

~AD HOC REPORT~
Reapportionment (2022) Meeting #1
Tuesday, January 17, 2023

Chairman Knapp called the meeting to order at 6:30p.m. on Tuesday, January 17, 2023. Present was Committee Member Nancy Cammisa, absent was Committee Member Fred Visconti. From the City were Les Pinter, Deputy Corporation Counsel; Ex-Officio members; Ben Chianese, Farley Santos, Joe Britton, Paul Rotello, Warren Levy, and Irving Fox. Also in attendance were residents; Roberto Alves, Larry Riefberg, Ken Gucker and Al Robinson.

Mr. Pinter provided a brief overview of the reapportionment process and the results of the Reapportionment Advisory Committee (R.A.C.). He noted committee members were Michael Safranek, Duane Perkins, Ben Chianese, and John Priola; a fifth member was not selected. The Committee was not able to recommend a plan to the Council. As a result, the City Council is tasked with preparing and approving a plan. This ad hoc committee was appointed to create that plan and present it to the City Council with final approval by March 1st.

Mr. Knapp reviewed the timeline for presenting and approving the plan.

Mr. Chianese discussed a plan that originated during the R.A.C. process (Proposal A). He explained that the goal for each ward should consist of 12,360 individuals with a +/- 10% deviation.

Mr. Rotello asked for clarification of the March 1st deadline and asked for the percentage of changes to the ward; Mr. Chianese explained: 1st Ward (.15%), 2nd Ward (-.93%), 3rd Ward (-.03%), 4th Ward (-.13%), 5th Ward (1.32%), 6th Ward (-.53 %), 7th Ward (.14%).

Mr. Knapp discussed Proposal B. He explained that this plan creates 2 downtown wards and used as many natural borders as possible with 1 polling location change.

Mr. Britton inquired about the 10% deviation vs. the racial percentage within a ward, Mr. Pinter explained he would need to do additional research before answering.

Mr. Santos commented on his concerns with the percentages and the need to change a voting location and asked for a breakdown of the socioeconomic demographic. Mr. Knapp explained the need to address population growth in the city's downtown area.

Mr. Rotello expressed his concerns with Proposal B with regards to political party representation. Mr. Knapp explained that political representation was not taken into consideration when creating Proposal B, and that it should not be used as a basis for creating any proposal.

Mr. Britton inquired about street changes in Proposal B. Mr. Chianese explained that the software does not offer that option and it would have to be done manually.

Mr. Rotello opposed the need for a new downtown district based on a philosophical outlook.

Mr. Santos discussed the mathematics of Proposal A vs. Proposal B. Mr. Knapp explained that there is a need for better representation in the city's downtown.

Mr. Levy discussed his past experience as Chair of the Reapportionment Committee when he received petitions for the creation of a more focused downtown ward. He explained the need to move forward from the old way of redistricting to fit the needs of the changing population needs and growth.

Mr. Rotello explained the need to balance the wards while also representing the population.

Mr. Britton reiterated his concern with Proposal B and supports the minimal changes in Proposal A.

Mr. Chianese explained his focus on incorporating the State's new district map when creating Proposal A and discussed mileage within each ward.

Mr. Pinter discussed the approaches taken for each plan, and confirmed that these approaches do not make the plans unlawful. He encouraged all participants to take a closer look at the plans and explained that the data questioned during this meeting could be provided to the ad hoc at another meeting.

Mr. Knapp asked for further clarification of the process' timeline and requirements.

Mr. Chianese suggested another meeting so that the plans can be reviewed further.

Mr. Santos inquired about the potential for legal challenges to Proposal B. Mr. Pinter explained that he needs to review the information and discuss it with outside counsel.

Mr. Rotello discussed time constraints.

Mr. Knapp asked that the committee reconvene in one week to confirm the legal validity of the plans.

A motion was made by Councilman Knapp and seconded by Councilwoman Cammisa, to extend this committee until next Wednesday (January 25, 2023) evening at 6:30pm. The motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Councilman Knapp, and seconded by Councilwoman Cammisa, to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:14 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Jack Knapp, Chair
Nancy Cammisa