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Sent: Sunday, February 20, 2022 6:05 PM

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Subject: Public Comment: 2/22 District Elections

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Dear Mayor Howell, Council Members and City Attorney Wang,

I will be unable to attend the 2/22/22 hearing on District Elections but am writing this email to be included as my public comment.

Voters are supposed to choose their elected officials. Folsom voters chose the current five councilmembers to serve the city for their respective four-year terms.

At the 2/8 public hearing, Councilmember Rodriguez, with concurrence from City Attorney Wang, stated "the voters would want us to keep our seats. Why would we not make adjustments so that we can retain the council we have?"

When, as incumbent councilmembers, you drew district lines to protect "your" seats, you in effect skewed Folsom elections, made them less competitive, and undermined Folsom voters' ability to decide whether to "retain" you in office for another four years.

1. Disregard of our communities.

Both "preferred" maps gerrymander districts that benefit Councilmembers Kozlowski and Rodriguez by splitting the major neighborhoods of Lexington Hills, Prairie Oaks, Willows Oaks, parts of East Broadstone and Central Folsom.

Also, how some councilmembers have spoken about the process of determining a district I have found to be astonishingly disrespectful of residents. At both the 2/8 and 2/15 public hearings, councilmembers talked about two "trades" of residents and about ten "swaps"; some were just "grabs" and two more were "snags." Neighborhoods were not just split, they were "squished." Several streets were "isolated," as if their residents do not go to parks and schools with adjoining neighborhoods. And another "little community" is "all by itself anyway," so it was OK move it.

Of course, incumbents will fall into a district either by themselves or with other incumbents. But by not protecting the integrity of our neighborhoods, the council-created districts, as Mr. Cline eloquently said, "in many, many areas ... is a preservation of incumbents." It is also a violation of the Fair MAPS Act.

2. The lack of transparency

During the 2/8 public hearing, while Mayor Howell and Councilmember Kozlowski were directing the drawing of district lines, on at least two occasions, the consultant quickly flashed five blue dots on the map that appeared to correspond with where the councilmembers live. Later in that meeting, when the consultant was going to show where Councilmember Chalamcherla lived, he asked for the councilmember's permission to display it to the public. He had not ask permission

prior to showing all councilmembers' residences. I can only assume this was to guide the Mayor and Councilmember Kozlowski as they drew districts to accommodate each member while not drawing public attention to it.

The same thing occurred at the 2/15 public hearing near the end of the hearing.

It is difficult not to conclude that council had planned how to draw districts that, with an assist from the consultant, would benefit each incumbent.

3. Disregard of public input

Council limited public input to 3 minutes per person while they themselves spent the majority of the hearings drawing district boundaries to their benefit, and then to two minutes after they had finished their mapping.

At the 2/15 meeting, Councilmember Kozlowski seemingly scolded that the public had offered no input, when in fact that evening both Mr. Goss and Mr. Cline gave very specific ways to redraw lines that respected neighborhoods.

Also at the 2/15 meeting, Mayor Howell remarked that she did not "even know who these people are" who have provided comments. There are 70,000 of us in Folsom. It is not surprising to not know everyone even as Mayor. That does not, however, diminish our input to justify ignoring it.

Finally, as I understand it, the CVRA exists to ensure the ability of a protected class to elect candidates of its choice or influence the outcome of an election. Yet, the council has not discussed Folsom's protected classes. The demographer's data shows Folsom's population includes 23% Asian and 11% Latino and 2% Black – all protected classes.

Despite the Mayor's decree that there is no concentration of minorities in Folsom, the "preferred" district maps point to the contrary with three of five proposed districts having greater than the average percentage of Asians, up to 33% in one proposed district. Historic Folsom is noted to be 20% Latino, higher than the city wide average, yet was paired with American River Canyon with a 6% population of Latinos. I am concerned that failure to acknowledge this and follow the requirements of the law with respect to election sequencing may put Council in violation of the CVRA.

I conclude by saying that I agree with the Mayor that these maps are "messy." They did not have to be. The council just needed to put our community's interests above their own.

Thank you,
Cheryl Davis
Empire Ranch