

Redistricting Group Minutes

March 22, 2012 - 4:00 p.m.
Room 319 City Hall, Minneapolis, Minnesota

Redistricting Group Members Present: Clegg (Chair), Bad Heart Bull, Brown, Cohen, Cole, Connell, Dolan, Ferrara, Garcia, Heinle, Johnson, Kozak, Lazarus, Lickness, Massey, Metge, Peltola, Richardson, Rubenstein, Sandberg, Schwarzkopf, Thaden, Unni

Redistricting Group Member Absent: Gerdes

1. Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m. Roll call was taken.

2. Adopt Agenda

Ferrara moved adoption of the agenda, as amended to include Item 3a, Acceptance of all public comments received at public hearings. Seconded.

Adopted upon a voice vote.

Absent - Gerdes.

3. Approve minutes of March 7, 2012

Ferrara moved approval of the minutes of the meeting of March 7, 2012. Seconded.

Adopted upon a voice vote.

Absent - Gerdes.

3a. Accept all public comments received at public hearings.

Ferrara moved to accept all public comments received at the public hearings.

Seconded.

Adopted upon a voice vote.

Absent - Gerdes.

5. Receive and file all written and electronic comments received since the March 7, 2012 Redistricting Group meeting and enter them into the official record

Metge moved to receive and file. Seconded.

Adopted upon a voice vote.

Absent - Gerdes.

4. Chair's Report

6. Consideration of maps

Clegg stated that the purpose of today's meeting was to take all the comments received, at the public hearings and electronically, and decide what direction to take with the maps. He noted that he had received a call from Council Member Goodman who suggested not placing the Twins Stadium in a separate ward from the North Loop because residents of the North Loop were most affected by stadium events and it was

best if the Council Member representing the ward with the stadium also represented the residents most affected by the stadium. She also noted that she had received numerous calls from people living in the northwest portion of Elliot Park who identified more with Ward 7.

Clegg stated that he had received a question about why there were two maps at the public hearings. The Redistricting Group had to approve a map and publish it in Finance & Commerce at least seven days prior to the first public hearing as set forth in the Charter. The Operations Committee did not want to stop and do nothing for the next seven days since there were some things in the map that they wanted to work on. Changes made to that map, which was also brought to the public hearings and identified as "March 15 Operations Committee Map", included eliminating the split in the CARAG and Lyndale neighborhoods, splitting Midtown Phillips, moving a portion of the Longfellow neighborhood into Ward 9, moving all of Elliot Park into Ward 6, moving East Isles to Ward 7, and reducing the amount of the Seward Neighborhood in Ward 6. The Operations Committee planned to recommend the revised map as the starting point for today's meeting. Even though it may have been a little confusing to have the March 15 map at the public hearings, the Operations Committee thought it was better to have full disclosure and let people know what they were working on.

Metge noted that it was disconcerting to people of Midtown Phillips not to know that their neighborhood was being split until they attended the public hearings and saw the March 15 map.

Lazarus moved that the Redistricting Group use the Operations Committee March 15 map as the starting point for today's discussion. Seconded.

Adopted upon a voice vote.

Absent - Gerdes.

Clegg summarized the list of areas to be discussed:

- East Harriet
- Ward 8
- Bryn Mawr/Harrison
- North Loop
- Wards 2, 6, and 9

Garcia asked the Redistricting Group to keep in mind during discussions the socioeconomic impact of Ward 6 becoming the ward with the most poverty.

East Harriet Neighborhood

Testimony at the public hearings spoke to either uniting East Harriet in Ward 10 or moving the southern portion to Ward 13.

After viewing the change and the updated population statistics, the southern portion of the East Harriet Neighborhood was moved to Ward 13 by voice vote.

Absent - Gerdes.

Ward 8

Testimony at the public hearings asked that Ward 8 include the Central and Field neighborhoods.

The Field neighborhood was moved to Ward 8 and the Northrup neighborhood south of 44th Street was moved to Ward 11 by voice vote.

Absent - Gerdes.

Central Neighborhood

The group discussed dividing the Central neighborhood between Wards 8 and 9 and the location of Sabathani Community Center in Ward 9 instead of Ward 8.

Schwarzkopf noted that moving the Central neighborhood to Ward 10 would dilute the Latino population in Ward 9.

