

2010 Commissioner District Census Review Committee

MINUTES OF THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 3, 2011 MEETING

LOCATION: Mt. Airy Library (large meeting room), 705 Ridge Avenue, Mt. Airy (Commissioner District 4).

MEMBERS PRESENT: Joseph Burns, Jr.; Joseph Leeman; Frank Rammes; Richard Reese; Gail Riley; C. Scott Stone; and Francis Walsh.

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

OTHERS IN ATTENDANCE: Timothy Burke, County Attorney, and Jo Vance, Office Manager for the County Attorney. Approximately seven members of the public attended.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER AT: 7:14 p.m., followed by the recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance and an observance of a moment of silence.

1. Review and finalization of agenda items – The agenda for this meeting was approved upon a Motion made by Joseph Leeman and seconded by Gail Riley Vote 7-0.
2. Review and approval of Minutes from October 20, 2011 meeting – The Minutes were approved as finally amended upon the Motion of Joseph Leeman and seconded by Frank Rammes, Vote 7-0. One amendment made included a change in paragraph number 5, line 10, on page 2, that a motion was made by Mr. Leeman and seconded by Mr. Stone. Another change was in paragraph 6, line 2, on page 3, changing Map 2 to Map 3. A third change was made to paragraph number 9, continuing over onto pages 4 and 5, to clarify Mr. Walsh's statements. He clarified where he did not propose the nullification of the current board', and also where his motion to adopt provisions for staggered Commissioner terms and provide provisions for those terms was actually later defeated on a vote of 6-1.
3. Review of website performance and input suggestions – Mr. Burns asked for a brief review of comments on the website and opened this review up to public comment as well. Citizen Mary Ellis stated that she found the website very helpful.
4. Review and consideration of any publically submitted correspondence – The Committee received an email dated October 23, 2011, from citizen Michael Davis commenting on the maps. Discussion ensued as to what Mr. Davis was asking for in his email. Mr. Stone explained that he believed Mr. Davis apparently wanted the maps labeled with major roads and towns to make locations more easily identifiable. Mr. Burns asked if this could be done through the website maps and

Mr. Burke said he would check with the Planning Department to see if the maps could be amended to include that information.

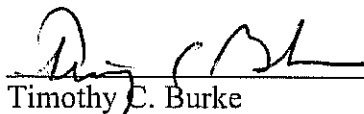
5. Review and discussion of submitted District maps – Mr. Burns asked for comments from the Committee members on the submitted maps, both Map 1 and Map 3. Everyone on the Committee declined to comment until after the public had a chance to comment on the maps.
6. Citizen participation and general comments – Mr. Burns opened the meeting to the public for comments. Mr. Larry Helminiak from the Sykesville/Eldersburg area noted the recent changes of the boundaries for the Congressional districts, and opined that the State of Maryland is also thinking of changing Carroll County to 4 separate delegate districts. He also stated that he felt the population numbers for Carroll County would more accurately be reflected by Map 1 and he recommended that districts remain unchanged. Mary Ellis stated that she believes Manchester and Hampstead belong together in one district, as do Taneytown, Union Bridge and New Windsor and that she prefers Map 3. Jackie Jones stated she understood from Gail Carter of the election board that cost is of no concern if the State decides to change the congressional districts. Randy Panos of Finksburg stated he likes the districts divided up as they are currently. He said any new districts might put Finksburg in with Hampstead and Mt. Airy. He believes Map 1 to be the best map for the County. Ted Payne of the Carroll County Education Association in Westminster stated that he prefers Map 3. He lives in Hampstead and believes there is an advantage to having Manchester and Hampstead together. Larry Helminiak stated that Eldersburg and Sykesville should not be split. They both share common post offices and fire companies, where Manchester and Hampstead both have separate post offices, zip codes, and fire companies. He feels that is reason enough to leave them alone. Mary Ellis rebutted that Mt. Airy and Sykesville should be together because they are both incorporated towns and share a border with Howard County.
7. General Committee Discussion – Mr. Leeman recommended that the Committee call the question and vote tonight on which map to recommend, on ideas for staggered terms, and to then begin putting the final report together at the next and final meeting. He also asked that all previous minutes and maps be corrected to indicate that Map 1 was accurately submitted by him and not by Mr. Burns. At this time Mr. Burns requested a motion that all minutes and maps be changed to clarify that Mr. Leeman was the person who submitted Map 1. Mr. Rammes and Ms. Riley both agreed to second the motion. The motion was carried 7-0. Mr. Leeman then recommended that both he and Mr. Stone should each report on their respective maps and give reasons why their map should be chosen, then a vote be taken. Mr. Leeman then made a Motion to have the maps discussed and for a vote on the maps be taken. Ms. Riley seconded the motion, and then Mr. Burns opened the floor to general discussion of whether or not to proceed forward in this manner. Discussion ensued with Mr. Rammes, Ms. Riley, and Mr. Stone stating that no final vote should actually take place until after the Hampstead/Manchester

