally agree. The two meetings in Detroit. And thank you to Doug for that flow sheet that you gave me with the populations.

I totally agree with the two meetings in Detroit because they do have a very large population.

But when I looked at our old meetings, proposed meetings, and I know Southfield was taken off. But if you looked at Southfield, Dearborn, Novi, and Detroit and Warren, when you add up the population of those, that's 1,023,483 citizens.

If you use Southfield as a starting point, and I'm just referencing off the old one because I did not have the updated one, that would put five meetings within a 15-mile radius. And I know that it was stated. I'm not from the urban or suburban area or the big area, so I really don't know about the transportation there. I know it was mentioned in our public comment that transportation is kind of not that great, public transportation in the urban areas.

But I would ask that people put themselves in the rural area shoes. We really don't have public transportation.

Lake County next to me has a Cat bus, which services Lake County. But you're going several counties away for a meeting, that Cat bus is not taking anybody from that county to that meeting.

So, again, transportation wise, we had a gentleman, during our public comment, that talked about economic disenfranchisement, people that economically, you know, making it easy for them to get to meetings.

The University of Michigan actually put out a wonderful scale. And it's kind of a well-being as far as people living below the poverty level. And of the top 12 counties of people living below the poverty level, nine of those are in rural areas. Number one is Isabella. And number two is Lake County. So they even beat out -- number three is Wayne County. So I totally agree with having it in the larger areas.

But I think there needs to be a better compromise made.

Another thing we talked about, we had a gentleman talk about the Hispanic population.

I had recommended Sturgis for that reason because based off the U.S. Census American Community Survey, Sturgis has the highest population of Hispanics in Michigan as far as any one city. And also, it's located in St. Joseph County, which I had spoken several times to staff about.

Another potential community of interest would be the Amish. And have their own cultural beliefs and transportation wise and phone wise and communication wise a little harder.

You have a population right in Centerville of over 2000, not to mention several other counties.

So I'm having a hard time, first, with the 16 meetings and seeing that the state priority is given to the lower half of the state.

I do understand when people say it should be taken into consideration population, but I also think it should be taken into consideration access.

We are supposed to speak for everybody.

And saying the rural area doesn't count as much or making it harder for them, is that not disenfranchising them, also?

So I guess my thoughts on this whole thing, if I were to propose something, I would propose doing the ten mandatory constitutional meetings and then focusing seriously on the town halls.

So we have a wider reach, and that would be my proposal.

I have more facts here.

But I'm not going to go any further, that is my thoughts. And thank you for listening.

I appreciate it.

>> Steve: Thank you, Rhonda.

We do appreciate your comments. And I think that probably everybody understands where you're coming from. And if we could have a couple hundred meetings, that would probably would not solve the problem either but it would at least move in that direction.

Doug, you had your hand up next, as far as I recall.

>> Doug: Yes.

I agree with Rhonda.

I think we should limit the initial meetings to ten.

And, in addition to what she said, the -- once we get the maps drawn, we should limit those to five that we are required to do.

And then we should deal with everything else. And I don't know if I got the terminology right, but these town hall forums where we send out a couple people to discuss with the communities.

And going back to the original ten, I think we just need to get a good distribution. And the requirements that I heard from the comments last week was population in rural areas were the two key items that we need to identify cities from.

So we need to distribute the ten and according to that and distribute the five according to that.

And deal with the rest, as Rhonda indicated, in these town hall forums.

I yield back.

>> Steve: Thank you, Doug.

I think Richard was next in line, I think.

Go ahead, Richard.

>> Richard: Mr. Woods, I guess I have one question.

All these meetings that you have on the list, will we be taking all 13 of us to these meetings or will it be just a few of us?

>> Edward: It would be all of you.

>> Richard: Okay. That is what I was wondering.

Thank you.

>> Steve: Who was next?

I saw several hands up.

Dustin, yes.

>> Dustin: Well, I agree with everything that, Rhonda, you're saying with the UP. But part of my ignorance on the fact of the matter here, isn't all of the UP and half of Upper Michigan in one district anyway?

So, I mean, wouldn't that -- it's not going to change based on having all the people that live in the UP and down, wouldn't that be keeping the same amount of population in one particular districts the same, I don't see how it would make a difference all that much.

The only thing I could -- the only thing I could think of is Native American populations, for example, drawing like to keep communities of interest intact, going across the bridge, or something like that, into where other individuals are and connect them together. But I think you can only go over the bridge once in that particular case. And only do it one time.

And then, second, based on the comment that we received, I would also highlight recommend that we add Livingston County as a particular place where we would have a meeting.

Based on what the comments were saying and me having lived there for a long time, I can definitely agree with them, saying that it's a major transportation hub and people from all over Livingston County travel all over the place.

So and I would be more than willing to help Edward secure a location in Howell. I can think of a couple on the back of my mind that would be more than willing to host us.

So, again, part of my ignorance on that fact, I'm just curious and that's all.

So.

>> Steve: Dustin, don't forget we've got State Senate and State Rep Districts to do, too.

So, yeah, you got one big, huge district up north, that's true.

However, you got a whole slew of reps up there.

>> Dustin: Part of my ignorance on the fact.

>> Steve: MC has been waving his yellow hand and his real hand and evidently, he has his computer working. Go for it.

>> MC: Yeah, but I think I got maxed out. I think we have got a lot of people working from home so my video -- I'm going to go off video and keep talking.

What I was hoping we might actually discuss is I think it what's to do with public perception. What I mean is we know we have more than just, right, we have already considering town halls.

So the value of these, I think what we are discussing here, the public outreach, the mandatory meetings is we have all 13 of us.

It seems like we should really be aware of we have so many ways to reach us, right, not just these town halls, but it seems there is a public perception piece and think we should try to understand and discuss as Commissioners, right, how do we want to like use all 13 of us, right? And do we need to sort of, right, we are not going to make a decision that is going to be -- that makes everybody happy. We are not. We are going to have to make compromises somehow.

And it feels like if we can try to understand the difference and educate ourselves, frankly, on the difference between these -- the all 13 of us going to a meeting, right, the town halls where there is just two or three of us, right, the communication links and ways that people can get to us virtually, right, that is equally valid. And, frankly, they can write to us with not just virtually but by letter, right, not to mention the access that they have to our staff, and, et cetera.

So I guess what I'm suggesting with all of those tools I think we might want to try to craft our discussion here around like how do we maximize those? How do we leverage what we can have and frankly save our budget? Right, because we don't have as much money as we would like. And I'll just leave it at that.

>> Steve: Cynthia.

>> Cynthia: I totally agree.

I think we should maybe discuss having fewer of the big meetings, but then really concentrate on those town halls like Rhonda and Doug and MC were saying, because I think money wise, you know, taxpayer dollar wise, as well as just getting out there, space, getting out into all of Michigan wise, I think that would go the furthest.

>> Steve: Thank you, Cynthia.

Who else?

>> Brittni: I have a small thought, a little underdeveloped because of the way that sometimes I process things. But so I see what folks are saying. And I know that I'm speaking, right, as a native Detroiter. And I encourage us just to, in whatever we decide as a Commission, to make sure that the voices in this Detroit, Metro Detroit Area are heard.

Given the public comment, given some of the decisions that we've made recently as a Commission and then now thinking about how we are refocusing these meetings, I think, for me, our public perception but also the voice of the community is extremely,

extremely, extremely vital. So as long as we have even sprinklings and especially knowing the area, Novi is about 25 minutes sometimes away from me.

I have a car though.

Our bus system sucks.

It's not bad. It sucks.

There is no way to mince that. So some of these locations even, like Dearborn could be a reach. Southfield might be a reach for some places.

I'm fine with town halls.

It might even be of interest to find local libraries, like really getting into these neighborhoods and encouraging them to vocalize their thoughts about the process.

So that is my dollar and 50 cents on that.

But I just if we are going to go back to ten meetings, then we better take heed and listen to what has been shared.

>> Steve: Thank you, Brittini.

And, you know, keep in mind we do ten, you know, full Commission meetings and say, you know, just to say we do two in the City of Detroit doesn't mean we can't go back there with town hall meetings in Detroit and spread them out.

You know, we get a big meeting and we see what the response is and figure, well, we need to come back with two or three of us and do town halls at various churches, social clubs, whatever.

I think that can be done.

Anthony, you had your hand up.

>> Anthony: Yeah. So I guess I should start by saying I actually like Edward's proposal.

I think that, you know, we are having this discussion now on reducing the amount of public meetings that we are going to hold. And I really believe that is going to move us backwards.

We already, even with this number of meetings that we have and Edward's proposal, it still might not be enough. Because, as Rhonda said, you know, it's not -- there is only one in the Upper Peninsula. So I don't see how reducing the number of meetings will help this problem.

I think it will only cause more problems and cause more people to feel like they are not being heard.

With that said, I really like Edward's proposal.

I think we might want to consider adding another meeting, you know, based on what Rhonda was saying in one of those areas she was talking about, perhaps in the UP, perhaps in Northeastern Michigan.

But based on population I think that what is in Edward's proposal is more or less where the people are.

And, you know, I appreciate that.

I just don't know if reducing meetings is, you know, the right way to move.

>> Steve: Thank you, Anthony.

I would note one of the things that Rhonda has brought up as far as the UP and Northern Michigan, and I live in Northern Michigan now and I'm familiar with the UP, there is no real public transportation up there.

But people are really used to driving a long way up there because they don't have a choice.

So that does not mean we should not have more meetings, and town halls up there would be excellent.

And Cynthia and then Doug and then Rebecca.

>> Cynthia: Okay. So I think, to clarify what I was thinking, I do like Edward's proposal as well.

I like the timing of it, that we are not doing four days all at a time. I don't think that would work for all of us. But I think this timing would work better.

And I do see that we are you know trying to cover the state.

I just think, my thought on that is more meetings would be better; but we cannot possibly do enough meetings to make it fair or to cover everyone. So that is why I think we may just need to cut it off at some point and then use the town halls.

>> Steve: Thank you, can I go to Juanita, please?

>> Juanita: Thank you, Steve.

You know, I'm trying to be a little quiet and listen, but we hired Edward Woods to do the communications work and all of that.

And I'm trying to respect the fact that he knows more than I know or we know, that is why we hired him more or less.

So I think that when he decides to present to us his ideas, I know we should come in and say what we have to say. But I would like to really remind us that we have to respect that we hired him for this. And I think he knows the best route and way to go to get the job done. And it's no reflection on anyone, that is just my feelings.

>> Steve: Thank you. And, Rhonda.

>> Rhonda: Juanita, I always, always respect your comments. You are so wonderful. I do respect what Edward does.

He has a lot on his plate, but what it comes down to is we are the Commission and it really is our decision.

Edward is getting the word out this for us so we have people that come to these meetings. But I feel it's our job as the Commission to decide where these meetings are. That's how we are independent.

It's not one person saying this is where we are going to go.

It's a group effort.

And going back to the ten, Anthony, my thought, just so you know what my thought was on that, the ten meetings with all 13 Commissioners, I think it would be easier to

have ten with all 13. And then really it would free up a little more time to where we could expand the town halls and get more meetings. Whereas if we do 16, 20 with all 13 of us, then I think that diminishes the amount of town halls we can do, so it would diminish our reach to everybody in the state. And that was just my thinking on that, and I just wanted you to know where I was kind of coming from.

>> Steve: I think Edward has a comment, so I'm going to go to him first and then to Rebecca, I believe.

