

**Commission on Reapportionment
Meeting Minutes**

DATE & TIME: January 28, 2021; 6:00 PM
LOCATION: Powered by Zoom Meeting by Dialing (646) 558-8656,
Meeting ID: 956 1062 6098
PRESIDING OFFICER: Travis Rask (Interim Chair)
LEGISLATIVE STAFF: Fawn A. Tantillo
PRESENT: Commissioners Sarah DeStefano, Donna Lutz, Andy Monk,
Regis Obijiski, Kenneth Panza and Kathleen Waithe
ABSENT: None
QUORUM PRESENT: Yes

OTHER ATTENDEES: John Milgrim, Deputy County Executive; Clinton Johnson and Kristin Gumaer, County Attorneys; Dennis Doyle and Robert Leibowitz, Department of Planning; Thomas Kadgen, League of Women Voters; Patricia Doxsey, Kingston Freeman

Commissioner Rask called the meeting to order at approximately 6:04 and asked commissioners to introduce themselves.

Attorneys Johnson and Gumaer thanked Commissioners on behalf of the County Executive and read the Commission's charge outlined in the County Charter.

Commissioners reached a consensus to rotate the role of Chairperson alphabetically until each Commissioner had an opportunity to Chair a meeting to allow them to get to know each other. After one rotation, the Commission will revisit the question and decide if they want to continue to rotate the role of Chairperson or select a permanent Chair and Vice Chair.

Motion No. 1: To approve the minutes of January 7, January 12 and January 13, 2021 as corrected.

Motion By: Commissioner Rask
Motion Seconded By: Commissioner Monk

Discussion: See transcript.

Voting in Favor: Commissioners DeStefano, Lutz, Monk, Obijiski, Panza, Rask and Waithe

Voting Against: None

No. of Votes in Favor: 7

No. of Votes Against: 0

Disposition: Minutes approved.

Planning Director Doyle and Principal Planner Liebowitz presented a Census Update and an Introduction to Redistricting.

Motion No. 2: **Motion to establish a standing meeting on the second Wednesday of each month at 6:00**
Motion By: Commissioner Panza
Motion Seconded By: Commissioner Lutz

Discussion: See transcript.

Voting in Favor: Commissioners DeStefano, Lutz, Monk, Obijiski, Panza, Rask and Waithe
Voting Against: None
No. of Votes in Favor: 7
No. of Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Meetings scheduled for 2nd Wednesday of each month.**

Interim Chair DeStefano asked if there was any other business, hearing none;

Motion to Adjourn
Motion Made By: Commissioner Panza
Motion Seconded By: Commissioner Waithe
No. of Votes in Favor: 7
No. of Votes Against: 0
Time: 7:37 PM

Respectfully submitted by: Fawn Tantillo
Minutes Approved: February 10, 2021

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Travis Rask

All right. Well, welcome, everybody. I'd like to call this meeting to order at 6:04pm. I'd just like to introduce myself quickly. My name is Travis Rask. I work for Gaggan Associate CPAs in Kingston, New York, and very happy to be on this commission. Would anyone else like to go next out of the seven commissioners, maybe we should let the attorneys as well?

Fawn Tantillo

Not sure if you want the attorneys to give us the charge first, but maybe you should introduce ourselves first. You're right, Travis.

Travis Rask

Doesn't matter to me. I don't mind, Clint. You want to go first?

Clinton Johnson

Okay, all right. Yeah, I will. I will do that. Travis. Good evening, everyone. I'm Clint Johnson on the Ulster County attorney. And I just actually want to formally extend a thank you to the, to the members of the Commission on behalf of the County Executive for volunteering to be on on this very important commission that meets once every 10 years.

So, so, we would definitely, on behalf of the County Executive and staff, appreciate and extend our thank you. I also have Kristin Gumaer, who is an assistant county attorney, and she's actually going to be the person to give you the commission, as required by the Ulster County charter, the the charge, your charge as as a commission, for the duration of the your time on this, this commission. that keeps saying commission quite a bit now.

Anyway, so that is an I see Fawn has an agenda and, Fawn, we definitely thank you very, very much for your time and efforts. And, and, and that you have extended and input into this

And so, Travis, you can we I guess we can go around and introduce all the commissioners. And, and once you've done that, and select your chairperson, and I guess Kristin can give you the charge either before or after. totally up to you sir. Or whoever the chair of the the permanent chairperson is going to be.

Travis Rask

Um, Kristin, if you want you can go ahead first, it's not an issue.

Kristin Gumaer

Okay, thank you very much. I am Kristen Gumaer, Assistant County Attorney in Ulster County. And I would also like to welcome everyone on behalf of Pat Ryan, the Ulster County Executive. And this is an open meeting with notice having been provided to the public in compliance with New York State Open Meetings law and again, I like to thank them for doing that getting the word out to the public and taking the charge on that. The lead on that sorry.

The purpose of this, this is the meeting that needs to be held to receive your charge. So I'm going to read to you what the charter specifically says is the charge of the Commission on Reapportionment.

The Commission on Reapportionment is established pursuant to Section C 10. of the Ulster County Charter. It shall meet as soon as practicable after the availability of data from each decennial census to evaluate existing legislative districts to the maximum extent practicable. Pursuant to the process established herein, and reapportion them as necessary to meet established standards in state and federal law; are equal and fair representation of all people in Ulster County; keeping districts compact and contiguous, while taking also into account existing town, city, village and election district boundaries, defining geographic features and equal population within applicable law, but giving no consideration to providing advantage to one or another political party]

That that is the charge of for the group. And also I'd like to state although, Mr. Doyle, it says on the agenda, we'll we'll mention later that the census information I'm sure everyone's aware is not yet available. That will not be available until later this year. July at the earliest was the latest word on that.

Also, we could now have actually every Commissioner if you don't mind to introduce him or herself. I can pick a name to start. If that's easiest, Mr. Rask, you are the chairperson of this meeting, would you like to start?

Travis Rask

Oh, yes. So Nope, no problem at all. Thank you very much, Kristin. As I stated before, my name is Travis Rask. I am an accountant at Gagnon Associates CPAs in New York, born and raised in Kingston. I have lived here my whole life and continued to reside here. Um, I can go right to left that way. There's no

real you know, out of order. I have Ken, I have you Next on my on my list. Ken, would you like to introduce yourself next?

Kenneth Panza

Yes, my name is Ken Panza. I'm from Woodstock. I've live her, let's talk about 40 years. My background is I work IBM, like many people here in this area, Now retired and an active in the in the town doing, I've been doing environmental work and involved with the County of the climate smart material. I got drafted into this by the supervisor because I used to help them with the elections and printing out the voter rolls and things like that. So I thought it might be a useful addition to this committee. So, sort of a last minute, I thought I was exempt. And all of a sudden, I get a call saying suddenly you're up. You're on. So it's been less than 24 hours since I've learned that. I'm now a member of this, this group.

Travis Rask

Well, thank you very much for joining us, and we really appreciate having you. Kathy, would you like to go next?

Kathleen Waithe

Sure. Hi, I'm Kathy Waithe. I'm a retired police officer for 20 years in the New York City Police Department and I transferred over for 13 years in Suffolk County, Long Island. I've lived in probably all five boroughs including Long Island and relocated to Saugerties approximately four years ago. And it is certainly my pleasure to serve on this committee.

Travis Rask

Well, welcome to the committee Kathy. We're very happy you accepted our invitation. Next I have Donna, Donna, would you like to go next?

Donna Lutz

I'm Donna Lutz. I live in Marlborough. I'm a retired nurse have been retired for a while now. I'm enjoying my six grandchildren. And I lived I grew up in Newburgh, so it was quite a change coming from Newburgh to quiet little farm town like Marlborough. But I enjoyed it. And I'm happy to be here. Thank you so much.

Travis Rask

Awesome. Last night, some of the other ones again, thank you very much for for accepting the invitation. And we're very happy to have you. Um, Regis I have you next Would you like to start? You were actually on mute Regis, if you'd like to unmute yourself.