meeting, so as to allow full public input opportunities from all districts. Mr. Reese and Mr. Burns both expressed the view that they would support a vote now. Mr. Stone then reminded the Committee that they must select which of the two maps to recommend to the General Assembly by the December 1, 2011 deadline. Mr. Leeman stated that he would withdraw the motion from consideration until the next meeting at Hampstead/Manchester and stressed that he was not trying to cut Hampstead/Manchester citizens out of the process. Mr. Leeman then brought up the percentage variances (+/-5% versus overall 10%) that are allowed in redistricting and asked if there was a defining statute as to what was required. Mr. Rammes said the courts make that decision. Mr. Burke clarified that there is no actual defining statute, but that the figures are guided by the courts based on the 1 man/1 vote concept. There ensued some discussion about population variances and the interpretation of those variances used by the courts either for smaller local districts or larger congressional mandates.

8. Review and discussion of HB290 “staggered terms” items – Mr. Leeman commented that the committee should hold off on voting on staggered terms and Mr. Rammes agreed. There followed a general discussion of the concept of the staggered terms and what provisions might be proposed. There was also more discussion about the idea of community interests as opposed to population numbers being the defining criteria for the maps. The requirements for the Redistricting Committee needing to meet every 10 years to review and recommend updated districts based on HB 290 was then discussed as relates to population shifts in the census. Mr. Stone reminded the committee that its purpose is to set districts of equal population density and provide provisions for staggered terms of office. Mr. Leeman stated that the delegation ultimately could draw their own maps if they wanted. He also stated that he thinks the committee should recommend that the staggered terms problem be fixed. Mr. Burns agreed where the committee should recommend a solution, so the problem is given a final resolution. Mr. Stone agreed but still feels they are obligated to recommend provisions for staggered terms and said the previous Redistricting Committee erred in saying it did not need to recommend staggered terms. Mr. Leeman asked if the Committee should recommend provisions for staggered terms. Mr. Burns stated that the most the Committee could do is make recommendations to the delegation. Mr. Walsh stated that the Committee can only make provisions for staggered terms and recommend a map. When Mr. Burns asked about fixing this problem with HB 290, Mr. Walsh stated that this was not the Committee’s job to correct what only the legislature can fix.
9. Reports and preparations as needed for the Committee’s final report – Mr. Burns recommended that everyone begin thinking about the content of the final report.
10. Old business items – Mr. Leeman thanked Mary Ellis for submitting Map 2 and stated that he appreciated her effort and interest and being involved in the process. Ms. Ellis thanked the Committee as well.

11. New business items – Mr. Burke informed the Committee that the County Commissioners and the legislative delegation had met that morning and that Senator Joseph Getty had expressed a desire for a future meeting to be held with the Commissioners, the delegation and the Redistricting Committee for the Committee to present and explain their recommendations. This meeting would be open to the public and would be held sometime after the December 1, 2011 deadline. The Committee was in agreement with this concept.
12. Review of any future meeting details and schedules of Committee members –The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 10, 2011 at the North Carroll Library. Mr. Rammes pointed out that there were 2 new citizens at tonight's meeting and he stated that he was encouraged that more people were getting involved.
13. Adjourn – The meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

Minutes prepared by:



Timothy C. Burke
County Attorney

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