

Redistricting Group Public Hearing Journal

Thursday, March 1, 2012 - 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Hosmer Community Library
347 East 36th Street
Minneapolis, Minnesota
612-543-6900

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

1. **Introduction and Orientation to Redistricting**
2. **Presentation of Draft Maps**

Chair Clegg called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m. He summarized the redistricting process and the format to be followed during the public hearing.

3. **Acceptance of Public Testimony**

a) **Sheila Cracraft Fehler, 4116 32nd Avenue South, Standish Ericsson Neighborhood**, stated that the current dividing line between Ward 9 and Ward 12 is a better location for the dividing line than the new proposed line along 42nd Street. The Standish Ericsson Neighborhood Association (SENA) is two neighborhoods that are active and would like to stay together. The new House District 63A has one of its bottom lines from Hiawatha to about 27th Avenue at 45th Street, which creates an area in a different House District on the other side of 45th. It was her understanding that for good precinct management, everyone in the precinct should have the same ballot, and she did not think that area would be large enough to be its own precinct. She suggested moving the line between Wards 9 and 12 north to make that area big enough to be its own precinct, and she would like to remain in Ward 12.

b) **Mike Dean, business address 2323 East Franklin, Executive Director, Common Cause Minnesota**, presented several maps that had been created on the drawminneapolis.org website by Minneapolis residents. He stated that over 130 people have participated and 45 maps were submitted as of today. Some maps made significant changes and some did not. One of the common themes in all the maps is that most changes occur in the central area of the city and just south of it. Most of the maps did a good job of creating minority opportunity wards. The mapping tool provides information on the number of neighborhood splits in each map, population, and ethnicity, etc. The Redistricting Group's maps have also been uploaded to the website to allow people to make edits to the maps throughout the process.

c) Zachary Metoyer, 2848 Pleasant Avenue South, stated that he was concerned about the Harrison, East Phillips, and Cedar Riverside Neighborhoods. When big chunks are cut out of neighborhoods, it dilutes the opportunities for the neighborhoods. It is important to look at those issues because of a person's right to vote and the Voting Rights Act tying into the civil rights movement of the 1960's in which individuals such as Martin Luther King and John F. Kennedy were assassinated for their attempts to strengthen the movement. It is important to keep in mind the rights that came out of that movement for individuals to have a strength and a voting power. He had faith in the Redistricting Group members to take what is said at the public hearings and make a better plan for everyone in the city. He had met with some Somali leaders and heard their concerns about the Cedar Riverside Neighborhood, and those concerns should be addressed as well as the Harrison Neighborhood with the split in the African American's voting capacity in that area. He inquired how much time will be available after the public hearings for the Redistricting Group to consider all of the input received. Clegg stated that public hearings on the next map will take place the week of March 20.

d) Patricia Webb, 4101 Portland Avenue, signed up to speak but was not present when her name was called.

e) Sadik Warfa, stated that he fully supported the plan submitted by the Citizens Committee for Fair Redistricting. It unites the Cedar Riverside community. He asked the Redistricting Group to consider that plan because in the last 20 years the population of the city has changed and the map proposed by the Citizens Committee best reflected that change.

f) Becky Timm, Executive Director, Powderhorn Park Neighborhood Association (PPNA), stated that currently the Powderhorn Neighborhood is split in half along 14th Avenue and is located in Wards 8 and 9. The proposed map would place the ward line at Chicago Avenue. They understood that the change was made because the Redistricting Group was trying to keep communities of interest such as Powderhorn Park together. Although they are sad to lose representation from two council members, they understand the reason for the change. They were glad to see the Redistricting Group had changed their previous version of the map which would have taken out two blocks west of Powderhorn in the Central neighborhood. They supported the change to Chicago Avenue.

