

Redistricting Group Public Hearing Journal

Tuesday, March 20, 2012 - 5:00 - 7:00 p.m.
Sabathani Community Center
310 East 38th Street
Minneapolis, Minnesota
612-821-2300

Redistricting Group Members Present: Clegg (Chair), Bad Heart Bull, Cohen, Cole, Ferrara, Garcia, Heinle, Kozak, Lazarus, Massey, Peltola, Richardson, Sandberg, Schwarzkopf, Thaden

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

Chair Clegg called the meeting to order at 5:06 p.m. He summarized the redistricting process and the format to be followed during the public hearing. He noted that the proposed map had to be published in Finance and Commerce seven days prior to today's public hearing. However, during that week, the Operations Committee had met and further refined the proposed map by eliminating the splits in the Lyndale, CARAG, Standish, and Elliot Park neighborhoods and reducing the amount of the Seward Neighborhood that is in Ward 6. This map was available to view, but had not been approved by the full Redistricting Group. This map will be presented to the full Redistricting Group on Thursday, March 22.

3. **Acceptance of Public Testimony**

a) **Barry Schade, 256 Sheridan Avenue South, Bryn Mawr Neighborhood Association**, asked that the Redistricting Group keep Bryn Mawr intact and in Ward 7 when they set the final ward and park district boundaries. By your latest map, nearly all of Bryn Mawr is in one ward and one park district: Ward 7 and District 4. He was glad for that and thanked the Redistricting Group for all the hard work they have put into the process. However, the neighborhood was concerned that a small, uninhabited sliver of northeastern Bryn Mawr is no longer in Ward 7, because the Redistricting Group was following the legislative line which, instead of following the traditional Bryn Mawr boundary that goes down Bassett Creek, the line now follows the railroad tracks south of the creek. Bassett Creek is the natural established boundary of Bryn Mawr and runs just north of the railroad tracks. Ten years ago, the City moved the neighborhood boundary south to where it is now, which is the middle of the creek, in order to allow Harrison and Bryn Mawr to have equal participation and equal representation in the development of the Bassett Creek Valley Master Plan. They want that equal representation to continue. By using the railroad tracks rather than the creek as the ward boundary, a small uninhabited part of Bryn Mawr is effectively isolated from the rest of the neighborhood. By becoming part of Ward 5, this small part of Bryn Mawr now will be represented by an elected council member and park district commissioner that no one in Bryn Mawr will have a chance to choose. The lack of proper representation makes it very difficult for the neighborhood to participate in the process

that was started 15 years ago. It is a simply technical change. They talked it over with the city staff and the Secretary of State has reported back and said that the Redistricting Group could make the change, and he was present to ask the Redistricting Group to do that.

b) Dan McLaughlin, 2500 Humboldt Avenue, Vice President, East Isles Residents Association, speaking on his own behalf, stated that he and his neighbors do not want to move from Ward 10 to Ward 7 because they are Uptown not Downtown.

Demographics of East Isles include a very young population with in average age of 25-34. Wikipedia states that "Uptown is a mix of various cultural strains and is considered an area for young people to live and shop. It's known as a vibrant center for artists and musicians, hipsters and hippies. Much more numerous are the young professionals, also known as yuppies from throughout the Twin Cities area who frequent this district at night, especially on the weekends, in order to visit local restaurants and bars." This is quite different from Ward 7 which is Lowry Hill, Kenwood, and Downtown. Therefore, East Isles shares more in common with Ward 10 than Ward 7. Other specific concerns include the fact that the Uptown area is developing rapidly and needs smart development that reflects the character of Uptown so they would like a council member who represents all of Uptown. They have the Hennepin Avenue Improvement District, the Greenway, and the Uptown Art Fair. They oppose moving their neighborhood into Ward 7. East Isles = Uptown not Downtown.

c) Shirley Heyer, 2426 13th Avenue South, stated that she lived in the Midtown Phillips Neighborhood in Ward 9. Their neighborhood organization voted last Tuesday that Midtown Phillips be moved completely into Ward 9. In addition to that right now Ward 9 is almost 4% under the deviation, by putting Midtown Phillips which is the heart of the Hispanic community in South Minneapolis into Ward 9, that brings the population in line provided that portion of the Standish Neighborhood that is put into Ward 9 goes back into the ward below it and that part of the Lyndale Neighborhood west of 35W goes back into the Lyndale Neighborhood. If this affects Ward 6, there are other changes from Ward 6 residents present who will express their concerns. Apparently last Thursday the Operations Committee met and there is now a different map. She inquired if that was a secret meeting.

