

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE OF
THE CITY COUNCIL ON REDISTRICTING
MAY 12, 2011**

On May 12, 2011, at 5:30 P.M., the City Council Redistricting Committee, held a Special Meeting at City Hall, Council Chambers, Room 400, 419 Fulton, Peoria, Illinois, proper notice having been given.

Roll call was taken with the following City Council Redistricting Committee present: Council Members Gulley, Irving, Riggerbach, Van Auken, and Chairman Spears – 5. Absent: None.

Also present were City Manager Patrick Urich, Council Member Chuck Weaver, Corporation Counsel Randy Ray, Director of Planning & Growth Management Pat Landes, Fire Chief Kent Tomblin, Urban Planners Josh Naven and Shannon Techie, Election Commission Executive Director Tom Bride, Chief Deputy City Clerk Beth Ball, Administrative Specialist III from the City Clerk's Office Angie Herrick, members of the media, and interested citizens.

Committee Chairman Bill Spears welcomed everyone to the meeting and then he led a moment of silent prayer or silent reflection, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

PURPOSE OF THE REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

Director of Planning and Growth Management Pat Landes provided an overview of the purpose of the Committee and explained the City Council had approved the formation of the Redistricting Committee at the April 12, 2011, City Council Meeting. She said this meeting was the first in a series of meetings on the topic of redistricting. She said future meetings would be announced once scheduled.

PRESENTATION OF MAPS

Director Landes distributed a series of maps which illustrated the current Council Districts, the population shift, and the vacancy percentage to members of the Committee. She explained the changes needed in each district and these included the following: growth in the First District by 2,622 people; growth in the Second District by 2,386 people; growth in the Third District by 1,696 people; growth in the Fourth District by 1,620 people; and a reduction in the Fifth District by 7,623 people.

In discussion with Council Member Van Auken, Director Landes clarified a discrepancy with the 2000 Census numbers was currently being investigated by the Census Bureau. She explained the 2000 Census showed approximately 900 citizens missing from reported numbers due to a miscalculation. She said she was awaiting a final report back from the Census Bureau.

Director Landes noted 2010 Census numbers indicated a 1.83% growth in the City's overall population. She said there had also been a shift in population both toward the North and in western downtown.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Corporation Counsel Randy Ray provided the legal framework for the redistricting process. He explained the U.S. Voting Rights Act and the 1987 lawsuit/settlement which affected the electoral structure. He said this required the five Council Districts to remain in place and the redistricting to take place following receipt of the census reports every ten years.

In discussion with Council Member Van Auken, Corporation Counsel Ray confirmed any change in the method of election or the number of Council Districts must be done by Court filing or referendum. He said either was a possibility as long as the new government structure was a legal form of government.

Corporation Counsel Ray explained the Gonzales v. City of Aurora case determined Council Districts must be as equal in population, and population groups based on race/color, as possible and as regularly shaped, geographically, as possible. He said, according to State Statute Section 2.a. and Section 2.b., it was a violation if the establishment of new Districts provided an unequal representation of any particular class of citizen in any one District. He said, in this computer era, the Court expected the use of computer-based information to generate and explore every possible scenario when establishing new District boundaries.

Chairman Spears called for any citizen to speak in regard to the redistricting issue. Following a second request, Chairman Spears determined no citizen wished to speak at this time.

REDISTRICTING CRITERIA

Director Landes presented a list of traditional criteria used in redistricting efforts. She listed the following: nearly equal population, compact districts, contiguous districts, maintaining cores of previous districts, and keeping together communities of interest. She clarified these were possibilities to utilize when establishing new boundaries.

Council Member Van Auken expressed concern that the "core" concept would be difficult to achieve. She added the communities of interest, while critical, would also be tough to do.

Council Member Riggerbach said he concurred with Council Member Van Auken, and he said these were not realistic criteria. He said he would like to see some Neighborhood Associations remain intact by respecting the previous boundaries as much as possible.

Council Member Gulley noted the importance of differentiating Neighborhood Associations and neighborhoods in general. He said there were certain areas with a strong minority presence and little participation in any particular Neighborhood Association. He said it was important to look at both individually.

In discussion with Council Member Irving, Election Commission Executive Director Tom Bride clarified voting precinct boundaries were redrawn in concert with Council redistricting. He said precinct boundaries were not allowed to go beyond Council District boundaries. He said the size of voter precincts was based on the number of registered voters, rather than population.

In further discussion with Chairman Spears, Director Bride said the Election Commission's timeframe was not in sync with the Council Redistricting Committee's timeframe. He noted it was possible, depending on where the Council was in their process, the Commission would be required to redraw the precinct boundaries a second time to conform with new Council Districts.

Chairman Spears noted the use of major streets and/or thoroughfares as criteria for redistricting. He suggested running both East/West scenarios and North/South scenarios, as well as drawing out boundaries from the center of town.

Council Member Riggerbach said major thoroughfares seemed the most logical criteria.

Chairman Spears also noted using the existing boundaries with expansions to accommodate the population changes.

In discussion with Council Member Van Auken, Director Landes determined a 30-day timeframe was needed to generate all possible alternatives to the boundary changes. She noted Staff would make preliminary maps available to the public one week prior to the next meeting.

SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING

Following discussion by the Committee, Council Member Gulley moved to set the next meeting of the Redistricting Committee to be held on Tuesday, June 21, 2011, at 5:30 P.M. in Council Chambers, Room 400, City Hall, 419 Fulton, Peoria, Illinois; seconded by Council Member Van Auken.

Approved by viva voce vote.

In further discussion with Council Member Van Auken, Director Landes noted there would be community outreach efforts via the City's website, City Commissions, Chambers of Commerce, churches, and community organizations. She also noted maps would be available at the library branches for those who did not have Internet access.

CITIZENS TO ADDRESS CITY COUNCIL REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE

Hearing no objections, Chairman Spears granted Privilege of the Floor to anyone who wished to address the committee.

Verna Harris, Peoria resident, requested additional confirmation of the date of the next meeting and when the mapping information would be available on the City's website.

Frederick Smith, Peoria resident, expressed concern regarding the maps and when they would be available.

Chairman Spears confirmed maps would be posted on the City's website one week prior to the next meeting for public viewing. He noted final redistricting maps required approval of the full City Council. He added there would be numerous opportunities for citizens to provide input throughout the process.

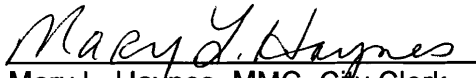
Chairman Spears thanked those present for their participation and City Staff for their assistance.

ADJOURNMENT

Council Member Van Auken moved to adjourn the Special Meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee of the City Council on Redistricting; seconded by Council Member Riggerbach.

Approved by viva voce vote.

The Special Meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee of the City Council on Redistricting adjourned at 6:20 P.M.


Mary L. Haynes, MMC, City Clerk
City of Peoria, Illinois

By:


Beth Ball, Chief Deputy City Clerk