

From: Kathleen McCaffrey <kathleenmccaffrey4@gmail.com>
Date: January 3, 2025 at 2:00:38 PM PST
To: City Council <CityCouncil@healdsburg.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] - Fair and equitable districts...

Dear City Council,

As Healdsburg moves forward with district elections, our community's energy and attention should be directed toward establishing fair and equitable districts. The California Voting Rights Act has made it clear that district elections are our future, and now our priority must be ensuring these districts are drawn to truly serve all residents.

The critical task before us is determining district boundaries that reflect our community's diverse neighborhoods, preserve natural communities of interest, and ensure equal representation. This process demands careful consideration of demographic data, geographic continuity, and community input. We need robust public engagement to understand how residents identify their neighborhoods and what common interests bind different areas of our city together.

While the concept of a generally elected mayor may seem appealing, it risks overshadowing the immediate need for balanced representation. A single mayor, elected by the majority, could inadvertently centralize power and dilute the voices of smaller communities. Rather than being distracted by discussions of an elected mayor, we should concentrate our civic dialogue on questions that will shape our community's representation for years to come: How can we draw districts that give voice to historically underrepresented neighborhoods? How do we balance population numbers while respecting natural community boundaries? These are the pressing issues that deserve our immediate attention.

Let's focus on what's certain and important: creating districts that will serve as the foundation for fair and effective local governance in Healdsburg.

Kathleen McCaffrey
Healdsburg, California

From: Stephen Johnson <stevej1480@gmail.com>
Date: January 3, 2025 at 1:06:26 PM PST
To: David Hagele <dhagele@healdsburg.gov>, Evelyn Mitchell <emitchell@healdsburg.gov>, Ronald Edwards <REdwards@healdsburg.gov>, Chris Herrod <JHerrod@healdsburg.gov>, Ariel Kelley <akelley@healdsburg.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] - Dist elections/mayor

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I noticed last week that all of the letters to the editor in the paper were on one side of this issue. Here is the letter we wrote to the paper that was not published.

Dear Editor

As Healdsburg transitions to district elections, it is crucial that we focus our

efforts on establishing fair and equitable districts, rather than diverting attention to the unnecessary distraction of a generally elected mayor.

At First glance, the idea of a directly elected mayor may seem appealing, but it fundamentally misses the mark for what our city needs at this pivotal moment. With its relatively small population and diverse neighborhoods, Healdsburg is better served by a collaborative council model where leadership rotates and decisions are made collectively. A single, directly elected mayor risks consolidating too much power in one individual, potentially giving disproportionate influence to certain groups or neighborhoods. This would undermine the principles of equity and shared governance that district elections are designed to promote.

Moreover, the time and resources spent debating this issue detracts from the critical work of defining district boundaries. The shift to district elections is a significant change, and it must be handled with precision and care. Our focus should be on creating districts that reflect the unique makeup of our community, ensuring that all neighborhoods have an equitable voice in local governance.

A generally elected mayor does not address the core challenges we face. It will not improve representation, nor will it enhance governance. Instead, it risks creating unnecessary division and distraction at a time when unity and focus are most needed. Let's stay focused on our priorities: equitable representation through well-designed districts. This is the work that will truly strengthen Healdsburg's future.

Sincerely, Steve and Anne Johnson

Stephen Johnson
408 590 7171
stevej1480@gmail.com

From: Elisa Snedden <elisasnedden@yahoo.com>

Date: January 3, 2025 at 9:21:22 PM PST

To: David Hagele <dhagele@healdsburg.gov>, Evelyn Mitchell <emitchell@healdsburg.gov>, Ronald Edwards <REdwards@healdsburg.gov>, Chris Herrod <JHerrod@healdsburg.gov>, Ariel Kelley <akelley@healdsburg.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] - Planning for District Elections in Healdsburg

Reply-To: Elisa Snedden <elisasnedden@yahoo.com>

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Dear Members of the Healdsburg City Council,

Please take into consideration the voting rights information re: non-citizen participation in local elections presented in this report, as we contemplate implementing truly representational voting for City Council members by Districts as yet to be determined.