Clegg stated that all of the meetings of the Redistricting Group and the Operations Committee are noticed and open to members of the public.

d) Becky Alper, 3148 1st Avenue South, stated that she was a board member of the Lyndale Neighborhood Association and asked that the Redistricting Group please keep Lyndale whole. She was part of the two-block stretch in Lyndale to the west of 35W, a forgotten piece that was put in a different ward. She looks out her front window at the sound barrier of 35W, that historic public works project that broke up neighborhood and wrecked the economic and social fabric of our communities. Do not let that portion of the neighborhood be isolated or forgotten. Keep Lyndale whole.

e) Marne Zafar, 2202 22nd Street East, stated that he was a resident of the Seward Neighborhood. The splitting of Seward is an unbelievably bad solution. She moved here from New York City over 15 years ago, and moved to the Seward neighborhood 14 years ago. As a neighborhood that encompasses much that is wonderful and good - it is progressive, innovative, friendly, big-hearted, and welcoming to all - this was the only neighborhood that met her desires in the Twin Cities. The bonus point - Cam Gordon, their Green Party Council Member. His leadership, thoughtfulness, ethics, and his great relations with the Seward Neighborhood as a whole. She has lived here, in Paris and Milan and as someone who is primarily Native, some African American, and Seward is the ultimate multi-cultural neighborhood. It appears that the Redistricting Group is more concerned with the comments of people who are outside of Seward proper. They do not live in Seward versus those who are actual Ward 2 residents. When she hears the words "opportunity ward" her hair stands on end because she feels that it is almost an assumption that just because someone is one thing, that the whole group of people are going to vote for that person. While maybe there are instances where that has happened, by and large many people need to be given the opportunity to be who they are and they work very hard in the Seward Neighborhood to be a true community. The Seward Neighborhood preferred the original boundaries as shown in the February map.

f) Nasra Noor, 2710 Franklin Avenue East, stated that the Seward Neighborhood was her home, her workplace, and her community. She was speaking on behalf of people from the Towers as well as herself. They just found out about these meetings. They would like to get involved. They want Seward to be in one ward and they want Seward to stay together and not be divided. They preferred the February map. Many people were present with her from the Towers and she was speaking on their behalf also. They want Seward to stay together.

g) Tariku Belay, 2515 9th Street South, stated that he had lived in the Seward Neighborhood for over twenty years. He was originally from Ethiopia and has a strong connection with his community. As a board member for the West Tower of the Seward Neighborhood, he serves as a representative of his East African community. In many discussions in recent weeks with other East Africans, it is very clear to him that the vast majority of East Africans who live in the Seward community do not want to see Seward split up again into two separate wards. Seward Neighborhood has a large East African community. They, as a whole, strongly oppose the splitting up of the neighborhood into two groups. They strongly believe that the neighborhood should remain intact. The Redistricting Group has not reached out to their East African community to hear their voice or their opinions before taking this drastic measure to split Seward into two new wards. For those reasons, he was not in favor of splitting Seward into two separate wards. He strongly believed that dividing the Seward Neighborhood into two wards would cause a lot of disharmony between the East/West. It has taken many years to mend some of the rifts caused by the division of Seward in the late 1960's and 1970's. Additionally, as a Seward Neighborhood board member and a resident of one of the Seward Towers, he knew firsthand how difficult it is to build community and to encourage different cultures to develop and appreciation of one another. He enjoyed living in the Seward Neighborhood and wanted his community to remain vibrant and

cohesive. He believed that Seward must be kept as a single ward in order to continue the important efforts at community building that they have worked so hard to achieve.

h) William Kingsbury, 1310 19th Street East, stated that was on the Board of Directors for Ventura Village, although he was speaking only on his own behalf. He did not like the proposed map that made Ward 6 squeeze over into the Seward Neighborhood. The idea of an opportunity ward is awkward. The way the change has been explained to him is that this configuration will create a Somali American opportunity ward. He thought it was great that every ethnic group has representation on the city council, but he didn't like the squeezing of the Somali American opportunity into the Phillips Neighborhood which is home to a very large amount of Native American people. He didn't like those two groups being pitted against each other for possibly one city council seat. He suggested a Ward 6 that is much closer to the current boundaries.

i) Robert Hain, 2801 9th Street South, stated that the Redistricting Group's first map kept the Seward Neighborhood together. Later, probably responding to the group called Citizens for Fair Redistricting, Ward 2 was changed drastically into an odd shape and it looked very political. The group that proposed the change never came to their neighborhood and never spoke to them or had any dealings with the people present tonight from Seward, many of whom are East African. They want their neighborhood to stay together. They have a lot of solidarity. They have a very strong neighborhood group. They have done a lot of hard work to include everybody and they want it to stay the way it is.