g) Shawne Fitzgerald, 1508 East 37th Street, Powderhorn Park Neighborhood, stated that she was a member of the PPNA Housing Land Use and Economic Development Committee. There has been tremendous progress on Chicago Avenue, most of it happened in the last two years. There are galleries, a community garden, a coffee shop, and people on the streets at 34th and Chicago where tragic shootings have occurred in the past. There is a knitting shop, an arts center, and newly rehabbed store fronts. The Housing Land Use and Economic Development Committee will consider the proposed redistricting plan at their meeting tonight. Having polled the members, she found there was strong support for keeping the western-most precincts of the Powderhorn Park Neighborhood in Ward 8 because their elected official and CPED staff have all been working to benefit the area. Young people are investing in old buildings and entrepreneurs starting new businesses. It would be great to see another five or ten years of progress and see this area stabilized. She asked that both sides of Chicago Avenue be kept in the same ward.

h) Richard Pitheon, 3728 13th Avenue, stated that he was a member of the Task Force that supported the effort to redevelop the 38th and Chicago commercial area. The proposed plan splits that area between two wards. He questioned whether that was wise. The Ward 8 council member has spent many hours working on attracting new businesses and upgrading the area. New businesses are moving in and landlords are purchasing property and bringing new life to the corner. The effort of the Ward 8 council member to rejuvenate the area should be recognized. This is an important redevelopment for the central southside of Minneapolis, and it is important to keep it within one ward.

i) Peter Rickmyer, Jordan Neighborhood, stated that the Jordan Neighborhood was currently in Wards 4 and 5 and the proposed map also split it into two wards. Harrison was also split. He proposed bringing the Ward 5 line down to cover the entire Harrison Neighborhood and the Ward 4 line to West Broadway and Emerson. That would put the Jordan Neighborhood in one ward as well as the Harrison Neighborhood. The goal should be to unite neighborhoods.

j) Anders Thorstenson, signed up to speak but stated that he had no comment at this time.

k) Sheldon Mains, 2718 East 24th Street, stated that, speaking as a representative of the Seward Neighborhood Group, they preferred having Seward in one ward. They felt it made sense to have Seward with the university neighborhoods since they have a lot in common with the university neighborhoods. It also made sense to have both sides of the Mississippi River in the same ward because of the importance of that resource. They suggested following the CP railroad track and the light rail track for the ward border. Speaking on his own behalf, Mr. Mains requested that the ward boundaries be kept as close to what they are now and kept as simple as possible. Confusing ward boundaries and shifting who represents people is a sure way to reduce voter turnout. When people don't know who represents them, they are less likely to vote. He noted that the map proposed by his friend Vic Thorstenson looked more like the tongue on the Guthrie Theatre.

l) Joseph Spangler, 2920 15th Avenue South, stated that the redistricting group published a draft map dated February 8th which met the published guidelines. After a special Senate primary election loss of an ethnically identifying individual, changes were made to the draft map to form a ward to further the election of such an ethnically identified person to the City Council. This action diminishes by design the franchise of votes within this ward not of this specific identifying heritage. This action diminishes by design the participation of diversity in other wards. No evidence of voter discrimination or proposed group division is offered. Federal legislation prevents municipalities from enacting practices designed to give minorities an unfair chance to elect candidates of their choice. This action changes the boundary lines of a number of wards with a change of between 40% and 50%. He urged the Redistricting Group to abandon the results election outcome engineering element and return to the February 8th map. (Mr. Spangler also submitted his comments in writing for the record.)

m) Kevin Johnson, 437 Cedar Lake Road South, Past President of the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association, and Marlin Possehl, current President of the Bryn Mawr

Neighborhood Association, requested that Bryn Mawr be kept intact as a neighborhood and in Ward 7, as was achieved in the current proposed map. They also requested that the Park District line be adjusted to include the Bassett Creek area in Ward 7 since the neighborhood had been involved in the redevelopment of that area. Current Park Commissioner Tabb also supported that change.

n) Neal Baxter, 1213 East 38th Street, signed up to speak but was not present when his name was called.