Thank you for your attention to this matter,
Elisa Snedden
Full-time Healdsburg Resident & Habitual Voter

The Myths and Truths of Noncitizen Voting in the United States

https://linkprotect.cudasvc.com/url?a=https%3a%2f%2fimmigrationforum.org%2farticle%2fthe-myths-and-truths-of-noncitizen-voting-in-the-united-states%2f&c=E,1,cFiTu-QbaJIbfFVBDFj9L13hSdZpLh12JqPjGWm0MXVsWI1UiWwsQc4OvDL5ZfqILa_pZCRnjkqG1j6m8w29Chu0kpbNE9MruuDawOODdD8.&typo=1

From: Valerie White <vwhite@sonic.net>
Date: January 3, 2025 at 9:38:27 AM PST
To: David Hagele <dhagele@healdsburg.gov>, Evelyn Mitchell <emitchell@healdsburg.gov>, Ariel Kelley <akelley@healdsburg.gov>, Chris Herrod <JHerrod@healdsburg.gov>, Ronald Edwards <REdwards@healdsburg.gov>, Jeff Kay <jkay@healdsburg.gov>, Raina Allan <rallan@healdsburg.gov>
Cc: Home <vwhite@sonic.net>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] - District Elections

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Dear City Council Members and City Staff,

I would like to present my thoughts on district elections. Please see attachment. If appropriate, please forward to the consultant who is working with the City through this process.

Sincerely,
Valerie White

Attachment – District Elections

District Elections

“The community is encouraged to participate during this second public hearing by providing input on the composition of the districts by sharing feedback on communities of interest that the public identifies within Healdsburg.”

It is very difficult to make meaningful comments at a City Council meeting without having more information on the subject, but I will endeavor to do so.

I believe there are two community meetings that will hopefully help people.

Jan 16 - community Center

Jan 24 - 24 at the Senior Center

Will these provide translation services? Shouldn't there be one meeting that is held entirely in Spanish?

Will participants be able to ask questions, make comments, and have an actual conversation with the presenters?

Will the meetings include visual presentations to aide in understanding the process?

“The Fair Maps Act defines a “community of interest” as a population that shares common social or economic interests that should be included within a single election district for purposes of its effective and fair representation. Characteristics of communities of interest may include, but are not limited to, shared public policy concerns such as education, public safety, public health, environment, housing, transportation, and access to social services. Characteristics of communities of interest may also include, but are not limited to, cultural districts, shared socioeconomic characteristics, similar voter registration rates and participation rates, and shared histories. Communities of interest do not include relationships with political parties, incumbents, or political candidates.”

There are two communities of interest that I would like to comment on.

THE SENIOR COMMUNITY, specifically the three senior communities east of Badger Park. These residents share many important interests and concerns:

1. the health of the river, flooding, how the county will be managing the Memorial Beach area
2. susceptibility to fires and possible evacuations
3. development of the Syar property
4. the development of Badger Park
5. Costs of utilities, water availability
6. Lack of parking in the downtown area
7. Lack of shopping choices that are affordable

THE LATINO COMMUNITY

This group has many, many interests in common and I do not want to address this here. My main concern is that the district map somehow includes **all** of the Latino population in the City. It seems that many live on March Ave. and off of Grove Street. Somehow, a map has to be drawn that includes all of these people so that their influence is not diminished.

From: alan cohen <alan@abcaia.com>

Date: January 3, 2025 at 10:57:48 AM PST

To: Evelyn Mitchell <emitchell@healdsburg.gov>, Chris Herrod <JHerrod@healdsburg.gov>,

Ronald Edwards <REdwards@healdsburg.gov>, Ariel Kelley <akelley@healdsburg.gov>, David Hagele <dhagele@healdsburg.gov>
Cc: Jeff Kay <jkay@healdsburg.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] - Districting

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Hello CC and Happy New Year,

I thought I would give you my thoughts on the redistricting issues.

When I read we got 'the letter' I thought it was unfortunate. Still don't quite understand why we get dinged for \$30K? But regardless while I can see the benefit of district elections in a larger City with large clearly defined districts, for small communities like ours the system we have currently seems better to me.

