

**CITY OF NORWALK
REAPPORTIONMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
JULY 25, 2024**

ZOOM CONFERENCING

ATTENDANCE: Diane Cece, Kenneth D’Arinzo, Khea Gibbs, Scott Goodwin (6:03 PM), Susan Remson, Stuart Wells

OTHERS: Esther Murillo, Assistant City Clerk, Sam Mathur, ArcBridge, Priti Mathur, ArcBridge

I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Murillo called the meeting to order at 6:03 PM.

II. ROLL CALL

Ms. Murillo called the Roll as follows:

Ms. Cece
Mr. D’Arinzo
Ms. Khea Gibbs
Ms. Remson

At Roll Call there were four (4) Reapportionment Advisory Committee Members present. A Quorum was present.

Also present were Assistant City Clerk, Esther Murillo, ARCBridge Consultant, Sam Mathur, and ARCBridge Consultant, Priti Mathur.

Mr. Scott Goodwin joined at 6:05 PM

III. MOTION TO ADOPT RESOLUTIONS

**** MR. GOODWIN MOVED TO APPROVE THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTIONS**

**** MR. D’ARINZO SECONDED**

WHEREAS, THE §3-4.A(3) OF THE CHARTER REQUIRES “PERIODIC REVISION OF COMMON COUNCIL DISTRICT BOUNDARIES: REAPPORTIONMENT”; AND,

WHEREAS, THE COMMON COUNCIL ADOPTED AN ORDINANCE ESTABLISHING AN “ADVISORY COMMITTEE FOR THE REAPPORTIONMENT OF COMMON COUNCIL VOTING DISTRICTS” IN §9-25 THROUGH §9-31; AND,

WHEREAS, THE ORDINANCE DID NOT INCLUDE PROVISIONS PERTAINING TO THE APPOINTMENT OF A CHAIR, OTHER OFFICERS AND OTHER MATTER PERTAINING TO THE GOVERNANCE OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE; AND,

WHEREAS, THE CHARTER PERMITS BOARDS AND COMMISSION TO ESTABLISH RULES

TO ADDRESS ISSUES OF GOVERNANCE AND ORDER, INCLUDING NOTICE [SEE, §2-2.B(24)]; PUBLIC HEARINGS [SEE, §2-2.B(28)]; PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY [SEE, §2-4.C(1)]; RULES OF ORDER FOR THE CONDUCT OF PUBLIC MEETINGS [SEE, §2-4.C(2)]; STANDARDS FOR REMOVAL FOR PERSISTENT ABSENCE [SEE, §7-1.E(2)]; AND,

WHEREAS, THE §§2-4.D, E AND F OF THE CHARTER STATES THAT THE PRESIDING OFFICER OF ANY APPOINTED BOARD AND COMMISSION IS “RESPONSIBLE FOR MAINTAINING THE ORDER AND DECORUM AT PUBLIC MEETINGS AND FOR THE UNIFORM ENFORCEMENT OF RULES OF ORDER” INCLUDING COMPLIANCE WITH RULES OF ORDER AND DETERMINATION OF BREACHES OF SUCH RULES; AND,

WHEREAS, RULES OF ORDER THAT GOVERN THE CONDUCT OF BUSINESS FOR DELIBERATIVE BODIES, INCLUDING PUBLIC BOARDS, COMMISSIONS, COMMITTEES, TASK FORCES AND THE LIKE, REQUIRE RULES TO ESTABLISH THE “BASIC STRUCTURE AND MANNER OF OPERATION” FOR THE CONDUCT OF MEETINGS AND THE ADMINISTRATION OF ITS FUNCTIONS; “MINIMUM ESSENTIAL OFFICERS FOR THE CONDUCT OF BUSINESS”.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED: THAT THE REAPPORTIONMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE ESTABLISHES THE POSITIONS OF CHAIR, AND VICE CHAIR TO SERVE THE FUNCTIONS COMMONLY ASSOCIATED WITH THOSE POSITIONS, EACH OF WHICH SHALL BE ELECTED BY A MAJORITY VOTE OF THE MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE, PRESENT AND VOTING, ASSUMING A QUORUM IS PRESENT;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE, THE CHAIR AND VICE CHAIR SHOULD NOT BE FROM THE SAME POLITICAL PARTY;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: THAT THE COMMITTEE SHALL KEEP SUCH RECORDS AND POST AGENDAS FOR ITS MEETINGS IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAWS OF THE STATE OF CONNECTICUT;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED: THAT THE COMMITTEE SHALL ESTABLISH RULES GOVERNING THE ACCESS, COMMENT AND INTERACTION OF MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC DURING THE MEETINGS OF THE COMMITTEE.

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

IV. ELECTIONS OF POSITIONS ON REAPPORTIONMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A. CHAIR

Ms. Murillo asked for nominations for the Chair position.

Mr. D’Arinzo asked Ms. Cece if she would be interested in being Chair. She stated she would prefer not to be Chair.

Mr. D'Arinzo stated that currently he is very busy and does not want to be Chair. He offered to provide his help but is not interested in the Chair position.

Mr. Goodwin stated that he would not be able to attend the next two meetings and did not feel that it would work for him to become Chair.

Ms. Cece nominated Mr. Wells. Mr. Wells clarified that he is an ex-officio member and cannot be Chair.

