

**Commission on Reapportionment  
Meeting Minutes**

**DATE & TIME:** September 8, 2021, 2021 – 6:00 PM  
**LOCATION:** Zoom Meeting ID 8544070648  
**PRESIDING OFFICER:** Commissioner Sarah DeStefano (Rotating Chair)  
Chairman Regis Obijiski (Elected permanent Chair)  
**LEGISLATIVE STAFF:** Fawn Tantillo  
**PRESENT:** Commissioners Donna Lutz, Andy Monk and Regis Obijiski, Kenneth Panza, Travis Rask, Kathleen Waithe  
**ABSENT:** none  
**QUORUM PRESENT:** Yes

**OTHER ATTENDEES:** Rob Leibowitz, Ulster County Department of Planning, Ulster County Attorney Kristin Kumar,, Mike Baden, Supervisor of Town of Rochester, Carol Nolan

Chairman Sarah DeStefano called the meeting to order at 6:05.

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**Motion No. 1:** To approve the minutes of August 11, 2021

**Motion By:** Commissioner Panza

**Motion Seconded By:** Commissioner Lutz

**Discussion:** None.

**Voting in Favor:** Commissioners Sarah DeStafano, Donna Lutz, Andy Monk and Regis Obijiski, Kenneth Panza, Travis Rask, Kathleen Waithe

**Voting Against:** None

**No. of Votes in Favor:** 7

**No. of Votes Against:** 0

**Disposition:** Minutes Approved

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Chair DeStefano asked if there was any public comment.

Hearing none, she opened a discussion on revisiting the question of how to proceed with the positions of Chair and Vice Chair of the commission now that each commissioner had done it once.

**Motion No. 1:** To select a permanent Chairperson

**Moved by:** Commissioner Obijiski

**Seconded By:** Commissioner Rask

**Discussion:** See Transcript

**Voting in Favor:** Commissioners Sarah DeStafano, Donna Lutz, Andy Monk and Regis Obijiski, Kenneth Panza, Travis Rask, Kathleen Waithe

**Voting Against:** None

**No. of Votes in Favor:** 7

**No. of Votes Against:** 0

**Disposition:** Motion Approved

Chair DeStafano opened the floor for nomination of a permanent Chairperson.

**Motion No. 2:** To select Regis Obijiski as a permanent Chairperson

**Moved by:** Commissioner DeStefano

**Seconded by:** Commissioner Rask

**Voting in Favor:** Commissioners Sarah DeStafano, Donna Lutz, Andy Monk and Regis Obijiski, Kenneth Panza, Travis Rask, Kathleen Waithe

**Voting Against:** None

**No. of Votes in Favor:** 7

**No. of Votes Against:** 0

**Disposition:** Motion Approved

Chairman Obijiski opened the floor for discussion of a Vice Chair.

Commissioner Rask nominated Commissioner Monk.

Commissioner Waithe seconded the nomination of Commissioner Monk.

Chairman Obijiski nominated Commissioner DeStefano and after a brief discussion recommended a first and second Vice Chair.

**Motion No. 3** To select Sarah DeStefano as the first Vice Chair and Andy Monk as the second Vice Chair.

**Moved by:** Commissioner Obijiski

**Seconded by:** Commissioner Waithe

**Voting in Favor:** Commissioners Sarah DeStafano, Donna Lutz, Andy Monk and Regis Obijiski, Kenneth Panza, Travis Rask, Kathleen Waithe

**Voting Against:** None

**No. of Votes in Favor:** 7

**No. of Votes Against:** 0

**Disposition:** Motion Approved

MAPPING

Robert Leibowitz reported on progress with the Caliper mapping tool. When the data is available and it is active it will be available to the public at "Redistricting at Ulster County, New York.gov."

He also reported that the NYS Legislative Task Force on Demographic Research and Reapportionment (LATFOR) will be delivering the prison population data directly to Caliper to be included in Ulster County's data.

## TOWN MEETINGS

Commissioner Monk reported on his visit to Town of Lloyd.

Commissioner Rask and Obijiski reported on their visit to Town of Rochester

## NEW & OLD BUSINESS

Commissioner DeStefano asked County Attorney Gumaer to look into the New York State law regarding prison populations to determine if the County Legislature needed to take any action to facilitate how the prison population data was used. Ms. Gumaer said she would report back in October.

Commissioner Panza questioned information received from Mr. Leibowitz and how he created it. There was a brief discussion regarding the changes to census blocks from the 2010 census and its impact on making comparisons.

The Commission had a brief discussion about where the mapping tool and the draft plans will "live" on the website. The commissioners discussed creating a subcommittee to set criteria outlined in the Charter for the public to submit plans.

Commissioner DeStefano requested Mr. Leibowitz prepare a primer for the Commissioners on census blocks, how they are used, how they are created and any other basics they need to know as they begin to work with the data.