>> Edward: Once again, I appreciate the deliberations. Like I said this is a recommendation. But I do want to give you some thought behind it. And that is really coming up in my next presentation. But the advantage of the public hearings, and they will be aired.

It's a technology component in terms of broadcasts; whereas, the town happen meetings will not be live streamed.

The other advantage of having these 16, and I'm hearing everything everyone is saying, while we are up there, you know, we want to do town hall meetings and be efficient when we are in the UP. So everywhere we go we want to take the opportunity to do town hall meetings, to go to the coffee shops, to "Starbucks," the "Biggby's," what have you, and meet with folks.

So it's not just doing the public hearing.

There is a travel day on Monday.

There is a travel day on Wednesday.

So instead of having people go up multiple times, we wanted to take advantage of that week to do the radio interviews, to do these different meetings so that we can be a little bit more efficient.

So you have a couple of things going.

You have the live streaming function that happens when you have these public hearing meetings.

You also have the town halls, while we are out there.

And I would submit to you that we can do more together than we can apart in terms of being concentrated in these different areas. And so please don't look at them as just separate events, but think about what we can build into that week.

And some of the feedback I got was, you know, it's a lot when you are doing two, three, four meetings all in the same week.

So we pulled that out so that there could be some opportunities to do town halls while we are there, to do informal meetings at the coffee shops, would have you, do things with County Commissioners because we've gotten requests for that. So please do not look at the schedule as these are the only two events.

This will be a part of a larger campaign that is going to take place throughout the month of May and June to get the word out as relates to the redistricting process.

So I hope that may answer some questions or it might not answer some questions, but please don't look at this as just two events in the week and that is all we are doing because that would be misleading.

There is also a cost efficiency involved with that as well.

>> Steve: Thank you, Edward.

Rebecca.

>> Rebecca: So, first, I just have a quick point of clarification for Edward because I want to make sure I'm understanding this correctly. So with the list that he came up with was 16 and so the plan is 16 initial meetings.

And then the ones that had like the one and two like I think it was Gaylord and Detroit and there were a couple others, Lansing, that number two is the second meeting once we do a proposed plan.

Can he just clarify that point for me? Then I have some additional comments as well.

>> Edward: Commissioner Szetela, that is absolutely correct. And the reason why I wanted to do that is we keep hearing about cost. It's easier to negotiate if you know you're going to a spot twice, and you will see more of that in the next presentation.

Sue wanted me to give a comprehensive explanation of what is going into these communication and outreach meetings, basically these public hearings. And you will see that. But I really wanted to be able to negotiate twice.

I mean, if that is not the desire of the Commission, that is fine.

But I was, as I said, demonstrating that I'm listening in terms of cost and getting the discounts. And the places I've contacted are willing to give us a discount for a multi-day, you know, for using the site more than once.

>> Rebecca: Okay, all right. Then my other thoughts are with respect to Livingston County, and we have seen a ton of public comments about Howell, Brighton and Livingston County. Living in this area, it's 30 minutes from Livingston County to Novi. It's 30 minutes from Livingston County to Lansing. So I feel like and then you can throw in Pontiac too as well and Flint as well as being in a relatively short drive from that area.

So I appreciate the comments and concerns from the people who are in Livingston County. But I feel we have provided them with an alternative site which is either Novi or Lansing or possibly we had Ann Arbor at one point but we have taken that off. But there are locations within reach for them which are a reasonable drive.

So my thought on adding, I know Dustin raised up the comment on adding Livingston County, I personally don't feel that is necessary because there are other locations, we are talking about meetings within their driving distance.

In terms of, you know, I feel like we kind of tend to get bogged down a little bit on this concept that the meeting is somehow critically important that we have it in, you know, we are getting a lot of requests from rural and urban where people want the meetings with this view that somehow the meeting is this critically important event, that there is no other way that people can communicate with us. And I just want to point out so far in

our interactions with the public, the majority of the comments that we are getting have been via writing, via e-mail.

And that is mostly how the public is interacting with us.

And if we are unable due to budget constraints and time and just decisions of the Commission, able to have meetings everywhere where we might dream of having them, that doesn't mean that there is no way for the public to communicate with us because most people are communicating with us in writing. And there are other methods where people can get their message across to us other than having to attend the meeting. That is not the only way to communicate with the Commission.

So I just want to make that clear. Like I said, we've had hundreds, hundreds of written comments. We've had literally a handful of people who have actually come to our meetings and asked to speak. So I suspect that is going to continue to be the case and that most of our comments are going to be writing versus people coming to meetings. And if they can come to meetings, that is great; but we do have these constraints on where we can have them.

My last comment is with respect to the Upper Peninsula. And, you know, there were some comments made about how many districts we have up there.

So I quickly looked to see so for the Federal house we have one district that comes all the way down in the lower peninsula.

For the State Senate District we have two.

For the State House Districts we have four.

I don't think, and I know this has come up before, that there is a ton of movement in those districts regardless of what the public comments are.

And then in terms of the population, we are districting based on population. We have to go where the people are. If that means more of the meetings are in the lower half of Michigan, that's because that is where the people are, that is just reality, a simple mathematical proposition.

It's not an effort to ignore or to disregard the feelings of people who are in the rural areas, which it's just a point of population. We have less than 3% of the population in the Upper Peninsula. If we are going to be having ten meetings, we should be covering at least ten percent of the population in each one of the meetings, not focusing on having meetings in a rural area where we are thereby ignoring the people who are in the more populous areas, which literally you could draw a line at the thumb and that is where most of the population is, it's below the line.

So I think the target for these more rural areas should be the town halls. I think the map that Edward came up with is fantastic.

It's got 14 meetings and the 14 districts that exist right now, so it's very much based on the population.

He threw in two extras to accommodate Northern Oakland County, which is Pontiac, and a second location in Detroit, which is the largest population center. I think that is fair.

I think that is equitable. And I think to the extent we want to do more smaller meetings elsewhere in terms of the town hall meetings, we can supplement that.

But I think the list that we have right now is good and fair and equitable and will allow a large number of people to attend these meetings. And then to the extent, like I said, we can fill it in with town halls. I think that is probably the best solution to do that.

>> Steve: Thank you, Janice.

>> Janice: I'm not certain I need to talk anymore because Rebecca said everything I was thinking.

I think I like Edward's plan. And I think we should have the major meetings where the population is and we can hit the rural areas with the town forums.

I mean, I couldn't have said it better, Rebecca. Thank you.

>> Steve: Dustin or do you want Rhonda to have her turn? Rhonda.

>> Rhonda: Okay first I want clarification. When you are talking travel time, Edward, so you anticipate us being gone four days out of the week still. I know you said no meetings 1234, but you still plan on us, you're saying, a meeting, one day travel, meeting one day travel. So you're anticipating us being in hotels four days a week and traveling is that -- I just want to make sure I understood your statement correct when you were talking about traveling.

>> Edward: Sorry about that, that would be open.

If people have work assignments, so I'm just saying I'm leaving it open so those that are able, just like we are scheduling meetings based on who is able now, I would try to do the same thing while we are traveling to maximize our time.

Because, obviously, you know, we are paying mileage and we are there and it's cheaper to get a bigger bang for our buck if I can use you while we are there.

So if people are able, and some people said I can come now, and some people do you know what I got to work, and those that are able to come on Monday, we would try to establish some town hall forums on Monday in these different areas.

And then we are there Tuesday for the public hearing. And Wednesday is a travel day, so we could take advantage of that on Wednesday.

And I could use that as well. Of if people go to work, that is fine. And Thursday for the public hearing that is a nod for efficient and maximizing the use of tax dollars.

I do need to clarify something is that the two that we did add and we didn't switch them around was the one in -- we added one in the UP and then we added one in Pontiac. The one in Southfield got moved because of the building. And that is the one we moved for the 13th District into the Wayne County, Detroit. So I just want to be clear, open and transparent of that.

But that is all I'm trying to do is, Commissioner Lange, was maximize the tax dollars. It comes up in meetings about being efficient and so if we had the 14 districts because people were talking about equal population and we added the two to address the concern of the UP and address the concern of Pontiac, it would give us those times to do the public town hall forums and give us those times to do these informal meetings while we are gone and to maximize, you know, the efforts, that was the strategy behind it.

But, like I'd said, again, it's just a recommendation.

>> Rhonda: Okay. And my last comment is I'm going to respectfully disagree with a lot of people.

I do understand the concept.

I said this already. I understand the concept of being where the population is.

But I also said from our second meeting that coming from a rural area I know what it's like to feel like your voice isn't heard, like you are left out. And even when we hired our Executive Director, one of the comments that was made was I don't care if there is ten million people in this state and ten million people want to be heard, we need to make it happen.

So I still -- I understand what other Commissioners are saying about the rural people. But I would say put yourself in their shoes. And how would you feel if you felt like no attention was given to you because there are communities of interest in the rural areas.

I live next -- just a couple miles away from Idlewild, Michigan, which was known as the Black Eden from 1912-1960. It was one of the biggest recreational areas for African/Americans. And it's like a historical site that they have been working to build up again.

So it's not about just being rural. It's -- there is other areas up here. We have people that fall within the Voters Right Act.

We have people that all within communities of interest. And I don't want people overlooked just because they do not live in a condensed area.

And I understand the condensed areas do need attention, but there has got to be some way we can do this. I don't know, but there has to be some way.

And so I'm just going to be honest, I'm leaning towards ten. The Constitutional. Because I realize there is no way we are going to make everybody happy. And I'm still just going to lean towards the ten meetings and doing as many town halls if people want to reach out. I would be more than happy to hit as many rural areas as we can, if they want to reach out and set that up.

And I don't know how else to do it and to allot us the time to do all of these if there is a big demand for the town halls. So that is the last thing I got on it. And, thanks, guys.

>> Steve: Thank you, Rhonda.

Dustin.

>> Dustin: Well, I also completely agree with everything Rhonda is saying. And I also feel that everyone does, in fact, need to have their voices heard with what we are doing.

I don't even really -- I don't want to sound like I don't care, but as far as budgeting goes, I can't put a dollar amount on making sure that everyone is heard at one particular point.

If we need to have another meeting somewhere, we have another meeting somewhere. I don't really care too much about that particular cost, so that everyone can be heard.

I also was thinking about the whole town hall concept later on over the weekend last week and sometime this week. And the more and more I think about it, I'm not a big fan of it. I think we all need to be there or at least the majority of us need to be in places where people can get heard regardless of the cost for it.

If we need to get the best polka dot of pins, I guess, on a map where we have been so everyone has the ability to speak with us in whole, minus two or three people in cases when they can't make it.

I do feel that is very important, but I do agree with everything that Rhonda says. I know the Amish community is up there. I have a cabin up in the woods up there.

It's huge and there is people from all walks of life up there, too.

So and I do believe everyone needs to be heard and needs to be heard by all of us.

>> Steve: Thank you, Dustin.

MC, you had your little hand waving up there.

>> MC: Thank you. So, Edward, I want to make sure that I thought that the two that were added were actually Muskegon and Pontiac. I don't think we have addition in the UP, so I just wanted to make sure I got that right, from to go from 14 to 16. Did I get that wrong?

>> Edward: Well, what we did is it was only Gaylord and to get to the 14. So if you look at each district, it was only Gaylord that was originally. And then we've had some different reiterations.

And so what I did was I provided one for each of the 14 Congressional Districts. And then if you look at where the extra ones were, one was the UP and the other one was the Pontiac.

>> MC: Thank you.

