



EL CAJON

El Cajon does about-face on redistricting maps process



El Cajon will pay its demographer an extra \$20,000 to glean more information on communities of interest as part of its redistricting and mapping process. (Karen Pearlman / The San Diego Union-Tribune)

City will pay demographer an extra \$20,000 about community

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BY KAREN PEARLMAN

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EL CAJON — Facing criticism from its Middle Eastern residents and a state advocacy group, the El Cajon City Council this week unanimously voted to pay its independent demographer an additional \$20,000 to take a deeper look at its community.

The council had previously voted 4-1 to not have National Demographic Corp. to do a more in-depth analysis that looked at voter turnout by race, languages spoken at home, educational attainment, income level and housing status.

The City Council said at that time that it was good with proceeding to the draft map phase of the redistricting process without the additional demographic services or the drafting of new maps for consideration. The council wanted to go with an existing map adopted in 2017 that the city used when it moved from at-large to by-district voting in 2018.

Redistricting is the process of adjusting voting districts so that each district — four in El Cajon — has substantially the same number of residents. Cities with voting districts are required to update their district election map following the release of the U.S. Census data.

The city has held three informational meetings and hearings about the process, and has had much input from the city's immigrant and new refugee communities, including those whose backgrounds are Arab, Afghan, Chaldean and Iraqi. The city has been told about the areas that constitute a Middle Eastern community of interest, many of whom are split in districts 2 and 4.

Jeanine Erikat of the group PANA (Partner: Americans) said that even though it appears in El Cajon, some shifts have occurred among that the city needs to acknowledge that.

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“We were really pleased that the City Council voted unanimously to pay for additional demographer services and software,” Erikat said.

California Common Cause had sent a letter to the city after its initial decision in which it stated that the city would be setting itself up for legal liability if it did not “solicit and listen to public testimony with an open mind, map communities of interest in the city and supplement its understanding of the city’s diversity and characteristics through other sources.”

EL CAJON EAST COUNTY LOCAL



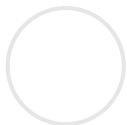
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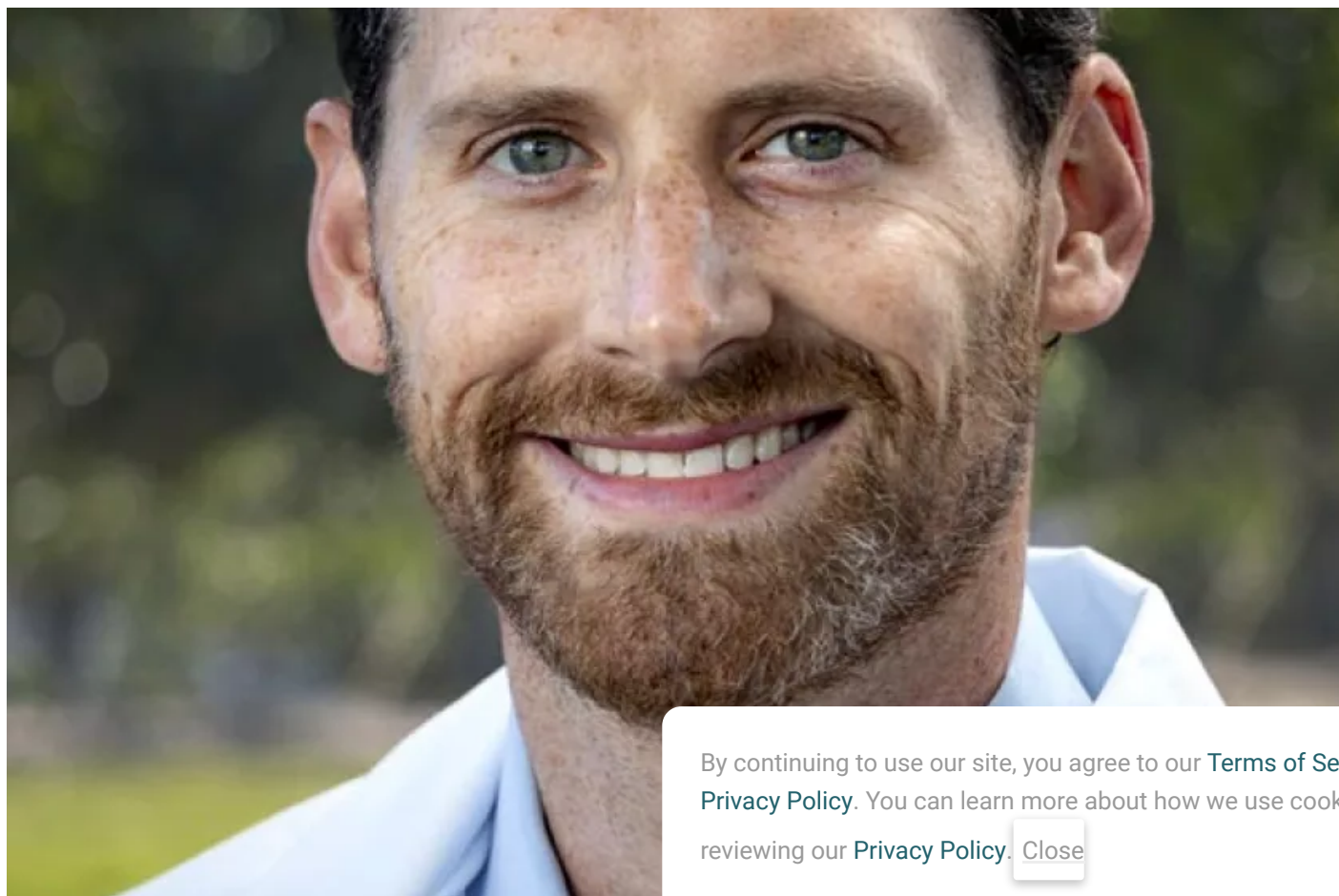
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