Trying to create districts with the same number of voters that reflect different demographic constituents will be a challenge and I expect the character of the constituencies in each district will be difficult to define. I can sort of see the SE river area with a lot of seniors, Parkland farms with ??? not sure what the nature of the residents would be but it is geographically distinct, South of the railroad tracks lower income and perhaps more Latino residents, March St. corridor with perhaps more lower income/ rental properties, downtown residential....not sure how to characterize those residents. Anyway, that exercise should be interesting.

I think it will be a challenge to create five districts no less seven. Although I suppose having seven smaller districts could prove easier to establish similar constituents. However I favor five districts as five council members seems like a good number in terms of discussion and coming to consensus. Seven would, I suspect, add a lot more council discussion and deliberations and lengthen already often long meetings. It would put more work onto the City Manager's plate to meet with and inform an additional two council members. I also worry that it will be harder to find community members that have the ability and interest to run for office and serve. I have not been impressed in the past with many of the candidates that have run for office but received few votes. With 7 districts the quality of the candidates I worry could suffer.

As far as the mayor position, I prefer equal council members vs. a Mayor presumably sitting above the rest. Again, for a small town.

I expect one could make arguments for all of the various options, my suggestion would be to go with five districts and a rotating mayor.

Best,

ALAN B. COHEN
ARCHITECT
Conceptual Design

*Feasibility Analysis &
Entitlement Consulting*
205 CENTER ST.
HEALDSBURG, CA 95448
(707) 431-7100
alan@abcaia.com
www.abcaia.com

From: Linda Cade <lindarcade@gmail.com>
Date: January 1, 2025 at 7:49:51 PM PST
To: Ronald Edwards <REdwards@healdsburg.gov>, David Hagele <dhagele@healdsburg.gov>, Evelyn Mitchell <emitchell@healdsburg.gov>, Ariel Kelley <akelley@healdsburg.gov>, Chris Herrod <JHerrod@healdsburg.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] - Election Districting

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Hello Council Members,

I want to express my desire to create 6 Districts as well as an elected Mayor as was proposed by the man at the last council meeting..

Especially if the plan is to significantly increase population.

I hope you are hearing from others as well.

Happy New Year,

Linda Cade
707.321.4555

From: Janis Watkins <janiswatkins@gmail.com>
Date: Sat, Jan 4, 2025 at 9:05 PM
Subject: Comments on Monday's closed and open city council meetings
To: Evelyn Mitchell <emitchell@healdsburg.gov>, Chris Herrod <cherrod@healdsburg.gov>, David Hagele <dhagele@healdsburg.gov>, Ariel Kelley (personal) <arielkelleyhbg@gmail.com>, Ronald Edwards <redwards@healdsburg.gov>
Cc: Jeff Kay <jkay@healdsburg.gov>, Warren Watkins <owlwo@sonic.net>

Dear Council Members,

We write with appreciation for your service. You have a complex and challenging job. Three points. First, the pending litigation to be discussed in closed session Monday should be taken seriously. We urge a quick resolution. Costly and distracting litigation does not serve our

community. After Measure O's defeat, many Healdsburg residents seem to have lost trust in City government. The City Council can begin to restore that trust by learning from and correcting the mistakes in crafting and promoting Measure O, and by settling this dispute on the proposed terms, which are modest and sensible.

Second, we suggest you rethink Monday's open session item "Second Public Hearing to Receive Input on the Composition of Districts for District Based Council Elections". The City Council should not go forward without first revisiting the December 16 decision (for five districts and a rotating mayor) on a properly-noticed agenda. This point has been raised by various speakers, community members and media.

Third, if the timeline seems too tight, request a reasonable extension from Mr. Shenkman. Public participation is important.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Janis and Warren Watkins

From: Michiko Conklin <michikoconklin@gmail.com>

Date: January 5, 2025 at 2:36:48 PM PST

To: David Hagele <dhagele@healdsburg.gov>, Evelyn Mitchell <emitchell@healdsburg.gov>, Chris Herrod <JHerrod@healdsburg.gov>, Ronald Edwards <REdwards@healdsburg.gov>, Ariel Kelley <akelley@healdsburg.gov>

Cc: Jeff Kay <jkay@healdsburg.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] - Redistricting/Mayor

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Hello City Councilmembers:

I am writing in the hopes that you will revisit your decision to continue the practice of having a rotating mayor. I feel strongly that a mayor who is elected by the entire City of Healdsburg is the most democratic form of leadership for the city.