Regis Obijiski

Thank you. Thank you, Travis. Nice to meet all of you. And thank you very much for the invitation to be a part of part of this commission. I've been a resident of Ulster County for about 34 years. I moved up here from New York City where I, I worked and worked there and also in Westchester. I spent my entire career, I'm retired, in human services here in Ulster County and and neighboring Dutchess I was executive director of New Horizons resources for over 26 years. Spent three years working for the state

of New York, too, to head up a workforce, workforce development project for about 100,000 people and have been fully, fully retired for about three or four years.

Regis Obijiski

Hi, I do some executive coaching and some consulting and some National Mentoring and Human Services. Anyway, glad to be here and part of this august team. Thank you so much.

Travis Rask

Thank you. We're very again, very happy to have you on as well. Next, I have on Sarah. Sarah, would you like to introduce yourself to the group?

Sarah DeStefano

Absolutely. Good evening, everyone. My name is Sarah De Stefano. I am a native and currently living in Boiceville, in the Town of Olive, I am an attorney at a, in the compliance department at a Wall Street firm dealing with mostly anti money laundering issues. And it was a real pleasure to review everyone who's joining us tonight, the additional four, I guess, five folks, actually, your backgrounds. nd I'm really looking forward to getting to know all of you and working with you.

Travis Rask

So thank you very much, Sarah. And last but not least, ah, Andy Monk, would you like to introduce yourself?

Andy Monk

I'd love to. Thanks, Travis. Hi, everyone. My name is Andy Monk. I'm an artist living in Kingston. I also pay my bills by working for a financial services company that serves folks with special needs.

And I'm super excited to be on this commission because I have an MFA in sculpture from SUNY New Paltz, and my thesis work was to make sculptures about extreme partisan gerrymandering. So I have a real interest in the topic. And I'm delighted to be here.

Travis Rask

Great, great. Thank you, Andy. And with that, I hand it back over to Clint or Fawn, where do where do we go next?

Clinton Johnson

Ah, go ahead, Fawn,

Fawn Tantillo

Lets just see if Kristin and Clint have anything else.

Clinton Johnson

Yes, I'm actually what we're going to do. And, it is already set out here on on the agenda, thanks to Fawn, is, is, There is a process set forth in the Charter with regards to selecting a chair. Whether it is a chair for the duration of the Commission, or a rotating chair by meeting. So I guess, at this point,

Travis, as the interim chair, I think it'd be incumbent on you to figure out for you to go through the process of deciding whether the commission wants to, buy vote, whether the commission wants to choose option A or Option B.

Travis Rask

Okay, um, so as the as the current chair for the tonight's meeting, I guess we'll put that up to vote. So option A of like, they set us to vote on a permanent chair that will chair this commission for the rest of time, or Option B

Clinton Johnson

chair and vice chair and vice and Vice Chair

Travis Rask

Chair and Vice Chair that will serve in those positions to the duration of this commission, or would we like to do a rotating chair, we would do that alphabetical order and kind of go from meeting to meeting as a new new chairperson. Would anyone like to start the vote?

Kenneth Panza

Perhaps I could have some discussion?

Travis Rask

Sure, of course.

Kenneth Panza

I mean, what do the rest of the members think? I mean, we just don't throw the dice, do we?

Travis Rask

I can agree. Um, does anybody does anyone want to be the chairperson of the of this commission? Is there something that you know, like from from that point of view?

Sarah DeStefano

I'd like to go ahead. I think that for continuity sake, it may be helpful to just have a standing Chair and Vice Chair Particularly, I imagine that there will be quite a lot of interest in the results of this committee, this commission and having one contact person, for instance, for the public or the media to contact with regards to where our status is, will be helpful and less confusing. It'll also take the onus off of Fawn, who has been very kind to have been filling that role, frankly, while we were, you know, choosing additional commissioners, but I think having a point person or two that are standing may be helpful for us as a group.

Regis Obijiski

I like to I like to say that, I agree to a point. I'd like to, I'd like to continue with the rotating chairs. It's my first meeting, getting to meet all of you for the very first time and, and for a couple, a couple of others, it's your first time as well. And so until we can kind of get our, our sea legs with each other and

really, really understand each other, I would really like to recommend rotating chairs. So we do that once. And then and then decide on a permanent chair and a vice chair. We're going to be around for quite a while until, until the general election of 23. I think that is.

Travis Rask

So the Charter says yes.

Regis Obijiski

Yeah, that's my recommendation.

Clinton Johnson

Well, guys, Clint, Clint, here. I just want to point out to you, though, just for clarity sake, that the charter requires that "the Commission shall decide at its first meeting by majority vote of the entire membership of the Commission, it will have a chair and vice chair by election or chairperson by rotation." So, I think by virtue of the language in the charter, you have to make that decision tonight at this meeting.

Regis Obijiski

Ah, no offense, Clint, but that doesn't make any sense.

Clinton Johnson

I just...I'm just reading what is in the charter?

Regis Obijiski

I know, I know.

Travis Rask

Kathy, would you like to weigh in?

Kathleen Waithe

Yes. I just have a question. What are the responsibilities of being the Chairperson or a Vice Chairperson? I'm not sure what it entails. This is the first time.

Travis Rask

Sure. Clint, maybe would you like to expand upon that role for us?

Clinton Johnson

Well, the the Charter doesn't give us a heck of a lot to go on. It tells you tells you exactly what if there's a vacancy and how to fill it for the chair or vice chair. But I think the the role of the chairperson is, as Travis is doing right now is to is to conduct called meetings to order, conduct meetings, make sure everything is being done in in, in accordance with, you know, Robert's Rules of Order. And essentially just to to to control steer the meetings and the discussions.

Kathleen Waithe

Well, in that regard, I'd have to say, I think I have to side with Sarah, it's Sarah, correct? For the issue of continuity, and I have a point person, I think it makes more sense, in my opinion, to have someone, you know, one or two people as a permanent person, you know, for contact, and so on. To me, it makes it a little bit less confusing.

Travis Rask

Right, thank you. Thank you, Kathy. Andy, would you like to weigh in?

Andy Monk

I have to say that so far, I think it's worked out pretty nicely. Having a rotating chair. I think each person brings their own, you know, style. Basically, in my understanding of what we've done so far, the chair is basically the facilitator of the meeting. And I think, not necessarily the primary point of contact for public inquiries and things of that nature. And correct me if I'm wrong about that. But I think each person having their own sort of individual facilitation style is actually a great way to keep the meetings. I don't know, kind of fresh, I guess. I think it's been nice that everyone's kind of had a chance to lead the meeting.

I don't... I'm not necessarily opposed to having a permanent Chair and Vice Chair, but I think so far, I like the idea of facilitating some. Personally, I like the idea of facilitating some of these meetings, but not all of them.

Kathleen Waithe

Okay.

Regis Obijiski

I think the Charter Does, does allow you to pass. And so we can actually, I don't want to say get around the stipulations of the charter. But if, if we want to settle on "a person", we could just pass every single time. And that person would in effect be the permanent chair. Right. Am I right on that, Clint?

Clinton Johnson

You're asking me to read into something better. I can't find anything here to charter. But it's, it's, again, I can only go by what the language of the charter says here. And, and it is it gives you two options. It's to pick a permanent chair or Option B you pick a rotating chair.

Travis Rask

Okay, Ken, would you like to weigh in on your opinion?

Kenneth Panza

Yeah, I'm sort of in favor of a permanent chair. I think there's a advantage of having one person kind of focus on what the committee is doing, what the, what the schedules are what we have to deliver. And I, I'm not sure I'm confident with, you know, just swapping the chairs around because you know, every

week it's someone or every meeting, it's someone new, that's coming on trying to figure out what to do next.

Travis Rask

That's right. Yeah. Thank you. Thank you. And Donna, would you like to finish up?

Donna Lutz

Yes, I agree. I like the idea of continuity. I think that's important to what we're doing.

Travis Rask

Okay. Well, I mean, so far, it seems like a permanent chair seems to be the the choice of the majority. But before we go into that, is someone willing to put their name on the list? Or do we nominate someone for the chair? How does that kind of go to do a nominee,

Fawn Tantillo

You could do open the floor to nominations? Or, as you said, open the floor to volunteers and then have those people nominated.