Cole asked the group to consider their original objective to create opportunity for more minority participation in the city. Moving even part of Central to Ward 8 would change the opportunity for two major populations in the city that have participated in the process and asked specifically for minority opportunity wards.

Garcia stated that it was important to keep Central together and critical to keep it in Ward 9.

Cohen noted that the community voice has been almost unanimous to return the Central neighborhood to Ward 8.

Richardson and Johnson suggested splitting Central at 36th Street to see how it affected the population statistics.

Ferrara stated that the demographics of the neighborhood have changed. Lines should not be drawn because of buildings; they should be drawn based on population.

Moving the southern two blocks of the Central neighborhood (from 38th to 36th Street) into Ward 8 was approved by a show of hands.

Absent - Gerdes.

Bryn Mawr/Harrison

Clegg stated that the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood had requested that the park and ward boundaries follow the neighborhood boundary, which is Bassett Creek. The area in question contains no population. The City Clerk's Office has stated that moving the boundary and deviating from the legislative line will not require a separate precinct. Group members received an email from the Harrison Neighborhood saying they also wanted this piece of land in Ward 5.

Sandberg stated that the Operations Committee had followed the legislative line in order not to create another precinct. If that wasn't an issue, then she was in favor of moving the boundary.

Cole was concerned about the fact that it set a precedent for other wards. Harrison residents stated that they didn't want the line at Glenwood because residents in the southern half of Harrison identify with Bryn Mawr.

Johnson spoke in favor of moving boundary since it didn't affect population statistics.

Connell stated that he would support the change, but noted that in doing so it took opportunity away from the currently drafted Ward 5. The testimony from Ward 5 residents was incontrovertible that they want additional economic opportunity.

Following discussion, moving the north boundary of Ward 7 to Bassett Creek was approved by a show of hands.

Absent - Gerdes.

North Loop

Heinle stated that the North Loop Neighborhood Association was in support of the March 15 map; however, they felt strongly that they would like to see the North Loop united. They were vehemently opposed to dividing the neighborhood into three wards.

Ferrara pointed out that historically a part of the North Loop had been in Ward 5.

Connell suggested moving the boundary of the North Loop neighborhood between Wards 3 and 5 to include in Ward 5 a sparsely populated area of the North Loop with potential for future development.

Bad Heart Bull inquired if it would be possible to keep all of North Loop together in Ward 5 and put some of Jordan into Ward 4. Cole noted that putting all of the North Loop neighborhood into Ward 5 would take away its minority majority.

Heinle agreed that there were a lot of opportunities in this area but felt that was speculating far into the future.

Following discussion, changing the boundary to include more of the North Loop neighborhood in Ward 5 was approved by a show of hands.

Absent - Gerdes.

Midtown Phillips

Garcia stated that she supported the request of the Midtown Phillips Neighborhood to remain in Ward 9. She did not feel that Ward 9 should extend into Longfellow at all since the addition of Longfellow dilutes the percentage of minority population in the ward. Hiawatha is more of a natural boundary. It would be preferable to have Ward 9 include the northern portion of the Standish neighborhood rather than Longfellow.

Metge stated that she felt if the Midtown Phillips residents had seen a map showing their neighborhood before the public hearing, there would have been a lot more testimony on the subject. Also, by taking Eat Street away from Ward 6 and splitting it between Wards 10 and 7, there is a concern that they will not have a voice because Ward 10 will then include Lyndale, Hennepin, Lake Street, LynLake, and Uptown, while Ward 7 has the downtown interests.

Bad Heart Bull stated that the consensus he had heard from the Latino and American Indian communities was that they would prefer to have the Ward 6 eastern boundary at Highway 55, put the Cedar Riverside and Seward neighborhoods into Ward 2, and expand Ward 6 either south or west. The concern is that instead of creating multiple ward opportunities for people of color, it is being concentrated into one ward.

Clegg stated that moving Ward 9 to include Midtown would lose the opportunity ward that had been created for African Americans and would only increase the Hispanic population in Ward 9 by two percentage points, from 31% to 33%. In the We All Win map, the African American population in Ward 6 is reduced to 25%.