The Commissioners will invite Board of Elections Commissioners Ashley Dittus and John Quigley to the October meeting.

## PUBLIC COMMENT II

Michael Baden thanked the Commissioners for coming to the Town of Rochester. He felt that inviting the Board of Elections Commissioners early in the process was a good idea but pointed out that they would like fewer changes to the election districts.

Carol Nolan was delighted to see how well the commissioners are working with each other.

Chair Obijiski asked if there was any other business. Hearing none:

**Motion to Adjourn**

**Motion Made By:** Commissioner DeStefano

**Motion Seconded By:** Commissioner Lutz

**No. of Votes in Favor:** 7

**No. of Votes Against:** 0

**Time:** 6:52 PM

**Respectfully submitted by:** Fawn Tantillo

**Minutes Approved:** October 13, 2021

**Commission on Reapportionment  
Meeting Transcript**

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Chairman Regis Obijiski (Elected permanent Chair)  
**LEGISLATIVE STAFF:** Fawn Tantillo  
**PRESENT:** Commissioners Donna Lutz, Andy Monk and Regis Obijiski,  
Kenneth Panza, Travis Rask, Kathleen Waithe  
**ABSENT:** none  
**QUORUM PRESENT:** Yes

**OTHER ATTENDEES:** Rob Leibowitz, Ulster County Department of Planning, Ulster County Attorney Kristin Gumar,, Mike Baden, Supervisor of Town of Rochester, Carol Nolan

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Sarah DeStefano

Oh, great. On that note, thanks, Fawn. It is 6:05 on September 8, 2021. And I call this meeting of the Commission on Reapportionment for Ulster County to order. And our first order of business is to approve the minutes from our last meeting on August 11. So anyone want to so move?

Kenneth Panza

So moved the minutes of August 11th.

Donna Lutz

Moved

Sarah DeStefano

Okay, so, so Ken are Donna and Kathy seconded.

Fawn Tantillo

And there's Regis,

Regis Obijiski

Finally.

Sarah DeStefano

Hello, Regis.

Regis Obijiski  
Hello.

Sarah DeStefano

And then we have to vote on approving the minutes. Correct. So everyone who approves to approve the minutes.

Committee Members

Aye.

Sarah DeStefano

And anyone disapprove. None seen, great. So the the minutes are approved. And then in our last meeting, in person, we discussed adding two periods of comment for the public to weigh in. The first would be before we actually get started on the agenda and discussing things for the public to comment on, you know, things that we should consider in today's meeting. And the second comment period would come at the end of the the meeting, to either comment on what we already discussed or to add some other items in. So, on that note, I'd like to open the floor to any public comment on the agenda items as they they have been so thoughtfully written by Fawn. And perhaps, if, if there's a lot of interest, maybe we could use the hand raising function on zoom, just to provide some order, if people are aware of that.

Or you can just move yourself into view if you have anything to say. Okay, sounds like there's no comment. So I guess we will proceed to our next agenda item, which is discussing how to proceed with the role of Commission Chair and Vice Chair.

We decided to roll this discussion into this meeting from our last one because we didn't feel like we had you know, enough of our commission members to thoughtfully decide but I think that there was consensus in the last meeting that having a permanent Chair and Vice Chair I made sense. But just to briefly open that discussion again. If anyone has any on the Commission has any comment on the establishment of a permanent chair versus a rolling chair please feel free to add your commentary and

Kenneth Panza

I think having a permanent chair makes a lot of sense because you you learn the procedures and you expedite the meeting relatively efficiently.

Sarah DeStefano

Thanks, Ken.

Travis Rask

Yeah, I agree with I agree with Ken.

Donna Lutz  
I do as well.

Regis Obijiski  
I do, too. This is Regis. I'm sorry that... I... I hey Fawn. Could you start live video it says that the host will not allow my video to start

Fawn Tantillo  
All right. Let me take a look at that. Because I certainly want to see you.... "Co host assigned... allowed to record... allowed to unpinned.... report.... hmm... All right.

Regis Obijiski  
I think I was I think I was on my video was on at the very beginning when I when I entered.  
But

Fawn Tantillo  
Um, I don't know if I should put you back in the waiting room and let you in again.

Regis Obijiski  
Yes, that would be fine.

Fawn Tantillo  
Let me let me do that. Just give us one minute here. Sorry about technical difficulties.

Sarah DeStefano  
It happens. No worries.

Regis Obijiski  
Same thing, Fawn.

Fawn Tantillo  
I've never had that happen to me before. So I apologize.

Regis Obijiski  
Well, I've never had it happen either. It's not but I'm not taking it personally. (Laughter)

Sarah DeStefano  
Strange.

Regis Obijiski  
Well, we could proceed. That's fine. I, you know, Fawn.

Fawn Tantillo  
Okay, I'll keep looking things on.

