



Councilmanic Redistricting Commission 2021

Members

Donna Hill Staton, Chair
McNeal Brown
Everlene Cunningham
Mahesh S. Kukata
David Marker
Chris Oxenham
Ray Serrano

Councilmanic Redistricting Commission

Minutes

Virtual Meeting via Webex

March 16, 2021

Councilmanic Redistricting Commission Members Participating in Webex Meeting:
Donna Hill Staton, Chair, McNeal Brown, Mahesh S. Kukata, David Marker, Chris Oxenham,
and Ray Serrano

Alternates Participating in Webex Meeting: Cynthia Fikes

Staff Participating in Webex Meeting: Gary Kuc, County Solicitor, Amanda Mihill,
Assistant County Solicitor, Theodore Wimberly, Acting Council Administrator, and Lynne
Rosen, Senior Policy Analyst

Ms. Staton opened the meeting at 4:05 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

Council Members Deb Jung and Opel Jones welcomed the Commission members and
alternate and thanked them for their service.

The participants introduced themselves.

Ms. Staton reviewed the mission of the Commission to prepare a plan of Councilmanic
districts for the County Council. The timeline to complete the mission has changed because of
the timing of receiving U.S. Census data.

Ms. Staton discussed the role of the alternates. The Charter does not outline their role.
After consultation with counsel, Ms. Staton reviewed that the alternates should be available to
serve if they are needed to step in.

Mr. Kuc discussed that the Office of Law has prepared materials for the Commission
members relating to Redistricting Legal Principles, the Open Meetings Act, and the Maryland
Public Information Act.

Ms. Mihill reviewed a PowerPoint presentation relating to redistricting legal principles to
provide the members with working knowledge of the legal parameters.



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Robert S. McCord, Maryland Secretary of Planning/Maryland Department of Planning, discussed the process for the distribution of U.S. Census Data to the State and local jurisdictions and the delay in delivery of the data. Secretary McCord discussed that according to the U.S. Census Bureau, the population numbers will be released by September 30, 2021. However, under Maryland law, the Department of Planning must reallocate prisoners to their last known addresses within 30 days of receipt of the population numbers. The final population numbers will be made available by October 30, 2021 due to the reallocation process.

Secretary McCord and Mr. Slivinsky discussed the use of Maptitude software for redistricting.

Secretary McCord discussed that the Department of Planning will not post data until prisoner reallocation occurs, and that the data to draw lines would be posted by October 30, 2021. He explained that any advice regarding deadlines set by a county charter need to be discussed by county attorneys.

Ms. Staton discussed that the Commission will proceed with a condensed schedule and get the job done.

Ms. Mihill reviewed a summary of the Open Meetings Act. She discussed the need for the Commission to designate a member to take online Open Meetings Act training before the Commission may close a session. She discussed the Maryland Office of the Attorney General website as an additional resource for information, including the Open Meetings Manual.

Mr. Kuc discussed that four members of the Commission are a quorum, and if there are four members outside of a formal Commission meeting, they may not talk about Commission business.

Ms. Staton discussed that Counsel from the Office of Law will guide the Commission and Council staff will support the Commission. She requested that any questions about the Commission be directed to her. She encouraged Commission members to take the Open Meetings Act training and the exam. She is currently taking the training.

Rob Slivinsky, Technical Service Manager, Department of Technology and Communications and John Bussiere, Technical Services Support Specialist, Department of Technology and Communications reviewed the software to be used by Commission members and the technical support to be provided by the Department. Mr. Slivinsky discussed that Maptitude will be the software used by the Commission and reviewed how it works. It will be hosted on County servers and is web based so that everything can be done remotely.

Mr. Wimberly explained that Council staff is having weekly meetings with Mr. Slivinsky to discuss technology planning for the Commission.



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The participants discussed the types of data to be included in the software, including data from the County Geographic Information System, data from the local Board of Elections, population data from 2010 for comparison to 2020 data, and other data from previous maps.

The participants discussed the use of 2010 data for software training, the possibility of Commission input on the software within the constraints of the software, and the goal of having software training and tools as soon as possible. The participants also discussed the composition of census blocks, the unit of analysis for Maptitude is a census block, and the use of aerial views and street views to understand the data in a census block.

Ms. Staton discussed the impact on scheduling a public hearing due to the condensing of time. She discussed the possibility of a public hearing in the spring or summer to let the public know the impact of not receiving the data until late October.

The Commission members discussed their preferred days of week and time of day for future meetings. The members discussed a preference for Tuesdays and Thursdays with a 4:00 p.m. start time.

Ms. Staton discussed her role as an official single point of contact for the public and the press.

Mr. Wimberly discussed that there will be a Commission website that will have an email address for Howard County Councilmanic Redistricting 2021 that will funnel correspondence that will be forwarded by staff to Commission members.

Ms. Staton agreed to be the designee to complete the Open Meetings Act training.

Mr. Kuc discussed the role of the Chair as the single point of contact, that the Commission can only act by consensus of majority, and it must act as one body when it takes an action. Mr. Kuc discussed the timing for the work of the the Commission as it will not see data until the end of October. The local Board of Elections Director has requested the new lines by January 2022, which leaves little time for the work of the Commission and the County Council. Mr. Kuc discussed Council Resolution 35-2021 that designates the date by which a redistricting plan must go to the Council and the date by which if nothing is done the Commission plan goes into effect. The Council needs time to have a public hearing.

The participants discussed the challenges of the time limits, that the Commission will complete its work within the time limits, and the need for a public hearing, possibly using existing data.



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Mr. Kuc discussed the Commission could have a public hearing, with proper disclosure of the use of 2010 census data and with the understanding that the data is temporary.

Ms. Staton discussed that the Commission will plan on receiving data on October 30, 2021 and will work backwards from there to see what can be accomplished prior to October 30. The Commission needs as much time as possible to do the work it needs to do. Ms. Staton thanked everyone for attending the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 5:55 p.m.