>> Edward: We changed it, and know we had different reiterations. And so I apologize for the confusion. But something that came up as a public comment was looking at the equal population in terms of where you are scheduling your meetings. So my concern with the ten, just for your consideration, is now we are going from 711,000 to north of 800,000, if we were to try to identify the areas in terms of consideration. So hopefully that answers your question, Commissioner Rothhorn.

>> MC: Thank you. I was confused. Thank you for the clarification.

The second piece that feels important to share is something about the ability for us to make a difference with regard to as people. So at these meetings are the time when we have communities of interest most able to share with us. And what I think from what I understand from Edward's 16 suggestion is that we have additional -- because we are going to be in places, we have 16. And then we can actually create, during that week, we have six weeks, a period of six weeks roughly we are doing that, eight weeks. So we have that many more weeks we can actually add town hall forums.

So, like, I feel like we are leveraging our -- I want to say I like the 16 and the second round.

I feel like we can have more input. And I recognize there is complexity with this. And I think whatever Edward has done is in consultation with Sue and the rest of the team.

And so what I feel like is a suggestion, takes into consideration a lot of complexities, that I think Juanita was trying to speak to and has been appreciated over and over. But it feels like the 16 and whatever we got suggested may actually help us create as many students to hear the Amish, to hear the Native populations in the UP. And all of those pieces feel really significant. And so, yeah, that is where I'm at.

>> Steve: Thank you. Janice.

>> Janice: I just want to say I don't think any of us are trying to leave anybody out. I think that we need to do the meetings where we have the most people. And we need to do those. And then we take the town forum and we look at it this way: We understand the problems that they have. The travel, the Internet, and all that. And we are going to take the meeting to them. We are going to do the town forums. We are going to do them in their areas where it's easy for them to get to. And that is all I want to say.

>> Steve: Okay. Julianne, you are going to add something that is going to further our discussion before I call on our other Commissioners.

>> Julianne: Yes. Just very briefly for the benefit of the public I did want to distinguish in following-up on Commissioner Rothhorn's comments, that the public hearing that we are discussing would be a quorum of the Commission. They would be broadcast with the ability for citizens and residents of Michigan to participate electronically in the meetings as well.

Any meetings that we are talking about noticing and being open to the general public, for an example, the town hall forums, those would be properly noticed, open to the public, but they would not have a quorum of Commissions and not have those electronic broadcasting as Mr. Woods indicated.

I just wanted it to be very clear for the public what that distinction -- the main distinctions between those events. Thank you.

>> Steve: Thank you. And I guess I have a question to Edward on the town hall meetings. Are those not possible to do without like we are doing here with the professionals but we could do them on Facetime or Zoom or something so people could, in fact, get in?

I'm not asking for an answer now, but I think it's something I want you to take a look at.

>> Edward: We have looked into the virtual. So as long as they are properly noticed, that is something we can also do.

>> Steve: Great. Rebecca.

>> Rebecca: I'm just curious, so I know Rhonda has proposed cutting down to ten and some other people have mentioned that, too.

Who are you planning on getting rid of from the list of 16 that Edward proposed?

>> Rhonda: Are you asking me?

I'm sorry, Rebecca.

>> Rebecca: Yeah. Who are you suggesting we should get rid of to go down to the ten?

>> Rhonda: In all honesty, I don't know. I would have to review it because I just saw them today.

These proposed ones were not the same proposed ones that were on last week's. So I don't know.

I honestly couldn't give you a straight answer on that.

Like I said, I do think, because looking at Detroit's population, where Detroit has a population of 664,139 residents, obviously, I think the two in Detroit is an excellent idea for population wise.

I know Anthony with his background and everything. I think maybe Dearborn. I think Anthony might agree with me there, that Dearborn would be important.

The way it broke down I guess Grand Rapids, Grand Rapids would definitely be important.

Because they are growing every year.

Their population seems to be going up.

So that would be another important area.

I realize we have got to hit around the Detroit area. And I'm not saying we don't. Because it is, but when you look at it, Detroit has the second most population in the state.

Warren has the third most.

Sterling Heights has the fourth.

Lansing, Ann Arbor, Flint, and Dearborn. And then how many is that?

I don't have the list in front of me.

I was trying to write them down as he read them off so.

If I look at it Detroit, two. Grand Rapids. Warren. Lansing. Ann Arbor. Dearborn. I would say the Flint Area. And then the last two, at least one in the UP.

There has to be one in the UP. And then I would say Gaylord.

Just to give Northern Michigan from there up some.

So that would be ten if we were looking at it from there and then doing additional town halls, I guess, if I were looking at it.

I don't know if those were all the proposed, Rebecca, because, like I said, I did not get them all written down.

I don't write that fast so.

>> Rebecca: I was kind of taking notes while you were doing that, so that would eliminate Novi, Muskegon, Jackson, Kalamazoo, Midland, and Pontiac.

>> Rhonda: And then on the list of the highest populations areas other than the UP and Gaylord, and that was the highest on the list. When we are talking about population wise, these were the cities that had the highest population, like I said, other than the UP and Gaylord.

>> Rebecca: Thank you, Rhonda.

>> Steve: All set, Rebecca.

>> Rebecca: Yes. I just said thank you.

>> Steve: Richard, you had your little yellow hand up.

>> Richard: Yeah. I guess all these sound very good with discussion, having the mandatory meetings, I guess, as I asked earlier, do all 13 have to be there.

And I assume that is true.

But I guess what I want to know is would the public be satisfied with having maybe one, two or three Commissioners coming to a meeting that might fulfill all this added people that would like to make comments?

And I guess if the public is listening, if they would maybe e-mail us and tell us if that would be satisfactory versus having all 13 of us there, would that make that much difference?

I think we could get around more if we were able to split up.

Thank you.

>> Steve: I'm going to get to Juanita and Doug has had his hand up.

We have been going on now for an hour and 15 minutes.

And quite frankly the comments are not really changing a lot.

Everybody agrees with everybody else, that we need more meetings.

We needless meetings.

As a suggestion, and I'm just it's just a suggestion, we may want to bring this back at our next meeting. And I would suggest that whoever would like to would come up with proposals on where we would have these meetings.

Edward has come up with his.

I think Rhonda has come up with at least one that I'm aware of.

Probably a couple.

And then, you know, get down to -- let's do -- let's pick one.

So that's only a suggestion.

Juanita, you had your hand up.

>> Juanita: Yes.

I think when Rhonda was suggesting that we keep Dearborn, and I'm not saying to keep or take away anything, but I realize that Detroit is, to me, fairly large.

And I think I could walk across the street and be in Dearborn. And it's just so close to Detroit that I don't see any separation for that.

Detroit could come to Dearborn or Dearborn could come to Detroit, that is how close those two are.

And then you all can decide on the rest, if possible, or whatever.

>> Steve: Thank you.

Doug.

>> Doug: I agree with Steve's suggestion.

I think maybe we should come up with like four or five different scenarios and bring them to the next meeting and then vote on those.

I think, I mean, my thoughts are still that we should only have ten and five.

There is a bunch of concern, too, on how much we can spend on these things.

These are not inexpensive meetings.

But I would suggest we do what Steve said.

You know, those that want to come up with some scenarios and get them to Edward and then we can go from there with it.

Next meeting.

>> Steve: Keep in mind, if we do this, and like I said it's only a suggestion, that there is no right or wrong answer here.

There are only things that we can do that are insufficient to what we really need to do.

And so we have limited time.

We have limited resources.

And keeping all of that in mind, we just have to make difficult choices.

And if you think, you know, obviously, we don't even all agree.

And, certainly, everybody out in the Ether is going to have their own opinion, so that makes about, I don't know, what is the population of the state, Rhonda?

>> Rhonda: Excuse me, almost 10 million.

>> Steve: We have 10 million opinions out there.

>> Doug: Yes.

>> Steve: Anthony?

>> Anthony: Thank you, Steve.

First off, I want to say I don't want anyone to feel they ever have to apologize for their opinion.

I, for one, have learned a lot from all of you, even if our opinions have differed.

And that is one of the blessings we have, you know, having 13 randomly selected people.

And we have different opinions, and that is okay, Even if we don't agree on everything.

So, you know, I don't want anyone to ever feel they have to apologize for what they think.

With that said, you know, I already said that, you know, I like this plan. I agree with a lot of what Rebecca said.

But, you know, I'm wondering if we can maybe have a little bit of a compromise. Would this get more support if I know we are already saying 16 is a lot and it is more than what we are obligated to do in the Constitution. But if we were to add one more in the UP or in the Northeastern side of the state, would that satisfy you, Rhonda? And getting you to support it?

Or are you just, you know, like opposed to it completely how it's drawn right now?

>> Rhonda: How it is right now, and I'm going to be completely honest, I would oppose it.

At this point, I have thought about it since our last meeting, excuse me.

And I really, I want to do the town halls and as many town halls as possible because I feel that is how we are going to reach the most people especially in the rural areas. And I want to be able to have the time to do these town halls.

I mean, if I had some in the rural areas that wanted to be heard in person and I had to go five, six days a week, I'm willing to do that is what I'm saying.

So with what is entailed with going to these meetings, being out of town for these meetings, I think that it would also take away from the opportunity to have so many more town halls.

So that's why I'm leaning towards the ten meetings that we are required to do.

And I know in the comments we've had regarding the Detroit area, too, we had comments about, you know, there is different blocks in Detroit that kind of have their own interests, so I'm thinking town halls for them, too.

If we had two big meetings like as scheduled in Detroit and then a bunch of town halls with people that know Detroit, like Brittini and Juanita knows Detroit, so people who are actually familiar with the area, I think that would mean a lot to people too because they can kind of get each other I guess is what I'm saying, because like Juanita would understand issues that are going on with Detroit, I'm sure. Brittini would.

I mean, she said she is a lifer Detroiter. So I am kind of looking in term of that were there could be so many more town hall meetings which would make it possible for even more Detroiters. And those who may not have the best public transportation to even get to the two in Detroit.

So I guess that is where my mind is. And even adding one more, like I said, there is an invisible line there in the UP that doesn't even include my county. So I don't want anybody to think that I'm including myself.

I'm about an hour from Detroit or Grand Rapids, so this is just up there.

There is a half a million people, so town hall wise that's what I'm leaning. So adding even one more.

It's still not going to make everybody happy. And I know we are never going to make everybody happy, that is why I'm going leaning towards the ten and multiple, multiple town halls.

>> Anthony: So thank you for that.

And, you know, I would love to join you on any town halls we have to supplement these larger public hearings. And I think many of us, would too, As long as people have time for it.

But, you know, my opinion is that I like this plan. And I think that it gets us in front of the most people, you know, in our state as possible.

So, I mean, we could table it like how Steve said or we could see how many people are in support of it.

I mean, we might have enough people to support it now or we might not. It might be good to see that.

>> Steve: Okay. Brittini and then Rebecca.

>> Brittini: Rebecca was first.

>> Steve: And then Doug.

>> Brittini: Rebecca, you can go first and I will go after you.

>> Rebecca: Thank you. I was going to echo what Anthony said. I would just really like to see us take a vote on the 16 that Edward proposed. I mean, I just think we are creating logistical difficulties for him in continuing to punt this off. Because the reality is whenever you are trying to book these kind of conferences, you just don't have endless time. You know, things fill up, facilities fill up. And I think we would be remiss to kind of push it another week. If we can take a vote on it right now, it seems like there may be majority support for the 16, even taking into account we might do other things as well.

So I just really would like for us to get to a vote so at least we may be able to get that done and then we can talk about other means of meeting in the future.