Andy Monk

One thing you could try is if you click on the participants menu, it'll pop up a little side screen. And I think you might be able to invite Regis to start the video, you can't force the video of someone else's camera to start for obvious reasons. But you can encourage the person to do that and encourage them to unmute themselves as well.

Kenneth Panza

Regis could just log off and log back in again, maybe that would solve the problem.

OK, Should I try that?

Regis Obijiski

Fawn, does that sound like something I should do?

Sure. We'll watch for you to come back into the meeting.

Robert Leibowitz

That probably isn't the issue, but I can't start my video either. I think it's a general setting that you toggled.

Donna Lutz

We saw you in the beginning.

Robert Leibowitz

Yeah, I turned it off and then I couldn't turn it back on again.

Fawn Tantillo

I know I said it so we could hear this. It's like the only thing I thought

Travis Rask

I can't turn mine on either.

Sarah DeStefano

We're dropping like flies. (Laughter)

Fawn Tantillo

Sorry.

Regis Obijiski

Huh. Well, that was a good idea, Ken.

Kenneth Panza

Can you hear him? Now? Thank you.

Travis Rask

Bottom next to record or anything like that, that you maybe have pressed by mistake by?

Fawn Tantillo

I was looking at security settings. Turn myself on and off. security settings...allow participants to share screen... chat, rename themselves...unmute themselves... Oh, start video.

Travis Rask

There you go.

Fawn Tantillo

Whoo. Yay. Thank you, Andy.

Sarah DeStefano

Um, alright. Well, on that note, I think our order of business then is to discuss who we would like as a permanent chair. And I have some thoughts on that. But I'd also like to open the floor first two others to comment.

Travis Rask

I vote for permanent chair.

Sarah DeStefano

I guess. I guess maybe that's what we have to do first. Is that, is that the case? I'm getting ahead of myself. Yes. I'm so I, to, to consider to move towards voting on a permanent chair. Would someone mind moving? So moving?

Regis Obijiski

Yeah. So moved.

Travis Rask

I'll second.

Sarah DeStefano

Perfect. So, on the topic of establishing a permanent chair.

Fawn Tantillo

Yes. Sorry. On is...are you going to vote on making it a permanent chair on the motion for permanent chair?

Sarah DeStefano

Yeah, not having a chair. Right. Yes. Yeah. Um, everyone, those in favor?

Committee Members

Aye. Aye. Aye.

Sarah DeStefano

Those opposed?

Fawn Tantillo

Now, who's going to do that?

Sarah DeStefano

Sure. Any commentary?

Travis Rask

Does anybody want to be the permanent chair?

Sarah DeStefano

I mean, I think I'll go ahead. And I would like to nominate Regis to be permanent chair. For many reasons, I think that he has really jumped into participating with gusto. He's done a great job, along with his subcommittee, of course of establishing a website; really thinking about what that should include. As well as coming up with the idea of us reaching out to community at a town meetings. He spearheaded writing a letter on the prison gerrymandering issue, I think, all around. He's just been, thus far, a very dedicated member of the Commission. Not that we haven't none the rest of us haven't. But, um, so I would like to if he is amenable, nominate Regis to the role of permanent chair. hope others have comment as well, but I think he'd do

Donna Lutz

Is that okay with you, Regis?

Regis Obijiski

Okay, yeah

Travis Rask

Okay. I'll second.

Donna Lutz

I'd definitely, definitely...

Andy Monk

I'm on the same page with Sarah too. I was sort of interested myself, but I don't actually have as much time as I thought I did right now. You just been doing such amazing work. And like really going above and beyond and I thought I would be able to do that same thing. So I am physiologically, third, or fourth or seventh or

Fawn Tantillo

Normally, you would ask if there's any other nominations before you close nominations and vote.

Sarah DeStefano

Are there any other nominations? Or any other commentary for that matter? No. Okay, on that note, I guess I have to motion to vote.

Fawn Tantillo

Then, all in favor?

Sarah DeStefano

All in favor?

Committee Members

Aye. Aye.

Sarah DeStefano

All opposed?

None opposed? Congratulations, Regis, you are a permanent chair.

Regis Obijiski

I have a picture now.

Sarah DeStefano

And on that note, something tells me I give up the reins of chairing tonight. So a double Thank you, Regis. Bravo. (Laughter)

Regis Obijiski

You have to finish tonight, don't you?

Fawn Tantillo

That honor goes to you, Regis.

Sarah DeStefano

So thank you very much. My My duty is satisfied.

Regis Obijiski

All right, well, then, on that same line, it says proceed with the role for vice chair. So does anyone wish to nominate someone for vice chair?

Travis Rask

Andy, it sounds like you would bid for that. Would you like to be in the Vice Chair position?  
If not the chair?

Andy Monk

I mean, I would I would certainly be happy to do that. Yeah,

Travis Rask

You have my nomination?

Andy Monk

Thanks.

Kathleen Waithe

I'll second.