j) Daphna Stromberg, 2717 Garfield Avenue South, stated that she currently lived in Ward 6 which will eventually end up being Ward 10. She was in support of the current Ward 10 map where Whittier was kept in one neighborhood. Whittier is a large neighborhood with many issues. Splitting it would give them two different council representatives which would make it difficult for them to achieve things and will complicate issues. She would like to support the last draft for her neighborhood.

k) Halima Ahmed, 2910 Franklin Avenue East, stated that she lived in Seward Tower and wanted Seward to stay together.

l) Omar Jama, 2515 9th Street South, stated through an interpreter that he was from the Seward Neighborhood and he wanted Seward to stay together. You can find everything you want in a small community or in a small neighborhood and everything can be found in Seward like Franklin Avenue, the schools, the swimming pool, the basketball court, small grocery shopping. He wanted Seward to stay together. He didn't want Seward split up.

m) Brian Nalezny, 4424 Lyndale Avenue South, stated that he lived in the East Harriet Neighborhood and thanked the Redistricting Group for returning their neighborhood to one piece. It has been split into three wards in one of the initial maps. He stated that while they were thankful to remain in one ward, they also asked that the

Redistricting Group look at putting them in Ward 13. Historically, they have had partnerships with the Linden Hills and Lynnhurst Business Associations.

n) William Kelly, 4234 Pillsbury Avenue South, had signed up to speak but stated that the relinquished his time to the next speaker.

o) Lynn Regnier, 719 10th Street South, Elliot Park Neighborhood, stated that the Elliot Park Neighborhood requests to remain in Ward 7. The latest map puts all of Elliot Park is now in Ward 6. With no disrespect to the people of Ward 6, the Elliot Park geographical interests are tied to downtown neighborhood. They meet with them regularly on a monthly basis and have done so for years. They have been working for three to four years on the DEEP District Framework which is Downtown East and Elliot Park and they would still be split from that ward, but instead of having three different council members to deal with they would only have two. They are working to grow leadership in economic development in district as whole and would like to stay intact in Ward 7.

p) Sammie Arditorikla (sp?), 2210 13th Avenue South, stated that she worked on Franklin Avenue. She was born and raised in Minneapolis. She was a member of Native American community, Ojibwa, with ties to White Earth. As the map currently exists it is pitting the Native and the Somali communities against one another. They currently have a Native representative, Robert Lilligren, and she would like to find ways for their community to have more representation than have less. There should be more representation by many people of color than trying to pit themselves against each other. Her community has had a long-time presence on Franklin Avenue. There are not large numbers of Native people, but they have been long time residents of Minnesota and Minneapolis. She hoped their relatives here would consider respecting their presence and cultural community and allow them to have representation as well. She asked the Redistricting Group to create a map that would unite them instead of setting them up to fight against each other.

q) Diana Boegemann, 3317 Aldrich Avenue South, stated that she currently lives in Ward 10. She noted that the next set of maps indicate that CARAG will remain as one neighborhood. They strongly supported the new map and supported Lyndale Neighborhood maintaining their boundaries as they were.

r) Jose Luis Villasenor, Phillips Neighborhood, stated that he was upset and angry because he has spent many hours to be at redistricting meetings and he sees that nothing has changed. He wanted to see Midtown Phillips, East Phillips, Corcoran, and Powderhorn together. The Redistricting Group members do not live in the communities they are dividing. He was concerned about the numbers in Ward 9 at this time being over the population required. He disagreed with the proposed map.

s) Sheila Cracraft Fehler, 4116 32nd Avenue, thanked the Redistricting Group for the changes made from the first hearing, moving the northern line of Ward 12 west of Hiawatha Avenue up to 38th. She encouraged the Redistricting Group to keep the line

there. There are empty lots at Hiawatha and 42nd and having all of that together makes it easier to redevelop. She and her neighbors who had written thanked the Redistricting Group for their work.

t) Lourdes De La Wrz (sp?), 3330 Stevens Avenue South, had signed up to speak but was not present when her name was called.

u) Art Serotoff, 4524 Columbus Avenue South, FAIR, stated that he was present along with other members of a group formed called FAIR, Fair Action in Redistricting. His grandparents came to this country and fought for a community voice. They helped create organizations that could effectively represent the community. He believed the current proposal was unacceptable. Today Sabathani Community Center is in Ward 8. Should this proposal go through, it will be in Ward 9. This proposal disrupts proven effective community coalitions that are organized by African Americans and have developed coalitions that have produced great leaders in our community such as former Mayor Sayles Belton and current State Representative Jeff Hayden. He had confidence in these types of coalitions because they are a positive force in our community. The proposed ward map divides up this united community effort. FAIR's guiding principle is to preserve one ward that is the core of African American community in the Central, Bryant, Regina, and Field Neighborhoods. He and other members of FAIR are ready to work with their neighbors to develop a more equitable proposal.