Travis Rask

And I'm not sure that the charter precludes you from doing what Regis just suggested rotating and then choosing but you're supposed to determine the chairman, how you want to handle the chairmanship at this first meeting. And I think they gave you a lot of options to into making that choice.

So, I actually, I do actually agree with, with Regis' assessment. I don't I don't know Kathy. You know, I don't I don't know Kathy, I don't know, Ken, I don't know, Donna and or Regis, himself, I've worked with Sarah and I've worked with Andy, throughout this process. And we did, we have had a very good rapport, which, which is, you know, great to see. Um, but I'd like to know, get to know you guys first as well, in that same manner. So I don't think I can necessarily vote on a, you know, an acting standing chair right away. So maybe if it's possible to modify this, to say, maybe just for like, Regis, you suggested for the first go around, everyone gets a chance to be in a chair. And then if we decided this isn't really working, or that we'd like to to have the standing chair. I mean, that's, and we can go from there. That's totally up to the rest of the group.

Andy Monk

Yeah. Are we allowed to make a decision tonight and then change our decision later? Or is that not permitted?

Fawn Tantillo

Well, I can say is I if your decision tonight was to rotate once through and then maybe pick a permanent chair or rotate once through and make a final decision after after you've had a chance to do that. I just think you need to make a decision tonight on how you want to move forward with the chairmanship?

Clinton Johnson
That's correct.

Sarah DeStefano
Well, should we take a vote on it then.

Travis Rask
Sure. So, we have option sounds like we have three options now. So we have option A: which is to make a permanent chair and a vice chair for the rest of the Commission. We have option B: to do the rotating chair for the rest of the commission or options C: to do a once around where everyone gets a chance to be the chair and then at the end of it, decide on a permanent Chair and Vice Chair.

Personally, I can I can open up the floor. I would like to go with option C. Ken, would you like to vote next?

Kenneth Panza
Oh, I'll go with option A?

Travis Rask
Option A. Kathy?

Kathleen Waithe
I'll go with option C

Travis Rask
C? Okay, um, Donna, Option A, B, or C?

Donna Lutz
I'll go with option C, I'd like to see how it how it all evolves and works. That's great idea.

Travis Rask
Regis, I'm assuming option C?

Regis Obijiski
Right, yeah.

Travis Rask
Um, Sarah.

Sarah DeStefano
I'm gonna go with option A

Travis Rask
Option A and Andy.

Andy Monk
I'm gonna go with option C, unless I can propose option D, which is similar to option C, and I'm willing to be totally overruled about this, and then I'll just go with option C, that's fine too.

But option D would be to rotate once through everyone facilitating the meeting and then make a decision if we want to keep doing that or appoint a permanent Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, so that we have just a little more flexibility at the end of that process in case we love it.

Travis Rask
Andy, he thank, thank you for that suggestion, because that was something that I that was, what I intended but it did not come out the correct way. So, Is everyone okay with maybe doing a re-vote, potential re-vote.?

So, I want to change my vote to option D to say rotating chair and into the Rotate for the room rotation to pick either a chair or continue with our, our rotation, so I will be option D at the moment. Ken, would you like to stick with a or would you like to change?

Kenneth Panza
I think I'll stick with my original vote,

Travis Rask
Okay, Kathy?

Kathleen Waithe
C, my original.

Travis Rask
B or C?

Kathleen Waithe
C.

Travis Rask
C. OK, Donna.

Donna Lutz
I'll go with C.

Travis Rask
C as well. Okay. Um, and we have Regis.

Regis Obijiski

I kind of like D. But actually, I thought I thought that C was exactly the way Andy, Andy described it. I really just, I didn't really see any difference to be honest with you. So C, C, or D? I don't care.

Travis Rask

So, Sarah, stick with A?

Sarah DeStefano

I'm sticking with A

Travis Rask

And Andy, you're going with D?

Andy Monk

I'm gonna go with D. Yeah.

Travis Rask

So it looks like we have three D's, two C's and two A's?

Fawn Tantillo

Yes. So you really need four people to agree to do anything, you need a quorum you need four.

Travis Rask

Okay, so...

Sarah DeStefano

I'll switch to D to make it easy. Let's do it that.

Travis Rask

Beautiful

Sarah DeStefano

The plurality there

Travis Rask

That four D, but I think it'll be it'll be good to have, like you said, everyone at the group, at least just get a chance to be to fill a position be the chair and, you know, see if you see if you like it. And again, when we come back to that round, you can volunteer, you know, your cell for the role. Or if it doesn't seem to work, we can, you know, continue the same way. So great. So I think I like the option D of rotating chair to start for everyone gets one meeting. And then at the end of that seventh meeting, we will decide on if we want to do a permanent chair and vice chair or continue with our rotation. Thank you, Fawn. Thank you everyone. Smooth,

Clinton Johnson

So, so, Travis, now that... Clint here... So, now that you've you've chosen that option? Now you have to select who is going to be the chair of this meeting, or are you already? Or are you just going to assume that that you're going to receive maintain that position for the rest of this meeting?

Travis Rask

I did it I did assume to maintain this position for the rest of the meeting because that was what was voted on originally.

Clinton Johnson

Okay. Okay.

Travis Rask

And then we can start we would everyone be comfortable with alphabetical order to start and finish up the chairmanship for the next.

Fawn Tantillo

Just technically, we'll have we'll do it alphabetically and the next person the alphabet will be the vice chairman of that committee in case that Chairman can't show up for any reason.

Travis Rask

Okay, great. All right.

Fawn Tantillo

So next, we need to approve the minutes of January 7 12th and 13th. With some typos corrected, misspelled Tom Kadgen's name and I miss misspelled Travis's name.

Travis Rask

I'll make a motion to approve the meeting minutes from the previous meetings as those corrections in mind. Oh, can I get a second?

Andy Monk

I'll second that motion.

Travis Rask

Thank you, Andy. And All in favor?

All

Aye. Aye.

Travis Rask

Thank you.

Fawn Tantillo

So that was all seven. Right?

Travis Rask

Yes. Okay. Right.

Fawn Tantillo

And then the next thing we have is our presenter from Dennis and Rob.

Travis Rask

Well, thank you very much. Dennis and Rob, you can take it away.

Dennis Doyle

Thank you very much. My name is Dennis Doyle. And you might wonder what we're doing here. I'm the Planning Director for Ulster County. And the planning department had in 2010 provided technical assistance and efforts with respect to the Commission's work. And we're standing ready to do that if the commission so desires coming up. And I brought Rob Liebowitz, who's a Principal Planner with the office. He spent many Saturdays in this building in 2009, 2010, going through working with the commission to come up with the various alternatives that were under consideration.

And he has a very short presentation. I just want to I just want to you know, as to tell you that we're at your disposal will work as hard as you want us to and in various ways that you want us to or we'll stand back, if that's what you if that's what you decide. And the other thing I want you to think about is as you move into the into the next meeting, just think about your public face for this. Not just, just in terms of the public meetings, but also websites releasing, releasing materials, etc, etc. And we'll we'll stand ready to help you if that's what you if you decide to have a robust public face, we stand ready to help you do that work and provide the necessary assistance. And Rob has a very short presentation if he can share his screen in terms of the work we did and give you some insight of how the census works. And also some of the tools that are available to the commission to help you decide on the various the various alternatives that are available to you in terms of establishing new districts. Rob,

Fawn Tantillo

Just before we do that, I want to introduce a couple other folks that are on the screen. We have Tom Kadgen on the screen who's with the League of Women Voters. In addition to Rob and Dennis, we also have John Milgrim, who is one of the Deputy County Executives, just so you get to know all these faces and of course, Patricia Doxsey is is on here with us. Okay.

Clinton Johnson

All right. And just just so you guys, I My apologies. for some strange reason I don't I didn't have a link zoom link to get on screen so that you guys can see who I am. But next the next meeting. Hopefully I'll show up and and, and we'll be able to you guys will be able to see who the county attorney and, and my my my assistant county attorney is

Fawn Tantillo

I I can send those to you now if you want it. Oh boy,

Clinton Johnson

Please do Fawn. That'd be great.

Fawn Tantillo

All right. Go ahead, Rob.