o) Rick Stafford, 3154 Bloomington Avenue, stated that he had been on the Redistricting Commission ten years ago. Ten years ago they attempted to split the Whittier Neighborhood because it was a very organized neighborhood, and they tried to keep the Phillips Neighborhood together because it was a fragile neighborhood that had a lot of issues, but they ended up splitting the Phillips Neighborhood. Since the proposed map splits the Whittier Neighborhood, he requested that the Redistricting Group reconsider the issue of splitting the East Phillips Neighborhood. The neighborhood has faced many challenges, and has a committed group of individuals that have spent years turning that neighborhood around. The Phillips split also splits some of the Native American communities. Also, ten years ago, Ward 8 was created to be a majority minority ward. Adding the Lyndale Neighborhood and the rest of King Field and the territory by the lake to Ward 8 dilutes that ward.

p) Abdulkadir Warsame, 614 19th Avenue, Citizens Committee for Fair Redistricting, stated that the proposed map splits Cedar Riverside. The Towers are in Ward 6 and all the businesses and the community centers are in Ward 2. He thought that was unfair. The African Development Center is one of the largest East African non-profit organizations in Ward 2, while Cedar Riverside Plaza residents are in Ward 6. He requested that all of Cedar Riverside be included in Ward 6, plus part of the Seward Neighborhood along Franklin Avenue, or the tongue of the Guthrie Theatre as it was earlier described, which houses around 3,800 residents, 85% of whom are East African. That area alone contains 30 to 40 businesses, and the area has more in common with Cedar Riverside than it does with Seward. These neighborhoods were set up decades ago and have fundamentally changed. Separating them from Ward 6 would disenfranchise the community as a whole. In the Redistricting Group's proposed map, Ward 6 goes all the way to Whittier. There is a concentration of East Africans in Whittier, but not of the same density as in the Franklin Avenue Area. They would like to keep the Cedar Riverside Neighborhood together as much as possible. The Citizens Committee for Fair Redistricting map proposes keeping as much of Cedar Riverside together as possible, as well as Elliot Park. The Redistricting Group had done a great job and the community is very excited about it. (Mr. Warsame also submitted his comments in writing for the record.)

q) Osman Ahmed, 1515 South 4th Street, West Bank Community Coalition, stated that his community has been divided into several different wards. They need unity in their community. There are a lot of businesses in the area of Riverside to 35W. He thought that 2012 was the year the Charter Commission should give consideration to uniting the community group in that area. He fully supported the plan submitted by the Citizens Committee for Fair Redistricting. He also supported the plan presented by Mr. Thorstenson. He hoped to unite

the neighborhoods of Cedar Riverside, Seward, Ventura Village, Elliot Park, and Phillips. The Redistricting Group's map is a move in the right direction, however it still divides the important Cedar Riverside area and all of Seward from the rest of their community. He asked the Redistricting Group to address this issue in the coming weeks.

r) Mohamoud Hassan, 1530 South 6th Street, stated that this is an opportunity for his neighborhood to have more opportunities in Minneapolis. He fully supported the Citizens Committee for Fair Redistricting map in order to give the community an opportunity to have better representation in the city. He asked that Cedar Riverside, Ventura Village, and the Phillips Neighborhood be included in Ward 6.

s) Imam Sa'ad Musse Roble, 115 West 3rd Street, stated that he fully supported the plan proposed by the Citizens Committee for Fair Redistricting. This proposal will unite his neighborhood and give his community better representation. He believed that Cedar Riverside, Elliot Park, Ventura Village, and the Phillips Neighborhoods should be included in the new Ward 6. The community is fully behind the proposal and they hope that the Redistricting Group gives it their consideration.

t) Paula Vollmar Heywood 2627 South 8th Street, stated that she had lived in the Cedar Riverside area for 30 years and was concerned about splitting the neighborhood. If all of the Cedar Riverside Neighborhood could be kept together in Ward 6, perhaps Whittier could be kept whole. She wasn't sure if Seward should be part of Ward 6, but asked that the Cedar Riverside area be kept together in any way possible.