v) Kaleca Gible, 3709 5th Avenue South, FAIR, stated that the current proposal for the Central community will take their current ward and split it into three parts which can affect their representation on the legislative level as well as affecting resources that may be available to their community. It takes away their voting power and can affect their schools and taxes. A lot will be removed from this community with these redistricting lines. They asked when the Redistricting Group plans for the future, that they don't do it at the expense of their community.

w) Ray Peterson, 2111 15th Avenue South, stated that he lives in the Ventura Village Neighborhood of Ward 6. He was against the proposed map. It is an exercise in racist gerrymandering not taking into regard what people who live there want. He also felt the Redistricting Group was taking sections of Wards 7 and 2 and putting them into Ward 6 creating a low income ghetto that the other council members will be able to more easily ignore.

x) Ray Roybal, 4937 Aldrich Avenue, stated that he was Chicano and no one speaks for him except his people. The word everyone is not using is "gerrymandering". The definition of gerrymandering is any lines that are drawn politically in order to benefit racially or otherwise something that is unfair to other people. The proposal is one that fits that definition. He didn't know if it would be good for voters or bad, practical or impractical. They have their communities. It is known as the African American community. They wanted to work together. He was responsible for the Chicano Studies Department at the University of Minnesota. Do not trample on liberty and

democracy because the word "freedom" is used in the name of your group. Gerrymandering is a no no.

y) Hussein Ahmed, 1501 5th Street, thanked the Redistricting Group for giving them the opportunity to voice their concerns and issues. In approaching the final stages in the process, they asked the Redistricting Group to be receptive to the needs of minorities and allow their voices to be heard through the democratic process. The Somali community is trying to get their voices heard and better representation in City Hall. The East African community strongly supports the proposed map. He thanked the Redistricting Group for reuniting people in minority communities, particularly those in the Seward Neighborhood along Franklin Avenue, Phillips, and Elliot Park. Splitting these communities would dilute their voices. He asked the Redistricting Group to do the fair thing and the proposed map represents that and they strongly support the current map.

z) Asli Ashkir, 419 Cedar Avenue South, had signed up to speak but was not present when called.

aa) Abdulkadir Warsame, 614 19th Avenue South, Lead Coordinator for the Citizens Committee for Fair Redistricting, stated that the Citizens Committee fully supports the proposed March 15 map. This map meets the principles that they have set forth in their proposal. It creates a minority coalition opportunity in Ward 6 with a majority East African population. It unites Cedar Riverside, Seward East, Elliot Park, Ventura Village, and vital parts of the Phillips community into a single ward. It keeps all of Midtown Phillips in Ward 6, an area which has around 400 homes, numerous small businesses owned by East Africans and steadily growing. The largest Mosque in Minnesota is also located in the neighborhood. It also creates a minority opportunity Ward 9 with a majority Hispanic population. It keeps the Native American area of Little Earth together and in Ward 9 and does not split their community. It is compact, contiguous, and meets the one-person, one-vote principle. The East African community as a whole welcomes the new map. If this map is approved, their community will have greater confidence in the American system and way of life. It is a highly motivated, cohesive and by and large voter eligible community. Thus the proposed map would go a long way to address the lack of representation and social exclusion that some in this community currently feel.

bb) Sadik Warfa, 620 9th Street East, had signed up to speak but was not present when called.

cc) Mark Hinds, 3616 Blaisdell Avenue, Executive Director, Lyndale Neighborhood Association, thanked the Operations Committee for fixing a major problem for the Lyndale Neighborhood. The map that was put up for the public hearing had a small, isolated chunk of Lyndale in Ward 8. He has been contacted by dozens of people who have been around for previous ward line changes who have talked about the way it was ten ago when this sliver went all the way to 50th and how difficult it was for them to get any council member or city attention from across the freeway. The message is to keep Lyndale whole. Because of the 35W sound wall and where Nicollet

Avenue is located, it is in many ways one of the most geographically isolated parts of the City of Minneapolis. Moving this area to Ward 8 will undo many of the positive changes that have taken place during the last ten years.

