

**OFFICIAL PROCEEDINGS OF A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE OF
THE CITY COUNCIL ON REDISTRICTING**

June 21, 2011

On June 21, 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 Members present: Council Members Gulley (arrived at 6:00 P.M.), Irving, Van Auken, and Chairman Spears – 4. Absent: Council Member Riggerbach - 1.

Also present were City Manager Patrick Urich, Council Member Beth Akesson, Corporation Counsel Randy Ray, Director of Planning & Growth Management Pat Landes, 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.

MINUTES

Council Member Irving moved to approve the minutes of the May 12, 2011, Special Meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee of the City Council on Redistricting; seconded by Council Member Van Auken.

Approved by viva voce vote.

Chairman Spears expressed that Council Member Riggerbach was unexpectedly in Stevens Point, WI for business with his employer, Associated Bank. He said he sent his regards and he looks forward to reviewing the dialogue from tonight's meeting.

Chairman Spears clarified the purpose of the Redistricting Committee was to only address the issue of redistricting. He said this requirement was done every ten years in concert with the Census. He noted the issue of cumulative voting had been added to the evening's agenda so citizens would have an opportunity to express any opinion they had on the subject; however, cumulative voting was a topic to be discussed with the full City Council in session. He said the Redistricting Committee had no at-large representation and the full City Council was a more appropriate venue in which to hold in-depth discussion and to make any decisions on cumulative voting. He added the full Council would also vote on any final decisions made regarding redistricting.

COUNCIL DISTRICT MAP ALTERNATIVES

Director of Planning and Growth Management Pat Landes provided a brief introduction of the series of maps provided to the Committee and citizens. She said, in reviewing the maps, the Committee and citizens would have the opportunity to make suggestions or express concerns.

Urban Planner Josh Naven gave a review of the criteria necessary to make changes to the five districts. He reiterated nearly equal population, compact districts, use of major thoroughfares as boundaries, contiguous districts, and keeping communities of interest (and respecting identified neighborhoods) intact as criteria for redistricting scenarios.

Mr. Naven reviewed all ten map scenarios. He said the first map was Existing Districts (1) and then he noted the following deficiencies in each map: Columnar (2) compactness; Layered (3) compactness and thoroughfares; Center (4) compactness; Expansion A (5) thoroughfares and compactness; Expansion B (6) communities of interest; Expansion C (7) thoroughfares and compactness; Expansion D (8) thoroughfares and compactness; Expansion E (9) thoroughfares, compactness, and contiguous districts; and Expansion F (10) thoroughfares, compactness, and communities of interest.

In discussion with Chairman Spears, Mr. Naven said Map (6) met most of the criteria but split up some communities of interest. He added the mapping system was capable of running district-specific maps, tracking population numbers.

Council Member Van Auken expressed concern regarding Map (6) because she said it divided the West Bluff and shifted the Knoxville boundary to Sheridan Road.

Chairman Spears granted Privilege of the Floor to any citizen who wished to address the Redistricting Committee. No objections were heard.

James Polk, former Council Member, expressed concern regarding the division of specific neighborhoods. He also said he felt it would be difficult for the District Council Members to serve larger populations and cover their entire Districts. He said he felt districts needed to be more compact by adding more districts to the map.

Rod Lorenz, Peoria resident, expressed concern that nearly all scenarios presented in the maps split up the West Bluff. He noted the West Bluff had a thirty year history. He said three of the maps split up the Moss/Bradley Neighborhood. He said he had real concerns regarding quality of life in the areas where neighborhoods were divided. He added there was also an issue of dividing members of the West Bluff's governing board into separate districts. He asked the Committee to reconsider any scenario adversely affecting neighborhoods. He concluded that I-74 was an effective boundary to the district that need not be changed.

Council Member Van Auken concurred with Mr. Lorenz. She said, of all of the scenarios presented, Map (7) was her preference.

Lester Bergsten, former Council Member, said he appreciated the various maps. He said he felt it was important to keep neighborhoods together. He said he recommended a total of ten smaller districts, perhaps naming them 1A, 1B, 2A, 2B, etc.

Council Member Gulley arrived at 6:00 P.M.

In discussion with Chairman Spears, Corporation Counsel Randy Ray clarified a change to the number of Districts would need to take place in time for the next election.

Council Member Van Auken noted the Committee had planned to take the Election Commission's timeframe for setting voting precinct boundaries into consideration when trying to complete the Council District Redistricting process.

Peg Pendle, Peoria resident, expressed concern regarding the lack of scenarios presented to represent racial populations as well as disabled populations. She requested the Committee be pro-active in this area.