Regis Obijiski

Anyone else? Well, I was going to nominate Sarah since she was so so gracious and, and also so very capable.

Kathleen Waithe

I actually thought about Sarah as well.

Andy Monk

Well, now it's a standoff between me and Sarah.

Kathleen Waithe

Sarah, would you That means

Travis Rask

The first one that blinks loses?

Sarah DeStefano

Sure, I would....

Kathleen Waithe

You might be busy. So I don't know.

Sarah DeStefano

I would consider accepting as well. But I, of course, leave it up to the vote.

Regis Obijiski

Oh, okay. Well, there, will there be a, be a, will there be a third candidate for vice chair.  
Okay, so we'll close that off, and proceed to a vote now for one.

Fawn, how do we how would we proceed with this?

Fawn Tantillo

Well, there are seven of you. So someone needs to get 51% of the vote. So if for if you vote for one person, you know, you should each just vote for one person. I I mean, if you want to do a secret ballot, you could send me your votes in the chat. I guess if you sent directly to me. I'm not sure. Normally. I don't think there's a I don't think there's a problem with that. But...

Regis Obijiski

Could there be a first vice chairman a second vice chair?

Fawn Tantillo

Sure. Absolutely. That's actually a great idea.

Regis Obijiski

I would i would recommend that to the commission. A first and second vice chair. And I will I will move that Sarah is first vice chairman at Andy the second. Does anyone wish to have another motion? So will someone second that motion that we'll move on to another.

Kathleen Waithe

Second?

Regis Obijiski

Second, okay. Would there would there be a motion to reverse that Andy first and Sarah Second.

Okay, so that being said, This is quite a tangle. Thank you very much, Sarah. (laughter)

May I, may we have May we have a vote for Sarah as first vice chair and Andy as as second vice chair of the of the commission?

Kathleen Waithe

I'll make I'll make a motion for that.

Travis Rask

I second.

Okay. All those in favor?

Committee Members

Aye. Aye

Regis Obijiski

Anyone opposed? Okay, well, congratulations to the three of us. Okay,

Fawn Tantillo

It's a testament to how well you've all been getting along.

Regis Obijiski

Yeah. No, you do it! No, you do it! (Laughter) Okay, the next, the next item on the agenda has to do with the mapping software and an update by Dennis and Rob.

Robert Leibowitz

Sure, happy to?

Fawn Tantillo

So, I think you can share the screen if I did this right.

Robert Leibowitz

Okay, I don't I don't need to share the screen. I'm not, I don't have any software to share.

Fawn Tantillo

Okay,

Robert Leibowitz

I'm not at least I'm not sharing any software tonight. Because I'm at home. There's, there's no reason to share the software tonight.

So okay, so we do have the desktop client in that's installed on my PC to manage the whole overall online thing. We just yesterday, got the the... It took them about two weeks to create a specific website to host and to be installed on our servers to host the online version that got delivered yesterday. So, and they assigned, IS just assigned a project manager for us to, to get that installed. So, it'll be working with Caliper to get that installed. So that'll be coming pretty soon. So, we'll get that all up. There is a website for it, but it's not active yet. But it'll be "Redistricting at Ulster County, New york.gov.gov. "Ulster County, New york.gov. Yeah, so it'll be it's on its own website, and every will have logins and information from there. So we're up and running, we just need the data.

And I know it's later on the agenda. But I in my conversations with Caliper. I asked them about the prison population, and they're ahead of the game on this. They are already talking to LATFOR (The NYS Legislative Task Force on Demographic Research and Reapportionment) on their own. So, LATFOR will be delivering the data directly to Caliper will then give it to us in the format we need for the software. So there's nothing we need to do to do it. The software, the prison adjusted prison population will be delivered to us to use as soon as it's this was a process it. I know it's gonna take them a while to process. And that's the update.

Regis Obijiski

Yeah, did, did LATFOR give Caliper any indication of approximate, approximate time?

Robert Leibowitz

I when I reached out to them, they were extremely vague. And they were glad that I had contacted them. They said they would contact me. When it was up, it would be up. That's basically their response. And if you go to the LATFOR website right now, it'll still say 2012. So, once it's up, it'll be up.

Regis Obijiski

Right, right. Yeah. No. And I saw the letter that they had to, they had written to you and it's pretty much what they said, this is of utmost important to us. But there's there's no, no date yet.

Robert Leibowitz

Right. So hopefully by the end of the month, I don't know, but it could be later than that. Sure.

Regis Obijiski

Sure. Okay. Well, we'll we'll hold on that. Thanks. Thanks for that, Rob. Yes, go ahead. Oh, you're okay. Thank you. The update on the town meetings. Lloyd Who? Who went to Lloyd?

Fawn Tantillo

Andy.

Regis Obijiski

Andy. All right. Good.