>> Steve: Well, in order to do that somebody has to take a motion. There is nothing.

>> Brittini: So quickly. Those are my sentiments along with, yeah. I think if we start to offer up different drafts of things, we will enter a rabbit hole and it will still elongate the discussion and we will go back and forth. So I make a motion to take a vote unless somebody has something before the motion.

>> Rebecca: I will second that.

>> Steve: Okay, what are we going to vote on? Are we voting on a specific plan or are we just voting to go somewhere?

>> Rebecca: Edward had as resolution that was submitted.

>> Steve: All I'm asking for is clarification on the motion. Brittini.

>> Brittini: So the motion would be to vote on the approved or approve the 16 proposed sites for the first public hearing and approve the 8 proposed sites for the second public hearing, if I have understood the discussion correctly as Edward presented.

>> Steve: And that would be at the locations that were listed for the 16 and the 8.

>> Brittini: Yes, Mr. Lett.

>> Steve: Okay. Rebecca, is that still your second?

>> Rebecca: That is still my second, yes.

>> Steve: Open for discussion. Juanita.

>> Juanita: Well, I'm in agreement with that. But I just wanted to kind of throw out there that because we are so public, if we favor anybody, we are going to get a lot of -- we favor one place opposed to another place with showing any kind of favoritism to what we were saying, we are going to get into a little -- I think Brittini said a rabbit hole, or something. And we don't want to do that.

>> Steve: We are definitely going to get comments. You can bet your life on it. Doug.

>> Doug: Yeah. After we take the vote, I'd like to make a few comments relative to how we are going to pay for this. You know, what process we are going to use to pay for it.

So I don't know if this is the appropriate place to do that.

>> Steve: Cynthia.

>> Cynthia: I don't mean for this to take a long time because I know we have been at this a while, but I am wondering if Edward or maybe Julianne can just clarify a little bit what a town hall would look like, how many of us can be there or how many of us need to be there.

If it can be streamed, just some of the details about it so we can take that into consideration.

>> Edward: Julianne, why don't you do the legal requirement.

>> Julianne: Perfect. Thank you. That is an excellent question and what I was commenting on earlier for the benefit of the public. So the Commission, a quorum in the Commission is nine or more members to conduct business at a meeting. And the requirement is that there has to be two-way public participation and the meetings have to occur throughout the state, all of that.

The town hall forum would fall under one of the exceptions of Subsection 11. So it's just dealing with communications to the public. So it doesn't have -- the requirements are that it be noticed and open to the general public.

So it has to be properly noticed and open, but it doesn't have those other requirements. And, remember, the focus of the Constitution is to really bring the public into your process.

The opportunity for all of the public into your process if they should choose to watch or participate.

So while I appreciate Mr. Woods giving me the chance to kind of make those legal distinctions between the two and how the requirements would be so different, again, if there were opportunities to stream the town hall forums and that, but I just wanted to make a point that legally the focus is on your public hearings and your meetings, which would require a quorum of members.

>> Cynthia: So for the town hall, anything under nine could -- any amount under nine could attend?

>> Julianne: Correct.

And, again, it would be under nine; but the access issues is what I think would need to be ironed out.

Obviously, they would be publicly noticed and open to the public. But if there were other things, and I believe Edward commented on it earlier about broadcasting and stuff, but those are not legal requirements under the Constitution, so just making that distinction.

>> Edward: Thank you, Ms. Pastula.

The other thing is we look at the town hall forums as, you know, addressing some of the communities of interest.

Some people are comfortable in a smaller setting.

Some people are -- want to talk about their issues.

But I think the other thing that we have to remember is when we are doing these public hearings for those of you that might not be familiar with the different areas, it's also an education opportunity as when you are considering drawing maps for the district lines, you're not just doing it in urban.

You are not just doing it in suburban. But you are also doing it in rural areas and listening to the people from across the state, I think there is a benefit in terms of listening to them as you draw your lines because the lines that you draw are not unique to one area versus another area.

You're drawing lines for State Senate.

You are drawing lines for State House. And you're drawing lines from the Congressional Districts.

So the opportunity to hear directly from the people that are being impacted is -- should be really considered.

Having said that, the town hall meetings provide just a little bit more intimate settings where we are going into communities, hearing from the communities. To do it, if we

need to support or identify some resources to make that happen, we do have that. And you -- I'm sure you have seen the budget, so that we can make those things happen. So that if, you know, not having a projection, not having a screen would not eliminate someone from having a town hall meeting.

We would make sure that we would have the same level of town hall meeting and same standard whether suburban, rural, or urban. They would all be the same standard.

>> Steve: MC.

>> MC: It occurs to me that because we are talking about the legal distinction between a town hall and the hearings, the public meetings, we may want to just offer for the public that we will take and legally -- that we will sort of operate as if it's binding just like the idea the town halls don't necessarily have a quorum. We may want to just as a committee acknowledge that we will treat it.

>> Steve: MC, you are breaking up so bad. We cannot understand you.

>> MC: Town hall and treated just as if it were.

Okay, sorry. Is that better?

Okay.

>> Steve: I guess, MC, I guess from what I took your comments to be about the legalities. And I guess I would like Julianne to probably opine with me, the meetings that we are talking about, either the town halls or the full Commission, is it would not be anticipated that we are making, as a full Commission, decisions at those meetings. We are there to listen to the people as to what the communities of interest are and what their opinions are.

Not to vote on where a line is going to be.

Julianne?

>> Julianne: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Certainly I agree on the informational and educational components of both the public hearings and the town hall forums.

The distinction would be if the body elected to take an action at a public hearing it could do so. And that could not happen at a town hall forum. So the information would need to be brought back from the town hall forums to the full Commission for action relative to we are using the example of community interests right now.

So those determinations could not be made at town hall forums. There would be no deliberation, or voting at those meetings.

It would be strictly for information gathering by the smaller subset of the Commission for action at a full Commission meeting. And distinguishing between the public hearings that are comprised of a quorum, business could be conducted at those meetings should the Commission elect.

>> Steve: Well, in order to do that, we would also have to publish that it would be a meeting and it would have an agenda. And we have a motion and a second on the floor. And we have gotten a little way away from what that entails.

So if anybody else, Rhonda, are you speaking to the motion?

>> Rhonda: Yes.

It's about the motion.

I just want quick clarification. Are you getting ready to vote specifically on the places and not on the times or dates?

Or is it on the dates, times and places?

Proposed times.

>> Steve: Back to Brittini. And as I understand the motion, Brittini, you were on the dates and times and places that Edward presented.

>> Brittini: Yes. I was making a motion as it was presented.

>> Edward: There are no times, Mr. Chair, for clarification.

>> Rhonda: There is no times?

Okay, that is the clarification I wanted. Thank you.

>> Steve: Very good.

Anybody else?

Are we ready to vote?

All right. We will take a roll call vote.

Sally, please call a roll and if you are in favor say aye. If you are not in favor, say nay.

>> Sally: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'm going to start and go in alphabetical order but start further down the list.

So first Brittini Kellom.

>> Brittini: Yes.

>> Sally: Rhonda Lange.

>> Rhonda: No.

>> Sally: Steve Lett.

>> Steve: Yes.

>> Sally: Cynthia Orton.

>> Cynthia: Yes.

>> Sally: MC Rothhorn.

>> MC: Yes.

>> Sally: Rebecca Szetela.

>> Rebecca: Yes.

>> Sally: Janice Vallette.

>> Janice: Yes.

>> Sally: Erin Wagner? Richard Weiss.

>> Richard: Yes.

>> Sally: Dustin Witjes.

>> Dustin: No.

>> Sally: Doug Clark.

>> Doug: No.

>> Sally: Juanita Curry.

>> Juanita: Yes.

>> Sally: Anthony Eid.

>> Anthony: Yes.

>> Sally: The motion passes.

>> Steve: All right. Before we move on, we have been at it for an hour and 35 minutes, let's take ten minutes and come back at 2:45.

[Recess]

I think we have everybody back.

Doug has a question. But before we get there, there was a chat close at lease on my screen, when we go to breaks, we need to mute ourselves and wait until we are all called back so the translators can get their breaks, too.

And I'm probably the greatest offender.

Okay. Doug, you had a comment.

>> Doug: I've got a comment. And I'm going to ask something of Edward to do something for the next meeting.

Edward, and, Sue, probably as well, as we start working with the communities to set up these meetings, we have to get a mechanism so they can get paid.

And my only knowledge of how that could happen is through another purchase order through purchasing.

You -- and I can't write a check for these people.

What I have done in the past during my work career is we developed an appropriation request. And let's say that was \$350,000. And as a Commission we would authorize you, Edward, to spend 350,000 as part of this project, project being the meetings. And then you could work with purchasing to write purchase orders up against that \$350,000 appropriation request. That is all you would get is 350 grand for that.

So my request for you and Sue is next meeting can you come back to us a what process you are going to use? Because I don't understand what the State does. But I'm sure they do something similar to that.

I mean, you may use what I just described or you may use something different. But if you could explain to us how these people are going to get paid and what that appropriation request dollar amount would be for these meetings, and then we could authorize that.

Does that sound reasonable?

>> Doug: Sue.

>> Sue: We have a budget set forth, that is proposed today, that would enable some money for Edward to do his job.

And then as expenditures happen, he and we, I would be reporting back to this Commission in regards to marketing and outreach.

We worked through the Legislative Services Bureau and they pay our bills. So we have not had very many, just the Kelly Services and those kinds of bills. And our policy is, if it's been approved in the budget, then I have the authority approval when the bills come in. Because they will be coming in, especially for Edward and his work to get these facilities in place and other technology that he is going to need.

>> Doug: Yeah. Have you touched base when them on this process? And they may require a purchase order before they allow us to rent a place.

>> Sue: Legislative Services, we usually provide invoices or some sort of documentation with them.

Or we provide an approval in the minutes, you know, if it's something that the Commission approved. But, yes, we have a process in place and it's been going well. And as I receive the invoices then, for example, for phone service, I approve those and those can be paid.

>> Doug: Okay. As long as we have that this place so we can pay these people, yeah, appreciate it.

>> Sue: Thank you.

>> Doug: I yield back, Steve.

>> Steve: Okay. Who has one of the old I think it was Staples easy button? Get it out and hit it because.

>> Let me find it.

>> Steve: That discussion we just had was easy.

It does not seem like it was easy, but it was really quite easy.

Everybody had their opinions. Everybody expressed them very nicely. Everyone was gentle with everybody.

Thanks, Dustin.

And I appreciate that.

I appreciate that.

It was a good discussion because it's not -- there is no easy answer as I said.

And keep in mind that as we go along, we may decide, hey, we need to add another one here, we need to add another one or take one away. This is in flux.

So nothing is cast in stone. And Dustin has our easy button now, so we are in good shape.

General Counsel Addendum to Election Data Services Contract. Are we doing that today?

>> Julianne: Mr. Chair, consistent with my remarks earlier, I'm preparing that document to have distributed for consideration at your next meeting.

>> Steve: You have to remember how old I am.

I can't remember what I had for lunch let alone what you said at the beginning of this meeting.

>> Julianne: Well, I'm happy to remember it and restate it at this time.

>> Steve: Okay. So key provisions of the constitutional amendment. Did you talk about that already, too?

>> Julianne: Mr. Chair, I could make a suggestion to the Commission that we move on to new business. Again, that is going through the three to five, excuse me, the going on from the third criteria. So, certainly, if the Commission would like to proceed with that. But I would recommend given the items in the new business with the planning and the budget, that the Commission may want to move on to those items.