Corporation Counsel Ray clarified no one group had any entitlement in the absence of past discrimination toward a particular concentration of citizens. He said the redistricting information was taken from Census numbers as required by State Statute. He said these numbers had no statistics regarding any disabled population.

Director Landes said, if the Committee gave direction to do so, Staff would begin to track certain disabled populations.

Corporation Counsel Ray reiterated the City's obligation was to use the Census data and, since the ADA population was not a group recognized by the Census, the City had no criteria to measure these populations.

Council Member Van Auken noted she did not wish to use any of the map scenarios that divided neighborhoods.

Chairman Spears asked Staff to determine what direction the City's population would grow and then take that information into consideration.

Council Member Spears requested Staff to come back with maps to address those maps with deficiencies in keeping communities of interest together.

Council Member Van Auken said Maps (7) (8) and (9) accomplished District Two objectives.

Director Landes clarified the Committee wished to place more emphasis on keeping neighborhoods together and less on thoroughfares in redefining the maps. She further clarified the City's future growth needed to be taken into consideration.

In discussion with Mr. Lorenz, Director Landes explained tools such as the Housing Study completed in the Warehouse District would be utilized to determine the City's future growth. She said the information compiled would then be brought back to the Committee.

Following a brief discussion, Corporation Counsel Ray reminded citizens the Redistricting Committee's final decision would be taken to the full City Council for final approval.

Chairman Spears reiterated the Redistricting Committee's charge was to change district boundaries. He said the Committee's plan was to move forward with the current five districts, leaving any other decisions regarding the cumulative voting issue or change in number of districts to the full City Council. He said the Committee had no At-Large representation and it was not appropriate to have discussion and to make decisions of that nature without the full City Council's input.

CHANGE IN METHOD OF ELECTING COUNCIL MEMBERS

Chairman Spears noted this agenda item was in place as a courtesy to citizens who wished to address the issue of cumulative voting and, hearing no objections, he granted Privilege of the Floor to any citizen who wished to address the issue.

Roberta Parks, Peoria Area Chamber of Commerce President, provided a brief history of the cumulative voting process. She said the Chamber's Board did not have a position on cumulative voting at this time, but she said as time passed fewer people were aware of its purpose and why the process existed. She added the Chamber thought it was an appropriate time for the City Council to review the process.

Irene Pritzker, League of Women Voters of Greater Peoria President, thanked the City for making the Redistricting process transparent. She said her organization did not have a position on cumulative voting, but she said the League does support having both District and At-Large Council Members.

Savino Sierra, Peoria resident, said he felt the City should keep the voting process as it is. He said he liked the option of contacting an At-Large Council Member if, for some reason, you weren't able to contact your District Council Member.

Cheryl Budzinski, Peoria resident, cautioned the Committee regarding Map (10). She discussed non-Hispanic/black populations and the election of minorities.

Council Member Van Auken moved to take the issue regarding a change in the method of electing Council Members to the full City Council for discussion; seconded by Council Member Irving.

Approved by viva voce vote.

2010 CENSUS POPULATION DATA IN RELATION TO BRADLEY UNIVERSITY

Director Landes distributed an analysis of 2000 and 2010 Census Data for Census Tracts 18, 19, and 20.

Urban Planner Shannon Techie provided an overview of the report. She said research had shown the Census Tracts 18 and 20 of the analysis were centered on Bradley University housing. She said 974 people had been lost in the count, with 890 of those being associated with Bradley. She noted in 2000 Census numbers there had been an over-count of 625 people. She said the Census Bureau wouldn't allow for any changes to be made to the 2000 data.

Council Member Van Auken moved to receive and file the analysis of 2000 and 2010 Census Data for Census Tracts 18, 19, and 20; seconded by Council Member Gulley.

Approved by viva voce vote.

SCHEDULING OF NEXT MEETING

Following discussion by the Committee, Chairman Spears requested to set the next meeting of the Redistricting Committee to be held on July 5, 2011, at 4:30 P.M. in Council Chambers, Room 400, City Hall, 419 Fulton, Peoria, Illinois. Hearing no objections, the next meeting was scheduled for July 5, 2011, at 4:30 P.M.

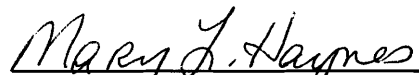
Chairman Spears thanked those present for their participation and City Staff for their assistance.

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 Irving.

Approved by viva voce vote.

The Special Meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee of the City Council on Redistricting adjourned at 6:40 P.M.



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

By: 

Beth Ball, Chief Deputy City Clerk