Unni suggested moving the boundary in Midtown Phillips a few blocks to the west in order to add the population still needed in Ward 9. He was also in favor of having Hiawatha Avenue as a boundary. He preferred the original map that showed Ward 9 extending into Standish rather than across Hiawatha.

Adding a portion of the Standish neighborhood to Ward 9 to bring the population totals within the requirements was shown to reduce the Hispanic population in Ward 9 from 31.35% to 30.31%.

Sandberg was concerned about reducing the Hispanic population in Ward 9 by even 1%.

Schwarzkopf suggested moving the line in Midtown Phillips from 13th to 12th Avenue, with the exception of the mosque.

Moving the Midtown Phillips line from 13th to 12th Avenue brought the Hispanic population in Ward 9 to 31.5% and brought the Black population in Ward 6 to 46.2%.

Thaden inquired if the Redistricting Group wanted to move the line in order to include the block with the mosque in Ward 6.

Garcia and Lickness spoke in opposition to moving the line to keep the mosque in Ward 6.

Massey inquired if splitting the Seward neighborhood was necessary to keep Ward 6 as a minority opportunity ward.

Clegg stated that taking the Seward portion out of Ward 6 would make the ward too small.

Unni agreed with Ferrara that neighborhoods could benefit by having more than one city council representative noting that Seward Neighborhood is a very strong organization with the ability to work with more than one council member.

Garcia was in favor of keeping Seward whole and keeping it in Ward 2. Ward 2 has traditionally been a progressive ward and the possibility of having a Somali council member is high in that ward.

Ferrara reiterated that the Redistricting Group was continuing the same debate of the two groups and he believed the Operations Committee had done its best to take both into account.

Brown stated that he felt it was important to maintain the Ward 6 opportunity ward and in order to do so, it was critical to split Seward.

Lickness moved to approve the layout of Wards 2, 6, and 9 with the Midtown Phillips split at 12th Avenue. Seconded.

Ferrara spoke in favor of the motion; however, he suggested reconsidering the division of the Central neighborhood.

Bad Heart Bull spoke in opposition to the motion. He felt Seward should be kept whole, move the boundary further west, and expand Ward 6 into 10.

Metge stated that she was happy to pick up a couple more blocks in Midtown and increase the Latino population in Ward 9, but she concurred with Bad Heart Bull's position. She was also concerned about Eat Street and about the Franklin corridor.

Lickness stated that if Ward 6 was extended into Whittier, the Whittier population would further dilute the minority population in Ward 6.

Peltola agreed with Bad Heart Bull. He wanted to keep Cedar Riverside and Seward whole and divide Whittier. Nonetheless, he would support the motion.

Garcia supported keeping Seward whole. Midtown is the neighborhood in South Minneapolis that grew the most since the last census - over 40% Latino. Moving Midtown to Ward 9 would be historic. Putting Eat Street in Ward 6 would also diversify a commercial, cultural, and social center.

Clegg stated that if Ward 6 did not include part of Seward, it would have to move west to Whittier, diluting the African American population in Ward 6.

Connell inquired if the line in Midtown Phillips was shifted to the west to encompass the entire neighborhood in Ward 9, by what percentage would the Latino population in Ward 9 increase. It was determined that the move would change the Latino population in Ward 9 by one tenth of one percent due to the fact that the total population of the ward also increased.

The motion to approve the layout of Wards 2, 6, and 9 with Midtown Phillips split at 12th Avenue was adopted by a show of hands.

Absent - Gerdes, Lickness.

Cole requested that when the redistricting process is complete that the Charter Commission explain to the community why the boundaries look the way they do, noting that the group did not perform the education and engagement process prior to the public hearings as they had planned.

Northeast

Peltola stated that testimony had been received from Northeast residents that Bottineau and Sheridan residents wanted to be included in Ward 1 rather than Ward 3.

Clegg stated that the two neighborhoods had been in Ward 3 since the beginning of the process and were currently in Ward 3.

Kozak noted that one of the redistricting principles was to make only the changes necessary to make the numbers work.

No action was taken.

Lake & Hennepin

Thaden stated that there is a Special Service District on Lake and Hennepin and suggested moving the line north from Lake Street to 28th Street at the northwest corner in order to include the Special Service District in one ward. It was felt that the downtown council member would be too busy with the downtown area to worry about the Hennepin and Lake area.