>> Steve: Okay, Doug.

>> Doug: Yeah. I want to go back to the subject on the Election Data Services contract.

My understanding was the contract was going to be the purchase order that goes to them.

And maybe Sue can comment on that.

My understanding was that Chad was dealing with them on the contractual parts of that and going to issue a purchase order. Is that where we stand on it?

>> Sue: I don't think we are there yet.

I can have Julianne strengthen my answer if I don't have it exactly correct, but the -- according to procurement, they have to agree to an addendum to include the racially polarized voting because the original proposal was approved by the Commission. But, however, with this added work, so that has to be handled first before.

>> Doug: So that addendum is 10B on the agenda what Julianne was going to talk about. That is what I wanted to make sure I understand. Okay. Thank you.

>> Julianne: And, yes.

>> Steve: Okay.

>> Doug: Thanks, Steve.

>> Steve: Moving on to new business, communication and outreach planning.

Edward.

>> Edward: Ms. Hammersmith, how much do you want me to do knowing our time constraints?

>> Steve: I want you to get as far as you can.

>> Sue: We have a half an hour still allotted in your time, so if we can do it in a half an hour, we will be back on schedule.

>> Edward: Okay, okay, fine.

Great.

Thank you.

Hold on. I'm trying to get my screen set up properly.

And I should have it right, here it is, okay, let me see if you can see it.

No, that is not it.

>> Rhonda: Is that your cat I keep hearing in the background? I was wondering if you could mute her while he is doing her presentation.

Is that one of those personal comfort things?

>> Edward: Are you able to see my screen?

Can you nod if you can see my screen?

Thumbs up?

Thank you.

All right. Just wanted to share what's going in, doing our public hearings, just so you have a concept of what is taking place.

This is to be as just a list, and just some of the planning that we are doing.

It is not completely exhaustive, but it's close.

But just wanted to give you just a concept.

February, you know, for communication focus in March, we have been working on branding. I will show you the logo a little bit later. We have been working on infrastructure in terms of outreach, media relations, community outreach. We just did the market research and got approved last week. We have been doing presentations and talking points, you know, trying to build our infrastructure, trying to get the brand. You have taken pictures. You have done videos.

We have, you know, every other week we are open, and I mean open, if you are a statewide organization and want to be a part of the communication process and know what is going on, we meet every other Wednesday at 10:00. So send me an e-mail and we will put you on a list. We are looking for statewide organizations that have local affiliates.

April, we are looking at doing ads to promote our public hearings. And there will be a six month since the start of the Commission. So we want to start talking about accomplishments.

We will be doing radio.

We want to just talk about what has happened with the Commission in the first six months. We want to start advertising our public hearings and just getting ourselves in the press.

In May and June we want to have press conferences associated with our public hearings, associated with our town hall forums as well.

Just so people know who we are, what we are doing, and why we are doing this redistricting process. So this is kind of the focus when you take a look at what we are doing communication wise.

And outreach focus in February identify statewide organizations.

And in March we have done local Governments and organizations.

And in April we want to continue with that, but we also need to do site visits with these different facilities. I mean this is a process,

Just initial site visits, making sure we understand the contracts.

And what -- making sure that we are getting what we are supposed to be getting. All of that takes place in April, takes me away from the home office. But that's what happens in April.

May, we start our public hearing and town hall forums like we talk about as well as in June.

This is all across the state.

So this is a lot of the activity that is taking place with regards to our communication and outreach in these different months. So just wanted to explain what is taking place and what is going on.

Outreach, so far statewide organization, we have the Council of Michigan Foundation, League of Women Voters, Michigan Association of Counties, Michigan Association of United Way, Michigan Farm Bureau Association, Michigan Municipal League, Michigan Nonprofit Association, MSU Extension Centers, and Michigan Township Association.

Once again, we are looking to build on the list. We are looking to reach out on that list. So if you aware of statewide organization with local affiliates that can help us with the work, please send their names to me so that we can include them and get them on our list.

We already reached out to Native Americans and we've reached out to other organizations that we are waiting to get confirmation. So I just want you to know we are doing that as well.

Role of statewide organizations: Increase, host, provide, and serve.
At the last meeting we talked about volunteers and trying to find ways that we can utilize volunteers.

With the statewide organizations, increasing awareness and engagement of redistricting process. Host town hall forums and informational sessions. Provide access to local affiliates to assist in recruiting people to the public hearings. And serve as greeters and staff to public comment stations at public hearings.

At each of our public hearings we will have public comments stations where people can submit maps or they can submit public comments utilizing our tools, so it's all in one place so that when you are making your decisions you are able to do that.

So these statewide organizations are on a volunteer basis.

And they are increasing awareness and engagement.

You already have been contacted by some of them to serve as panelists.

Post town hall forums and informational sessions to get the word out, especially in the areas of the communities of interest. And provide access to local affiliates.

A lot of this stuff is going to be boots on the ground.

And what we want to do in recruiting people to the public hearing and to serve as greeters, is we want their neighbors to do that. We are not looking for security to do that or the police to do that. We are looking for people in their own community to volunteer and serve as neighbors in the public hearings so it has a community feel.

It has a neighborhood feel.

Where people feel welcome and feel open to provide their comments and suggestions. And that is something that is really important of having that safe environment to do that.

Public relations consultant. One of the things that we need to do is we need to assist in media build up, generate coverage and staff media at the public hearings. As you know during these public hearings, I will be responsible for making sure things run smoothly. Our Executive Director and General Council will be a part of your meetings and participate in your meetings and staff your meetings.

I will be responsible for staffing the public and anyone that comes, including the media, in these areas.

We want to identify and promote public hearings to communities of interests, neighborhood associations and local grass roots organizations.

When I say local grass roots organizations, some of these communities do not have statewide community-based organizations, but they have credible, local grass roots organizations. We want to make sure we know who they are and make sure that they know they are invited and participate in the meetings.

I'm going to consult on best communication practices to increase awareness of engagement of the redistricting process in terms of what channels should be used. Should we be using social media ads? Should we do something totally different? Should we be doing outreach to churches? I mean, how do we do the best way to generate coverage?

And then serve as the local outreach and site liaison. In doing 14 public hearings, I can't be in 14 places at one time. So we need someone that can help and with regards to that role.

And so that would be the purpose of the public relations consultant.

When it comes to site selection, this is one of two slides.

This is one of two slides we are looking at.

The first thing that we have to consider is accessibility in terms of making sure that the place is accessible for people with disabilities, people that may have challenges. Also transportation, you know, in terms of getting people there.

We want to make sure that we have a site that is accessible.

We want to make sure of the cleaning.

With regards to the cleaning of the facility, if we were to take a break, you know, depending on how long we have these public hearings. We want to make sure the place is cleaned.

The rest rooms are cleaned on a normal basis, you know, depending on that, that whole cleaning is something important in an era of COVID-19.

We want to have a layout. We have to have a layout plan. Where is the Commission going to be? Where is the cameras are going to be? Where are Secretary of State going to be that is providing our live stream?

How are we going to make sure we have sick feet of social distancing?

The layout is really important in terms of the site selection, so we can maximize the amount of people that come to the public hearing.

With regards to parking, you know, there is a concern about parking, should parking be free or paid?

How do we do the parking in terms of cost?

You know, how can we limit our cost as relates to parking so people can come and paying for parking is not a barrier?

The press set up. Where are we putting the press so they are not obstructive to people that are there for the public hearing. They bring their cameras. How does that relate to the layout?

We have to have a spot designated for the press, whether it's print, whether it's television, or whether it's radio.

And you will see in the audio, in the AV plan the need for a jump box. And I will explain that later.

The public comment section, station.

Where are we going to have the public comment station? If people have to leave and cannot stay long, where are we doing the public comments? What if people want to submit maps? Where is the public station going to be and how can we set that up so that we can ensure social distancing?

The other thing is rental time. How long are we going to have our public hearings? You know, I was sharing with regards to public hearings. We want to provide time, whether people are first, second or third shift. It does not matter when they work. They should be able to have voice before the Commission.

So looking at how are we going to set up time for our public hearings so we can maximize hearing from as many people as possible despite the different work schedules that they may have.

That is another thing with site selection.

The other thing is the rest rooms.

Sanitization after every person speaks during public hearing, we have the sanitize the mics. We have to have somebody to sanitize the mics, that is something that goes into the cost.

Certain facilities are requiring we are having security. When we have meetings open to the public, we are going to be required to have security.

The other thing is set up.

In terms of are we going to set up in terms of theatre style, where it's just chairs? Are we looking at rounds? Are we looking at classroom style? Just a whole setup for the public hearing. And social distancing is also a factor. And also the stage so that people can actually see you.

So these are all the things that are really going into a site selection process so that we can get as many people as possible but also keep people safe and to make sure that it's accessible and affordable for all to attend.

So I just kind of wanted to share with you, you know, some of the things that are going on to make this happen.

From an audiovisual standpoint, we want to make sure that we have great cell phone coverage, our translators will be available, with regard to cell phone coverage, that is something that is important.

The jump box is something where the press can insert their AV device, their audio device so they can hear directly from the microphone system.

When we look at that, we also have projectors. And we need to consider projection screens, projectors, and that is on the next slide, projectors so we can display the information so people can see it or hear the presentation. The Internet, we need wireless and hard wire for live streaming. We need a hard wire access for the wireless. We are trying to make our public comment stations flexible, so we will need wireless access, and so that is something that Internet will have to be provided, that we will need at these facilities as well.

The other audiovisual needs include projection screens, sign interpreters, signage and graphics, a sound system. We need microphones for each of the Commissioners. We are going to need microphones in the audience.

For our speakers, we need a mixer board so that they can mix and the audiovisual for the live feed will all be there. And translation is consistent with Arabic and Spanish like we do for existing meetings. And then we will need videographers so that they can see people when they are speaking and they need to be able to see the Commission and they need to be able to see the sign interpreters and also need to be able to see who is providing public comment.

So these are the audio visual stuff that is happening. And this is something that we would be doing at each of our public hearings. So just wanted to give you a concept of what we are doing to build up to these public hearings, executing these public hearings, so that we can get the maximum participation as possible for each of these public hearings.

If there is any questions, Mr. Chair, I can take them at this time.
This is just more of an informational presentation.

And then I do have a brand new one after this question and comment.

>> Steve: Anybody have questions for Edward?

I don't see any, Edward.

So branding.

>> Edward: I will go right back. Thank you very much.

Branding, what we are trying to do, you, know we have taken your photos and done the videos and we are trying to brand the Commission.

And one of the things that we wanted to do with branding the Commission is to establish a logo so we can build out our assets.

And doing that we worked with M-DOT with regards to that to brand the Commission. Represent Michigan as the Great Lakes State.

We wanted a logo that speaks to the Commission's work. We wanted to connect to the previous logo and identify colors to their meaning.

Blue in addition to representing water and the Great Lakes state also means trust and loyalty.

Orange means vitality and construction.

Vitality in terms of a sense of energy.

So changes that will give renewed vitality, you know, to our democracy process. And so we were looking really at the colors of blue and orange. We worked at a team with our Executive Directors, Sue Hammersmith and general counsel, Julianne Pastula, and worked with M-DOT and want to present to you two logos for your consideration as it relates to what would be the best one for the Commission. And you can see those logos right there.

The fonts are different.

Like I said the blue, the trust and the loyalty.

The orange for the vitality and the construction of the maps.

