

## SPECIAL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

May 17, 2011

5:00 PM

The Clerk called the meeting to order.

The Clerk called the roll.

Present: William Cashin, David Wihby, Robert Rivard

Absent: William Gardner

Messrs: K. Sheppard, L. LaFreniere, D. Beauchesne

3. The Clerk advised that the first purpose of the meeting shall be to nominate and appoint a Chairman of the Redistricting Committee.

On motion of Mr. Rivard, duly seconded by Mr. Cashin, it was voted to appoint Mr. Wihby as Chairman.

4. Chairman Wihby advised that the second purpose of the meeting shall be organizational in nature and request the Clerk to provide a brief overview regarding statutory requirements.

City Clerk Matthew Normand stated as this Committee is aware, many of you have served in various capacities over prior redistricting efforts, the job here of the Committee is to adjust the ward boundary lines to account for population changes that have been identified in the current census, in accordance with the principal of one man and one vote. I know that the Planning & Community Development Department has already undertaken an effort to overlay the census block data over the City to assist this Committee in determining the proper ward boundaries. From the perspective of the Clerk's Office, I would just want the Committee to be aware that State law requires that the Charter changes need to go to the November ballot of this year. No sooner than 60 days the Board of Mayor and Aldermen has to order that question of adjusting the boundaries. So in September, at the September 6<sup>th</sup> Board meeting, the Board of Mayor and Aldermen will have to order the Clerk's Office to place the question on the ballot. There are public

hearing requirements that will have to take place in August. I have tentatively come up with a proposed schedule that we can certainly discuss as we go forward. If the Committee can come to some sort of agreement and conclusion by August 8<sup>th</sup> or August 9<sup>th</sup>, that would allow the Board of Mayor and Aldermen to discuss the matter and the findings of the Committee, order a public hearing on August 16<sup>th</sup> and hold the public hearing, which has to be posted to the public at least seven days prior, which brings us to August 30<sup>th</sup>. The Committee has a few months through the summer to come up with its finding and report to the Board. I know that Leon LaFreniere from the Planning & Community Development Department and Kevin Sheppard from the Highway Department are here tonight to let the Committee know what sort of resources they have and what they can help this Committee with going forward and get some direction.

Chairman Wihby asked can you go over those dates again?

City Clerk Normand stated tentatively we had targeted August 8<sup>th</sup> or August 9<sup>th</sup>, sometime that week, to come back with some sort of findings from this Committee. That would allow the Board of Mayor and Aldermen on August 16<sup>th</sup> to hold a special meeting to order, by State law, a public hearing. That public hearing needs to then be posted to the public by legal notice for seven days, which would bring us to around August 30<sup>th</sup>, the final Tuesday in August. The public hearing could be held on August 30<sup>th</sup> and then the Board could take those comments under advisement, make any necessary changes that it sees fit and order, on the September 6<sup>th</sup> regular meeting of the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, the Charter revision to the ballot and comply with State law.

Chairman Wihby asked is this the best thing for the Clerk's Office and everybody else involved?

City Clerk Normand replied it works, and it allows this Committee, as well as the Board of Mayor and Aldermen, a little bit of wiggle room during August to make any changes that come up after hearings.

Chairman Wihby asked could someone come forward to discuss the chart that was put together?

Mr. Kevin Sheppard, Public Works Director, stated with me are Leon LaFreniere and David Beauchesne. David actually put together the map and the information that was received as part of your package. As you can see there are some discrepancies in the census data in the wards. Some have grown and I believe some have actually gone down. What we found was an average of somewhere around 9,130 over the population of 109,571. We will be working with the Committee to determine where best to adjust the ward boundaries. I believe David

is going to pull up a map for you to see. From that, with some direction from you, perhaps we can gather some information and report back to Committee or have some working sessions with the Committee to determine how you feel best to work on the boundaries. The map that you had submitted to you as part of the agenda, what David did was put some information, I believe, along the ward boundaries, as far as populations. He didn't populate every block within the City. That would have just made the map too busy, but once we have some direction as to the Committee's thoughts in adjusting the wards, it will be much easier for us to get you that information and perhaps blow up sections. As you can see we have the ward boundaries outlined and the population within those blocks, the red rectangular areas. We will work with the Committee as best as we can and provide any information that is needed.

Chairman Wihby asked does the map that we have contain those blocks on it?

Mr. Sheppard replied it does, but it doesn't have all the populations. What David did is he populated the information next to the ward boundaries and he didn't extend those beyond the ward boundaries. David has all of that information.

Chairman Wihby stated I think the easiest way to approach this is going to be trying to do the least amount that is necessary in changing lines, if we don't have to affect the ward then we probably shouldn't. I know that in the packet that you got there were a couple of areas that I wanted to look at. Matt sent out a packet. Did you take a look at that?

Mr. Sheppard stated we received some information and we have started to take a look at that. I think, like you say, with working sessions, we will be able to populate some of the information along the ward boundaries and better identify exactly where that line should be, based on the average within each ward. I am sure we would try to keep it as close as possible, as the Committee suggests.

Mr. Leon LaFreniere, Director of Planning & Community Development, stated I don't have much to add beyond what Kevin has already identified. The numbers that are populated on the map do assume that the current methodology of 12 wards would be attained when these various polygons that contain the numbers are defined by the census tracts and the information that we received from the federal government. We can populate that map to any degree that the Committee would find useful. However, as Kevin has already identified we didn't want to make the map so busy that it was more difficult to manipulate, so you can let us know how best you would like to see that information. We can provide it for you in different formats. David has also been working on identifying other locations within the map such as locations of current Aldermanic residences, polling locations and that

sort of thing. We can insert and drop that type of information in as the Committee would find useful. Just let us know what works best for your purposes.