Robert Leibowitz

All right. So um, name's Robert Leibowitz, Principal Planner with the county, as Dennis suggested, said. I've been with the county 21 years. This is basically my third time to reapportion. My second with commission, and happy to assist in any way we can. This presentation gives you some census basics gives you a census update, and really goes into the new business section. So I'm happy to stop at any point and pick it up again, as you go along. Just I touch on a variety of topics.

So, I don't know...I'll start off here. Let's see. Alright. So as you were heard earlier that this just came out recently, the file usually comes out December 31. If they had hoped it was going to come out by the end of March still. Now it's been pushed back to the end of April. that pushes it back to July for us. So, the end of July will be...tentatively anyway, when we would receive the actual data from from from, from Congress from the state. We actually do already have those came out earlier this week, on Tuesday, we had files for GIS that came out so we know what the district boundaries look like as far as census blocks census tract. Is everybody familiar with census geography?

Travis Rask

No, you could expand Robert, no problem,

Robert Leibowitz

Sure, I'm sure, you know, I didn't actually provide that in here. But the basic building block is the census block for all redistricting efforts. And that's the smallest geographic feature that a census created that contains population data. And so that's what we build it up all from. So we're really delayed in terms of when we'll get the data last time we got that march, march 24, in 2011. So we're not gonna be getting it from a long time. The good news is, is that gives us a lot of time to prepare.

So just some factors for who went the wrong way. factors for redistricting. There are some federal ones, which are the equal population based on Supreme Court decisions in the 60s. And also, the Voting Rights Act, which is from the mid 60s.

New York has its own criteria, compactness, which you heard about from our charter, continuity, to contiguity preservation with political subdivisions, community areas, community interest, competitiveness and prohibition on on favoring or disfavoring a party. There's one other factor, and that was the law that was passed by New York State. And last time we were in such a time constraints as the charter was different back in 2011, that we had to produce a map by the end of May. And we started in March. So we didn't weren't able to include this. This data wasn't out yet. But what they did

was the state required that prisoners had to be relocated to where they were located originally from. So when you look at the last redistricting map, it includes prisons, which it should not.

So going forward, we will exclude or have the people in the correct place in which they were from. The problem with that is it further pushes us back for when that date, the state will have to revise the data further than that July date to put the populations in their correct place. And we don't have a timeframe on that. So that will be the actual data that we use to draw district boundaries.

Kenneth Panza

Rob. what about universities?

Robert Leibowitz

Universities are counted in place, in place differently.

Kenneth Panza

Yeah.

Robert Leibowitz

That's based on, that's where you were on the census. You're, you're on April 1 is your primary location. So, college students count, prisoners do not.

Dennis Doyle

So, the three communities that are affected by that are the Town of, the Town of Shawangunk, which has a a correctional facility, a state Correctional Facility in it, the Town of Wawarsing, which has another state Correctional Facility in it. And first, in a small way, the City of Kingston, which we have Ulster County's correctional facility is located,

Robert Leibowitz

That fortunately gets a little just redistribute without, yeah. Mostly. This is what the map looked like last time. As you can see, we focused on a lot of political boundaries, trying to preserve those and try to keep it compact as possible, based on urban centers, and going and moving out from them,

Unknown speaker aside

Right, write me a note. So I forget who?

Robert Leibowitz

Oh, somebody's gonna be. Okay. So the first thing I was touching I was the equal equal representation, there was a Supreme Court ruling that basically said, equal districts equal people. At the federal level, it has to be basically exact, divided exactly. At the state and lower levels, we have a little bit more margin of error, we have up to a 10% deviation. So that deviation is actually between the largest and the smallest districts. So for example, you have 1000 people, you have 10 districts, average be 100 people. So it could be 105 and 95 and two districts, or, in some cases, you could be 101, and nine, those districts and 91. And another, so it's within that 10% margin. And I said, Supreme Court, you

have to be as balanced as you should strive to be as close to that average as possible. When it comes down to

Travis Rask

Hey, Robert, I'm sorry to interrupt you. We are we can we can we get this presentation.

Robert Leibowitz

Absolutely.

Travis Rask

Okay. Wonderful. Thank you, please continue.

Robert Leibowitz

Sure. So, this is what happened in 2011. So, population back then was 182 493 divided 23 districts, and we had used plus minus 794. Is our deviation, county wide, it looks pretty good. We only do the 8.48. But we went as high as 5%. Above that mean, we went as low as minus 5%. Below that mean, so we had some pretty wide things. But that was in the interest of trying to balance as many political boundaries as possible, as we did them. The recent estimates Just Say No, we've probably we don't have the official numbers yet, as you know. But the estimates have is having lost about three and a half percent population since, since 2010. So we will be having smaller defaults, most likely as we move forward in this one.

Interestingly, though, is we've had an uptick in population since COVID started, but since most of those people moved up after April 1, we won't realize that gain. So we'll see how many people moved up before April 1.

Voting Rights Act, this is more federal level, but also at local low federal, he cannot dilute purposely dilute the vote. The line drawing and there are three criteria this this is at the federal level. And what they have nationwide are 122 majority minority. So basically the majority of that population areas minority, and those are there 122 congressional districts that are set up that way. And none are in Ulster County. But for our purposes, we just make sure we preserve minority of life rights in the county, and that we don't purposely draw lines. And as you'll see, in all the census programming for redistricting, it always keeps tracks of minority and also by different racial group and not Hispanic and non-Hispanic so you'll be able to, as we go through it, you'll be able to see this really clearly. Wasn't an issue last time.

Let's see. So just to show you what compactness means. The circle is concerned perfectly compact. You can't contort it and like little "jut-outs" just to capture more people and you can't disperse it that way. So that would be circles. The most perfect form of compactness though rarely actually occurs in nature.

Okay, continuity contiguity is basically Can you drive one portion of the district to another, so you should always be able to drive to it. Now, neither these are compact originally, I hadn't be able to order

but the way to state law read, they said, compactness first. So, this contiguousness is not the first priority, but more of a second one.

Okay. Do you want me to hop into software? Or should we save that for later? Because? Or do you want to hear about this now? Or this is this is more what we did last time, I can tell you more about what we did.

Travis Rask

Okay. Whatever, whatever works for you, Robert.

Robert Leibowitz

Okay. So 2011 This is how we handled it. So we had our commission. And we decided and we got the day in March, we had to move pretty fast this time. So we purchased something called AutoBound from Citygate GIS. And what that is, is a plugin to a software which I've been trained in called ArcMap, or ArcGIS. And we thought we decided what we do is we'd have one station where we be Main Station, which was my computer, we set up one additional station for the public to come into the planning department, we had a bunch of people who did who made their own maps. And then we gave the software to all the commission members to make their own maps. Turned out to be not all that great in practice for the commission members. What ended up happening was some people from public were able, who were more tech savvy, came and made their own maps. Commission members ended up sitting down with me and made their own maps with me. And then also on one particular Saturday, as Dennis mentioned, all of us came into the county office building, and we went block by block and we made a map. And then ultimately, they ended up choosing a different one. They also had ways where I made a whole bunch of different maps, and then we edited them from there based on comics and public comment back. And again, we had to complete it by May. So, we were in a lot more of a rush back then.

So, this time, there are a lot, there's a lot more advent of tech technology this time, because now you have a lot more on the web. So, we also have a longer timeframe, so the final map is not, isn't required till the end of July 2022. So, you'll have a lot of time. There are more companies producing the software. Some are standalone products like that are just focused on redistricting, some are ArcGIS plugins, like I mentioned, Citygate still produces that. And then there are a lot of web-based product products, which are more ... more expensive often. But they also allow much more public input where public can either comment on the maps that are being produced and pushed to the web by the Commission as drafts, or even allows them possible to draw their owns and submit those for comment or inclusion and discussion.

So, there's, there's a lot, there's a big range of possibilities that we can do depending on budget. And I do not know what that budget is. Also, with the software, those are more robust. And they show different ways of measuring compliance with minority population, with compactness are all sorts of measures of compactness, and making sure you're making and also equality, making sure all the districts are equal. So it takes a lot of the "hand by hand" work out of it. And also by doing online also provides more transparency, transparency and inclusion for general public, too.