dd) Robert Albee, 1215 21st Street East, Chairman, Ventura Village

Neighborhood, speaking on his own behalf, stated that the people in Elliot Park are happy as they are. Many of the people in Ward 6 are happy as they are, as are Seward. To him, he saw a lot of tinkering to create a slam-dunk ward rather than one that respects the coalition building that they have been doing at this time in history. The fact that they are represented by a council member who is a Native American person with 7% of the population, and the fact that he is openly gay indicates that he really knows how to campaign and how to work with a lot of people. When you have a group that doesn't have to work very hard to gather the votes, I think you begin to have a ward in which the kinds of problems that have been seen elsewhere start cropping up. When people who are not affected draw the maps throughout the world, you see why we have so many wars. He hoped that the work of the Redistricting Group did not create a war here where they have been building from what was once called the troubled Phillips to neighborhoods that are working very effectively.

ee) Mark Hoffman, 3648 Elliot Avenue South, asked for clarification regarding the maps displayed. Clegg stated that both the map proposed for the public hearing as well as a map created by the Operations Committee at the end of last week were on display. Hoffman stated that he was concerned about the exclusion of Midtown Phillips from Ward 9. The Midtown Phillips Neighborhood is 40% Latino, nearly 70% people of color. By excluding Midtown Phillips from Ward 9, the Redistricting Group would split a uniquely diverse community of interest. Including Midtown Phillips in Ward 9 would provide Latinos and other minorities, particularly Native Americans, an opportunity to elect a council person who could represent their interests and the interests and needs of this very unique community. Latin American immigrant families from Ward 9 have contributed to remarkable transformation and revitalization of Lake Street and Midtown Global Market. Despite their indispensable cultural and economic contributions to the area, despite the high concentration of Latin Americans in Ward 9, this ward still lacks political representation. Today there is an unprecedented opportunity to remedy this political exclusion of minorities by convincing the Redistricting Group to include Midtown Phillips in Ward 9. Doing so would finally give Latin Americans, African Americans, and Native Americans, and all Ward 9 minorities, the ability to elect a city council person who understands the needs and interests of this unique community. Excluding Midtown Phillips from Ward 9 would be a devastating injustice both for the Latino community and for the multi-ethnic neighborhoods of Ward 9 and to the wider public. He endorsed the We All Win map which avoids dividing this diverse community and disenfranchising Latin Americans by excluding Midtown Phillips from Ward 9.

ff) David Stack, 3306 46th Street West, stated that he also owned property in the Harrison Neighborhood. He thanked the Redistricting Group for eliminating the split that would have divided Harrison residents between two wards. He asked that the centerline of Bassett Creek be used as boundary between Wards 5 and 7 and Park

Districts 2 and 4. It would be good to have more of an equal sense of ownership and engagement with this natural amenity that is already so close to the current map boundary. The current draft map places almost all of both sides of Bassett Creek within and way out on the edge of Ward 5 and Park District 2. Moving the boundary to the centerline of Bassett Creek would give both wards and both park districts equal involvement with creek issues. This change would not require any recalculation of population numbers because there are no residents living in the areas that would be changed. If the Redistricting Group did not make that change, he asked them to at least consider moving the border to the existing boundary between the Harrison Neighborhood and the Bryn Mawr Neighborhood. This change would also not require any recalculation of population numbers because no one lives in that area.

gg) Ben Walen, 2211 21st Avenue South, Seward Neighborhood Group, stated that he was disappointed with the on-going production of maps. The February 29 map was one that he could support as it left Seward largely intact within one ward. It allowed Seward to remain in a ward with communities on both sides of the river. He opposed the March 7 map, and even more so the March 15 working map because they both split Seward into two wards, basically the wealthy and less wealthy portions of the neighborhood are separated from one another. They separate the main retail street of Seward, Franklin Avenue, from the residential sections of the ward, particularly the March 15 map. The boundaries within Seward on the later maps represent no historical or geographically obvious splits in the neighborhood with none of the boundary streets being major thoroughfares. The March 15 map goes so far as to carve a 7 block long finger or peninsula that is only two blocks wide and puts that in Ward 6 making both Wards 2 and 6 quite contorted, not compact. Both maps are obvious attempts to put Seward Towers East and West into Ward 6. He lived in Seward because he valued the diversity of the neighborhood. The proposed maps politically divide the neighborhood into two different wards largely based on racial boundaries. He advocated for the February 29 map which leaves Seward whole and within Ward 2.