Clegg stated that Lake and Hennepin and Lake and Lyndale were both represented by two council members.

Ferrara spoke against changing the ward line in this area. He couldn't imagine a council member ignoring an area they represent. He thought the area would be better served with two council members.

Metge concurred with Thaden because the ward is very large with lots of competing interests.

Rubenstein was opposed to splitting a neighborhood that hadn't been split before the public hearings.

By a show of hands, there was not enough support in favor of changing the current line at Hennepin and Lake.

Elliot Park

Regarding requests from the Elliot Park neighborhood preferring to be in the downtown ward and not in Ward 6, no action was taken.

Metge noted that a large portion Elliot Park had been in the downtown ward in the map proposed for the public hearings. It was on the March 15 Operations Committee map where they were moved entirely into Ward 6. The neighborhood had been looking at the map published for the hearing and had not actually had an opportunity to testify to the March 15 map.

Ferrara requested that the revised map published on the website as soon as possible and that neighborhoods be notified.

Clegg stated that following a vote on the map tonight, the Operations Committee would meet on Friday, March 23 to work with the City Clerk and Elections Department to determine any precinct problems. The revised map will be posted on-line as soon as possible after that meeting and an email announcement will be distributed to neighborhoods. He then suggested a meeting of the full Redistricting Group on Monday, March 26, and the group could make any needed precinct adjustments and vote on the final map on Monday prior to the Special Charter Commission meeting.

Ferrara moved approval of the revised map, subject to precinct adjustments by the Operations Committee, then to be forwarded before the Redistricting Group for final approval. Seconded.

A brief recess took place.

Casey Carl, City Clerk suggested rescheduling the Special Charter Commission from Monday to Tuesday. He stated that the reason that he had suggested that the Charter Commission adopt the map on March 26 was to allow time for the City Council to also adopt precinct lines by the April 3 deadline. He wanted time for the City Council to draw precincts fairly as well as harmonize precincts across wards while reducing total precincts from 131 to 117, which will have an impact on voters. Rescheduling the Special Charter Commission meeting would allow an additional 24 hours to get precincts and ward lines right so there is no overlap or confusion for the voters.

The Ferrara motion to approve the revised map, subject to precinct adjustments by the Operations Committee, then to be forwarded before the Redistricting Group for final approval on Monday was adopted upon a voice vote.

Absent - Bad Heart Bull, Gerdes, Lazarus, Lickness.

Garcia and Metge requested to be recorded as voting no.

The upcoming schedule is as follows:

- Operations Committee Meeting - Friday, March 23, 2012 - 2:00 p.m - Room 319
- Redistricting Group Meeting - Monday, March 26, 2012 - 2:00 p.m. - Room 319
- Special Charter Commission Meeting - Tuesday, March 27, 2012 - 4:00 p.m. - Room 317

Public Commentary

a) Alondra Cano, 2704 18th Avenue South, stated that drawing lines around mosques is illegal. Ward 6 as drawn includes all of the economic assets: Seward, Franklin, Lake. That is not equity. They need assets spread equally throughout the city. Right now Ward 9 has very few, if any. Lake Street and Midtown needs to be restored to Ward 9. She had heard that Barb Lickness was in charge of getting the word out to the community about what was going on with redistricting. Additionally, Barb Lickness keeps saying that Whittier wants to be in Ward 10. She did not think that was true. They just wanted to be together. The Somali community is heavily divided on this issue. The clan that is pushing this plan lives in Riverside and is intimidating and harassing the Somali organizers from Seward. The Redistricting Group needs to be aware of the clan warfare they are unleashing when they empower that clan to have a city council member representative.

b) Jennifer Godinez, 1500 Lake Street, stated that those who drew the Wisconsin redistricting lines have been sued by the Latino community because they were breaking the Voting Protection Act. She was concerned about the role the Redistricting Group was playing in this process because people's civil rights are being impacted by the process. For fifteen years she has been involved in building strong institutions in the Midtown Global Market area through the Latino business corridor. She has seen Latino families give up everything they have in Mexico to build strong businesses. She believed that one of the Redistricting Principles was that ethnic communities should stay together and the Redistricting Group should consider keeping that Latino community together. The We All Win proposal keeps the Midtown area intact and builds minority coalitions because there is a strong Native and African American community, as well.