So, like I said, these are different, three different ways that I that I see different ways we could do it. One is one license like we did last time where we the commission works with it, they sit down. And since you have so much time, you can work through a whole bunch of maps. And as commission come to a consensus and develop a map, then narrowed down to a single version, post different versions of them up online and get feedback on it. There's also different ways like I said to make it online, and we could get different vendors to come in and pitch their programs to us. And then the question comes down to what kind of budget and what did these things cost? And I have a list of vendors and presentations that you all can check out and I'll send out this presentation to you as well.

I do I should say I have a free version which is a plugin to ArcMap but it isn't as robust in its checks and balances. It can be used it is very usable and it is free but It's more limited. So there's a link to some webinars, I found interesting to these four software I mentioned right here. And a couple other ones. This district builder, one is actually kind of interesting in that it's online, it's free for everyone to edit their own make their own electoral maps for donation. And they do make them for they do will customize them, I have had some talks with them, but I didn't get any pricing out of them. So there's that. So I encourage you all to check that out. And that's all I have, I believe. So.

Fawn Tantillo

One thing I just wanted to point out the last time in 2010, we were going from 33 legislators to 23 legislators, we went from multi member districts to single member districts, and we went from keeping the towns whole, to dividing the towns up. I know some of the legislators were discussing the fact that that particular division that they did the last time because it was done very publicly. And it's resulted in us having almost a 50-50 legislature for the last 10 years. So that part of it was pretty fair, and you may not need huge changes. Also talk a little bit about the the census blocks, the last time the census blocks made no rhyme or reason, like some would have, some would be like, you know, 50 acres, and some would be like one house. And you know, are they still going to be those kinds of

Robert Leibowitz

Census blocks are made up of physical features or boundaries. Sometimes it could be a little bit of a stream, it could just come down to the streets could be the boundary of a block. So, there's all different reasons for blocks, you can't rely on a block to make that much sense. I mean, it has to fit with it, they all the blocks can't be split by municipality, so they'll have to fit within municipalities. We won't see any blocks split by them. So, you have and they're designed to essentially have similar amounts of population where possible.

Fawn Tantillo

I just remembered over by the Watchtower farm where the farm itself was. There's like 800 people in that building. And there was a little house with the next over only had to only had one house on it with like two people in it and they got the number on the wrong census block.

Dennis Doyle

Yeah, there there, there are those problems that arise with respect to the counts within blocks. But generally, you try to work in Block Groups. So say there's a 200 block, there may be four Block Groups in a 200 and a 200. Block group. So it's black group 201, 202, 203. But there are those situations where blocks because of the concentration of population in a particular area may have a lot of people in the block next door may not. And that's just because of apartment buildings or group quarters or something of that nature that show up in those in those census blocks. And when you move to tracks, where you'll go back to the map, Robert, and take a look at the tracks in the map, the existing map. You can see what happens up in the mountainous areas in the Catskills in the western portion of the county, you can see these very large districts that essentially are trying to capture the necessary population to make them to make them equal. So representatives from those districts represent multiple towns in multiple areas. And the reason for that is is some of those towns up there have less than 1000 people. And so when you're looking at 7000 people as a requirement, in order to have equal representation, you have to really bundle a lot of towns together to get to that as compared to the City of Kingston where you see multiple, at least two districts in the City of Kingston, or three districts in the City of Kingston to to to deal with those issues.

Fawn Tantillo

We also discussed the fact that the legislature didn't budget any thing for this. So if we need to purchase one of these programs, we're going to have to put a budget together and present it to the legislature for them to, you know, if we need one of these programs, so we may want in some of our first meetings, or maybe make a subcommittee to work with Rob to see what kind of a program you want.

Sarah DeStefano

That was actually going to be my question. Rob, do you have like a suggestion on which one of these would be best served with? You know, I think a free online software makes sense, just particularly in our current climate where none of us have met in person yet. And we're all meeting on zoom. I don't know how realistic it is to think that we're all going to be coming in indoors to an office someplace to fiddle around on a computer.

But I also want to be sure and I'm sure everyone else has The same way that we have a program that captures the demographic data that we really need to properly divvy up these districts. Do you have a sense of which of these programs sort of balances that the best I, you probably haven't looked into the pricing and things like that. But for my having nothing, knowing nothing about any of them?

Robert Leibowitz

Well, none of the free ones that are online are for counting, those would have to be custom jobs. So those all are not free for the county. I mean, I have a lot of experience with the ESRI product. And with which is an online tool, let me try to go back to a term. And I bought experienced at the city gate prop project they have, they also have an online version of it now. That is for city gates. So that was interesting. I don't know what the price points on it, all of them can use the same data all have the same inputs. And when it comes down to it, they all look really much the same. They're basically a map

with the data underneath is how they look. And as you go through and and their functionality is pretty much identical.

Dennis Doyle

Let me let me suggest this. And to answer that question, we'll, we'll start a conversation with our information services, folks. And share that and share our experience with some of the service have worked with magnitude GSI and Citygate. And share our experiences with those and look at the combat compatibility of that with some of the systems that are out there particularly for particularly for those folks that are at home that have home computers, and or particularly can we can we do it in a cloud. Those are the two things I think we can think about. And then some, perhaps one of the things to think about is a very simple program. I don't know whether it exists, but if a simple program exists that the Commission can can manipulate easily. And then we can bring those maps back in and into a more complete and more complex program, and sort of give you whether or not they how they how they, how they meet the federal the federal and state requirements with a little bit more detail that we can, they're probably available in a complete program. And we can get something back to you. I think the next I don't know when your next scheduled meeting is. But we'll start that conversation with our Information Services Department to make sure that not only are you comfortable with it, but they're comfortable with it. And we have some protections relative to make sure that it's not. It's not hackable.

Sarah DeStefano

All that sounds great. Thank you. I don't know that we have a meeting scheduled. But we could also schedule it around how much time you need to make that collection of data or information, rather.

Robert Leibowitz

I would go on so that all these programs do exactly what Dennis just said. So they have Citygate. And as we have [inaudible], all have cloud based versions were which are... don't have as much learning curve as using ArcMap, is that people can log in, if they log in to a certain specific account, then they can get it's more, I think it comes down to more of a pricing issue depending which way they want to go with that.

Dennis Doyle

Yeah. And we can find an offline, we didn't have any specific budget items. I mean, I'll offer the fact that there there is a limited amount of money that I can find in the planning department budget. But if we start approaching a \$50,000 range for software and outreach, then that's not available to you. There are there are things that we can sort of look at priorities and move to an I can move some stuff to capital capital programming, if the legislature is doing is wants to do that, that wouldn't have wouldn't have to have a conversation about contingency.

Fawn Tantillo

That would probably go over much better.

Dennis Doyle

Yeah, I'm thinking the same thing. And I you know, and we certainly want to make sure that that the committee is well served. So I don't I don't want to shortchange the committee, if we feel that we don't have the money, then that's what's going to have to happen.

Kenneth Panza

Sort of a question, a question about, yeah you know, the last time it was multi districts and everything had to be reorganized this time, you know, are we looking at just one census block from one district to another, you're trying to balance things out? Or we weren't working at the margins? Or is it starting with a

Robert Leibowitz

Well that's, that's what we did last time. We did go block by block last time too. And we built them. We started from different centers in the county and then we built the district out sometimes we tried to maintain the town sometimes, depending like the as you saw in the Catskill towns, they had to go beyond the boundaries of the towns, but it really came down to the smallest increment and really building out from that amount.

Dennis Doyle

So the thing is, think of it this way, there may be larger changes that took place in various districts and other districts, and the example I would give you is the second homeownership question with respect to the mountain towns has, from a trend perspective really, really increased the amount of people that are owning second homes. Now, depending upon where they reported themselves. For the for the census, you may see some more sense more loss in in the rural districts in the western Catskills than you would in the other districts. Similarly, the southern Ulster County has even, even with 2008. And the problems that occurred with respect to the recession in 2008. Southern Ulster County has seen a, continued to see increases in building when we look at building permits increases in building. And if you want to look at a really, I think, going to be an interesting discussion is what's happened in the town of Lloyd. Town of Lloyd has had multiple building, building large building projects that have gone into the Town of Lloyd, so that area is probably going to grow. So the thing that you're thinking about when you think about this is not to think about it as a countywide changes, but the shifts in individual districts and you're right, we may be we may be moving boundaries, some boundaries may be required to be moved a lot more than others.