Andy Monk

I went to Lloyd. Along with Fawn. Unfortunately, Donna wasn't able to make it. But it was actually really smooth and easy. There were, I would say quite a few more questions in Lloyd than there were in...Sarah, where did we go? Was it Olive.

Sarah DeStefano

It was Yeah.

Andy Monk

But it was, you know, similar format. They were happy to have been informed about the process and to learn more about what we're doing. And they were all really excited when I shared that they would be able to tinker with the maps themselves online. So that was a cool selling point to just share with them.

Donna Lutz

And I want to thank Fawn for stepping in for me. I, I have to apologize to everyone. It, it was something that just couldn't be, couldn't be

Travis Rask

We more than understood.

Andy Monk

Totally fine. And yeah, thanks, Fawn, for showing up for moral support, but I I certainly am appreciative I could have handled it by myself, but I was glad I didn't have to

Regis Obijiski

Oh, that's great. And Andy, excuse me, Travis, do you want to want to say something about Rochester that you and I attended?

Travis Rask

We have fun getting there? (laughter)No, it was. Rochester was, was nice. Again, their board was very, very interested in what we had to say. You know, it's nice to see all the towns, you know, being excited to be here about what we have to say and even willing to share some information on on their own. I mean, we I know I've learned a lot from just talking with their, their different board members and certain things that they had to bring to our attention as well with the different prisons that are in the area. Apparently, there are four different prisons in our area, not the, the two or three that we originally thought so that is nice. Nice to know. And the fact that they're on board with having us, you know, work together and do these lines.

Regis Obijiski

Yeah. That's not surprising that, that Rochester was informed I see that. Mike, Mike Baden is on this, this call. And Mike was, Mike was terrific. And his board were were very, very knowledgeable. That one one town board member who was instructed us about about the prisons, that count and the number of prisons within our county. I mean, I just thought that that was that was great. They are they're very far ahead of probably of most municipalities when it comes to this. And looking forward to working with them. They were terrific. They were really terrific. Yeah.

Okay. Well, we already had the update on the prison populations. And and we're not not surprised that it's not in yet. And there's probably very little we can do. And it could be a very dramatic change in the in the numbers. We don't know, we don't know what that's going to look like, for the entire county as well as, as well as the four locations of prisons in the county.

New business? Any? Yes.

Sarah DeStefano

If I could jump back, when I was on the rotating chair duty, I was asked to request an update on, which I think I know the answer to but perhaps the expert opinion, if Kristen doesn't mind weighing in on this. If the county legislature needs to vote on implementing the New York State law regarding prison gerrymandering, or if it's already something that the county needs to follow, as a result of it being New York State law, is it something we should be waiting on county action, or we can just be running with?

Kristin Gumaer

So, technically, I don't know the answer to your question. I mean, generally, the state laws as you know, Sarah, right. And maybe everyone does, but state laws have to be followed by the localities. But I don't know if there's something like I'm unsure as to why that question was asked, which makes me wonder if there's something specific in this law that says that the counties have to act. So I can get back to you next month? Unless for some reason someone else knows the answer. But otherwise, I'll find out for sure, and come back with the answer.

Sarah DeStefano

It would definitely be helpful. I think it may have been that in like a previous version or an amended version. It it asked the counties to you know, take affirmative action that they were going to follow. But I think in its final iteration, it didn't include that. But I think it's I think it's worth just having the county attorney sort of check the box on this if if that's all right, just since they're sure,

Kristin Gumaer

yeah. I'm gonna read it before the last meeting. And I do not remember seeing anything about that. But that does not mean it's not in there somewhere. So yeah, I'll double check it and like, unless you want it before, for some reason, I can just come back next month with that information.

Sarah DeStefano

Or, or if you're able to do it by email to when you come up with it, I perhaps that might be just a more efficient way of making you, making you wait to remember to to give it to us.

Kristin Gumaer

No problem. Thank you very much.

Regis Obijiski

That's a great question, Sarah. And it because that's exactly what we left it the last time we weren't sure.

Travis Rask

And that came up in in Rochester as well. Right. Regis.

Regis Obijiski

Yes. Yeah. Yeah, so I said it's a it's a it's a very legitimate question. It's it's one that I wouldn't ask I would think just as a as a lay person, not a not an attorney, that if it's a state law, that it trickles down in in a way where the counties have to comply, but, you know, that isn't necessarily so. So Well, thank you very much for following up and I appreciate the question.

Fawn Tantillo

I would point out in conversations I've had with a couple of people there was concern that the numbers the from the prisoner already in our counts, and that we're not allowed to read move any counts. So, but I believe in this case, you know, that that was one of the concerns that I had heard mentioned by just conversations happening.