u) Dahir Jibeel, 1806 Riverside Ave, Executive Director, Somali Justice Advocacy Center, speaking on behalf of the community, he supported the proposal of the Citizens Committee for Fair Redistricting. Their plan meets the needs and aspirations of the East African community and also meets all the principles of redistricting. He emphasized the need to have the Cedar Riverside Neighborhood, parts of Seward East as shown in the map, as well as the Elliot Park Neighborhood in Ward 6. It is important that the Redistricting Group fully understand that the community as a whole is excited and energized by the redistricting of the city and wholeheartedly supports the plan of the Citizens Committee for Fair Redistricting. He believed that its implementation would help revitalize the neighborhoods they live in, as well as add a great deal of new voters to the system.

v) Carol Pass, 2536 18th Avenue South, East Phillips Neighborhood, stated that she was hearing a tremendous amount of work to create groups together that have a very similar identity, and she was very sympathetic with that. As a Euro American, she did not have that agenda. There is an old saying, "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." Phillips is very mixed, and they are trying to go far. We are going to find ourselves in places where many of the people are quite different, and we are going to have to love each other and work together if we are going to go far. We would all like to be clustered with people like ourselves. She has learned to like to be clustered with people who are not very much alike. She likes diversity. Part of the current concern of a ward is to take care of an area. It is easier to do that when you have a lot of similarities, but it has to be done anyway. The community in which she lives is so diverse that on one block there are ten different

nationalities. She was concerned with the area where the Citizens Committee for Fair Redistricting map veered all the way to the river. People in that area are not stakeholders in the neighborhood in the west portion of Ward 6. It is important that stakeholders in an area are clustered in that area to focus on the area. She was also concerned about the Native American Cultural Corridor where they are working hard to keep that cultural community together and strong. She asked the Redistricting Group to take very seriously the needs of the Whittier community and the Native American community and keep them together so they can work together.

w) Shirley Heyer, 2426 13th Avenue South, Midtown Phillips Neighborhood, stated that she agreed with keeping all of the Phillips Neighborhoods together. The neighborhoods have wanted to be together in one ward for a long time. The core neighborhood has a median household income that is the lowest in the city at \$10,000 per year. The neighborhoods work very well together with their diverse populations. They are 80% non-White, equally divided between Somali, East African, African American, Native American, and Spanish speaking people. They are the American experiment and can elect people of many diversities to their neighborhood boards and the City Council. Being stuck half in Ward 9 and half in Ward 6 has been very difficult. They don't have enough votes in either ward to convince a council member to do what they would like. Elliot Park is part of the Phillips-Elliot Community Service area in the new park system. The portion of Elliot Park below Highway 55 is primarily residential with the same population mix. The part north of 55 is like downtown. They would like the Elliot Park District to be with the Phillips Neighborhood. Adding Seward to Ward 6 would bring a big hospital and university complex that will compete for attention with Allina and Children's Hospitals and bring another major business area on Cedar and Franklin. That is too much for one council member to handle.

x) Sill Ordino, 3517 Oakland Avenue, (through interpreter Marlana Rojas, Minnesota Immigrant Freedom Network), stated that she supported the We All Win proposed map created by the Latino community. She did not want to divide the community. She wanted to keep the Latino community together. The Latino community disagreed with the Redistricting Group's proposed map because it is dividing the Latino, Native American, African American, and Somali communities. They wanted the communities together.

y) Jose Luis Villasenor, 2708 18th Avenue, stated that the We All Win proposal keeps communities of color together and doesn't divide and conquer. The Redistricting Group's map divides communities of color throughout the city and takes away political power from communities of color, and he disagreed with the proposed map. There is a large population of Latinos in Central, West and Mid Midtown Phillips Neighborhoods.

z) Imam Abdighani Ali, 406 Cedar Avenue, stated that all those in the community support the proposal of the Citizens Committee for Fair Redistricting. The proposal tries to unite the neighborhood and give their community more opportunity. He supported the proposal of the Citizens Committee for Fair Redistricting.

aa) Eduarda Olivera, 3206 Cedar Avenue South, (through interpreter Marlana Rojas) stated that she lived in the Corcoran Neighborhood and was a member of Mujeres Latinas in Accion.

