

Town of Riverdale Park
Redistricting Committee Meeting Minutes
July 6, 2022

In Attendance

Mayor Alan K. Thompson
CM Aaron Faulx, Ward 2
Chris Fike, Committee Member
Ifiok Inyang, Committee Member
Kate Kelly, Committee Member

Ryan Chelton, Director of Development Services
Frederick Sussman, Town Attorney

Call to Order

Mayor Thompson called the Redistricting Committee Meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Inyang made a motion to approve the Redistricting Committee Meeting agenda for July 6, 2022. Ms. Kelly seconded the motion. Vote: 3-0-1 (Favorable)

Roll Call Vote:

Mayor Alan K. Thompson: Abstain
Chris Fike: Aye
Ifiok Inyang: Aye
Kate Kelly: Aye

Discussion:

There were no changes to the agenda or stated conflicts of interest.

Presentation

Frederick Sussman, Town Attorney, Legal Requirements for Redistricting

Town Attorney Fred Sussman discussed the fundamental constitutional premise that local legislative districts (wards) consist of approximately equal population and stated that the redistricting process occurred approximately every ten years. Mr. Sussman defined the term “population” and discussed court findings related to the proportions of local legislative districts (wards).

Mr. Sussman outlined the considerations related to redrawing ward boundaries and Mayor Thompson provided examples. Mr. Sussman discussed the following basic considerations related to redistricting:

- Boundaries should be contiguous and compact; not sprawling and meandering.
- To the extent practicable, wards should not be split by major barriers such as railroad tracks, bodies of water, major streets, etc.
- To the extent practicable, wards should maintain communities of interest; not divide groups of residents with similar interests.
- Wards should not be constructed in a way to dilute the opportunity of minority populations to elect candidates of their choice.

Mr. Sussman also discussed other considerations such as the preservation of existing political communities, the division of jurisdictions (cities, towns, etc.), gerrymandering, providing for racial and ethnic fairness, and the anticipation of future population growth.

Mayor Thompson discussed the significant changes that were made to the ward boundaries during the redistricting in 2000. Mayor Thompson stated that it was his understanding that population changes and communities of interest guided the redrawing of the wards. Mr. Sussman stated that he was not certain of the charge that was given in 2000 but the outcome of redistricting needed to reflect “one person, one vote” and be in compliance with the Voting Rights Act.

Mayor Thompson discussed the County redistricting process and stated that the considerations discussed previously did not appear to be taken into account during that process. Mr. Sussman stated that he was not aware of the details related to the County’s redistricting process but reiterated that the end result had to reflect “one person, one vote” and there could not be any violations of the Voting Rights Act. Mr. Sussman discussed the redistricting process in Harford County.

Ms. Kelly asked what constituted a minority (race versus percentage) and Mr. Sussman provided clarification.

Mr. Inyang asked if there was an opportunity to increase or decrease the number of wards and Mr. Sussman replied that a charter amendment would be needed. Mayor Thompson stated that there was time to amend the Charter, if recommended by the Redistricting Committee. Mr. Sussman discussed the timeline related to redistricting and the 2013 Town Election.

Mr. Fike asked if Mr. Sussman recommended any specific changes to the current wards and Mr. Sussman stated that nothing appeared to be highly irregular with the current wards however, the Redistricting Committee needed to work through their process.

Mr. Inyang asked about the data source and Mayor Thompson stated that he would discuss the data sources further as part of New Business.

Mr. Sussman stated that he was available to assist the Redistricting Committee, as needed.

CM Faulx thanked Mr. Sussman for his assistance with the Town’s redistricting process.

New Business

Redistricting Process

Mayor Thompson provided a detailed overview of the data used for redistricting. Mayor Thompson discussed how PGAtlas, as well as the data collected as part of the Town’s rental licensing program, could be used to refine the census data for the multifamily buildings in Town.

Mayor Thompson discussed the 2010 (current) ward boundaries and the considerations made during that redistricting process. Mayor Thompson stated that Ward 1 boundaries anticipated the growth related to the Cafritz development. Mayor Thompson discussed the communities of shared interest (Baltimore Avenue, Madison Hill, and Ward 5 apartment buildings) identified during the 2010 redistricting process.

Ms. Kelly asked about the Council's role in the redistricting process and Mayor Thompson stated that in the past the ward boundaries were drawn by the Council. Mayor Thompson stated that, this year, the Redistricting Committee would present their recommendation to Council for review and approval. Mr. Fike asked if more than one option could be presented to the Council for their review and Mayor Thompson replied in the affirmative.

Mayor Thompson and Ms. Kelly discussed the timeline for redistricting as it related to the 2013 Town Election.

Mr. Fike asked what the delta was between the 2010 and 2020 census data and Mayor Thompson stated that he had not finalized his calculations yet. Mayor Thompson discussed the timing of the collection of the census data and the opening of the Pilot House.

Mr. Inyang asked about the communities of interest that were determined in 2010 and asked if the Redistricting Committee was bound to the same communities of interest. Mayor Thompson stated that the Redistricting Committee was not bound to the 2010 communities of interest.

Mr. Inyang asked about the consideration of future growth and Mayor Thompson stated that he would review his notes from the 2010 redistricting process to determine what percentage was used at that time. Mr. Fike asked when the completion of other multifamily buildings in Town was anticipated, and Mayor Thompson stated that no date had been given yet.

CM Faulx thanked the Redistricting Committee for their work.

Mayor Thompson suggested that the Redistricting Committee meet again in August and hold community outreach meetings in the fall.

Mr. Inyang asked if interviews could be conducted in the neighborhoods that were divided by ward boundaries and Mayor Thompson suggested that meetings could be held with residents in those areas.

Mayor Thompson reported that a map and presentation were made to the Mayor and Council as part of the post-2010 census redistricting process. Mayor Thompson stated that he envisioned that the Redistricting Committee would make redistricting recommendations and he would carry forward their recommendations to the Council.

Ms. Kelly asked what members of the Redistricting Committee could do to prepare for the next meeting and Mayor Thompson suggested that they review the current ward boundaries, determine potential changes, and identify communities of interest.

Unfinished Business

There was no unfinished business.

Next Meeting

The Redistricting Committee determined that the next meeting would be held on August 3rd at 7:00 p.m.

Adjournment

Mr. Inyang made a motion to adjourn the Redistricting Committee Meeting at 8:26 p.m. The motion was seconded by Ms. Kelly. Vote: 3-0-1 (Favorable)

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Roll Call Vote:

Mayor Alan K. Thompson: Abstain

Chris Fike: Aye

Ifiok Inyang: Aye

Kate Kelly: Aye