

**CITY OF NORWALK
REAPPORTIONMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
AUGUST 29, 2024**

ATTENDANCE: Kenneth D'Arinzo, Chair; Diane Cece, Khea Gibbs, Scott Goodwin, Jody Proct, Susan Remson, Brenda Penn Williams

OTHERS: Priti Mathur, ARCBridge; Sam Mathur, ARCBridge; Frederick Wilms, Norwalk Republican Town Committee Chair; Diana Paladino, Else Obuchowski, First Taxing District Chair

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. D'Arinzo called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

II. ROLL CALL

Mr. D'Arinzo called the roll. A quorum was present.

III. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

• August 15, 2024 Regular Meeting

**** MS. PROCT MOVED THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 15, 2024 MEETING.**

**** MS. CECE SECONDED.**

**** THE MOTION TO ACCEPT THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 15, 2024 MEETING PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

IV. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Fred Wilms of Westview Lane greeted the Committee members. He explained that he was the Norwalk Republican Town Committee Chair. He thanked the Committee for all their hard work and noted that having a fair and balanced outcome would be important. Speaking for the Norwalk Republicans Town Committee, Mr. Wilms said that RTC's intent was to play a constructive role. Currently, Mr. Smith, the Republican Registrar of Voters has been experiencing some significant health issues. Ms. Diana Paladino was nominated as the candidate by the Town Committee to replace Mr. Smith in November. Mr. Wilms has spoken with Attorney Mednick on the phone about this situation and Mr. Wilms believed that the ordinance was being changed to allow Mr. Smith to select a designee for this committee. Ms. Paladino has been authorized to speak on behalf of Norwalk Republicans. Mr. Wilms said that he knew the Committee would extend the same courtesy to Ms. Paladino that they do to Mr. Wells.

Ms. Diana Paladino of Naples Avenue greeted the Committee members and said that she had been reviewing the information provided at the past meetings. Ms. Paladino said that she would like to participate in the process now and hoped to be confirmed as a designee soon.

Ms. Paladino said that she had a number of insights to present to the Committee. Ms. Paladino explained that she was leaning towards Option 3 with the hybrid of Option 2. She would like to discuss this with the Committee for clarification in the future. She also would like to review the neighborhood structures where streets like Park Hill, Lockwood Lane and Buckingham Place are located in District A. Ms. Paladino explained that she feels those neighborhoods are clearly aligned with the East Norwalk Community, which is part of District C. She noted that District C is underpopulated while District A is overpopulated. She would like to see a shift there if possible and participate in further discussions about this. She also gave a brief overview of additional information that she would like to review, which she does not have access to at this time.

Mr. D'Arinzo noted that the Ordinance Committee would be holding a Public Hearing on September 3rd for public input on the suggested revisions. This will be followed by two Council Meetings, a Special Meeting on September 9th, and the regular Council Meeting on the 10th. Mr. D'Arinzo said that he hoped that this would be completed by then.

V. DISCUSSION

a. Redistricting Options

b. Common Council and Ordinance Committee Meetings

c. Public Hearing

d. Final Recommendations

Mr. D'Arinzo opened the floor for Committee comments. Mr. Goodwin said that he had been able to watch the meetings that he missed via YouTube and gave a brief summary of his take aways from those meetings.

Mr. D'Arinzo said that when Ms. Paladino joins the Committee after the 10th, the Committee would be able to make their recommendations to the full Council.

Ms. Remson asked the Committee to review Option 3 again. Ms. Mathur displayed the maps on the screen for the Committee. Ms. Mathur indicated where Ms. Paladino had concerns and noted that the change could be done, but it would have an effect on the taxing district. Ms. Obuchowski, the First Taxing District Chair, pointed out that there could be problems with future Taxing District elections every two years. Ms. Cece pointed out that if the change was made, there would not be any Taxing District changes for any of the residents, only the Council Districts. Discussion followed about the census tracts, the Taxing District and polling places.

The discussion moved to when these changes were due, when the adjusted voting districts would take effect and how the timeline was created. Mr. D'Arinzo said that they had set the timeline so

that the Council would have the project for their October meeting. There was also a change from the original 90 days period to 120 days. He explained that at the next meeting, the Committee would be discussing the decisions made at the September 3rd Ordinance meeting. This will be followed by the September 12th and 19th meetings where the Committee would prepare for a Public Presentation on September 26th. The Committee will then submit their final report to the Common Council. He noted that the dates have been posted on the City website. No formal decisions or reports can be issued by the Committee until Ms. Paladino has been formally recognized.

Mr. D'Arinzo said that he felt the Committee should recommend that this process be regularly reviewed before the State required redistricting. Ms. Cece pointed out that they are aware that there is a level of non-compliance in certain districts due to residents who do not participate in the census. This causes a number that is actually under the true population.

Mr. and Ms. Mathur explained that there was the national program that takes place two weeks before the census data is released where the State Representatives are invited to review the data and point out any discrepancies based on their local counts. Local governments are also invited to review the local blocks for consistency and match the counties and cities in the State. The data is then placed in a national database so the local governments can refer to it when needed.

VI. NEXT STEPS

Mr. D'Arinzo said that at the next meeting, they should discuss the direction the Committee wishes to move in and hoped that Ms. Paladino and Mr. Wells will have a list of points they wish to discuss at the next meeting. He said that he would like to have the September 12th and 19th meetings held in the Council Chambers. The September 26th meeting will need to be held in the Chambers.

Ms. Remson asked how a current resident of District A would be affected by the change from District A to District C. Mr. D'Arinzo said that the Council Representative would change and the change in perspective would have to be given by the new Council Representative. Discussion followed.

Ms. Cece expressed concerns about how the information about the potential voting district changes would be communication to the public would be critical.

Ms. Obuchowski noted that for the 2020 census, Norwalk had a Complete Count Committee working in 2019, but COVID had a major impact on that process. She added that the Taxing District Treasurers have two year terms and the Commissioners rotate every two years, so an election takes place in the Taxing District every two years. She expressed concerns about residents being confused as to whether they are in the First Taxing District or the Third Taxing District. A brief discussion of the details followed.

Ms. Mathur thanked Ms. Obuchowski for the information about the Complete Count Committee.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

- ** MR. D'ARINZO MOVED TO ADJOURN.**
- ** MR. GOODWIN SECONDED.**
- ** THE MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

S. L. Soltes
Telesco Secretarial Services