hh) Marque Jensen, 1714 Irving Avenue North, 1516 Lake Street East, stated that he has seen three cycles of redistricting and saw the importance of keeping natural neighborhoods together. He works for the Minnesota Immigrant Freedom Network on Lake and Bloomington. He was concerned that the Redistricting Group members hadn't heard the importance of keeping Midtown Phillips in Ward 9. This is a naturally contiguous neighborhood along Lake Street. The very high population in that area is very similar to the African American community in North Minneapolis. The Latino community has very much transformed Lake Street into a new, vibrant business district. They work many ways with the East African community and West Phillips makes sense to be in their neighborhood as well as concerns with keeping the mosque within their community. At redistricting meetings he had attended, he had heard discussion about not keeping all the power of downtown in one representative's hands. He suggested that same concern be applied to the University of Minnesota area and divide it by the natural lines of the river so they could have two representatives. He was mainly concerned about returning Midtown Phillips to the community it is naturally a part of in Ward 9.

ii) Josefina Franco, 3745 18th Avenue South, stated that she was concerned about the division because she didn't think it was the right option regarding the numbers and the community. She strongly believed that keeping Midtown, Central, Powderhorn, Corcoran, and East Phillips together works better and she did not want to be excluded. She wanted to continue being in Ward 9. It is the best option. She also belongs to a women's group called Mujeres en Liderago to help women become leaders. They are working with their neighborhood associations to keep the community clean and safe. These are the same concerns of other women in other neighborhoods, particularly Mujeres en Accion in the Corcoran Neighborhood. She asked that the Redistricting Group take into consideration keeping this ward together.

jj) Mary Merrill Anderson, 1144 Cedarview Drive, had signed up to speak but was not present when her name was called.

kk) Hazel Reinhardt, Citizens Committee for Fair Redistricting, stated that she had been working with the Citizens Committee for Fair Redistricting and thanked the Redistricting Group for listening to their comments. She personally felt the Redistricting Group has moved a long way to create more opportunities from where they started. The Citizens Committee for Fair Redistricting supports the current map.

ll) Marlene Rojas, 3425 Elliot, stated that she works in Midtown for Minnesota Freedom Network. She was really angry and disappointed. She felt she hadn't been heard. She had attended the other public hearings and she clearly saw that the maps haven't changed. They wanted their community together. The law states that if you have a group of a community together, they have to be together. They must be together in order to grow and create political power. She also supported the We All Win map. It also creates minority opportunities, not only for Latinos but also for Somalis, Native Americans, and for African Americans creating a minority coalition opportunity. If the Redistricting Group really believes in racial justice, they have to look at these issues. This is a very diverse neighborhood and they want to be heard. They want to create an opportunity for the next generation. They supported the We All Win map because it creates opportunities for minority people, not just a certain group.

mm) Scott Persons, 3239 Nicollet Avenue South, stated that he lived in that small swathe that was part of Ward 9 on the proposed map. 35W is a big geographic area for them the way the ward is configured. They don't have any shared political interest with those folks on the other side of 35W. He asked that Lyndale be kept whole. It sends a poor message to people in the area who make investments in safe and affordable housing in the community. He urged the Redistricting Group to follow the Operations Committee recommendation to keep Lyndale whole.

nn) Omar Ali, 2824 13th Avenue South, had signed up to speak but was not present when his name was called.

oo) Jama Osman, 2824 13th Avenue South, stated that he works at the Abubaker Center. He has been a member of the community for the last seven years and owns several businesses. He thanked the Redistricting Group for giving his community this opportunity. As a neighbor and working in the community he wanted the East African community to stay together. He agreed with the current map and asked that it stay that way.

pp) Hassan Jama, 2824 13th Avenue, Executive Director Abubaker Center, stated that he supported the way Ward 6 is drawn on the current map. It gives the East African community a historic chance to unite their efforts. It will be the first time the East African Community gets a fair chance to unite their power and resources. The East African community has lived in Cedar Riverside, Seward West, Ventura Village, and Midtown Phillips for almost two decades. He thanked the Redistricting Group for their work.

qq) Mohamed Cali, 2325 11th Avenue, stated that we need to remember that we are all American and need to work to be together and have leadership for every ethnicity. This is the first opportunity the large growing Somali community has had to work together in Ward 6 and build some kind of leadership where they can have a better future for all. He hoped the Redistricting Group would support the Ward 6 boundaries because this is how they can make a difference.

rr) Scarlett Lopez, 3028 Park Avenue South, stated that she was present to ask the Redistricting Group to make the right decision. This map will affect her community for ten years. This is not a perfect world but there are ways they can make it better. She thanked the Redistricting Group for the opportunity to let them know how they feel. She personally felt that the Latino community was not being heard. She wanted all the cultures to live together as one. This map not only affects Latinos, it affects Native Americans, Somalians, and all other races. She asked the Redistricting Group to take into consideration the Latino culture as well and she was strongly looking forward to the Redistricting Group making the right decision.