-the mayor, as the leader of the city, should represent all the citizens of Healdsburg and should be voted on by all the citizens, not just a single district.

-one person should be accountable and be the actual "leader" of city government.

-we need continuity over several years, as most projects take much longer than one year.

-the logistics of the election process should not determine how the mayor is elected (easier and less expensive for the candidates). The consideration should be what's best for the citizens of Healdsburg, not the easiest process for the candidates.

-a councilmember who is only representing one district may never be mayor, as the terms are 4 years and there are 5 councilmembers. Therefore, your representative might never be mayor, so you may never have the chance to vote for the mayor.

Thank you for your consideration of having an at-large mayor for the City of Healdsburg.

Michiko Conklin

From: Jon Eisenberg <jon@eisenbergappeals.com>

Date: January 4, 2025 at 7:00:52 PM PST

To: David Hagele <dhagele@healdsburg.gov>, Ariel Kelley <akelley@healdsburg.gov>, Evelyn Mitchell <emitchell@healdsburg.gov>, Chris Herrod <JHerrod@healdsburg.gov>, Ronald Edwards <redwards@healdsburg.gov>, Jeff Kay <jkay@healdsburg.gov>, Raina Allan <rallan@healdsburg.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] - Agenda Item 7 for January 6 regular City Council meeting

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I'm emailing to remind you of the City's obligation, under Government Code section 54957.5(b)(2)(B)(ii), to immediately post to the City's website any written public comment sent to a majority of City Council members in connection with the City Council's January 6 public hearing on district elections—Agenda Item 7—within 72 hours of the hearing.

This provision of the Brown Act is explained in my December 26 letter to the City. It means that any written comment on Agenda Item 7 sent to the City Council today (Saturday), Sunday, or Monday must be promptly posted to the City's website.

Jon B. Eisenberg

507 Tucker Street

Healdsburg, CA 95448

510-305-7670

jon@eisenbergappeals.com

From: Ann Marie Montecucollo <ammontecucollo@gmail.com>

Sent: Sunday, January 5, 2025 5:01 PM

To: Chris Herrod <JHerrod@Healdsburg.gov>

Cc: Ariel Kelley <akelley@Healdsburg.gov>; David Hagele <dhagele@Healdsburg.gov>; Evelyn Mitchell <emitchell@Healdsburg.gov>; Ronald Edwards <REdwards@Healdsburg.gov>

Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] - Upcoming Agenda Issues

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Dear Councilman Herrod,

Thank you for your response. I can't help but wonder why you take such a negative view of elected officials of which you are one. Are you really saying that all elected Mayors are a negative for the working class?

Are you also saying that the people of Healdsburg are incapable of vetting a proposed candidate?

I respectfully disagree with your reasoning.

Ann Marie

On Jan 5, 2025, at 2:56 PM, Chris Herrod <JHerrod@healdsburg.gov> wrote:

Hi Ann Marie,

Thank you very much for sharing your erns with me!

Yes, there are many other towns dealing with districting, just as we are, and it is indeed frustrating.

The Voting Rights act has been around a long time, but it's not uncommon for new interpretation and applications of a law to emerge over time.

Unfortunately, should we choose to go with a Mayor who is elected at-large (city-wide) there are no guarantees that they will have any special qualifications or experience, or impartiality -as you wrote. If there is no one but a single candidate running (that is to say, who is willing to take on the burden of a city-wide election) then anyone could just walk into the office. The same risk exists within any one of the new districts also. That's my biggest concern, that in any scenario we choose, there will not be enough candidates stepping up to create competitive races. The benefit of district elections, however (as opposed to city wide ones), is that campaigns will be far easier and less expensive to run.

Also, I would mention that the current rotating Mayor, or an at large Mayor, has not unique ability to monitor or police the other councilmember about the Brown act -or anything else. Nothing changes there.

If enough people advocate for a 4 district map with an at-large Mayor I will strongly consider supporting it, despite the horrible crunch that changing course would impose on our staff who are working withIn a tremendously tight time constraint on this issue.

