

**Town of Riverdale Park
Redistricting Committee Meeting Minutes
September 21, 2022**

In Attendance

Mayor Alan K. Thompson
Chris Fike, Committee Member
Ifiok Inyang, Committee Member
Kate Kelly, Committee Member

Ryan Chelton, Director of Development Services

Call to Order

Mayor Thompson called the Redistricting Committee Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Approval of the Agenda

Mr. Inyang made a motion to approve the Redistricting Committee Meeting agenda for September 21, 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.

Approval of Minutes

Ms. Kelly made a motion to approve the minutes from the August 11, 2022, Redistricting Committee Meeting as submitted. The motion was seconded by Mr. Inyang. Vote: 3-0-1 (Favorable)

Roll Call Vote:

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

Discussion:

Mayor Thompson clarified that a crossing of a ward near the railroad tracks could also happen at the East-West Highway bridge in addition to Town Center and Cafritz bridge.

Discussion Items

Populations of existing wards based on 2020 census

Mayor Thompson discussed the updated populations of the existing wards:

Ward 1: 1,485

Ward 2: 1,218
Ward 3: 1,114
Ward 4: 1,159
Ward 5: 1,207
Ward 6: 1,175

Mayor Thompson discussed the population estimates for the Town: 7,353 according to the 2020 Census and 7,358 according to the State of Maryland. Mayor Thompson noted that the difference between the numbers was likely due to incarcerated individuals who previously lived in Riverdale Park and are counted as part of the Town's population according to the State of Maryland.

Mayor Thompson noted that the target population for each ward was 1,226, with 1,287 and 1,165 as the + or -5%.

Mr. Fike stated that it was surprising that the 2021 Google estimate of the Town's population was lower and he had anticipated that the population would increase with the opening of the Pilot House. Mayor Thompson agreed and discussed the timing of the occupancy of the Pilot House.

Mr. Fike asked for clarity regarding the current population of Ward 1. Mayor Thompson stated that the population was approximately 1,485 which was more than 5% higher than the target population for each ward. Mayor Thompson also noted that there would be additional development in Ward 1.

Possible communities of interest

Mayor Thompson stated that he had considered a possible community of interest as the residences that experience flooding, but it was difficult to draw ward boundaries consistent with the goals of redistricting and within the target population range.

Mr. Inyang noted that the Committee had discussed housing style, garden style versus high rise apartments, as a possible community of interest and he had been thinking about how to apply that as community of interest while keeping the population within the target population range. Mayor Thompson stated that he had created a draft map that showed some possible options. Mr. Inyang noted that he was not necessarily in favor of housing style as a community of interest.

Ms. Kelly discussed the history of Ward 5 and 6 with regard to participation but stated that she was not certain that the issue could be addressed through redistricting. Mayor Thompson discussed the difficulty that he experienced in filling an unexpected vacancy in Ward 6. Mayor Thompson discussed the goals of redistricting and the difficulty of addressing participation concerns through redistricting and Ms. Kelly agreed.

CM Aaron Faulx stated that the Council addressed the needs of all residents no matter what ward they lived in.

Draft Ward Maps

Mayor Thompson provided an overview of the 2010 ward boundaries and presented three draft ward maps for the Committee's review.

Mayor Thompson provided an overview of Draft Map #1 (labeled Less Disruptive) and stated that Draft Map #1 was the least disruptive to the current ward boundaries.

Mr. Inyang asked about the populations of each ward in Draft Map #1 and Mayor Thompson reported the following:

Ward 1: 1,228
Ward 2: 1,216
Ward 3: 1,246
Ward 4: 1,284
Ward 5: 1,207
Ward 6: 1,175

Mr. Fike asked Mayor Thompson to display the map layer that showed all of the properties in each ward. Mayor Thompson provided an overview of the property locations.

Mayor Thompson provided an overview of Draft Map #2 (labeled Northern Swath) that would connect the Riverdale Park Station and Madison Hill communities.

Mayor Thompson provided an overview of Draft Map #3 (labeled Start Apartments) which had significant changes to the 2010 Ward boundaries and would start with the reconfiguration of the wards on the east side of Town, mostly comprised of multifamily buildings.

Mr. Inyang asked about the population of the yellow ward on Draft Map #3 and Mayor Thompson replied that the population was 1,238. Mayor Thompson and Mr. Inyang talked about the possibility of moving a small multifamily building from the yellow ward to the green ward to be closer to the target population. Mayor Thompson also discussed other potential minor adjustments to the proposed ward boundaries in Draft Map #3.

Mr. Inyang stated that he liked Draft Map #3 specifically as it related to the multifamily buildings east of the Anacostia River. Mr. Inyang and Mayor Thompson discussed minor boundary adjustments between the blue and yellow wards and the impact on the populations of each ward. Mr. Inyang and Mayor Thompson also discussed the potential for future development in the yellow ward. Mayor Thompson stated that he would make the minor adjustments that were discussed for the Committee to review at a future meeting.

Mayor Thompson noted that the Committee could present more than one map to the Council.

Mayor Thompson asked if there was any interest in making adjustments to Draft Map #2.

Mr. Fike stated that he wanted to keep in mind the potential development over the next 10 years to avoid major shifts to ward boundaries over two consecutive redistricting cycles.