ss) Marian Biehn, 10 East 25th Street, Executive Director, Whittier Alliance, stated that the Whittier Neighborhood as it is currently placed in Ward 10 is one that they would advocate maintaining the boundary; keeping the eastern boundary at 35W is a natural boundary. The work that they do is within the Whittier community but also is more with their western and southern neighbors than it is to the east because of the 35W boundary. She advocated for maintaining Whittier as a whole within one ward. There is a lot of on-going development, cultural, economic, housing, and institutional diversity that would be a plus to add to Ward 10. She also advocated moving the eastern boundary of Lyndale to incorporate all of Lyndale.

tt) Virginia Richardson, 4044 Oakland Avenue, stated that she had lived through many redistricting cycles and this one made her very sad. She moved to Ward 8 in Minneapolis when there wasn't any chance of an African American aspiring to any office. Her husband ran for state representative in 1970 and was defeated by a

Republican, so she has been very politically active. They have grown African American leadership in Ward 8 and have moved with their neighbors to share African American and other American leadership and they look at people as people and have moved to the position of electing leadership that represents African Americans as well as other Americans. The proposed map has destroyed Ward 8. She did not see any advantage to the current ward lines. She shared joy with those who thought they got what they wanted. But that is not true of Ward 8. She was much more impressed by the March 15 map than she was with the proposed map. She asked the Redistricting Group to look at what they are doing. The community has grown beyond just electing someone who looks like them in trying to elect leadership and the Redistricting Group is destroying that.

uu) Farhan Hussein, 2600 26th Avenue, stated that he supported the Ward 6 map and the East African committee who worked together to create a plan that took into consideration all Minneapolis citizens and communities. They did not think just of themselves. That is why he supported the Ward 6 map.

vv) Abdihakim Abdi, 2427 16th Avenue, stated that he supported the current map. This is not about dividing minorities. This is about giving a voice to the largest, active minority community in South Minneapolis. He supported the current map and thanked the Redistricting Group.

ww) Greg Moore, 3537 4th Avenue, stated that he was raised on 42nd and Oakland. His relative was the Assistant Principal at Central High School. He went to Field School. He was here when the freeway was put through and divided his community. He has seen the destruction of the schools. He remembers when 38th Street was the African American business community hub. What he sees now is more chiseling away at the African American community and their natural boundaries. For many of the new populations that are here, he wasn't sure that they understood that Ward 8 has been the historical and traditional place of residency for African Americans. City leaders came from this community: Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton, State Senator Jeff Hayden. This map is one more way of destroying or chiseling at their seat of influence. The map divides them up from their natural boundaries and their coalition and is an injustice.

xx) Osman Ahmed, 1515 South 4th Street, stated that he was the Chair of Riverside Plaza. He thanked the Redistricting Group for their work. This map unites the East African community who live in Seward, parts of East Phillips, and Midtown. Their largest mosque in the state of Minnesota is in Midtown. They own over 400 houses and have over 127 businesses from Seward to the border. The current map unites the minority community and creates a minority opportunity ward. The Latino community would be a majority in Ward 9. He supported the current map.

yy) Abdullahi Ali,, 1515 South 4th Street, stated that he was a student at the University of Minnesota. He supported the proposed map for Ward 6. He wanted his community to stay together.

zz) Abdirashid Abdi, 2515 South 9th Street, had signed up to speak but was not present when called.

aaa) Dega Adgu (sp?), 2109 Blaisdell Avenue, stated that she supported the current map because she wanted the East African community to have a voice to contribute and have the ability elect someone of their choice. She asked to have an opportunity to make a difference in their lives and the lives of their children.

bbb) Sahra Ali, 1530 6th Street, had signed up to speak but was not present when called.

ccc) Ahmed Harsi, 419 Cedar Avenue, stated that he supported the Citizens Committee for Fair Redistricting map. As a Realtor he could guarantee that East Africans and Somali are moving into the Seward, Elliot Park, and Midtown Phillips neighborhoods as homeowners and business owners. He asked that the Redistricting Group keep their community together.

ddd) Mohamed Jama, 1600 South 6th Street, stated that it was time for a change in the city of Minneapolis. He was present as a Cedar Riverside Plaza resident. He was a member of the Cedar Riverside Neighborhood Coalition and he supported the current map because it was time for a change for the Elliot, Cedar Riverside, and Seward neighborhoods. They as a community need to stay together for the greater and common good of the Cedar Riverside neighborhood and for the East African community.