Ms. Khea was asked if she was interested in being Chair. She stated she needs more information before making a decision.

Committee members asked Ms. Murillo how to proceed and she responded that the vote should be tabled for the next meeting.

**** MR. GOODWIN MOVED TO TABLE THE CHAIR VOTE TO THE NEXT MEETING**

**** MR. D'ARINZO SECONDED**

B. VICE-CHAIR

**** MR. GOODWIN MOVED TO TABLE THE VICE-CHAIR VOTE TO THE NEXT MEETING**

**** MR. D'ARINZO SECONDED**

V. ACCEPTANCE OF MINUTES

Regular Meeting: July 8, 2024

The following correction was made to the minutes –

Mr. D'Arinzo noted that when referring to the timeline, the correct date is September 30, 2024 not 2025.

Ms. Cece wanted a clarification in section IV. Discussion, paragraph 7. She was referring to the potential move of a portion of District A to C as under the purview of the Redevelopment Agency and she was questioning what the potential impact would be since the Redevelopment Agency uses census tracts and other criteria. It is possible that there is no impact. Company is not the correct word.

**** MR. D'ARINZO MOVED TO APPROVED THE MINUTES AS CORRECTED**

**** MS. CECE SECONDED**

**** MOTION PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**

VI. OLD BUSINESS

THERE WAS NO OLD BUSINESS

VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. PRESENTATION OF ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS

I. STUART WELLS

Mr. Wells presented a detailed overview of the current voting district and taxing district lines in Norwalk, highlighting the confusion caused by the split lines and the administrative inefficiencies they create. He proposed several adjustments to simplify the lines and make voting more convenient for residents. These included merging small, discontinuous districts into larger ones, and redrawing lines to align with natural boundaries such as streets and cemeteries.

The team agreed to further examine these proposals.

Mr. Wells proposed a solution to adjust the size of council districts while maintaining voter involvement and compliance. The plan included reallocating some voters to districts closer to their homes and adjusting district boundaries to include Ponus Shool voters in their respective districts.

Mr. Wells also suggested potential tweaks to the proposal, including compensating E for the loss of the Ponus area. However, he acknowledged the complexities of the taxing district lines and the need for legislative intervention to rectify them. Mr. Wells also highlighted the challenges of redistricting, referencing the difficulties encountered during the last redistricting process 12 years ago.

Mr. Goodwin noted that Mr. Wells' proposal made sense to avoid weird district lines in gerrymandering that he has seen in other maps around the country. He felt that the 9% fell well below the 10% deviation requirement. He went on to inquire if there are demographic considerations that might make this proposal unfair.

II. ARCBRIDGE

Ms. Mathur began by referencing the charter and guidelines on redistricting.

Ms. Mathur proposed an alternative approach, which followed the taxing districts as closely as possible while also considering areas suggested by Mr. Wells. This new proposal considered the demographics to ensure fairness.

VIII. DISCUSSION

Ms. Mathur explained the challenges of balancing the districts, particularly when it comes to blocks with a large number of residents.

Mr. Wells raised concerns about the cost and administrative burden of creating new voting districts, estimating it to be around \$100,000.

Ms. Cece agreed with Mr. Wells' points, highlighting that the proposed changes could lead to an increase in personnel and costs for the city.

The members further discussed the challenges and considerations related to councilmanic districts and taxing district lines.

Mr. Wells highlighted the difficulties of managing polling stations and equipment, especially when districts are split.

Ms. Cece raised concerns about voters potentially having to move to a different location to vote.

Ms. Mathur explained that the Bureau of Census creates public data sets, which are used to determine the number of people in each district, and that taxing district lines are not currently a focus. However, Ms. Mathur also noted that not following the census blocks could lead to questions about the accuracy of the numbers.

Ms. Mathur raised concerns about how to allocate population and demographics when splitting blocks for the upcoming 2025 primaries.

Ms. Cece expressed her unease about the timeline and the plans, citing the need for a better understanding of the pros and cons of each. She also raised concerns about the potential underestimation of the population due to non-compliance with census responses.

Mr. Wells clarified that the Council districts are used for the Board of Education and any changes would impact the Board.

Ms. Cece also sought clarification on how the overlay would impact the Board of Education.

Mr. Wells suggested consulting the Corporation Council about the flexibility in following a census line.

Ms. Mathur sought legal advice to ensure compliance with rules while drawing the plan.

IX. NEXT STEPS

Mr. Wells to send addresses of Board of Education and Common Council Members to Ms. Murillo.

Ms. Murillo will consult with City Attorney about Chair and Vice-Chair Votes.

Ms. Murillo will consult with City Attorney about changes to Public Hearing and Committee meeting dates.

Ms. Murillo will consult with City Attorney on guidance about following census blocks vs. taxing district lines.

Ms. Murillo to provide Mr. Mathur and Ms. Mathur with the addresses of Board of Education and Common Council Members.

Ms. Mathur to consult with the redistricting office at the Bureau of Census regarding use of Census blocks vs. Taxing Districts.

Committee Members to review proposals before next meeting.

Ms. Murillo to schedule additional meetings before public hearing if needed.

X. ADJOURNMENT

There was no further business, and the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 7:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Esther Murillo
Assistant City Clerk