

Commission on Redistricting

Wednesday July 14, 2021

Start Time: 5:05 pm

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance:

Commission Members

Mariana Cordier (Chair)
Arthur Edmunds (Vice-Chair)
Imad Aldean Ahmad
Laura Ard
Keshia Desir
Bruce Goldensohn
Jason Makstein
Nilmini Rubin
Samuel Statland
David Stein

Council Staff

Pamela Dunn
Jeff Zyontz
Liz Olsson

Planning Staff

Corinne Blackford
Erik Westbrook

The meeting began at 5:05 pm.

It opened with a greeting to the Commission by Chair Cordier.

Next, the Chair requested approval of the meeting minutes. The June 9 meeting minutes were approved without amendment.

The Chair then asked if the Commissioners had any observations or remarks regarding upcoming meetings. It was noted that efforts to connect with residents in the Up-County and with communities of color are needed. Commissioner Desir mentioned that she recently added upcoming meetings with communities of color to the list. In addition, Chair Cordier requested the powerpoint presentation currently being used by Commissioners at community meetings be translated into Spanish for an upcoming meeting she will attend.

It was requested that the list of community meetings being scheduled for attendance by Commissioners be posted on the Commission webpage with information for how to request attendance at a community meeting as well as making sure a copy of the powerpoint presentation is posted to the webpage. Also related to webpage communication, the Commission requested staff explore adding a tool to allow users to submit comments to the Commission online. Commissioners also requested the chat associated with the FaceBook Live meeting be monitored so that questioned posed in the chat can be addressed following the Commission meeting or as part of the next Commission meeting.

Next, the Commission discussed scheduling outreach meetings using the Up-County and East County Regional Service Centers, and the Council Office Building as possible venues. Further outreach sessions scheduled by the Commission will be explored.

Following the discussion on community outreach, the Chair opened the floor for Commissioners to share their experience and thoughts in working with the Redistricting Map Tool (presented by Planning staff at the May meeting). A few Commissioners remarked that they had tried the tool and had created draft maps. A couple of the draft 7-district maps were shared on screen with Commissioners noting that these drafts were initial attempts at using the tool and did not represent drafts for Commission endorsement. During the mapping discussion the issue of placing the Cities of Rockville and Gaithersburg in separate districts was raised. The Commission agreed to reach out to these municipalities to get their thoughts on the issue.

Council staff and Planning staff indicated that they had also created draft maps to highlight decisions like this that one encounters in creating 7-districts. There was no time remaining in the meeting to share all maps; the Chair indicated additional map review would occur at the next meeting. Planning staff reiterated their offer of assistance to any Commissioner who needs help using the mapping tool.

The Commission had a brief discussion of possible changes to the meeting day and time starting in September. Council staff offered to send a poll to Commissioners regarding their availability and preference.

The meeting closed at 6:29 pm.