c) Marlene Rojas, 2425 Elliot Avenue, stated that she had been at most of the meetings over the past month talking about community. She represented the Latino community and felt disempowered because she felt the Redistricting Group hasn't really heard what they want to create. They wanted to create opportunities and to be represented. They wanted to be united with other communities. They did not want to fight against others. They believe in equity. She encouraged the Redistricting Group to give them the opportunity to be represented.

d) Rosie Cruz, 2935 16th Avenue South, stated that she felt there should have been more Latinos on the Redistricting Group. Midtown and East Phillips is not only Latino, but also African American, and Somali. The Redistricting Group in making this decision should think about the children. There are many Latino children in these neighborhoods. She was present in support of the Latino community and to support others and asked the Redistricting Group to think twice before making their decision.

e) Abdulkadir Warsame, 614 19th Avenue South, stated that he thought the Redistricting Group had done a great job. The point about Somali clans is not an issue. His mother and father were from different clans. There is no issue about clans. They came here as East Africans. The elders and Somali groups supported them. Elders, religious leaders, youth, Somalis of all different ages and genders spoke at the public hearings. It is disingenuous to say that Somalis are divided. Somalis are cohesive and they will vote together in the coming election. He was not against the Latinos. He loved the Latino culture and they deserved as much opportunity as possible but not at others' expense.

f) Mariano Espinoza, 3120 12th Avenue South, stated that he was tired of being at the redistricting meetings repeating that Midtown is 42% Latino. Midtown is the glue that brings communities together. It is the social, economic, ethnic, and cultural interest that they all share. The Somali community has said they embrace the Latino community, but they do not. There is a Somali division. It is not about being divided. It is about having opportunities and it is possible to have opportunities for Somalis, Latinos, and Native Americans. The reason why the Latino number doesn't increase in the Redistricting Group proposal is because they are including Longfellow in Ward 9 and diluting the Latino vote. If Midtown, East Phillips, Central, Powderhorn, and a portion of Corcoran were included, the number would go up to almost 35% and the Latino community would have an opportunity as well as the Somali community.

g) Scarlett Lopez, 3028 Park Avenue, stated that she had been to almost all the hearings but kept seeing the same map. East Phillips is not being included. She felt they were not being heard. Their power is being diluted. There are many others who strongly disagree with the proposed map and she had petitions from them, but if they had all attended the meeting, they would not have fit into the room. She asked the Redistricting Group to take into consideration their concerns.

h) Jovita Francisco, 2529 13th Avenue South, stated that it was not fair to create opportunity for only one community. There is an opportunity to create a Latino opportunity in Ward 9. She hoped the Redistricting Group heard the voice of the people.

i) Jennifer Godinez, 1500 Lake Street, read a letter from State Senator Patricia Torres Ray in favor of the We All Win proposal. The letter was sent to the Redistricting Group members and is included in the record.

j) Carol Pass, 2536 18th Avenue South, Chair, East Phillips Neighborhood, stated that there has been a presumption since the beginning of the process that 35W is a barrier to picking up population from Whittier. There is a significant Somali population in the Whittier area. People have become accustomed to crossing 35W. Robert Lilligren does wonderful development on both sides. He works with both groups. This ward has worked across that boundary. There is a member of this committee that told her that her sole reason for being on this committee was to save Whittier for the White people. She should not have been here and should have recused herself. There are more creative ways to keep the Latino community intact and work on Whittier or someplace else to fill out the population. The Redistricting Group does not need to split the most populace, organized Latino community in the city for the purpose of fixing Ward 6.

k) Pedro Rivera, 8570 South Magnolia Trail, Eden Prairie, stated (through interpreter Scarlett Lopez) that we all have something to say. Two and a half years ago his daughter was born. The doctor said they couldn't go to his house. And the next day at 1:30 am, someone wanted to break into his house and take his daughter. He called the police and the police couldn't help them. Why? Because her voice was never heard. That is why he was here: in memory of his daughter. He wanted a person like him to represent him and to understand him.

Ferrara moved to adjourn. Seconded.

Adopted upon a voice vote.

Absent - Bad Heart Bull, Gerdes, Lazarus, Lickness.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Peggy Menshek
Redistricting Group Coordinator