Rochester would be a great example. There's a huge resurgence of of homeownership in the Town of Rochester, which, quite frankly, has resulted in the some of the census, some of the census blocks in the Town of Rochester on the American Community Survey, are now are now essentially being reported as being some of the wealthiest blocks in the in the County of Ulster.

Travis Rask

Other concerns for Robert or Dennis?

Dennis Doyle

So we'll get this presentation to Fawn and she can she can distribute it to the committee. Thank you, Fawn.

Fawn Tantillo

Yes, and it'll become a part of our record. I see. We now have Clint and Kristin on screen with us. So you can see what they look like I think John Milgrim is going to have to leave us in a minute. I didn't know if you wanted to. If John wanted to say anything before he signs off.

John Milgrim

I just want to thank everyone for volunteering their time for this and taking part in such an important once in a decade process that's critical to everyone in this county and really appreciate it and kind of enjoyed watching this meeting and everyone working together and trying to take the first steps. Obviously, Dennis and Rob will be integral in your plans moving forward. And I personally believe Dennis really, really, really loves this stuff. The technical aspects, but so the Executive's administration here between Dennis and Clint and Kristen, Rob anything you need to facilitate your endeavors moving forward, more than happy to help. I know, Fawn is very helpful on the legislative side. So you know, best of luck through this. And hope to hope to see some great progress moving forward. So thanks. Thanks again.

Travis Rask

Thank you, john.

Sarah DeStefano

So I guess for next steps on that. Are we just waiting for Dennis and Roberts, advice on where to move next with the software? We'll we'll wait to hear what the discussion is from the Department of Planning. Is that my understanding of how we move forward in that regard,

Fawn Tantillo

and maybe want to do get some prices? For what?

Dennis Doyle

Well? Yeah, well, absolutely. Yeah. There's no question we need some pricing. That's there's absolutely no question about that.

The only other thing I would say I, as I indicated in my initial comments would be, I think the committee should commission should sit back and think about what its public face is. What it wants to say, if we establish a conditions webpage, and I think that's what you should do. But it's up to you, then you should basically have what you know what your goals are, you know, we could you could put this presentation up there you can, you know, you can have, you know, the various meeting things but you can also basically, you know, start to set out a schedule, what your goals are with respect to transparencies. So you can set some broad policies and put them up for the public to understand and know about and, and then start to think about how you're going to give them the opportunity to participate.

Fawn Tantillo

And if I might offer the last time the commission sat down with some priorities like they didn't want to. They, they wanted to keep Towns whole as much as possible. But they were looking at geographic boundaries at school district boundaries, they looked at several different overlays. Like they wouldn't want to have, they didn't remember a discussion that they didn't want to have the district above and below the reservoir, or they didn't want to have a district, they went, you know, completely over the mountain somewhere where people were on one side of the mountain, and people were on another side of the mountain. So those were certain things, you folks may want to have those kinds of discussions in the meantime. And as we look at the public face of this, they also held several public meetings in the very beginning, out in the towns, if we're not getting this information until, you know, the summer, and I'm not sure how we have a public meeting, but they held public meetings in different towns. But we could ask hold meetings maybe in a couple of different districts and see how the districts work and how they maybe don't work for them, but what people feel about their current districts.

Dennis Doyle

One of the first things that the Commission asked us to do the last time was mapped the existing legislators addresses so that we knew when we started this establish districts, what would happen on that basis, I don't know whether it was a, it was a decision making point for him, but we did map them.

Fawn Tantillo

Okay, I don't know if they ever publicly shared that. But my recollection was that they deliberately didn't talk about where legislators completely

Travis Rask

Completely ignored.

Dennis Doyle

It was. In my recollection,

Regis Obijiski

I'd like to have some conversation at some point about some of the other criteria other than the equality of population, which I think is really key. And that's how that's how the software is gonna is going to work is from my understanding what with Dennis and Rob has pointed out, so I mean, that's, that's absolutely first. But we, we have, we have some other, other criteria, I think, to consider some of them the contiguity, or the contiguousness, whatever, that that that term is, within, within the compactness. So what is there are there ordered priorities of these criteria, by which we would have to consider all of the other stuff, you know, the other stuff being, you know, just how the population has shifted in Rochester and Shawangunk and all of that those things, those things are? In a sense, the math is going to be difficult enough. And yet, they're these the, these, these other principles?

And so, you know, what do what do some towns think about, let's say, being broken apart, or being combined with others and, and how that works? In some cases, for example, in the western region, as, as was pointed out, I mean, there, there's space, but not that many people and it hasn't really, it

probably hasn't changed very much. So, there's going to have to be representation among three or four towns. And you know, how does that work?

Regis Obijiski

And what about maybe a town like Ulster, which probably has the weirdest shape of all, it's kind of surrounds the City of Kingston, but but not neatly? And it's, it's, it's something that really could be in a sense picked apart, but how does how would a municipality like the Town of Ulster relate to, let's say, three legislators? And how did legislators manage that with working three, and four and four towns? And where do they put their where do they put their time?

And so I see that as an that I think, is relates to the public hearings? How do people feel about this, you know, may not even know who their representative is. I thought it was someone so because he represents everybody else in the town, but not me. So, there's that there's that confusion. So, the end user really, is the public. And so I really like to hear, you know, from them, I like to hear from them. I'd like to hear from some municipal officials and how, how it works, how it works for them. And the legislators and putting it all together because they're the ones that are the representatives that are going to be affected here.

Dennis Doyle

You could start to two things. One is that to answer your answer your first set of questions were in from my perspective, that the federal and state law requirements are one of those things that you just can't overlook, and then you get into the much more subjective requirements, which are, you know, how does it relate from election districts in terms of the board of elections? How does it relate to travels? Where are the roads? Do we split roads down the middle? Or do we use stream so that one person on one side of the road is not represented by a different person on the other side of the road? Those were things that I think are become much more intangible.

But one of the things that you could think about doing is to start asking questions about the existing districts or the existing districts problematic for anyone. That may give you a sense of where you want to focus change. And if people say they aren't, then and there's not that much change in the census, and in the end, the minority groups don't change that much, then you can start to think about people are relatively comfortable with the districts as they are. But those are that's up to the commission.

Travis Rask

That's a good, that's good. Thank you. History is definitely a huge factor in this.

Kenneth Panza

Which districts are we considering? Is it just the the county districts or the districts within the the the election districts,

Dennis Doyle

Just the county district district representation for the county?

Fawn Tantillo

The Board of Elections is... once you draw, once you decide what the what the districts are the district boundaries, the Board of Elections will make the election districts within those boundaries

Kenneth Panza

They seem to favor dividing the boundaries down the middle of a road?

Dennis Doyle

Well, one of the things that ends up happening is you end up with ballots in the community, if you split a community, the ballots could be split. So you end up for example, with a supervisor, you know, you have a legislator in a community, there's one legislature on one side of the community and a different legislature on the other side, whether it's the supervisor or the council members of the board members are the same. So those split ballots are one of the things that you that that are, it's an intangible that people start to think about.

Travis Rask

So maybe we make a motion to have a meeting, you know, within a month or so to discuss some of this a little bit further.

Fawn Tantillo

I was looking at the calendar. And if you want to pick a regular night to meet monthly at least to begin with, it looks like the second Wednesday and Thursday for the rest of the year right now is open. Except for November, the Thursday's Veterans Day. But so if you want to just pick a night that would work, generally for the rest of the year, and we could like not meet if you don't have something, you know, to discuss, although I think you're gonna have a lot to talk about setting up your "face" and how you want to go ahead. If we did that the next meeting would be February 10. But I don't know what everybody's calendar looks like. If there's another day or night that works better for everybody. I'll check the calendar.

Sarah DeStefano

The second Wednesday and Thursday. seemed to work fine for me either name for me as well.

Kenneth Panza

So use those dates.

