

Menshek, Peggy Y

From: Kevin McDonald <kjmcDonald@hotmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 20, 2012 4:55 PM
To: Redistricting2012
Subject: Ward and Park Boundaries

To Redistricting Commission Members,

I have been closely watching this effort. Congratulations for an excellent process to date.

I am writing to express a concern about portions of Ward 2, specifically the Cooper neighborhood as well as portions of Longfellow and Seward neighborhoods.

Issue # 1

As you undoubtedly know, the Longfellow Community Council (LCC) is a large neighborhood association comprising the neighborhoods of Hiawatha, Howe, Cooper and Longfellow. The currently proposed map splits this association between two wards: 2 and 12. As has been convincingly stated by other associations, neighborhood associations -- and their advocacy and community building efforts -- are "communities of interest."

I believe that adjusting the map to include Cooper in Ward 12 would both offer redress to this specific failing, as well as help to address issues posed by others.

Issue # 2

I recognize, as well as support that, certain geographic portions of Seward are important for meeting the ethnic heritage considerations of "community of interest," as well as proactively helping to achieve the Voting Rights Act (VRA) requirement that racial and language minorities have a fair opportunity to elect representatives of their choice. That said, there are portions of Seward that share a very strong affinity with the neighborhoods to the immediate north (LCC boundaries). The greater Longfellow neighborhoods and Seward have a long track record of collaborative efforts, ranging from restorative justice to commercial/residential redevelopment projects.

While it is difficult, if not impossible given VRA's minority representation objective, to choose an east-west street to subdivide Seward, I ask that you consider East 24th Street as an option. This street, between Hiawatha Avenue and West River Parkway, could be used as a ward boundary between the 12th and 6th Wards. This achieves the stated goal of "(3) Wherever possible, Minneapolis City ward and Park and Recreation district boundary lines should follow the centerline of streets, avenues, alleys and boulevards and run due East and West or North and South."

Finally, I wish to comment on one Charter Commission principle: Change current boundaries as little as possible. I believe that the Voting Rights Act goals, Minnesota Statutes, and the City Charter must take precedent over this Charter Commission guiding desire. The most important consideration is to "get it right" based on Federal and State laws, and the City Charter. In doing so, you may need to set aside the guiding principle of as little boundary change as possible.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kevin McDonald
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