Sarah DeStefano

I think I think we may have had the same conversations with the same people, Fawn. And so I actually looked into that myself. I'm not the county attorney. But it seems pretty clear to me that there was active litigation on this in 2011. And the New York State Court of Appeals said that it was constitutional and didn't violate any state laws. So I think for our purposes, please, Kristen, jump in and correct me as just like the legal expert on the call in this manner. I think for our purposes, unless this commission is going to be suing Federally, we really have to follow New York State law as it is, you know, adjudicate adjudicated from the highest court in New York State. We really don't have any I understand it from a theoretical standpoint, what they were talking about, but from an actual like implementation standpoint, I don't see how it's something that we can really be, like having a theoretical discussion on from our standpoint. So

Kenneth Panza

Some of the samples that have been sent out showed the the prison population subtracted from the town totals, but not from the total of the county. So, you don't have a situation with the sum total of populations, election districts would be less than the sum total of the population of the counties. And that would seem to be a awkward problem to workout.

Regis Obijiski

Um-hmm. I think that it probably in 2010, 2011. I mean, it was in the end of end of 2010, that it was it was signed and signed into law. Then it's it's, how do you how do you make this happen? And probably within the timeframes, it was just going to be too difficult from the Department of Corrections, as well as the redistricting going out across the state. So, you know, I could see where, you know, the the,

Kenneth Panza

I'm talking about some of the samples for 2020 that were distributed.

Regis Obijiski

Right.

Sarah DeStefano  
I think the numbers...

Regis Obijiski  
Yeah, for 2010. It wasn't an issue, right.

Sarah DeStefano  
I think the concern was that census blocks are not supposed to be tampered with, and that the law would require us almost to be removing it. And I don't think that that's actually the implementation of it at all. And we're getting the data directly from the state, essentially. And we're not tasked with removing, you know, being given, you know, these are the people you removed, and we're not being told to do that. It's... we're getting it sounds like we're getting the data and we're putting it straight into our system rather than when we're not responsible for it. So the implementation issues don't seem like they're really they're. The the numbers being sort of awkward...sounds like the software can kind of ingest that and pop it out in a way that makes it easy for us to do this. So...

Regis Obijiski  
That makes us feel protected.

Sarah DeStefano  
Yeah, exactly. We we're, we're sort of "Stockholm Syndrome-ing," in a way, right, we have to follow the law. And that's what we're gonna do.

Regis Obijiski  
So we'll do that. Okay. Is there any other new business or old business for that matter?

Kenneth Panza  
Well, I had a question for Rob. You have sent out this list of 2020 possible populations based on the old districts, and I really couldn't figure out how he did that. So, I asked him for some information so I could recalculate those numbers. The problem is, of course, is that the the census blocks have all been shuffled around. In order to..

Robert Leibowitz  
I can go, I can go into it, Ken, if you like.

Kenneth Panza  
Well, just just an email.

Robert Leibowitz  
Okay, well, here's here's where, so what I did is I created, um, I did in my mapping software, so I have the districts, and I can just select by district all the blocks within the district automatically and generate a number. So, it grabs them all for sure. But as we as Ken showed

in his email, yes, there is some at the block level, there is some moving around those numbers. Some of the towns do aggregate to their actual census numbers. Some don't, based on the blocks. But all the blocks in the county do aggregate to the total for the entire county. So, they are the same, they are all there in the county. So what the commission needs to focus on is: when you create... I would try to ignore the old districts. I would create from the ground up, block by block and do it that way. This way you aggregate to that 181 500, 500 whatever it is, or less because the prison population and divisible by those 23 districts and just focus on that. So you try to recreate those districts, it's just, it's gonna be different, the numbers are gonna be different, prison population wise, and also, the way they moved some of the blocks around. So I do have a list, I think...did I send it out, I sent out a list of... I created a list of all the towns that did aggregate to what they're supposed to, and some that don't. So that's kind of interesting. But the point is that it all does add up in the end. So

Kenneth Panza

With the, you know, the block definitions are quite different to me. There's over 6000 blocks in 2010, there's only like 4500 in the 2020. Some of them split, and some of them combined, you know, it's not a one-to-one relationship.

Regis Obijiski

Right, so we, so I ignored the 2010 blocks just know that they're all aggregate to be 181,000. And they're all combined to fit within the towns still. So

Sarah DeStefano

Is that a result of the privacy issues...creating the fuzziness that

Robert Leibowitz

They create mistakes... they have? You could easily tell, figure out... there's when there are ways to puzzle out who a person might be. And if there's any question of being able to find that out, they'll, they have to fuzzy it up a bit. So, that's what they do.

Kenneth Panza

They fudged up a lot of the numbers. It will make our job more interesting.

Sarah DeStefano

Well, the numbers are the numbers. It's just a matter of it not matching what was previously done. And I think

Kenneth Panza

What... the populations of the blocks aren't represented in the blocks. Then you can have a block that has a lot of large population has zero, zero persons in the on the census, right?

Robert Leibowitz

That was the way it was last time, too. So but all you can do, you can't argue whether the fuzziness of the Oh, this doesn't represent this, it's fuzzy, you still have all the blocks

aggregated together all you can do, because that's what you have to do with redistricting is divided by the number of districts. And you just have to be satisfied with the way it is. There's no way around that.