Donna Lutz

Thursdays are really tough for me. If we could do Wednesday,

Regis Obijiski

Wednesday, Wednesday' is much better for me. The Thursday I second Thursday's of the month I I have I'm committed on but you know, I could shake myself loose if it's necessary. But the 10th is a good day to start with that Wednesday.

Fawn Tantillo

So, I mean, you can take a formal vote, but if you wanted to pick, do like right now just inform it just sit formally say it's going to be the second Wednesday. Certainly, if that doesn't work out for you going forward or you need to meet more often we can, we can always change it. I just like to lock us in because those meeting nights will fill up rather quickly.

Travis Rask

When we would like to make a motion for the second Wednesday of every month to have our meeting.

Kenneth Panza

I move we meet the second Wednesday of every month.

Travis Rask

And I have a second.

Donna Lutz

I'll second.

Travis Rask

Thank you, Donna. All in favor,

All

Aye. Aye.

Travis Rask

Okay.

Fawn Tantillo

So, we'll get that on the calendar. And, and the chairman of our next meeting will be Sarah and the vice chairman will be Donna for our next meeting.

Travis Rask

Great. I just like to say on behalf of the Commission. Thank you, Clint. Thank you, Dennis. Robert, very informative tonight. And of course Kristin as well. And Patricia, thank you for coming. Also in Thomas, you know, we had a great group for the first night. Um, so like I said, Thank you, everyone for participating and joining us tonight. This was a very informative and exciting meeting.

Robert Leibowitz

Thank you.

Clinton Johnson

Thank you very much, Travis. And again, thank you very much for each and every one of you for volunteering your time. And it sounds pretty exciting.

Fawn Tantillo

I'll make sure we have you and Kristin on our zoom login from going forward.

Clinton Johnson

No worries, Fawn, thank you. Thank you very much.

Thomas Kadgen

If I may. You might want to invite Dr. Thompson. She's in the League of Women Voters resigned the last reapportionment commission and she could share. What happened then?

Travis Rask

Who's that? Tom? I'm sorry.

Fawn Tantillo

Dare Thompson.

Thomas Kadgen

Dare Thompson. She's a ex-president of the League of Women Voters. She was on the reapportionment commission the last 10 years ago. And she can, if you want, she can discuss what happened during that.

Travis Rask

Fawn and Robert, you both are on the reapportionment commission 10 years ago, as well as

Fawn Tantillo

I just I just witnessed as a private citizen 10 years ago, but I was I used to go into Rob's office and play with maps and

Travis Rask

Okay, I mean, it's definitely something that we can we can discuss, maybe at the next meeting, we can, we'd like to invite Dare to to join us. Thank you, Tom, thank you for the suggestion.

Fawn Tantillo

I believe she's on my notice, I have a group of people that want to be notified about these meetings. I've included Scott now on that I assume he's gonna he was very involved and will want to, to stay involved. And I think Dare is on that list, but I'll double check.

Travis Rask

Thank you.

Fawn Tantillo

that we'll grow during the, you know, during the process as people get... Patricia is going to write a glowing article. And so we'll probably have more people on on on the 10th.

Travis Rask

Wonderful, wonderful. Um, so with that, is there anything else anyone would like to address? Before I ask for a motion to adjourn?

Kathleen Waithe

Yes. Just one question for the 10th. Will the time remain the same? Is it still at six? Are we agreeing on that?

Fawn Tantillo

Is that alright, with everyone? Yes, please. I would prefer it that way.

Travis Rask

For me. Sure. All right.

Sarah DeStefano

Actually, I have a question as to public involvement in the meetings. I know, obviously, it's a public meeting. And if we were in person, we would all be sitting. We'd all be sitting in a room and perhaps the dynamic between commissioners in public will be different. To what extent can the public interact with our discussion? Just I'm just curious, mostly because of the feature of zoom. To what extent does that work? And, you know, how do we invite folks from the public? Where is this information posted? Just curious, mostly because of technical, the new realities of technology and in a COVID, the COVID times,

Fawn Tantillo

Certainly we, we noticed the meetings on our legislative calendar, and we send that out to the press every week. I know the Freeman and our official newspapers print the upcoming meetings. This meeting should make it on there. Sometimes there's last minute changes that don't make it into the papers, but it's always on our calendar. Online.

You need to hold your meetings in public. But whether or not you let the public address the commission is up. This is a is up to the chairman of the committee. So we have there's a difference between holding your meetings in public and letting the public speak to you during the meeting. Some commissions hold decide to hold. If you have a public hearing that's different in a public hearing, you're inviting the public to come speak to you. And at least when the legislature does that they don't respond. They don't they're not allowed to reply to the public. They can just sit there and listen.

So, you may decide to have a public at some meetings, you may want to have public comment. Maybe at the beginning or the end of the meeting, you may want to open it up for public comment. But that can be up to the chairman at that particular meeting. Or, you know, you may, you know, set a criteria.

We've, we've had people who online doing this have been a little disruptive, but the chairman is There have been occasions where a chairman has asked me to take somebody off out of the meeting. So that is an advantage with zoom, if anybody's not following your protocols.

Robert Leibowitz

May I comment on that Plan Board, we have a webinar license with zoom. So therefore, we have a private link for all the board members. And then the public comes in the main link. And we have a public comment section up front, they can speak. And then so we have complete more complete control. Nobody can disrupt the meeting that way. So

Fawn Tantillo

I do the clerk about maybe doing that for ours, too.

Clinton Johnson

Right. And that that may be a good suggestion for is maybe. And you don't have to do it on in every meeting. But you may just want to put set aside on your agenda, perhaps, say, five minutes or so for public comment. If you guys want to do that.

Sarah DeStefano

Yeah, obviously, at this point, we're I mean, we haven't had any public visitors who have been disruptive in any way. But it's good to know that in in the future, should it become contentious, it's something we can, we can use a webinar feature instead, with a public comment period, rather than it just being open forum like this. Thank you, everyone.

Fawn Tantillo

And people can always write if they write to me at Ftan@co.ulster.ny.us. We will, I will forward any comments we get to the rest of the commissioners, we're not really sharing your direct contact information. So if people want to contact you, we I will forward those, those things to you.

Dennis Doyle

We could if, if, if the commission desires, you could set up a web and a an email address that they could write to from the commission. And you could end up seeing that but it'd be a specific web specific email address for the commission.

Fawn Tantillo

That might be good.

Dennis Doyle

Yeah, we've done that for we serve as a planning board, a transportation Council and a few other boards. And we have specific web addresses or email addresses, I'm sorry for those. So it all comes into it all comes into an individual, but you don't have to guess that individually. You just go on and it has the the addresses to the commission or in our cases to the transportation council to the planning board, which we then see and then pass on to the board. But it itself saves you then when you're

sending stuff out. It goes out as the commission as a commission, email rather than as an individual's email so people know what they're looking at.

Travis Rask

Thank you, Dennis.

Fawn Tantillo

I'll get some answers for how we could do that for the next meeting.

Travis Rask

Great, thank you for any anybody else, anything, anything else that we may have overlooked, or we want to bring up before our next meeting?

Okay, if that's the case, why would anyone like to give a motion to adjourn?

Kenneth Panza

So moved.

Travis Rask

Thank you and a second.

Kathleen Waithe

I'll second.

Travis Rask

Thank you, Kathy. All in favor?

All

Aye.

Travis Rask

Very nice to meet everybody. I look forward to seeing you guys in the next meeting.

CENSUS UPDATE AND AN INTRODUCTION TO REDISTRICTING

Presented to the Commission on Reapportionment

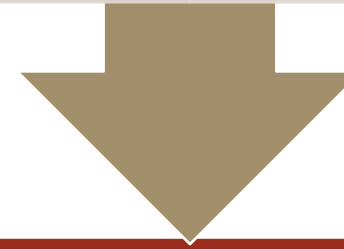
Thursday January 28th, 2021



P.L. File - Normally released December 31st and usually released state-by-state by April 1st.

