

Commission on Reapportionment Meeting Minutes

DATE & TIME: June 22, 2022 – 6:00 PM
LOCATION: KL Binder Library, 6th Floor, County Office Building, 244 Fair Street, Kingston, NY
PRESIDING OFFICER: Regis Obijiski
LEGISLATIVE STAFF: Fawn Tantillo
PRESENT: 1st Deputy Chair Sarah DeStefano, 2nd Deputy Chair Andy Monk, Donna Lutz, Kenneth Panza, and Kathleen Waithe
ABSENT: Commissioner Travis Rask
QUORUM PRESENT: Yes

OTHER ATTENDEES: Kristin Gumaer, County Attorney; Robert Liebowitz, Department of Planning; Supervisor Michael Baden.

Chair Obijiski called the meeting to order at approximately 6:05.

Mr. Liebowitz projected a copy of various maps and displayed sections as needed.

Commissioner Obijiski introduced a map developed by Commissioner Panza noting that they asked Mr. Liebowitz to make some minor adjustments to address Board of Elections concerns. He also noted that Commissioner DeStefano sent out a map just before the meeting that they would discuss.

Commissioner Panza discussed a map he called Revision 2 with changes he made to the Revision 1 map presented to the commission on June 8. He addressed many of the issues commissioners had with Revision 1. In comparing his map to the map presented at the public hearing some of the changes included: “flipped the hat” from Marbletown to Kerhonkson, divided Shawangunk into two districts with one district wholly within the town rather than 3 that cross town line. made the Town of Gardiner whole with parts of Plattekill, leaving Plattekill and Lloyd in 3 districts. A discussion ensued regarding the pros and cons of the map.

Commissioner DeStefano discussed a map that she submitted that made only one significant change from the map presented at the public hearing – that is “flipping the hat” from Marbletown to Kerhonkson. She did not think it was fair to cut Lloyd and Plattekill into three districts in order to keep the town of Gardiner whole.

Commissioners discussed a number of factors including the equity of dividing smaller towns (populations of less than 7,815) vs keeping them whole and keeping the numbers (median/mean) as low as possible vs keeping neighborhoods intact.

The commissioners revisited their original aspirations criteria keeping municipalities like villages, the City of Kingston and the towns whole “as much as possible”. They noted that of the 24 municipalities in Ulster County, 14 are too small (populations less than 7,424) to be their own district and 10 are too large (populations over 8,207) to be one district.

They compared the two maps (Panza and DeStefano) for various criteria including how many towns were in more than one district; if towns with a village were in two or three districts and how many districts were in more than one town.

Commissioner DeStefano expressed concern about potential political motivation of some commissioners.

Commissioners discussed which maps were still under consideration. They agreed that the DeStefano map was an improvement on the public hearing map and reached a consensus to dismiss the public hearing map and replace it with the DeStefano submission for consideration. Commissioners wanted time to compare the DeStefano map to the Panza Revision 2 map.

The commissioner agreed to hold the next meeting on July 13. They anticipate that this will be their final meeting before the deadline for submitting the map to Board of Elections on July 20th. They briefly discussed how they would submit the map to BOE.

Public Comment

Supervisor Baden made some observations about the differences in the various maps. He also said that some supervisors think having three legislators representing parts of their town is not a disadvantage. He also calculated the town populations in Gardiner and Shawangunk in District 16 of the DeStefano map and said that portion of Gardiner had a higher population than the portion of Shawangunk in that map by about 500. He felt that both maps had advantages, thanked the commissioners for their hard work.

Chair Obijiski asked if there was any other business, hearing none he called for a motion to adjourn.

Motion Made By: Commissioner Monk
Motion Seconded By: Commissioner Lutz
No. of Votes in Favor: 6
No. of Votes Against: 0
Time: 7:15 PM

Respectfully submitted by: Fawn Tantillo
Minutes Approved: July 13, 2022