

City of Hyattsville — 2022 Redistricting Committee

August 23, 2022, 10 AM–11:00 AM — Virtual

MINUTES

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

1. Roll Call

A quorum was noted, and Chair Sayer called the meeting to order at 10:05 a.m. Attendance was registered.

2. Minutes

Minutes from the August 10, 2022, meeting were approved on a voice vote.

3. Map Adjustments

Chair Sayer offered comments on potential alternate maps. At the August 10 meeting, two scenarios were requested, referred to a Ward 4 North and Ward 4 South. Neither adjustment proved compliant with both scenarios making Ward 4 too big. The Ward 4 North map made Ward 3 too small with no room for adjustments; Ward 4 South make Ward 5 too small, but with room to make adjustments.

Sayer reported that during Summer Jam (August 19) feedback on the equal-population map and the Ward 4 shifts was largely not controversial. Most people didn't have too strong of feelings and there was confusion about county/state/federal redistricting, not city ward redistricting. That said, there was an expressed preference for clean/straight lines and compact wards, which were perceived as less "political" than ward boundaries that crossed major streets to capture a few households. Specific comments noted that 42nd Avenue feels like it should be a natural boundary and that the Park Place Condominiums south of Hamilton Street and west of Driskell Park feel quite isolated from the rest of Ward 1. Ross noted that parklands and commercial areas skewed some perceptions of how big the wards would actually be (if only the places where people live is considered).

Sayer asked if Census blocks could be split in redistricting. (The Census block that contains Park Place also includes a portion of the "cul-de-square" south of Crittenden Street and east of Driskell Park.) Zork noted that while such a split would make population calculations more difficult, it might be possible. She will seek additional input.

Sayer next outlined two possible adjustments to the Ward 4 South map that might address the concerns while keeping in mind future growth. One option puts the Park Place Condominiums into Ward 5 to increase population (splitting that Census block) along with retaining some of the shifted addresses in Ward 5. It also makes 42nd Avenue a straight-line boundary and keeps the entirety of the Suffrage Point development in Ward 2. Sayer described this option as a "viable, growth-conscious map" that puts Wards 3 and 5, where the greatest growth over the next decade is anticipated closer to the minimum allowable population based upon the 2020 Census and wards with less anticipated development

closer to the maximum allowable population level. There likely will be a need to push a Census block or two from one ward to another to get to allowable, balanced levels, but this seems workable.

Sayer's second map showed an effort to balance racial and ethnic groups across the Wards. This created a map that left Ward 3 primarily north of the Metro tracks and East–West Highway and left the Arts District along Route 1 mostly unchanged, but Wards 2, 4, and 5 were significantly altered to have a primarily East–West orientation stretching across the city. This created a more even distribution of Black, white, and Hispanic residents across the wards, but it created questions about whether such a distribution diluted the influence of various communities or if it would have positive influences.

In discussion, Freemyn noted that maintaining cultural connections and landmarks, especially for historically marginalized communities of color, was important and she wasn't sure this map achieved that. Mosher stated she wasn't sure this map would be feasible, but thought it would be good to develop further to show the sorts of changes that could be considered.

Marshall noted that dividing the wards with roads like Queen's Chapel also divided citizens and their needs. He noted that his home shifted from Ward 3 to Ward 2 in 2012 and the current maps would shift him to Ward 4, which felt like being on "a merry-go-round." Sayer thanked him for the comments and noted that the comments were an argument for having boundary changes affect as few people as possible.

Marshall also asked why keeping the Arts District in a single ward was a desirable goal. Zork noted that, along with its geographical orientation on the eastern edge of the city, the division of responsibilities between the city and Arts District Home Owners Association seemed a logical community of interest that would be reasonably contained in a single ward.

4. **Community Outreach Tools Update**

Zork noted that new city feedback tool "Hello Hyattsville" is now up and running — <https://hyattsville.citizenlab.co/en/projects/redistricting> — and that questions about redistricting are part of the platform's soft launch. The city is looking at other ways to build engagement ahead of public hearings and presentations to Council in September. Zork also said she will talk to Public Works to see if flyers can be delivered at least into the areas most affected by Ward boundary changes. Zork is also putting together a budget for promoting the redistricting process.

Marshall asked when does redistricting have to be completed? Zork noted there is not a legal deadline, per se, but redistricting is tied to the next regularly scheduled city election, which will be in Spring 2023. The goal of having Council approve the redistricting plan by November 2022 is so that there is time to the changes incorporated into the City Charter and for potential candidates to prepare for the election cycle (registration would likely be in February or March 2023).

In discussion of community outreach, the importance of explaining the decision-making

process and being transparent in factors considered throughout the process was noted. These will be important in ensuring people can understand the rationale behind the offered maps, as well as aid in focusing any concerns.

5. **Assignments and Next Steps**

The committee would like to meet again the week of September 5th. Zork will circulate a poll to determine the best meeting date options.

Mason was asked about further developing the Ward 4 South map in line with Sayer's proposals in time for the Back-to-School Event on Saturday (August 27). He felt the map could be done by close of business on Friday. Zork said she would bring the finished printed map to the event and asked if committee members could also attend.

6. **Timeline**

Currently proposals of new maps are set for presentation to the City Council on Sept. 19, 2022, followed by a public hearing on Oct. 3, 2022.

7. **New Business**

`No new business was presented.

8. **Adjourn**

There being no further business, Chair Sayer called for motion to adjourn at 11:00 a.m., which was approved on a voice vote.