Regis Obijiski  
Right. That Okay, Ken?

Kenneth Panza  
Well, you know, this was just the beginning of a long process.

Regis Obijiski  
Of course, it is yeah. We'll be going block by block.

Kenneth Panza  
My intention is to keep up with Rob. So the commission is gonna deal with this on a... more than just one person having to do analyses,

You are doing a pretty good job of it, Ken.

Travis Rask  
Thank you, Ken

Kenneth Panza  
You pull out all that all the data from last from the 2010 and the 2020 census, plus they have some other files have supposedly allowed you to combine or establish relationships between the two Census. But those two those files really show it's all mixed up? Yeah, they made a lot of changes.

Regis Obijiski  
Well, thank you very much. Is there any other old business?

Fawn Tantillo  
One, one thing that I wanted to bring up. When we get this website set up for the mapping? I'm going to put the link to it under "draft plans". That's one of the categories on your website. We were just looking for a good place to get that link and make it very clear to the public. We might even have like a link to directions on you know how to, to if there's anything special people need to know in order to make their draft plans?

Regis Obijiski  
Well, I think one of the things the board's got the vote on is the criteria by which people can submit a plans, you can set that so that: one) in order to submit a plan, they have to have completed all 23 districts. They have to meet the map plus and minus thresholds. They just can't throw any plan at you. So, you can, you can set all those wonderful thresholds and make sure you're getting quality plans and not just mashups or half done plans.

Sarah DeStefano

If you have other suggestions on the rules like that, perhaps it would be helpful to like have an exhaustive list or a semi exhaustive list, if possible. I know that a lot of extra work on you, but I know that we're not necessarily familiar yet with the capabilities of the software yet.

Robert Leibowitz

So one thing you should know is in the Charter language, it tells you what to preserve what geographies to preserve, That would be probably serve us really well with that. So check out the Charter. Boy, check out the Charter language.

Travis Rask

Thanks, Rob. Yeah,

Fawn Tantillo

I find that send it to you.

Travis Rask

Should we maybe set up a committee for that? Or is that too much?

Sarah DeStefano

Not a bad idea, actually.

Regis Obijiski

Are you good to sit in that, Travis?

Travis Rask

What's that?

Regis Obijiski

Are you interested?

Travis Rask

Oh shoot. Yeah, I guess so. That was smooth.

Regis Obijiski

Do you want to do you want to think about that for the next the next time, Travis, and then we could and everyone else could think about working? Who would like to work with you on that if possible?

Travis Rask

Sure. Yeah. That's not that's not a problem we could take. Yeah.

Regis Obijiski

But I yeah, it's it certainly is academically right now. Worth, worth of consideration for sure. Okay.

Sarah DeStefano

If I could throw in one more old business another, I've received a few questions in my former role as rotating chair. The other was if the Planning [Department] could give us a primer on the basics of census blocks: what they are, how they're used, how they are, come up with, you know, anything that would be helpful in the actual, like, just basics of what a census block is, would be very helpful to be explained.

Robert Leibowitz

I can give you a Census geography primer shortly. That's not a problem. I can do a PowerPoint.

Sarah DeStefano

Thank you.

Robert Leibowitz

That would be great. I, you know, Sarah, I think you're speaking, speaking my language now. So I could really use that primer. And maybe a couple others here would as well.

Andy Monk

I have one other piece of, I guess new? I don't know, business, let's just say you're sure. Which is I wanted to ask Fawn. Can you think of anyone else that we should be inviting to these meetings to give presentations or to meet with or to share information with us because I feel like, there there may be people and like now during these meetings where we're a little bit dead in the water, since like the perfect time to get them in to talk with us.

Fawn Tantillo

Certainly, the Board of Elections comes to mind. We really need to embrace them. The last committee, one of the recommendations was that we involve the Board of Elections earlier in the process rather than later. So we may want to invite them to the next meeting or to a meeting soon.

I believe, though, I could look over the minutes of the last [Redistricting Committee], I believe the last committee did invite the majority of minority leader to come. But I don't know how much... you know, they, you know..., you want to be an independent board. So I don't know how much, if that's something you want to do. I'm sure if they have anything. One of the last time we did this, one of the legislators made a really great point when they unveiled the map, he said it's like looking at any picture, you look for your how you look in the picture first. I'm sure they'll have a lot to say once you start unveiling draft plans.

Kenneth Panza

And the last time they were, you know, people are gonna lose their jobs because they're reduced reducing the size of the legislature. We're not, we're not quite in that situation this year.