We have the same marker. We have the marker drawing.

It talks about lines, so you see the lines beneath the state.

And looking at the color logo and then when we need to do ads in black and white that would represent the black and white on the right.

So we are looking at you to look at logo number one or logo number two in terms of making a choice today so that we can move forward and developing our assets and getting our communication materials out to the public.

And so, Mr. Chair, I'm just making a recommendation that the Commission today chooses either logo one or logo two for branding purposes.

>> Steve: Okay. Any comments, thoughts, suggestions?

Rhonda.

>> Rhonda: Correct me if I'm wrong, but did we not vote towards the beginning when we started out or maybe a month or two after.

I think it was when -- before we had her staff position, didn't we vote on the logo basically that we have been using for the last seven months, the original one, to use that for letterhead and such?

Kind of as our logo, the original redistricting logo?

>> Steve: I think, and correct me if I'm wrong, but I don't know that we voted on it. I know there was some discussion once. Sue came on to have a letterhead set and somebody designed it.

I don't know that we talked about it specifically in the reference that Edward is now talking about it.

But we did talk about having a letterhead, yes.

>> Rhonda: Okay. I was not sure if we had voted on that.

>> Steve: I'm going by what I remember. Rebecca.

>> Rebecca: I was just going to say I like number one. I think the font is crisper and cleaner and easier to read, so my preference would be for number one.

>> Steve: Cynthia.

>> Cynthia: I agree that it's easier to read. Number one. But I just have a question. Is it wise to use blue since blue and red both represent the two major parties?

So I'm thinking a secondary color, would that be smarter?

Like the original one was purple.

I assume that was for a reason because it wasn't blue or red, just a thought.

I don't think it's a big deal, but we are trying to remain independent.

>> Steve: Edward, can you put those back up?

>> Brittini: I think it's orange, but it could be me, and it looks blue and orange on my end.

>> Cynthia: Right. I'm saying I know it's orange, which is the secondary color. But blue, either blue or red seems like a bad choice to me so. And it kind of looks like we are -- some people could think that we are leaning a direction just from the public comments that we've had.

>> Steve: Doug?

>> Doug: Yeah, I just want to say I completely agree with what Cynthia is saying. I can see where people could take it that way easily, so I think the colors could change.

>> Steve: I think they should be green and white.

Go ahead, Rebecca.

>> Rebecca: Sorry, I had to unmute there.

I'm just wondering if we could maybe make it a different shade of blue, maybe more of a teal, because democrat is associated with a darker blue like is in this or, you know, green maybe instead of blue.

>> Steve: Is there an official state color?

Juanita.

>> Juanita: I believe that the colors that are up there are the official state colors, blue and that orange.

>> Steve: That was a slightly joking question.

But, hey, if we got -- everything has got state something.

Rebecca.

>> Juanita: You see them everywhere that color for the state.

>> Edward: For the Michigan state colors, there are six colors in the state flag. They are Catalina Blue, Scarlet, Brandy, Brandeis Blue, Sandy, and American Green. And those are the colors associated with the flag.

>> Steve: Rebecca, you had a comment?

>> Rebecca: I just had not dropped my flag down, no.

>> Steve: Okay, Juanita.

>> Juanita: Is there any way we can look at some of those colors or does it matter? If we are in agreement, I just want to see what they look like. I'm so used to seeing blue and orange everywhere.

>> Steve: We can ask Edward. I guess it kind of is the design, is that something that everybody can kind of go along with? And then we can have other colors brought back to us to pick the colors?

How would that be on a consensus? Shake your head.

Okay, so everybody kind of likes the design.

Edward, bring back some different color combinations next week and we will get it set.

>> Edward: Okay. Just so we are all clear, we are saying that to logo number one? And I will put it back on the screen just to make sure.

>> Steve: Yeah, do that.

>> Edward: Just want to make sure we are all talking about logo number one.

>> Steve: Everybody likes logo number one. Do the thumbs up.

Seems to be consensus on that one.

So bring that back with different color combinations and --

>> Edward: That will be great. Thank you.

>> Steve: Is that it for you, Edward?

>> Edward: That is it. Thank you so very much.

I have taken more than enough of time.

>> Steve: You have taken exactly the right amount. Sue talk to us about money.

>> Sue: Oh, yes, I'm happy to do that.

I'm presenting a budget today that has a lot more detail than the last time you saw it. And initially I told you when we got the mapping consultant number that would have a great deal to do with our budget. Also, Edward has been filling out a lot of the marketing and communications needs that will have to be handled as we host public hearings and town hall meetings.

I don't know if you have specific questions, if you want me to go line item by line item and explain it.

Or if you have all read it and just want me to answer questions, I'm happy to do that.

Tell me how you would like to proceed.

>> Steve: Doug.

>> Doug: To answer your question, Sue, I just think we should ask questions to you. I looked and I really liked how you did both tiers 2021 and 2022.

I thought that was really helpful.

The one item I saw that's not on here is at some point in time we are probably going to have to work out of Lansing and probably have to pay for office space.

I'm not -- I mean, even if it's state office space.

It's going to -- the cost is going to get pushed over to us. And I did not see that on there at all.

I also saw that it looked like it's like about \$158,000, correct me if I'm wrong, that is -- that were unused or unallocated at this point.

So does that infer that we don't have to go back to the legislature for more money?

>> Sue: My answer right now would be maybe.

But the change in the census has done by delaying the census, it's delaying our work.

>> Doug: Correct.

>> Sue: Our second round of public hearing will be bumped in the next fiscal year.

So it's kind of split out our costs. Again, I'm not real sure, for example, on the mapping firm.

I did a 60/40 split assuming we spent 60% this year, 40 next.

I'm not sure that that is accurate until the negotiations are finished and we have a plan in place for them to do that work.

So we are very close.

I would say. If there is a possibility we may not have to go to the legislature, regardless, we will be reaching out and letting them know where we are in the process.

And, you know, that way they know if we have to come back to them, if there are expenses incurred, that we did not anticipate, then we will.

>> Doug: Let me ask this question. The \$3.1 million that the state allocated to us, was that just for this fiscal year or was that for the entire project?

>> Sue: It was for this current fiscal year, and there will be another appropriation starting on October 1st for the next fiscal year.

>> Doug: So really, we are not \$158,000 or was that just for this year?

>> Sue: That is just for this year.

>> Doug: Okay. Okay. So we -- how are we working with the legislature on the budget for next year? You are dealing with that I'm assuming.

>> Sue: There really isn't any work that we can do.

The Constitution sets our budget at 25% of the Secretary of State Offices general fund budget.

So it will be a formula that will be put into that budget.

It's not something that we have to ask for.

It's set in the Constitution.

>> Doug: Roughly speaking, it's probably going to be another \$3.1 million.

>> Sue: Maybe, maybe not, maybe not because their tend to be budget reductions every year, so I would not count on 3.1.

>> Doug: Yeah.

>> Sue: We may not know that until September 30th. we could know it any time between now and then. But, again, that's an unknown until the budget is, you know, finally determined, which may be as late as the end of the fiscal year.

>> Doug: Got it. One last question, and refers back to the comment I had at the end of the discussion on the meetings.

Let's take for example the section you have this year for public hearings.

It's \$320,000.

What financial controls are we going to have in place to be sure we don't go over \$320,000?

>> Sue: Well, I think we are going to have different costs at different venues, some are going to be less, some are going to be more. But that's what is in the budget. If we spend up to that point, then what we would have to do is if we realize that we were going to need more money, we would have to come back to the Commission and say, hey, that \$320,000 was not adequate for the public hearings.

We need another \$20,000 in the budget.

>> Doug: The question is: What financial control that you have that we don't go over the 320 without coming back to the Commission?

>> Sue: I think you work with your staff.

I mean, that is our job is to watch this budget and to spend what we are allocated.

And to not spend over without permission from this body.

>> Doug: So you're manually going to track it as we spend it?

>> Sue: We are going to track it, absolutely.

>> Doug: Okay, I yield back.

>> Sue: Thank you.

>> Steve: Rhonda.

>> Rhonda: Okay, I looked over the whole thing. And I see the projected for the meetings, \$320,000 that is projected for this fiscal year. \$176,000 for next fiscal year. And then when I go on to the second page, I'm seeing the communications and outreach activities with a projected budget of \$371,880 for this fiscal year. And \$100,000 for the 2022 fiscal year. And I do see a little bit of the breakdown with the research and the pictures and what have you.

I'm just curious what other costs are going to be incurred with that amount of money? What are we looking at spending that money on?

I mean, I understand what the hearings, it's the venue set up, things like that. So I'm just curious what all the communications and outreach activities entails.

>> Sue: So that will include things like advertising, social media. Edward mentioned a consulting firm to do some of this work.

If we don't hire somebody to partner with us and help us, one person -- it's impossible for one person to do all this work.

So the other option would be to hire more staff in this area.

I think it's easier to hire experts who know what they are doing or have the connections to do this work to assist us and maybe Edward can strengthen this.

>> Edward: Also in addition to that with our ads, some of our ads are television ads, so we have a video company that is helping us with regards to shooting the ads.

Support for the town hall forums for those who may not have the resources.

And, you know, all the stuff that Sue just said.

I mean, you are looking at 16 hearings. We are looking at a campaign.

We are looking at two campaigns this fiscal year.

One, to get people to the hearings.

And then an educational campaign on how to submit maps.

And that will be a statewide campaign that will crisscross the state, including rural areas. No stone will be unturned. But we have to teach people how to submit maps and how to submit public comments.

So all of that is coming from that money.

>> Rhonda: I guess my question in more detail is: Do we have an actual written breakdown of what that money goes to particularly?

Like how much are we saying that this consulting place may cost?

I mean, is it going to be more than what hiring an administrative assistant or something like that would cost is what I'm saying? Do we have a breakdown to show how that money would be spent and what kind of costs we are looking at say for media or for your Facebook advising or, like I said, the consulting? Do we have a breakdown so we can kind of put it in better perspective?

>> Edward: We have to actually go out for three bids per purchasing policy with regards to that. So hypothetical we could throw some numbers out there.

The idea is to get the best price as possible.

And the most responsible price in terms of value.

To be honest with you, I have not had time to just do that.

You know, we saw some estimated prices with the previous bids that were submitted that we kind of used but we thought those were kind of high. So we said we would maybe redo the bids differently and break down the price we can do that.

I just haven't had time to do that yet.

And so what we were doing was a placeholder or an estimate, you know, with regards to that so we could give you some idea so that we can move forward.

But, once again, those contracts would have to come back to you. But there is a reason why we are trying to break these contracts down.

So that we can save the taxpayer money, but also get the most responsible price for our needs.

And based on the feedback from what we got on the last two proposals, we figured we could sharpen our pencils and try to be more responsible by breaking down these bids.

We just haven't had a chance to do it.

>> Steve: Doug.

>> Doug: Yeah, this question goes back to Sue.

In our conversations with Arizona and California they had \$10 to \$12 million budgets and we have a \$3.1 million. What is the difference?

What is the huge difference?

And I think probably Arizona is probably more our size than California is, so maybe we could talk about them.

>> Sue: Yeah, California put \$2 million into their communications and outreach.

And as we looked at scaling down for Michigan, we said, well, we are 25% the size, so half a million dollars would be the equivalent of what California had spent if you are looking at the size of the state.

I do have Arizona's budget. And I've looked at that one, also. And I think our budget pretty well tracks similarly to the things that they did.

At -- but I don't know where the huge cost came in.