The main concern many have is that having an at-large elected mayor could be seen as a benefit for any candidates who are especially well connected and well financed enough, and who also has the free time, to run a city-wide campaign. It further tilts the Council away from having true working-class representaatn, which has been an ongoing problem, in my view. The city-wide Mayoral candidate stands in contrast with those running in the smaller, more approachable and less expensive districts races. These smaller races are far more doable for people who are punching the time clock every day.

In this way, the inclusion of an at-large mayor creates an unnecessary hierarchy. The most ambitious, connected politician ends up serving a two (or longer!) year term (opposed to the current one-year Mayor) and levying the prestige of being elected city wide. Even though they get just one vote, their position clearly outranks and overshadows the others in a way that is in stark contrast to how the mayor is seen and works now. This is not equity.

Thanks again for your input. It is truly appreciated!

J CHRIS HERROD | Healdsburg Vice Mayor

he/him/his

Cell: 707-328-8871

cherrod@healdsburg.gov | healdsburg.gov

City of Healdsburg

401 Grove Street. Healdsburg, CA 95448

707-431-3317 | Healdsburg.gov

Note: All e-mail communications through this e-mail account are public documents.

From: Ann Marie Montecucollo <ammontecucollo@gmail.com>

Sent: Saturday, January 4, 2025 7:24 PM

To: Chris Herrod <JHerrod@Healdsburg.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] - Upcoming Agenda Issues

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Dear Councilman Herrod,

There are issues that we are facing as a community at the moment which raise serious concerns. The issue of re-districting is mandatory and legal but under the extortive move by a law firm without warning is maddening . If I understand the situation correctly, there are many small towns dealing with the same problem: ignorance of the California Voting Rights Act. How can a bill, enacted in 2001 go unnoticed? Where were our local state officials? Jim Wood was an acting mayor here and then an Assemblyman. Mike McGuire is a member of the California State Senate, and James Gore, our Supervisor. It is obvious that we need an informed elected Mayor who is an impartial representative and can guide council in conjunction with an informed City Manager. The current rotating system just doesn't work. Case in point: violations of the 1953 Brown Act. If we continue to burden elected City Council members with a turn at role playing as Mayor, we can expect more of the same: fines and litigation as well as political maneuvering that will serve a particular district rather than the community.

Regarding the number of districts, there is too little information at hand for us to contribute an intelligent point of view. It seems that the number 5 is based on nothing but a comfortable

option that hopefully can be debated as further information is made public.
Please vote to add the position of Healdsburg Mayor as an elected official.

Thank you,
Ann Marie Montecucollo
707 235-2491

From: alan cohen <alan@abcaia.com>
Sent: Friday, January 3, 2025 1:48 PM
To: Jeff Kay <jkay@Healdsburg.gov>; Raina Allan <rallan@Healdsburg.gov>
Subject: [EXTERNAL] - district elections

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Healdsburg City Council c/o City Manager Kay,

Please provide to the City Council for their agenda this coming Monday Jan 6, Agenda Item 7A regarding District Based Elections.

Mayor Mitchell and City Council Members,

I thought I would give you my thoughts on the districting issues.

When I read we got 'the letter' I thought it was unfortunate. I still don't quite understand why we get dinged for \$30K, but in any event, while I can see the benefit of district elections in a larger City with larger and more clearly defined districts, for small communities our current system seems better to me. I understand that is moot at this point.

Trying to create districts with the same number of voters that reflect different demographic constituents will be a challenge and I expect the character of the constituencies in each district will be difficult to define. I can see the SE river area has a larger amount of seniors. Not sure how the residents of Parkland Farms would be characterized but geographically they are distinct., South of the railroad tracks perhaps has lower income levels and I expect a higher percentage of Latino residents. March St. with the multi-family housing could be the same. Not sure how to define the downtown residential neighborhoods. Anyway, that exercise should be interesting.

I think it will be a challenge to create five districts no less seven. Although I suppose having seven smaller districts could prove easier to establish similar constituents. However, I favor five districts as five council members seems like a good number in terms of discussion and coming to consensus. Seven would, I suspect, add a lot more council discussion and deliberations and lengthen already often long meetings and not sure it would add much to the deliberations. It

would put more work onto the City Manager's plate to meet with and inform an additional two council members. I also worry that it will be harder to find community members that have the financial ability and willingness to run for office and serve. I have not been impressed in the past with many of the candidates that have run for office but received few votes. With 7 districts the quality of the council members I worry could suffer.