She disagreed with the map proposed by the Redistricting Group. She did not want the Latino community divided. She supported the We All Win proposal.

bb) Celia Olivera, 3121 Cedar Avenue, (through interpreter Marlana Rojas) stated that she belonged to the Mujeres Latinas in Accion group. She disagreed with the map proposed by the Redistricting Group. She did not want the Latino community to be separated. She supported the We All Win proposal. It represented the Native American, Latino, African American, and Somali communities.

cc) Irail Velasco, 3509 Oakland Avenue South, (through interpreter Marlana Rojas) stated that she supported the map that represented the Latino community. The Latino community is very large and they want to be united, not divided. She wanted the Redistricting Group to consider the map proposed by the Latino community.

dd) Lucia Velasco, 3509 Oakland Avenue, (through interpreter Marlana Rojas) stated that she represented the Latino community and supported the map proposed by the Latino community. She disagreed with the Redistricting Group's proposed map. She asked that the Redistricting Group consider the map proposed by the Latino community.

ee) Erika Valderama, stated that she was present supporting the Latino community. They did not want to be separated. She disagreed with the Redistricting Group's proposed map that divided their community. She asked that the Redistricting Group consider the map proposed by the Latino community.

ff) Marlana Rojas, 2425 Elliot Avenue, Minnesota Immigrant Freedom Network, stated that she disagreed with the map proposed by the Redistricting Group because it divides communities of color. The map proposed by the Latino community creates four wards that represent different communities and can have different representatives. They don't want to fight each other, they want to bring communities of color together.

gg) Sandra Estrella, (through interpreter Marlana Rojas) stated that she disagreed with the map proposed by the Redistricting Group. As a Latina she agreed with the map proposed by the Latino community. She did not want the Latino community separated. As a Latina, she wanted all the Latinos together.

hh) Diana Rieva, stated that she belonged to the Powderhorn Park Neighborhood. She disagreed with the current map because it divides the Latino community and they wanted to be united and it will affect her and other young teenagers.

ii) Osman A-Daga, 1212 South 9th Street, had signed up to speak but stated that he would give up his time to the following speaker:

jj) Robert Flemal, representing the Minneapolis Taxi Drivers and Owners Association, stated that he lived in St. Paul but was present to speak for the taxi drivers who live in Minneapolis and their families. They need representation because they are trying to get ordinances changed in the Minneapolis code book and it's not working. The city doesn't seem

to care about the families, the drivers, the owners. They are small businessmen and it is not fair the way the city is being split up. Part of their association also includes Latino drivers. They have hundreds, soon to be thousands, of members. There are 10,000 family members being affected by the policies of the city now. Some of these policies need to be changed. You have invited all these people to live here, now give them fair representation and we can all live in unity in the city.

kk) Marilu Thomas, 1800 Glenwood Avenue, Executive Director, Redeemer Center for Life, stated that there are about 4,000 residents in the Harrison Neighborhood. Redistricting will move about 1,100 residents to a different ward. It will split the neighborhood in half. Redeemer Center has properties on both sides of Glenwood Avenue and the properties will be split into two wards. They recently opened a bike shop to start economic development on Glenwood Avenue working with the Minneapolis Health Department and with Community Planning and Economic Development. This will place all of those efforts into two different wards, and they will be working with two different council members to try to get one project done. This proposal will decimate the tax base because everything south of Glenwood has higher property values and it makes the ward then include only the lower income neighborhoods that are split on a racial line as well as an economic line. It deepens the differences between those two parts of North Minneapolis and reduces the power of the Harrison residents.

ll) Mary Mellen, 2813 8th Street South, stated that she has served in the NRP community since 2001 and was now on the NRP Board. She believed that the Cedar Riverside Plaza needed representation. They have their own issues and needed representation of their own culture. The line cuts through the Seven Corners area which is a huge historic area along the river. The River Towers is on one side in Ward 2 and the Riverside Apartments are on the other side. She asked that the Redistricting Group consider keeping that historic area together.

mm) Brad Pass, 2536 18th Avenue South, inquired when the video of the public hearing would be aired. Barb Lickness stated that it would be broadcast on MTN early this weekend.

4. **Close of Public Hearing**
5. **Announcements and Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Peggy Menshek
Redistricting Group Coordinator