>> Doug: They had a \$10 million cost.

They spent \$10 million.

>> Sue: I know.

>> Steve: One of the things, Doug, that they had a lot of litigation going on early on.

I have not seen their budget, but they had a lot of litigation.

>> Doug: We don't have that yet and may have been in their budget very much so.

>> Steve: Juanita.

>> Doug: I yield.

>> Juanita: I want to ask a question of the budget that Rhonda just ran off.

Did each of us get one?

I don't recall having one.

>> Steve: Should have come in your packet.

>> Juanita: I don't see it in any of my packets.

>> Sue: In your e-mail? They were e-mailed out to everybody. There is a link that is on the chat if you want to grab that.

>> Juanita: I don't see that.

>> Julianne: Mr. Chair, if I could just.

>> Steve: Sure, Julianne.

>> Julianne: Commissioner Curry, it's a single sheet of paper that is double sided.

>> Juanita: I looked, but I did not see it.

Maybe I'm overlooking it.

I did not see it.

>> Doug: It was the sixth attachment on that e-mail.

>> Juanita: Maybe, Sue, if you can just text me that e-mail and I will just look it up because I don't see it on any of my paperwork.

>> Sue: If you go into the chat and click, it's right there for you.

Sarah just put it up there for us.

>> Juanita: Okay.

>> Steve: Any other questions on the budget for Sue?

I -- just a second.

Just a minute. I would say that on our budget we might get lucky with the fiscal year. We might also not get lucky in that if they don't pass it when they are supposed to in June. We could be back into October, November like we used to do. And I think that we need to be talking with the budget people in the legislature so that we have an idea of what it would take to get more money.

I can't believe we are going to be able to do that with the budget that we have, but we will see.

MC.

>> MC: That's what I was going to offer.

I just really appreciate how budgets are a reflection of our priorities. And I like -- it looks like we are spending time or money where we are with education and with people regarding the public hearings and the outreach. I really appreciate that.

And, yeah, what Steve just said, I think Doug was just alluding to this, too, the idea you have been able to balance the budget over two years and that it's, yeah, presented. And no one has a crystal ball. So I know you're giving your best shot and really appreciate it. And I think it's a reflection of the priorities I would like to see, emphasis on the citizens. And, yeah, I would move that we approve it.

>> Steve: I think, I mean, Sue, are you asking that this budget be approved? Or is this for your informational purposes at this point in time? Since our budget is set and we are just moving money around?

>> Sue: I'm asking for it to be approved.

We've never had an approved budget and I think it's really important.

Every once in a while, there are expenses that come through that I cannot approve because I don't have them in approved budget. So as, you know, general expenses come through and especially as Edward begins his work with these venues and getting the public hearings together, I think it's going to be really important to have this approved so we can do the work.

>> MC: Agreed. And I will be specific. This is Number 7, Attachment 7, the resolution that I'm moving.

And just what you said, Sue, I think Rebecca spoke to in the last time we were talking with a budget for Edward is really important. So I just really appreciate this. And I'm moving the resolution 2020, February 13, 2021, excuse me. And presented March 11th. And it says be it resolved that the Michigan Independent Redistricting Commission approve budgets for the fiscal year October 1, 2020 through September 30, 2021 as presented, that is what I'm moving.

>> Steve: Second?

Do I have a second?

Dustin. Juanita, have you had a chance to get to that budget sheet?

You're muted, Juanita.

>> Juanita: I'm good. I'm good right now.

I'll get to it in a minute. I just wanted to make sure I had a copy of it. Thank you.

>> Steve: All right. Doug.

>> Doug: My opinion would be that we table the motion until we see the budget with office space in it.

I don't know what others' comments are on that.

That is going to be a significant cost if we have to incur it.

>> MC: I guess I would offer, Doug, because we don't know what is going to happen and, in the space, we are this is sort of the best we have. And I feel like we work with the information we have, right? And I hear what you are saying, that is what you are predicting. But I'm suggesting that I would rather us take that step and make it when we need it because right now it's just another opinion. And I guess we have got an opinion that is presented. And I would like to just sort of suggest that the staff have given us that I think is incredible, and we have talked about that.

It may not be what we actually need. But budgets are always, you know, the best guess. And until we know that we need an office, I would rather us approve what we need right now. And then make that change as when the information -- when it arises. We cross that bridge when we come to it.

>> Steve: The motion by Doug is that we table this.

There is no discussion on this motion.

It's a vote up or down.

So the motion has been made.

I don't know if it was seconded.

Dustin has seconded the motion to table.

Lay it on the table.

All in favor of tabling the motion raise your hand.

[Hands raised]

123, 3. All opposed raise your hand.

[Hands raised]

1234567.

Somebody is missing.

>> Rhonda: Steve, there was four on the nos.

>> Steve: I counted seven on the yeses, and it fails. Back to the main motion.

Any further discussion? Rhonda.

>> Rhonda: With that said, I'm going to abstain from the vote because I don't feel like I have enough information to truly make an informed decision.

>> Steve: Cynthia.

>> Cynthia: I kind of have the same comment. And I do see the value.

We really do need a budget, especially for Edward, and everyone to be able to do their job.

But I don't feel like I'm understanding exactly enough.

>> Steve: What is it you're not understanding?

>> Cynthia: Well, we haven't really talked about an office, but are we going to have to have an office?

And, if so, how much -- when is that going to happen?

And how much is that going to be?

And things like that.

>> Steve: Well, I mean, understand that a budget is not cast in stone.

We are making this budget on the information that we have.

I'm not speaking for or against the budget. But a budget is not cast in stone. A budget is a projection and can be amended at any time.

Sue.

>> Sue: Just a comment on an office. We have been asked to work from home by the State until at least May 1, all state employees. So that's why it's not a consideration at this time.

It may be in the future.

But, you know, again, it's just an unknown.

And I did not want to build something in that may or may not happen.

We may not want or need an office.

>> Steve: Doug.

>> Doug: Yeah, I agree with what MC said.

We got to approve it so these folks can do their work and pay the bills.

I would say let's assume in June we have to revisit this because we have to go to an office.

In my expectation, it would be if that was \$400,000, then we have to cut \$400,000 somewhere else because we only have \$3.1 million.

I mean, is that how you would see it, Sue? We would not add \$400,000.

>> Sue: Yeah. I can't see that kind of expense over a few months, that would be left in the fiscal year.

>> Doug: I just used that as an example.

>> Sue: If it was \$200,000.

>> Doug: But we could keep it a total of \$3.1 million?

>> Sue: We certainly are going to try to meet that budget that is for sure. Edward.

>> Edward: Mr. Hammersmith, what is the contingency that is unallocated for the budget just so people know?

>> Doug: \$450,000.

Well, we can't exceed it because you have told us we are going to have financial controls so we don't exceed it.

Unless we modify it somehow.

So, okay, I'm good with it.

>> Steve: We ready to vote?

Now?

Cynthia.

>> Cynthia: Just clarify what we are voting, please.

>> Steve: Voting on the budget that was presented, the two-page budget that was presented.

All set?

Okay, if you are in favor of this budget raise your hand.

[Hands raised]

I think that is everybody.

If you are opposed raise your hand.

And we got one abstention.

>> Julianne: Mr. Chair.

>> Steve: Yes.

>> Julianne: I apologize for the interruption. Under your rules, there has to be a roll call vote if people are abstaining. Thank you.

>> Okay.

>> Julianne: That is section --

>> Steve: I believe you.

>> Julianne: Just for the record, Section 9.1. Thank you.

>> Sally: Hello, Commissioners. I will now do a roll call vote if that works for you, Mr. Chair.

>> Steve: It does.

>> Sally: All right.

Starting with the next person in alphabetical order.

Rhonda Lange.

>> Rhonda: Abstained.

>> Julianne and the reason, I'm sorry, the reason for the abstention shall be entered in the minutes of the meeting.

>> Steve: It was stated previously.

>> Rhonda: But I'll say it again just for the record, I feel like I lack information to say one way or the other what I'd like to do.

>> Sally: Thank you.

Steve Lett.

>> Steve: I approve it.

>> Sally: Cynthia Orton.

- >> Cynthia: Approve.
- >> Sally: MC Rothhorn.
- >> MC: Approve.
- >> Sally: Rebecca Szetela.
- >> Rebecca: Approve.
- >> Sally: Janice Vallette.
- >> Janice: Approve.
- >> Sally: Erin Wagner.
- >> Erin: Approve.
- >> Sally: Richard Weiss.
- >> Richard: Approve.
- >> Sally: Dustin Witjes.
- >> Dustin: Approve.
- >> Sally: Doug Clark.
- >> Doug: Approve.
- >> Sally: Juanita Curry.
- >> Juanita: Approved.
- >> Sally: Anthony Eid.
- >> Anthony: Approved.
- >> Sally: Brittini Kellom.
- >> Brittini: Approved.
- >> Sally: The motion passes.
- >> Steve: Thank you.

Thank you, everybody.

Next on the agenda are meetings, virtual meetings after March 31 for the Open Meetings Act.

Is that going to be Sue?

>> Sue: And Julianne. I don't know if she wants to jump in first but to explain that for sure.

>> Julianne: I'm happy to do so.

So what I wanted to note was that a bill was introduced in the Senate last week, last Thursday to be specific, to extend the deadline to conduct virtual meetings for any reason through June 30th.

We are monitoring the bill to gauge support and progress.

But given the reopening of the State and the current trajectory, it would be most appropriate to continue to operate under the current deadline, which is March 31st, And to plan for in person meetings beginning in April.

The mask and distancing order has been extended through April 19th. So that is also in play.

But specifically for the Open Meetings Act for virtual meetings, the deadline, the current deadline is March 31st.

>> Julianne: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

>> Steve: Sue, anything to add?

>> Sue: What I was going to suggest then is that we do not meet on April 1st because we probably won't know if this ability to meet virtually will be extended or not extended. And it's pretty hard for the Michigan Department of State to turn on the dime and set these meetings up in a location with all the technology that they need and to get the translators and everybody in place.

So what I thought I would propose is we move the April 1st meeting to March 30th if we can do that.

It would be immediately after the VRA legal counsel committee, assuming we get proposals for -- from legal counsel. And that we would just extend that meeting, and that would make it easier for MDOS to change that.

And then after that we would probably give them a little bit of time and maybe not meet the following week and then April 15th kick into high gear again.

>> Steve: Doug, you had your hand up.

>> Doug: This was a question for Julianne.

If the Senate passes that and the Governor signs the use of virtual meetings, is that going to impact the work that Edward is doing on the public hearings?

>> Julianne: So that we have been discussing, you know, the in person/virtual, particularly with the public hearings, because, again, if will is a local state of emergency or disaster in a county that would have a flare-up, or something, that could also impact the public hearing schedule or how the meetings are held.

So we continue to discuss that.

But, again, the requirement would just be if the body chooses to have the virtual meetings for no reason, if it were extended. And, again, up until very recently, there had been no movement or no introductions or no discussions on that.

So I'm not very confident in talking to the sponsor's office and the Chair, the committee Chair's office, how successful this effort will be.

>> Doug: Thanks. My second question was, going back to what Sue just mentioned, I fully support moving that one meeting to March 30th. I think that is a good idea, but I don't support eliminating one the following week.

I don't think we have enough meetings as it stands now to get our work done. So I would suggest that that first week of April that we do have a meeting.

>> Steve: Cynthia.

>> Cynthia: I just think it's a great idea to move it forward that one day so that we can -- we know we can do it virtually.