Sarah DeStefano

Yeah, I also have been saying this since probably day one, with you know, just the four commissioners trying to pick another three is, I feel pretty strongly - keeping out the legislators as much as possible. If just for public perception that we we are truly independent. We are not colluding with elected officials. It maintains our, you know, our respectability in our community. I feel pretty strongly do I, you know, I don't think any of us would actually truly be influenced if we felt like it was not proper, but I just think that the public perception of it. Yeah, thank you, the public perception of it is worth just maintaining an arm's length with them.

Kathleen Waithe

I agree.

Regis Obijiski

Yeah, and from that recommendation a lifetime. Sorry. You know, we we really, were advancing the whole notion of really meeting with the towns and municipalities so that they would know that we're in motion so that they can be in motion because we want to hear from them.

Sarah DeStefano

Absolutely.

Regis Obijiski

Yeah, that ties in ties in very, very nicely. Anyone else on business? With the I'm sorry,

Andy Monk

I was just gonna say with that all said, should we then invite the board of elections to come to one of our meetings in the near future?

Yes. Yes, I think so.

Maybe the next one. Before we really get into like mapmaking? Yeah,

Regis Obijiski

That's Yeah, that's true. Everybody Okay, with that? I think it makes a lot of sense, Andy.,

Donna Lutz

if anyone wants me to, to take that on, I have no problem.

Fawn Tantillo

And I can certainly do that. We can ask them like, ask them to tell us their concerns and, you know, just generally, maybe give us a primer on you know, how they are going to deal with the information once we set up the

Andy Monk

Well, especially because I'm sure that that recommendation to get them involved in the process. Just earlier probably came from something that happened. Do you remember what it was? That was that thing?

Fawn Tantillo

I don't know. Dare is on the call, she may recall or I can look back at minutes and things.

Andy Monk

Just to know if there's like some pitfall we could be avoiding and learning from past experiences.

Regis Obijiski

So, I mean, from past experience with them, I mean, the election districts have to follow the legislative districts. So, whatever is chosen they have to conform to. So, what their concern will be is "please don't change our election districts as much as we have to do less work." We don't have to make as much... or air or make people so that they have to change your polling station. So, I suppose becomes more inconvenient for us. So that will be as the issue there.

Travis Rask

Certainly.

Regis Obijiski

Okay. All right. Well,

Donna Lutz

Sorry. Sorry, Regis, I didn't want to step on your toes, Fawn, and I didn't know, I apologize.

Fawn Tantillo

Oh, no problem, I'm happy to.

Regis Obijiski

Okay. We will, we will invite the leaders of the Board of Elections is that, and Fawn will make that make that invitation for next for the next reading. That'd be great.

The last item on there, the penultimate is the public comment. And these are brief comments coming from people who are participating in this meeting on any topic related to reapportionment and redistricting. So, Fawn, do we open up, open up that for, for conversation, we open up the lines for that, how does that generally work?

Fawn Tantillo  
Can they I see Michael Baden has raised his hands.

Regis Obijiski  
Okay.

Fawn Tantillo  
Mike, can you unmute yourself?

Mike Baden  
I can. I can actually go ahead and start video even. There we go.

Regis Obijiski  
Hey, Mike.

Mike Baden  
Um, first, Regis. And Travis, thank you very much for attending Rochester his meeting was very helpful. And apologies if we didn't get you great directions, but glad you made it. And just want to sort of echo what what I've heard tonight that the Board of Elections from what I witnessed last time is a very important partner. And I think, if my memory serves me, right, they weren't brought in to the discussion till after the districts were created. And they had to do, as Rob put it a bit of jumping through hoops to create their election districts, because they do have to follow. But also bear in mind that they don't have to follow balanced numbering within their election districts, because their election districts that they're creating are within municipalities. So they don't have to be equal numbers by election districts. So there's, there's a lot more leeway in that point. But definitely bringing them into the conversation early, I think is a great, great idea. It's exciting that the public will be able to work with the software directly, or at least that's what I think I'm hearing. So it's just definitely looking forward to the process and how it goes.

Regis Obijiski  
I greatly appreciate your leadership on this, Mike. Anyone else wish to come forward? Raise your hand please.

Fawn Tantillo  
Okay, I think Carol's good. So.

Kenneth Panza  
If that is all the public comments I moved to adjourn.

Fawn, Did you say anybody else is...

Fawn Tantillo  
Well Carol is here, but I doesn't look like she's unmuting. She can if she wants to comment.

Regis Obijiski  
Okay.

Carol Nolan  
Let me just say really quickly. I am delighted to see how well you folks seem to be working with each other.

Travis Rask  
Thank you, Carol.

Regis Obijiski  
Thank you. That's very nice to you. Okay, well. It looks like the last item on the agenda is is adjournment. May I have a motion to adjourn this August meeting.

Sarah DeStefano  
Also moved

Regis Obijiski  
Sarah, Okay. Thank you.

Donna Lutz  
Second

Regis Obijiski  
Thank you. All those in favor?

Committee Members  
Aye.

Regis Obijiski  
Okay. Thank you. See you soon, everyone.