

City of Reading Redistricting Committee
Council Chambers, City Hall
November 17, 2011

The Committee meeting was called to order at 7:30pm.

Committee Members Present:

JoAnne Brancadora (District 2), Dan Gallagher (District 3), Barbara D'Agostino (District 4), Melvyn Jacobson (District 6),

Committee Members Absent:

William Seidel (District 5)

Voting Support Staff Present:

City Planning Commission - Wayne Jonas Bealer, Brian Burket
Legislative Aide Committee - Twila Ramirez, Adam Wagonseller, John Short

Voting Support Staff Absent:

Tom Anewalt

Non-Voting Support Staff Present:

Mike Golembiewski (Berks County Planning Commission)

1. Call to Order

Melvyn Jacobson called the meeting to order at 7:30pm.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes October 27, 2011

The Minutes of the October 27, 2011 meeting were approved without comment. Motion brought by Dan Gallagher and seconded by Barbara D'Agostino.

3. Approval of Agenda

The Agenda for the current meeting was approved without comment. Motion brought by JoAnne Brancadora and seconded by Brian Burket.

4. Public Comment

The Chair asked for public comment. None was forthcoming from the audience.

5. Comments from the Chair

Mr. Jacobson noted that he was in contact with Michael Toledo and had invited him to attend tonight's meeting.

Mr. Jacobson presents several handouts to the Committee members so that they could follow along with the evening's presentation of potential modifications to current Council Districts. He further indicated that Mike Golembiewski would present a mathematical analytical approach to balance all six districts, as well as explain consolidation of several districts that took place in 2009. The City Home Rule Charter was not amended to reflect the changes made by the Berks County department of Election Services. The mapping being presented this evening reflects those modifications.

The handouts were as follows:

- A. A spread sheet indicating Council Districts and associated population statistics.
 - a) Existing Conditions
 - b) Proposed Changes (per Mike Golembiewski) – ALTERNATIVE 1
 - c) Proposed Changes (per Mel Jacobson) – ALTERNATIVE 2
- B. Map - Existing Boundaries
- C. Map - ALTERNATIVE 1
- D. Map - ALTERNATIVE 2

6. Presentation of updated Precinct Maps & supporting population data

Mike Golembiewski, Berks County Planning Commission, handed out a sheet dated 11/17/2011 and explained the Consolidation of Voting Precincts.

He proceeded to explain his mathematical analysis and how he arrived in developing the potential remapping of Council Districts (ALTERNATIVE 1). He emphasized that his goal was specifically targeted at balancing the populations without considering any political ramifications.

Mel Jacobson explained his approach to the potential remapping of Council Districts (ALTERNATIVE 2). His emphasis was to consider the combination of neighborhoods that are contiguous but share similar quality of life issues, without emphasizing mathematical balance.

7. Discussion

Dan Gallagher indicated that Wards 8-1 and 3-2 (Penn's Commons) would then be split into two Council Districts.

Adam Wagonseller, a legislative aid, indicated that the emphasis should favor mathematical balance.

Wayne Jonas Bealer provided some insight in that although ALTERNATIVE 1 appears to have a visual separation of neighborhoods due to the fact that the railroad runs between Wards 2-1 and 3-1, there are three linkages penetrating the tracks between to wards and that they share similar quality of life issues.

Mike Golembiewski indicated that there are four opportunities:

- A. Do nothing (maintain the existing mapping)
- B. Consider ALTERNATIVE 1
- C. Consider ALTERNATIVE 2
- D. Start over

The Chair asked for a "straw poll". The poll indicated that ALTERNATIVE 1 would be unanimously accepted as the approach to be taken for the redistricting process.

The Chair asked if there were any specific consideration that needed to be given concerning the Latino community.

JoAnn Brancadora did a brief analysis which indicated that the Latino populations by District were in the majority. Mike Golembiewski indicated that that analysis was correct.

The Chair asked the Committee if there was a desire to make the motion to adopt ALTERNATIVE 1 as the Committee's proposal to Council.

The motion was brought by JoAnne Brancadora and seconded by Dan Gallagher. John Short commented that perhaps the vote should be taken at the next meeting and that it would give the committee time to digest all of the information that was presented this evening. The Chair asked for a motion to table. Hearing none, a vote was taken on the original motion which was passed unanimously.

Several Committee members thanked Mike Golembiewski and the Chair for providing the "homework" which was presented.

8. Further study requirements

The Chair will contact Linda Kelleher to schedule a presentation to Council next month.

Next meeting will be on December 1, 2011 at 7:30pm in the Penn Room.

The focus will be to review the documentation that will be presented to Council at a public meeting.

9. Adjournment

Motion brought by Dan Gallagher and seconded John Short. Without comment, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Melvyn Jacobson, Committee Chair
Redistricting Committee
City of Reading
815 Washington Street
Reading PA 19601