Mr. Wihby asked Kevin, on your map can we go to Wellington Road, that 883 number that is up there?

Mr. Sheppard replied off of Eastern Avenue, yes. That is actually a development of apartments, and the way the block data was put together was that group of apartments within that development...I actually talked to David a little bit about that and we don't control how they put the block data together. There is a group of apartments that consist of that 164 number and there are some other apartments along Eastern Avenue that are a part of the same complex. There are also some homes along Old Wellington Road, as well as some other apartments down off of Old Wellington Road that consist of that 883 number. That block data actually breaks up that apartment complex off of Eastern Avenue.

Chairman Wihby asked are the 883 number and the 164 number separate numbers?

Mr. Sheppard replied correct.

Chairman Wihby stated so with the 883, 164 and 268, there are 1100 or so in that area. Is that the only road that goes in there or are there other small roads?

Mr. Sheppard replied that is the only public street that goes in there.

Mr. David Beauchesne, Senior Planner, stated these blocks are created by the federal census takers for their own internal purposes. They don't take into consideration local needs around the country, therefore aggregating house by house, population and other data. What you see is reflected in their work. We just overlaid it over local mapping.

Chairman Wihby stated so I guess where I am coming from is ward 4 needs households and ward 6 has to lose some. If you were going there, you wouldn't be looking at the 883 number, you probably would have to take that whole 164.

Mr. Sheppard stated correct.

Chairman Wihby stated I drove up there and couldn't distinguish where the 164 was.

Mr. Sheppard stated I think that is probably a driveway that goes in and around the building. It is not a public street. It is probably a driveway that goes in and around the buildings that are in that area.

Mr. Beauchesne stated the roadways themselves you can see are a grayish/whitish line, on the map, overlaying the red block lines or areas. Obviously Eastern Avenue is a little white line that is overlaying the red underneath it that defines a block edge.

Chairman Wihby asked if you took that whole area, you would assume that anything on the west side of Karatzas Avenue would be one ward and the east side would be another?

Mr. Sheppard replied right, if that's the way...

Chairman Wihby interjected would the whole street be part of the 268 number?

Mr. Sheppard replied the southeast side of that would be one ward, if that's what we ended up doing. The west side would be another ward. A street like Karatzas Avenue is not actually a bad divider line, because to the east is one development and to the west is another development. On Karatzas there are a few single family homes, but I think that is towards the top and not even in that area.

Mr. Beauchesne stated Mr. Chairman, any changing of ward lines would, of necessity, have to follow one of these block lines. That is how they would have to go, whichever ones you pick to switch over. That would define the edge of whatever new shape you would have.

Chairman Wihby stated if we are looking at that spot, it makes no sense to take the 883, which is probably enough that we need, but then leaving 164 or the 268, I guess, because half of those would be part of the 268 in ward 6 and the other half would be in ward 4.

Mr. LaFreniere stated that is the challenge with drawing a lot of these lines, not creating islands or projections out of where you would anticipate the natural boundaries to be. You are absolutely right.

Chairman Wihby asked is it okay to proceed? We will schedule another meeting and let Planning and Highway, and whoever else wants to look at this, come up with sort of a number that talks about what I sent. It is probably a good working document as far as keeping the number close. It may not be exact depending on where the lines go over, but if we start with it, maybe you can follow along and

keep working with this. Then you can come back to the Committee at a later meeting.

Mr. Sheppard stated that is fine.

Chairman Wihby asked how far out do you want to go?

Mr. Sheppard replied I would say two to three weeks.

Mr. LaFreniere stated at this point, because we have been doing a lot of work on this in anticipation of your Committee's meeting, we can probably meet your schedule within a week or two, whatever works best.

Mr. Sheppard stated Mr. Chairman, if you would like, we can work with you and the City Clerk to schedule the next meeting, probably within three weeks.

City Clerk Normand stated we don't have to necessarily decide that date tonight. We can see how the planning goes and then I can contact the Committee members and see what date works for them. We can figure that the meeting will be sometime in early June.

Chairman Wihby stated why don't we anticipate three or four weeks from now. If you have it done sooner, we can set it up sooner. We have until August to get it done. Does that work?

Mr. Sheppard replied yes.

Mr. LaFreniere replied yes.

Mr. Rivard asked is there a place where this map can be laid out and we can work on it, somewhere where the members can walk in and take a look? I was trying to spread this out at home and couldn't find a place big enough.

Mr. Sheppard replied we will have a map at the Highway Department, as well as the Planning & Community Development Department.

Mr. Rivard stated it would be nice to have it laid out in front of us.

Chairman Wihby asked what is easier? Is it for us to come to you? Do you have a location somewhere where this is out and we can work on it?

Mr. Sheppard replied yes, we could do it either at the Highway Department or at the Planning Department. We could work at either location. It may be easier for us to meet down at Planning. David has the information and the data.

City Clerk Normand stated Mr. Chairman, we would have no ability to record the meeting, so it would have to be in one of the conference rooms here at City Hall or in the Chambers.

Mr. Sheppard replied that is possible as well.

Mr. Beauchesne stated there would be public seating in those rooms as well.

City Clerk Normand stated we could certainly set up one of the conference rooms with the maps and such ahead of time. Maybe on the second floor here at City Hall. That would allow us to record it and give some workspace.

Chairman Wihby stated okay, so get back to the City Clerk when you are ready and he will check with Committee members and we will go from there.

Chairman Wihby addressed item 5 of the agenda:

5. Any other business which may come before the committee.

There was no other business that came before the committee.

On motion of Mr. Rivard, duly seconded by Mr. Cashin, it was voted to adjourn.

A True Record. Attest.

Clerk of Committee