

REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, February 4, 2014

Attending:

Mayor Carol Duprey
Councilor Jean Lawlis
Councilor Tom Brann
Councilor David Ryder
Councilor Ivan McPike
Paul Philbrick
Terry McAvoy

Town Clerk Denise Hodsdon
Representative Brian Duprey
Citizens:
Bill & Rachel Shakespeare
Bill Lippincott
Mary Poulin
Clyde MacDonald

The meeting was called to order at 6:06 pm by Mayor Duprey

1. Discussion of Reapportionment of Town Council Districts based on Population as determined by 2010 Census Block Data

Mayor Duprey explained that the Town is required by State law to reapportion its council districts in order to balance the population of each district as determined by the 2010 US Census. She noted that committee members include the four District Town Councilors, Ivan McPike, Tom Brann, Jean Lawlis and David Ryder, together with citizen members Paul Philbrick and Terry McAvoy. She said it was her desire to work toward a unanimous or near unanimous redistricting plan. She also noted that she would chair the meeting, but would not be a voting member.

Town Clerk Denise Hodsdon reviewed the map of current Council districts using the Census blocks as determined by the 2010 Census. She then presented a draft redistricting plan and map, which balances the four districts at approximately 25% of the total population in each district. Mayor Duprey asked for public comment, to be followed by comments from committee members.

Public Comments: Bill Shakespeare of 1060 Western Avenue and Clyde McDonald of 310 Main Road North felt the proposed plan was a good solution. There were no committee member comments.

Mayor Duprey asked if any of the committee members had any alternate plans. Paul Philbrick presented a plan and map that would create a fifth council district. He noted that with the events of the last three years, i.e. the Comp Plan, some citizens residing in District 4 felt that their voices were not being heard. He felt that with the creation of a fifth district, people would gain a direct link to the person in their neighborhood. He also felt it was important to anticipate the areas of town where future growth would take place.

Public Comments: Rep. Brian Duprey discussed the pros and cons of this idea. He noted currently there was a possibility of four councilors coming from the same district. He pointed out that with the current council configuration, there would still be three at-large councilors with one year left on their term. He indicated that it would be necessary to have eight councilors for the first year, and then drop back to seven the following year, with only two at-large councilors.

Paul Philbrick said that there was a possibility that one of the current at-large councilors might be willing to resign their at-large seat and run for the newly created district seat.

Councilor Lawlis said it appeared that there had been a lot of conversations that had taken place prior to this meeting and she was concerned about that.

Clyde McDonald noted that if there were three councilors all from the same district, then that would become a political issue in itself.

Bill Lippincott of 30 Wilbur Drive said he would be upset if he voted for an at-large councilor who then resigned to run for a district seat and would no longer be representing him. He felt this plan was diluted and doesn't represent the same density. He felt that we need to look at the population as it is right now.

Mary Poulin of 55 Ruth Avenue noted that with this plan she would be moved from District 2 to District 5 and she was not comfortable that District 5 as proposed would represent a common interest.

Councilor Brann said he likes the 4/3 ratio as it makes a good mix for coming to consensus. He felt that the proposed District 5 has a real disparity as it encompasses industrial and rural areas. He felt that the four district plan would cause less change and confusion.

Councilor McPike said what if someone with a lot of money wanted to push something forward and buy 3 at-large candidates and they had the councilor in their district, they could get their candidates elected and have four council votes.

Paul Philbrick said that the greater the population grows, the three at-large councilors have a disproportionate say.

Town Clerk Denise Hodsdon questioned whether district councilor terms should be staggered if the 5-district plan were adopted. She expressed concern that that could create more confusion for the voters.

There was also some discussion about eliminating districts and having all councilors elected at-large, but there was little support for that. Clyde McDonald noted that when the Charter was developed, politics in the Town were hot and heavy as you had three

distinct areas in Town – industrial, farming, and residential. That is why the districts were created.

Bill Shakespeare, noted that someone from each district would have to run and it has been difficult to get candidates for some districts in the past.

Paul Philbrick said we just thought that a new district was a good idea.

Councilor Lawlis said she had a feeling that things had been set up in advance and that if people thought that the idea of a fifth district was being proposed, more people would have come. She didn't feel that this was ready for a vote and that it needs to be open to more members and further discussion. She said this was not the meeting she thought she was coming to.

Mayor Duprey suggested that the committee take a straw vote to see which way the members were leaning. Straw vote was 5 in favor of the 4-district plan (McPike, Brann, Lawlis, Ryder and McAvoy) and 1 in favor of the 5-district plan (Philbrick).

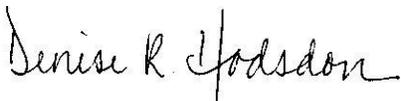
Councilor Brann suggested adopting the 4-district plan now, and we could look at creating a fifth district later if we thought we needed to.

Mayor Duprey asked for a vote on which plan the committee wanted to discuss. Vote was 5 in favor of the 4-district plan (McPike, Brann, Lawlis, Ryder and McAvoy) and 1 in favor of the 5-district plan (Philbrick).

Mayor Duprey then asked if the committee wanted to make any changes to the plan proposed by the Town Clerk. There were none.

Mayor Duprey then asked for a vote on sending the proposed plan as is to the Council. Vote was 5-1 (Philbrick) in favor.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:35 pm.



Denise Hodsdon
Town Clerk