City of Woodland Citizen's Advisory Committee

Citizen's Ad Hoc Committee Seeks Public Comment and Input

On City Council District Elections

The City Council received a request from community members to consider the use of district-based elections, in which officials are required to form a specific geographical area and can only be voted for by voters in that same area. The California Voting Rights Act (CVRA) attempts to prevent the disenfranchisement of any protected classes. A protected class is a class of voters who are members of a race, color, or language minority group. The Act does not mandate the abolition of at-large election systems but makes the use of at-large election systems more susceptible to a legal challenge. Earlier this year, Vice Mayor Tom Stallard and Council Member Bill Marble were appointed by the Woodland City Council to serve as the subcommittee related to the CVRA to consider the request. The Council subcommittee reported back recommending that the Council move forward with district elections. This recommendation was made, in part, due to the legal requirements of CVRA but more importantly to provide more citizens with the opportunity to seek election to the Woodland City Council and engage in the political process. The subcommittee also presented a proposed map for City Council Districts. They also recommended that the City Council establish a process to ensure that the Council and public have maximum flexibility for transitioning to district-based elections. A ballot measure would then be presented to the voters to transition to district based elections and the adoption of the district map.

The City Council established an ad-hoc Citizens' Advisory Committee because of public comments suggesting that the map before the Council needed additional public input and revisions. This five member committee will report back to the Council by presenting one or two new Council district maps as well as their comments on the district map prepared by the Council subcommittee. The Ad -Hoc Committee has held seven meetings since its inception. The committee first focused on the development of criteria to be used in drawing the districts.

The most important criteria in drawing the district maps is making sure the voting age populations is equal and the boundaries are also proportionate in size.

The Advisory Committee will utilize the following criteria in developing the district maps:

- Be as equal in population as possible. Stay within the legal requirements for district population distribution.
- Utilize voting age population including race and ethnic numbers (especially Hispanics and Asians census information) and gender.
- Fairness
- Consider such factors as geography (e,g, major streets & highways) and cohesiveness, contiguity, integrity and compactness of districts
- Maintain neighborhoods of common interest (e.g. School District trustee areas, school population areas)

The Citizen's Advisory Committee then individually worked with the Yolo county Elections Office to prepare a map to present to the committee as a whole. Based on these presentations, two maps emerged based on similarities between each of the maps. These two maps were refined at a subsequent meeting of the Committee and are ready to be presented to the Woodland community for their input and feedback.

Two public workshops will be held by the committee to allow the public to review the Committee's two maps as well as the map generated by the Council subcommittee. These meetings will be held on Friday, October 11, 2013 at 10:30 a.m. at the Woodland Community and Senior Center and also on Tuesday evening, October 29, 2013 at 6:30 pm in the Council Chambers at City Hall. These maps are also on the City website and will also be placed for review in City Hall and the Community Center. Comment cards will be available to send to City Hall as well as submitting your comments on the city's website. The committee welcomes your comments to allow them to finalize the maps for submittal to the City Council for their review and action.