Mayor Thompson discussed the potential impact of future development to include two substantial multifamily buildings in Riverdale Park Station. Ms. Kelly asked about the size of the proposed development at the corner of Queensbury Road and Rhode Island Avenue. Mayor Thompson stated that the proposed development would contain approximately 90 units which would be approximately 200 new residents. Mayor Thompson also discussed the proposed redevelopment of the Chambers Funeral Home property with a similar number of potential units and new residents. Mr. Inyang noted that the 2020 Census did not include the Pilot House in Riverdale Park Station. Mayor Thompson stated that the 2010 ward boundaries were drawn in anticipation of the future development in Ward 1.

Mr. Fike noted that the 2020 Census did not include the Pilot House and that needed to be taken into consideration when drawing the ward boundaries.

Mr. Inyang asked about the possibility of adding a seventh ward and the impact on the population of each ward. Mayor Thompson discussed the populations of various areas throughout Town. Ms. Kelly stated that she was not in favor of an odd number of wards because of group dynamics and the need to potentially break a tie.

The Committee asked CM Faulx for his opinion on the draft maps. CM Faulx stated that he did not want to sway the Committee in any way, and that he was viewing the draft maps through the lens of the ward that he currently represented. CM Faulx stated that he would have the opportunity to discuss the maps in greater detail when they were presented to the Council.

Mr. Fike asked if CM Faulx felt that there were any boundaries that seemed out of place or communities of interest that were not recognized. CM Faulx discussed the homes located south of East West Highway and 48th Avenue as a division point for several of the draft maps. CM Faulx stated that the multifamily buildings east of the Anacostia River, Riverdale Park Station, and Riverdale Elementary School were communities of interest.

Mayor Thompson discussed the current boundaries of Ward 2 and noted that the neighborhood on the other side of the Anacostia River within Ward 2 was more isolated from the rest of the ward and East West Highway was a barrier, but the current boundaries of the ward worked well.

Mr. Fike asked if there had always been six wards and Mayor Thompson stated that there had been six wards for at least 30 years. Ms. Kelly discussed how long she had lived in Town and noted that there were six wards at that time.

Ms. Kelly asked how minor boundary adjustments to the blue and yellow wards in Draft Map #2 would impact the populations of each and Mayor Thompson discussed the population adjustments.

Mr. Fike asked about the purple, red, light green, and dark green wards east of the Anacostia River and Mayor Thompson discussed the populations in each area and how the ward boundaries were determined.

Mr. Inyang discussed his concerns related to Riverdale Park Station and the characteristics of the ward that were included on Draft Map #2.

Mr. Fike stated that he felt that the more natural split for the Town was East West Highway, and he discussed the density of the various neighborhoods. Mr. Fike stated that adjusting the number of wards in the future may be a better approach.

Mayor Thompson showed the Committee the capabilities of the technology used to create the draft maps.

Mr. Fike asked if Riverdale Park Station, currently in one census block, could be divided further for the 2030 Census. Mayor Thompson stated that he planned to make that request.

Mayor Thompson asked if there was any interest in adjusting or discussing Draft Map #1. Mr. Inyang stated that Draft Map #1 did not seem to account for future development, and he was not in favor of it.

Mr. Fike reiterated his concerns about making major changes to ward boundaries now and then again in the next redistricting cycle and noted that the estimates for future development could be incorrect. Mayor Thompson discussed minor adjustments that could be made to Draft Map #1.

Mr. Inyang stated that Draft Map #1 assumed that the current ward boundaries made sense and he was not certain that was accurate. Mr. Inyang stated that he understood Mr. Fike's position. Mr. Fike noted that more than one map could be presented to the Council. Ms. Kelly stated that Draft Map #1 seemed workable and fair.

Mayor Thompson asked if he should continue working on Draft Map #2 and Mr. Fike discussed the aspects of the map that he liked. By consensus the Committee decided not to pursue Draft Map #2.

Mr. Inyang asked about the population of each ward if there were eight wards and Mayor Thompson replied that the population would be slightly more than 900. Mr. Fike stated that having eight wards may help in one area but hurt other areas that were not easily split. Mr. Inyang agreed with Mr. Fike as it related to the multifamily buildings in Town.

Mr. Fike asked about the concept of At-large Councilmembers and Mayor Thompson provided an overview. Ms. Kelly stated that a Charter Amendment would be required to change to At-large Councilmembers.

Mr. Fike stated that it was his recollection that the next step was to get public input on Draft Map #1 and Draft Map #3. Mayor Thompson discussed the minor adjustments suggested by Mr. Inyang.

CM Faulx thanked the Committee for their work and stated that he looked forward to public and Council input on the draft maps.

New Business

There was no new business to be discussed.

Next Meeting

Mayor Thompson stated that the next meeting was scheduled for October 19th at 7:30 p.m.

Adjournment

Ms. Kelly made a motion to adjourn the Redistricting Committee Meeting at 8:44 p.m. The motion was seconded by Mr. Fike. Vote: 3-0-1 (Favorable)

Roll Call Vote:

Mayor Alan K. Thompson: Abstain

Kate Kelly: Aye

Ifiok Inyang: Aye

Chris Fike: Aye