eee) Steve Washington, 3948 5th Avenue South, thanked the Redistricting Group for holding the meeting in the community and to his brothers from East Africa for asserting their rights. He stated that the current map is an atrocity. It gives false hope to people who don't understand gerrymandering. The reality of these communities is the fact that we built these communities as long time coalitions so that people began to get along with each. If you give a people a block for themselves, they will block out everyone else. In the Central Neighborhood, Ward 8, they have learned to get along with each other, to share community problems, and to raise their children in harmony. In the last five years they have lowered the crime rate. Looking back to the last time redistricting took place it ended up with two African Americans running against each other which eliminated one of them. The reality is you are running people at each so that we can build power structure. This is by no means fair. It is taking a historic power center and dividing it into three different components. You are taking power away from a community, a group of people who have served this community and have decided that you are now going to now bestow power to another. That is not fair.

fff) Mariano Espinoza, 3120 12th Avenue South, stated that the Redistricting Group needs to attempt to preserve communities of interest in order to comply with the legal requirements and one of the Redistricting Group's requirements to keep citizens with similar social, demographic, ethnic, cultural, and economic interests together. He inquired about the March 15 map on display. Clegg stated that both the map proposed

for the public hearing as well as a map that the Operations Committee was currently working on were on display. The latest map had not been approved by the Redistricting Group.

Mr. Espinoza stated that the We All Win proposal creates a minority opportunity ward in Ward 9 where 34% of the community was Latino/Hispanic, 31% White, and 19% African American. The problem he had with the current proposal is that it was splitting Midtown-Phillips which is the heart of the Latino community. Midtown-Phillips is 41% Latino-Hispanic, 23% White. Under the current proposal the White population in Ward 9 will be the largest population. He was asking the Redistricting Group to not divide the Latino community. For his Somali brothers and sisters, they have an opportunity to have a Somali, Latino, Native American, and African American ward in the future. It is not about being Latinos or Somalis, it is about recognizing the demographic landscape that we have today in Minneapolis which is about 60% White versus minorities. He asked the Redistricting Group to use their guidelines.

ggg) Carol Ann Pass, 2536 18th Avenue South, stated that Midtown Phillips being moved out the Ward 9 and into Ward 6 was a concern. East Phillips has been partnering with Midtown Phillips and working with Midtown residents for a long time. Everything they do organizing East Phillips ends up organizing Midtown, and vice versa. That is an over 40% Latino area and there are other ways of creating a minority opportunity and even a minority majority wards other than lopping off the centerpiece of the Latino community. She had not heard anyone address the fact that the number of commercial blocks in Ward 6 is huge compared to Ward 9. The current map creates a disparity in commercial opportunities between Wards 6 and 9. She also asked that Lyndale be kept whole

hhh) Salma Hussein, 420 15th Avenue South, stated that she was a graduate student at the University of Minnesota. People are saying that the East African community at Cedar Riverside do not fully understand what is at stake. It is not that they don't understand. They are working actively to work with all communities. They are not just isolating Somalis to stick together and work together. A lot of minorities do live in Cedar Riverside that are not Somalis or East Africans. It is really about getting people's voices heard. She supported the current Ward 6 map. The neighborhood presented within that map presents unique issues that need to be solved or addressed by elected officials. They want to stay unified as a ward to allow them to support candidates that will help them work to eliminate issues. If more people understood English, they would be at the public hearings speaking. The young people that live in Cedar Riverside were present today asking to be given a voice. They came to America looking for new opportunities. This is where dreams come true. They want to have someone that looks like them, that speaks their language, to be elected someday and this could be made possible with the current map.

iii) Darrell Washington, 2213 Grand Avenue South, asked that the Redistricting Group continue to keep neighborhoods whole, continue to keep Whittier whole, and continue to keep Lyndale whole. He wanted to respect Ward 8 and continue to keep it

intact. As a Whittier resident he asked that it be kept whole, as well as other neighborhoods.

jjj) Kevin Baumgartner, 4450 42nd Avenue South, stated that he found most individuals interact through their neighborhood organizations and the current map divides the Longfellow community into only two representatives. He asked that Ward 12 be pushed further down into Standish. It is important to have multiple representation within community groups. Ward 12 benefits from that as does Ward 9. He would like to see Ward 9 pushed further into Standish, to at least 40th Street. It gives better representation at the light rail stations.

4. Close of Public Hearing

5. Announcements and Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

The next public hearing will be held on Wednesday, March 21, 2012 at the University of Minnesota Urban Research and Outreach Engagement Center (UROC) 2001 Plymouth Avenue North from 5 - 7 pm.

Peggy Menshek
Redistricting Group Coordinator