Received in March in 2011
(24th)

Delayed Now Expected By
End of July



GIS Data being released on January 19th, 2021

In GIS
"shapefile"
format

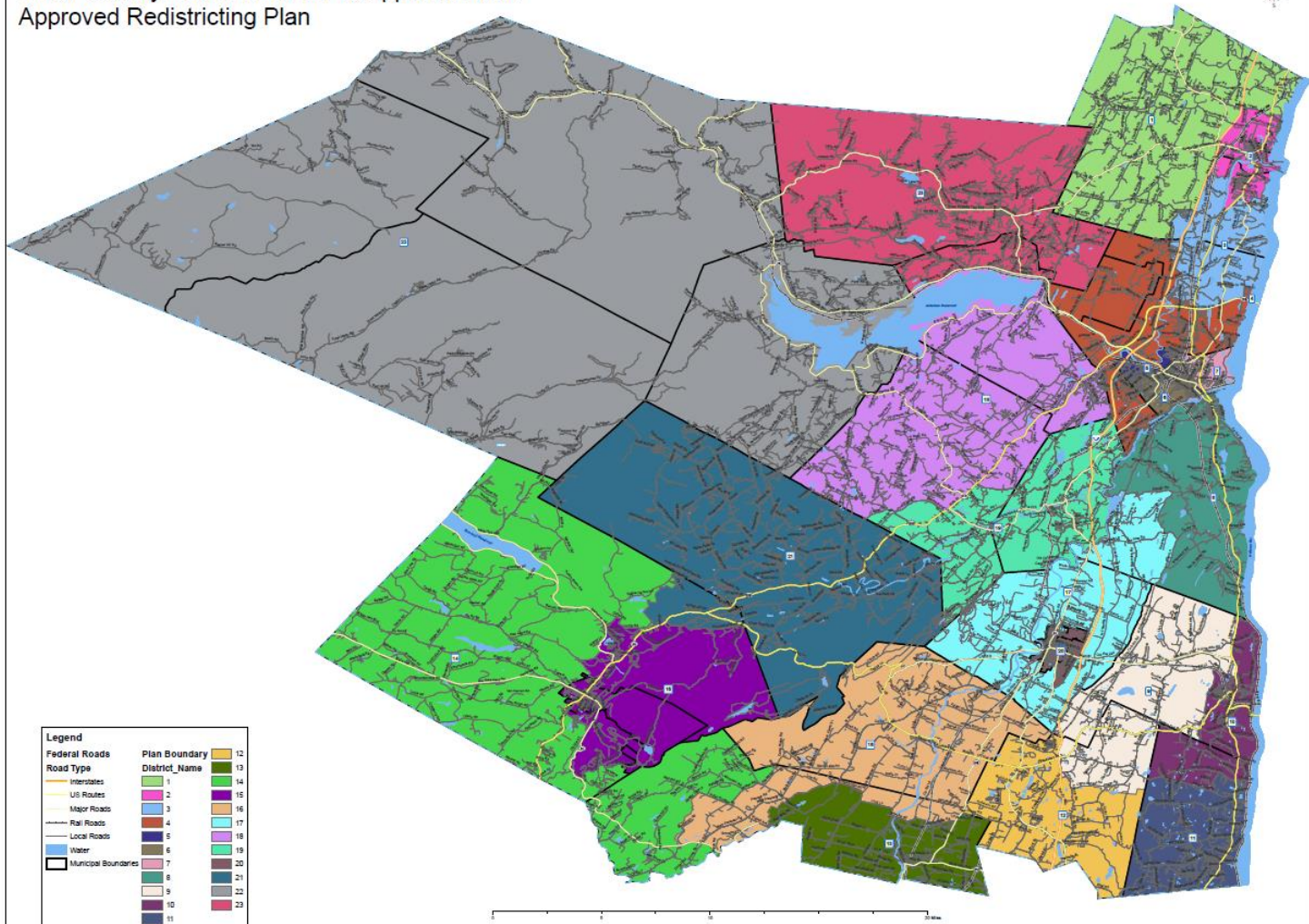
Tract, block
group, and block
level boundaries
updated

New York
released on
January 26th,
2021

FACTORS FOR REDISTRICTING LINES

- Federal Criteria
 - Equal Population
 - Voting Rights Act
- New York
 - Compactness.
 - Contiguity.
 - Preservation of political subdivisions.
 - Preservation of communities of interest.
 - Preservation of the cores of prior districts.
 - Competitiveness.
 - Prohibition on favoring or disfavoring an incumbent, candidate or party.
- **Other Factor** – Reallocation of prisoner population
 - Should be excluded from count – New York State Law
 - New York will produce corrected counts – data to be utilized.

Ulster County Commission on Reapportionment
Approved Redistricting Plan



EQUAL REPRESENTATION

- 1960s – Supreme Court Ruled:
 - Congressional Districts – Exactly Equal
 - State Legislature and Lower – Up to ten% deviation (between largest and smallest districts)
 - Example:
 - 1,000 people. 10 districts.
 - 100 People.
 - Could be 105 and 95 in two districts
 - Could be 101 in 9 districts and one with 91.
 - Supreme court still requires they be as near equal population as possible unless reason for unbalanced districts can be shown.



- 2011 Redistricting
 - Ulster County Population Was 182,493
 - Average of 7,934 per district (23 districts)
 - Used a +/- of 794
 - Countywide Deviation was 0.48
 - Went as high as +5 and -5% from mean.
- Most Recent Estimates
 - 176,728
 - 7,683 per district. (over 3.5% Decline)



**EQUAL
REPRESENTATION**

THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT

- **Federal Level**

- **Cannot dilute the vote via line drawing – 3 criteria**

1. "The minority group must be able to demonstrate that it is sufficiently large and geographically compact to constitute a majority in a single-member district."
2. "The minority group must be able to show that it is politically cohesive."
3. "The minority must be able to demonstrate that the white majority votes sufficiently as a bloc to enable it usually to defeat the minority's preferred candidate."
4. Nationwide there are 122 majority-minority congressional districts. None in Ulster County.

State Law Requires Districts must preserve minority rights



COMPACT



CONTORTED



DISPERSED



All three contiguous but only this one is compact.

COMPACTNESS

State Law requires districts be compact



NON-CONTIGUOUS

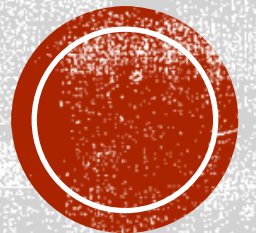


CONTIGUOUS



CONTIGUITY

State Law Requires Districts must be contiguous




REDISTRICTING IN PRACTICE - SOFTWARE

- 2011
 - Purchased from “Autobound” from Citygate GIS.
 - One full version for Staff – add-on to ArcMap GIS (County Has licenses)
 - Light version in office and for commission members provided.
 - Resulted in members of public producing their own versions at set aside desktop for public in office.
 - Learning curve was substantial for commission members
 - Work with staff on their own to produce own maps
 - Discussed variety of versions from public and commission members and iterations produced by staff.
 - One version – commission members present – developed a map, district by district, with staff assistance.
 - Had to complete project by end of May of 2011.



- 2021
 - Longer Time Frame - Final Map Not Required Until July 20, 2022, effective 2023.
 - More companies producing software
 - As standalone products
 - As ArcGIS Plugins
 - As Web-based products
 - More measures of compliance with criteria
 - Greater options for transparency and inclusion of the public into the process.





REDISTRICTING PROCESS - OPTIONS

One License

- Work with commission to create multiple iterations
- Post drafts of iterations for public comment
- Narrow down to single final version

Online

- Allow members to make edits to/create own versions for review by commission
- Potentially allows members of public to create own versions for inclusion

Cost/Budget?

VENDORS TO CONSIDER

- ESRI
 - Has a pay version that is scalable and has more checks and balances
 - Free Version – usable, but requires GIS mapping skills/access to ArcMap Desktop version.
- Maptitude
- ZilllionInfo
- Citygate GIS
- **Webinars for above 4 can be found at:**
 - <https://www.ncsl.org/research/redistricting/redistricting-software-vendor-presentations.aspx>



OTHER VENDORS

- <https://www.districtbuilder.org/>
 - **Free for U.S. Level**
 - **Can customize for local levels at a cost.**
- <http://www.publicmapping.org/resources/software>
 - Open-source program



QUESTIONS?