As far as the mayor position, I prefer equal council members vs. a Mayor presumably sitting above the rest in prestige if not authority. Unnecessary and I believe counter productive for a small town and likely to lead to more \$\$\$ spent on the campaigns.

I expect one could make arguments for all of the various options under consideration but my suggestion would be to go with **five districts and a rotating mayor**.

Good luck with your deliberations.

Best,

ALAN B. COHEN
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From: TESSA KRAFT <tessaanne@comcast.net>

Date: January 5, 2025 at 6:05:12 PM PST

To: Ariel Kelley <akelley@healdsburg.gov>; David Hagele <dhagele@healdsburg.gov>; Chris Herrod <JHerrod@Healdsburg.gov>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] - District elections

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Dear Councilmember Kelley,

I am writing with regard to the proposed district elections for city council and how the position of mayor will be handled. I was extremely dismayed by what I saw at the last meeting where 4 of you decided that keeping the status quo of a rotating position was appropriate when you hadn't had any input from the community you claim to represent. This is not acceptable.

Currently no matter who is chosen we have a mayor who was elected by a majority of the voters in Healdsburg - that is the only status quo that should be followed. If the position continues to rotate that person will have only been elected by the voters of their district completely disenfranchising the voters in other districts. Once again this is not acceptable. I am in favor of having 4 districts as I believe the town is too small to divide into 5 districts and electing a mayor at large.

If the four council members continue on their chosen path it only reinforces the mistrust towards the council that many of us feel and was part of the reason Measure O was soundly defeated. I have lived in Healdsburg for almost 34 years and I hope to make it to the meeting on Monday but please accept my email as a legitimate comment on this issue.

Thank you.

Tessa Kraft
25 F Front St
Healdsburg
707-433-4160
707-239-6490

From: Marilyn Joyce <marilynjoyce@icloud.com>

Date: December 17, 2024 at 2:10:02 PM PST

To: Marilyn Joyce <marilynjoyce@icloud.com>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] - City Council meeting 12/16/24 on District formation

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Dear Mayor, vice mayor, city council members and city manager,

From your collective reaction when I caught you all returning from the break last night, I'm guessing my energy felt too confrontative, if so please accept my apology. I do recognize and respect the sincere and responsible approach you assume when representing the community. At the same time, my passion for democratic process is strong and that passion went on high alert last night after your unanimous decision to lock in the number of districts and the mayoral question in this first ever districting hearing which had minimal public input. Approaching you individually after the vote I did not feel heard when my concern was met with "It's a done deal!"

I didn't realize you would be voting on a significant district formation factor. However, in reviewing the agenda I see that part of your task was to provide direction to staff. I made the effort to attend in person in order to listen and learn but in particular to ask questions. The answers to those questions mostly left me with more questions; the hands-off nature of the Brown Act makes dialogue frustratingly awkward. Since I was able to attend meeting I'm guessing community members who have less forgiving evening schedules must feel even more

new to, and confused by this significant change.

Paul, from Redistricting Partners, the two women from Windsor who made a special trip to share their city districting experience, the thoughtful and principled Phil Luks among other speakers, each urged being true to the stated intent of this major change to voting districts, i.e. to make equity foremost in the process and for more fairly represented future. To me that means partnering with the community. In that regard, how did last night's vote increase decision making access for all, especially the Spanish speaking 34%?

Betsy from Windsor (missed her last name) advised that Healdsburg stay open as long as possible; that we wouldn't really understand what was best for our city and the community until the public actually begins drawing up a variety of maps. City manager Jeff Kay was pushing for staff direction but he did not insist on a decision last night, so why not reopen the process to allow more people to become engaged and heard. With all the emphasis on multiple input hearings, transparency and inclusion, last night felt like a really disappointing beginning. We all have competing issues that beg for our personal time and attention. If this is how future districting decisions will be made why should we feel encouraged to stay engaged?

Democracy is on the line for at least the next 4 years. Let's be a model for how we work together democratically and what is truly fair and possible in Healdsburg.

Merrilyn Joyce
Healdsburg
707/228-8974