And everyone can plan on that. So I would like to move that we vote to move that day to March 31st, is it?

>> Sue: The 30th. It's the Tuesday of that week.

>> Steve: Rhonda is seconding.

I have a question of Brittini.

Are you going to be available that day?

>> Brittini: That is what I was looking at, what time?

We have our still -- there is a meeting in the morning, right?

>> Sue: There will be a committee meeting from 8-9:30 and we would start the Commission meeting at 9:30. And I would propose running until 1:00, that is a half hour longer than our normal meeting time.

But I think one of the things I've heard some requests for increased meeting frequency.

And I'm wondering if we can extend the time of some of our meetings going forward to handle more business because the meetings are a lot to set up and initiate and get all the people in place and it's a great deal of work, it really is, to schedule these meetings.

>> Brittini: I don't want to hold up anyone else.

I have things scheduled that day.

I can really try. As it stands, I was preparing to write a message in the chat that says I have to take off because I teach on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

And I still do have my full-time job.

So if we had any more meetings, but that's just me.

I can really try.

I just cannot make any promises for the 30th.

>> Steve: Okay, Doug.

>> Doug: Yeah. If both of you are unavailable, I would be happy to fill in for you.

>> Steve: I looked at my schedule and I have a conflict, but I'm going to unconflict it.

So I will be there. If that is what we end up doing, I will be there.

>> Doug: Okay. Sounds good.

>> Brittini: Like I said, I'm not going to say, no. I can check. But there is literally five things on that day, so I might have to see if that is even possible for me.

>> Steve: All right. Are we ready to vote to move the meeting? If you are in favor of moving the meeting as presented on our agenda actually raise your hand.

[Hands raised]

Those opposed same sign.

Okay. The meeting that was scheduled for April 1st is now scheduled for March 30th, beginning at 9:30.

And meeting frequency we just talked about.

Doug wants more meetings and Sue is suggesting longer.

We will probably end up doing more longer meetings, Cynthia.

>> Cynthia: Yeah, I realize some people don't want more meetings but really, we are running out of time every meeting to be able to discuss everything we need to. So I think something has to happen that we have more time.

>> Steve: You are correct.

In most instances certainly in the last few meetings we have run. And I always ask a question of Sally of how long we can go and she tells me and then I don't tell you guys because that makes you want to talk longer. And so that is a way I kind of try to control it.

And so, you know, we usually have an extra half hour.

And I guess we need to look at that and see how we are doing Anthony.

>> Anthony: I foresee these meetings getting even longer and the agenda getting longer as we go along. So I would just suggest to, you know, all of us to, you know, especially people that have, you know, other responsibilities to try to make arrangements now so that when it comes time to either go longer or add more meetings, you know, we can all be prepared for that.

Always better to be proactive is what I think.

>> Steve: Sure. Thanks. Rhonda.

>> Rhonda: I'm going to agree with more meetings, too.

I actually had said the same thing to Sue just because of the last few weeks it seems like there has been vital business that we needed to get to that we just didn't have the time.

And it gets pushed back week after week after week. So I was kind of on board with that same notion that maybe we needed more at least until we get caught up, a little bit.

>> Steve: MC.

>> MC: So listening, I wonder if we could try to add an hour, half an hour to an hour to each existing meeting, which is what I heard Sue suggesting and I guess that could be on either end. I'm open to either side, starting earlier, a half hour earlier and ending a half hour later. And then sort of suggesting, gosh, April, do we want to start April 1st when we because -- we don't know what is going to happen, that is why we are moving the meeting. But I suggest we try to do two meetings a month so that we have that -- so if the staff has the time to sort of ramp up because it sounds like an incredible effort. So I'm suggesting that that hour additional time on our existing meetings in March is what I was hearing, that might help us alleviate the need for additional meetings. But, yeah, compromise I suppose.

>> Steve: Brittini.

>> Brittini: Just, again, there will be times then, if we do extend or add more meetings that I unfortunately won't be able to be present, that does not mean I'm being dedicated but being honest.

I would also say whether we make the meetings longer or we add more meetings, I encourage the Commission to honor time and be decisive when we do have time.

I think that's kind of a larger issue that I'm noticing with my lovely peers. We love a deliberation. And oftentimes we end up just in kind of reflecting at the first point that or our first thought. So I would just encourage us to have and use best use of our time while we have it because we tend to come to the same conclusion anyway when we extend things.

>> Steve: Dustin.

>> Dustin: As for as more meetings go, we do have people who work here as well. Again, I've said that many of times.

I guess at this particular point I would ask why is it still not really possible for people to do something on a weekend at one point in time.

If you can't I'd like to hear why.

>> Brittni: Thank you, Dustin, for that.

>> Steve: Juanita.

>> Juanita: I'm in -- I don't have any objection to whatever time we meet, but if you make them longer and longer, I'm already dealing without eating. When do we eat if we have these long meetings? We only get ten minute breaks, that is just a thought.

>> Steve: That is a good point. We got to figure out how to get the pizza delivered to everybody.

Rebecca.

>> Rebecca: Yeah, I mean, to address Dustin's point, the weekends are difficult for me because I have four kids and they have all sorts of activities on the weekends. And so it just becomes logistically difficult for me especially because I don't have family nearby.

So that it means that my kids end up -- if we had a bunch of meetings on Saturdays, my kids would miss their activities because only my husband takes them. And when you have four kids, possibly going four different areas they just miss events.

I don't mind doing a Saturday here and there. But if it was an ongoing, consistent thing it would just be difficult for me.

The other thing is the same thing with going further in the evening, I could do like a Noon to 4:00 meeting or we could do a 9:00 to extend it to 2:00 meeting. But once we start pushing in the evening hours, we run in the issues of it makes it difficult for me with a family to get my kids to their events they have in the evenings because it's just me and my husband and they are often going different ways and that would mean one of them would be missing their activities. And frankly considering they are remote schooling right now, they need those activities. They really do need to get out and see people because it's hard on them not to be seeing people during the day.

>> Steve: Well, we've had this discussion before.

And I'm sure we will have it again and the challenges have not changed.

At some point we are going to have to make some hard -- each of us will have to make a hard decision as to what is going to happen, and some people, as Brittini points out, some people are just they are going to miss meetings.

So as long as we can get nine, we will be in good shape.

Future meeting agenda items.

I'm assuming that is Sue.

>> Sue: It is me.

I have not done this much lately, so I wanted to just let you know what is coming up.

Next week on the 18th we will be exactly six months from the time that this group selected a Chair.

So the motion was that it is six months the Chair and structure will be assessed.

And the rules of procedure it says that the Chair will serve for six month terms.

So at this point next week you would want to consider what you want to do about going forward in that arena.

Also, on the 18th we are going to have Tom Iboko come and talk to us a little about communities of interest.

And he will be bringing Susan Smith from the League of Women Voters on his panel for that presentation.

And that --

>> Anthony: You froze up, Sue.

We can't hear you.

I don't know Zoom. Am I right?

>> Juanita: What happened?

>> Steve: Juanita, since Sue is frozen.

>> Juanita: Real quick, I kind of thought when we had -- we said, I know we voted that we were going to change. But I thought our final remarks was we were going to keep you as Chairman and Brittini Kellom as the assistant.

Am I wrong?

>> Steve: Well, my recollection is that we were going to take a look at the six-month period and decide what we wanted to do.

So I guess.

>> Juanita: We got so used to you guys.

You are doing a great job.

>> Steve: You will have another shot at me.

Don't worry about it.

Sue is gone.

Do we have -- Rhonda, what?

>> Rhonda: I was hoping Sue would come back because she was talking about the continued ed. And honestly, I wanted just an opinion. I feel that with our meetings

that's where we have been running into the issue with the time is the continued ed going on and on and on.

And I heard a recommendation about possibly, and I thought it was a good recommendation, about having -- when we have continued ed, people come in to do that, maybe moving it to the end of the meeting so we can actually get to our business first. And then time allotted, that's left, they would have the end of the meeting, which I thought was an excellent idea because the last couple of meetings when we like when we had Arizona and that that's kind of what happened.

We ran out of time to get to our actual business that needed to get done because we had the continued ed.

So that is kind of a concern for me. I understand that continued ed is important, but I think maybe if we can move it to the end of our agenda so we can actually get to the vital work that we have to do, it might be a good thing.

Just a thought.

>> Sue: My Internet just totally crashed. I'm so sorry. And I missed what you said, so I appreciate you either repeating or --

>> Steve: Rhonda is concerned that we are running out of time. Continuing ed is important, but she is suggesting we put it on the back end instead of the front end so we get our business done and have a continuing ed.

That sums up her comment.

>> Sue: Okay. And I appreciate that.

The one for the 18th was already scheduled when internally staff started discussing this. So going forward after that on the 25th it will be at the end of the agenda.

So but we are going to practice some mapping actually and some mapping evaluation and we are going to use the State of Ohio.

And Matt Grossman really wanted us to use Michigan. And I said we can't be seen doing that.

It's just the optics would not be good. So we will work on Ohio just to practice mapping and just get a feel for how it's done and how it can be fair and how you can evaluate maps.

So I'm looking forward to that.

Also, then on the 30th we will have our VRA committee recommendation for groups to interview on that day.

So and then I hope on the 15th to do the VRA bidder presentations.

>> Steve: Juanita.

>> Juanita: Just one more suggestion.

When we get our correspondence from the different -- from the public, we give them only two minutes.

Sometimes can we kind of keep ours thoughts and just go directly to our thoughts to two minutes and maybe that would help us out?

Just another thought.

>> Steve: We will keep that thought in mind, but right now we will let everybody talk.
Sue, do you have announcements other than what you have already given us?

>> Sue: I don't.

>> Steve: Anyone else have an announcement you have not shared yet?

Anthony, you have an announcement.

>> Anthony: It's more of a question.

So where are we at with EDS as far as that contract?

>> Steve: Julianne can pipe in, but they are -- basically they are modifying the acceptance proposal to make sure everybody is good with the final iteration of the contract.

>> Julianne: To add the racially polarized voting work, that was not in the original scope of services.

>> Anthony: So.

>> Doug: They accepted it, haven't they, unchanged?

>> Julianne: We are still in the negotiation phase and will bring the Commission the proposed document for consideration at next week's -- at your next meeting. So, yes, we are still in the contract negotiation phase.

>> Steve: Juanita.

>> Juanita: I'm sorry. I did find the budget. Forgive me.

I have it here.

I was overlooking it.

I guess I'm tired.

Thank you.

>> Steve: Any other announcements from anybody?

And this is Juanita, you have peaked my memory.

In a lot of meetings I've been at I had individuals who had to eat.

They have health concerns that they need to eat.

And if that is a concern for any of our members or any of the staff or any of the translators, we can, please, eat.

You can turn your video off and chow on your Subway or whatever it is, or if it's absolutely -- if it's necessary, you know, say hey, we need to take a break. I got to get something, and we will do that.

We are not going to chain everybody to their computer.

We need to be cognizant of that.

So I would entertain a motion to adjourn.

We are past the time.

Erin is adjourning.

Richard is the second.

All in favor say aye.

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>> Aye.

>> Steve: I was just checking to make sure everybody knew how to turn off their mute button.

Have a wonderful weekend everybody.

I'm getting my second shot tomorrow.

>> Oh, good.

>> I'm getting my first tomorrow.

>> Good.

>> Yeah, I'm getting one, too.

>> Thank you, everyone.

>> Good-bye, guys.

[Meeting concludes at 4:03 p.m.]