

City of Hyattsville — 2022 Redistricting Committee

September 8, 2022, 7 PM–8:30 PM — Virtual

MINUTES

In attendance: Leland Dudek, Alicia Sanchez Gill Freemyn, Jennifer Gafford, Greta Mosher, T. Carter Ross (Recorder), Andrew Sayer (Chair), Krystil Smith, Cynthia Totten. **Staff:** Shakira Louimarre, Sekour Mason, Cindy Zork. **Regrets:** Cliff Mayo. **Guests:** David Marshall, Chuck Perry.

1. Roll Call

A quorum was noted, and Chair Sayer called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. Attendance was registered.

2. Minutes

Minutes from the August 23, 2022, meeting were approved on a voice vote.

3. Final Map Adjustments

a. Discuss Community Feedback

Sayer noted that a notable amount of feedback has been received. Common threads seem to be a preference for straight lines, for minimizing ward boundaries along residential roads (splitting neighbors). Some people prefer minimal movement is preferred so that people don't feel like they are bouncing from ward to ward, others prefer more forward-looking balance to keep representation on Council even. Ross mentioned the feasibility of drawing lines along back property lines instead of down the middle of streets. Sayer showed a map of Census blocks (which normally use the middle of streets as borders). He noted that if we split census blocks we would be less sure of population counts and would be using estimates in some cases instead of true population counts. Splitting census blocks is possible and will make sense in some places, but we should be aware that other issues (i.e., next-door neighbors being in different wards) can occur.

b. Review new and adjusted maps

Sayer showed two versions of the growth-conscious map that smoothed lines and made a few adjustments that further balance the math and use dividing points identified in public feedback as logical. Zork noted that the limited splitting of census blocks in the growth-conscious map is workable. Ross asked if the grouping of apartments near the Ward 4/5 boundary was splitting the North Pointe apartments. Dudek noted that there is one apartment building connected with the other apartments that is currently separated between Wards 4 and 5. Sayer said he and Mason could look at the impact of splitting the census block to unite that community.

Sayer then showed a "minimal adjustment map" that tried to shift as few addresses as possible while still meeting the population balancing goals. Sayer noted that this map had an average compactness measure of 0.34 (versus 0.32

for the current maps). The growth-conscious map's average compactness score is 0.43. One consideration with the minimal adjustment map is that it pays less attention to planned growth and may yield a greater disparity 10 years hence than the growth-conscious maps. Sayer noted that since both options are more compact than the current map, both should be compliant with requirements.

Smith asked if there was more detailed information about how these wards will look in terms of more than just total population numbers. Sayer noted that Census 2020 data gives us racial and ethnic breakdown information, and Sayer showed how that maps to the current wards. Because of how people are distributed through the city, creating ethnically/racially balanced wards would break up neighborhoods more and diminish voting strength for different communities. We also have some 2017 American Community Survey data that provides more socio-economic information (albeit slightly outdated).

c. Determine any final map adjustments

In discussion, growth-conscious map two seems to make the most sense compared to the original, with a few additional adjustments that Sayer and Mason will explore. In discussion, there a desire to see Census-block level breakdowns of ACS data to understand how the data maps to the new ward boundaries.

4. Prep for Council Presentation

a. Overview of what to expect

Zork noted that the presentation to Council is scheduled for September 19, which means materials need to be finalized by September 14th (morning). There will be 10 minutes for a presentation, followed by questions, but the agenda is packed and the presentation may come late. Public hearing is now scheduled for October 17th.

b. What background is valuable to share?

Zork suggested including some material as a background report to save time in the presentation. Sayer also asked for feedback on the idea of using a word cloud showing adjectives that describe the committee members and highlighting the diversity of the members.

c. What maps will be presented?

Sayer suggested showing the current map, along with some of the alternatives and a summary of the public comments received thus far. Smith stressed the need to provide clarity around the decisions made. Freemyn made a motion proposing that growth-conscious map two and the minimal adjustment map both be presented to council for their consideration. Dudek seconded. After discussion, the motion was approved unanimously.

d. Who will be part of the presentation?

Sayer said he is happy to lead the presentation. Gill Freemyn volunteered to help with prep. It was suggested that as the presentation is developed, then there may

be a need to have additional speakers. Zork said it would be helpful if others can be in attendance to help support and answer questions. The meeting will be via Zoom. Dudek suggested having committee members alternate in responding to council questions. Freemyn suggested the committee members develop some talking points to make sure we are in alignment when responding. Zork suggested the committee meet the week of September 12 to finalize a plan.

5. Community Outreach Next Steps

- a. Zork reported that Public Works has distributed flyers, the public-input website is up, flyers have been distributed to apartment managers and local clergy. Future actions include distributing information to local schools, but might be better for a later round of contact so that it doesn't get lost in the early part of the school year. Gafford suggested that digital distribution through schools might be a good option. Signage on the Big Belly trashcans is possible, but it takes a while to have things printed; it may be more effective in helping to educate people once ward boundaries change. Yard signs will also be helpful for educating people as ward boundaries change, but the goal is not to create division or competition among wards, so it would have to be well thought out as to how they are handled.

Gafford asked if the Citizen Lab website would keep information available as the process continues (i.e., can people see prior comments and maps or just the current one). Zork said it would persist and people can review the entire process.

Other upcoming events where it might be presented include the Zombie Run, Arts & Ales Festival, and Parking Day.

Sayer relayed a public comment about the possibility for anonymous comments. Zork said Citizen Lab cannot accept anonymous comments; they have to be tied to an email address. However, it is possible to have emails sent directly to redistricting@hyattsville.org instead of info@hyattsville.org.

6. Assignments and Next Steps

- a. September 14 at 7:30 p.m. was tentatively selected as the next meeting date to run through the presentation.

7. New Business

No new business was presented.

8. Adjourn

There being no further business, Chair Sayer called for motion to adjourn at 8:38 p.m., which was approved on a voice vote.