

**Commission on Reapportionment
Meeting Minutes**

DATE & TIME: October 13, 2021, 2021 – 6:00 PM
LOCATION: Powered by Zoom Meetings. Meeting ID: 87673035652
PRESIDING OFFICER: Chairman Regis Obijiski
LEGISLATIVE STAFF: Fawn Tantillo
PRESENT: Commissioners Sarah DeStefano, Donna Lutz, Andy Monk Kenneth Panza, Travis Rask and Kathleen Waithe
ABSENT: None
QUORUM PRESENT: Yes

OTHER ATTENDEES: Board of Election Commissioners Ashley Dittus and John Quigley; Dennis Doyle and Rob Leibowitz, Ulster County Department of Planning, Ulster County Attorney Kristin Kumar;

Chairman Obijiski called the meeting to order at 6:05.

Motion No. 1: To approve the minutes of September 8, 2021
Motion By: Commissioner Monk
Motion Seconded By: Commissioner DeStefano
Discussion: None.
Voting in Favor: Commissioners Obijiski, DeStafano, Lutz, Monk, Panza, Rask and Waithe
Voting Against: None
No. of Votes in Favor: 7
No. of Votes Against: 0
Disposition: **Minutes Approved**

Chairman Obijiski invited Board of Election Commissioners Ashley Dittus and John Quigley to make a presentation to the Commission on Reapportionment regarding any thoughts or concerns they had about the redistricting process. (See Transcript)

Chairman Obijiski gave the floor to Mr. Leibowitz to give an update on the mapping software and a brief primer on census blocks. (See Transcript)

Commissioner Monk suggested creating guidelines for the public to submit their own redistricting maps for consideration. Chairman Obijiski created a subcommittee of Commissioners Monk and Rask to formulate these criteria using, among other considerations, the language in the Ulster County charter.

Old Business

Commissioner DeStefano asked when the Planning Department expected to have the mapping tool accessible to the committee. Director Doyle promised to get an answer from the IT department and get it up as soon as possible.

New Business - None

Public Comment - None

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

Motion to Adjourn

Motion Made By:	Commissioner Lutz
Motion Seconded By:	Commissioner Waithe
No. of Votes in Favor:	7
No. of Votes Against:	0
Time:	6:48 PM
Respectfully submitted by:	Fawn Tantillo
Minutes Approved:	

**Commission on Reapportionment
Meeting Transcript**

DATE & TIME: October 10, 2021, 2021 – 6:00 PM
LOCATION: Powered by Zoom Meetings. Meeting ID: 87673035652
PRESIDING OFFICER: Chairman Regis Obijiski
LEGISLATIVE STAFF: Fawn Tantillo
PRESENT: Commissioners Sarah DeStefano, Donna Lutz, Andy Monk
Kenneth Panza, Travis Rask and Kathleen Waithe
ABSENT: None
QUORUM PRESENT: Yes

OTHER ATTENDEES: Board of Election Commissioners Ashley Dittus and John Quigley; Dennis Doyle and Rob Leibowitz, Ulster County Department of Planning, Ulster County Attorney Kristin Gumar; Carol Nolan, Patricia Doxsey

Regis Obijiski

Okay, welcome everyone to the Commission on Reapportionment. It is 6:05. And I will call the meeting to order and, Fawn, for benefit of those who are not. Not on not on zoom or not on zoom yet, would you mind doing a roll and the commissioners will respond here?

Fawn Tantillo

Yes, I have Regis Obijiski

Regis Obijiski

Here.

Fawn Tantillo

Sarah DeSteff. I'm sorry, Sarah, DeStefano.

Sarah DeStefano

Here. Well done. By the way, that's, that's what it is.

Fawn Tantillo

Andy Monk

Andy Monk

Here

Fawn Tantillo

Donna Lutz is not with us yet. Kenneth Panza.

Kenneth Panza

Present.

Fawn Tantillo

Travis Rask.

Travis Rask

Here.

Fawn Tantillo

And, Kathleen Waithe.

Kathleen Waithe

Present.

Fawn Tantillo

You have a quorum, Mr. Chairman.

Regis Obijiski

We have a, we have a quorum. Thank you. Okay, so I'm, I'm calling for a motion and a second to approve the minutes of the Commission on Reapportionment meeting as of September 8th. So may I have a motion please?

Andy Monk

I motion to approve them.

Regis Obijiski

Alright. Thanks. Andy.

Sarah DeStefano

Second.

Regis Obijiski

Second Sara, thank you very much.

Fawn Tantillo

And for the record, Donna Lutz just joined us. Welcome, Donna.

Regis Obijiski

Thank you. What happened?

Donna Lutz

It's me. Thank you.

Regis Obijiski

Okay, we're glad it's you even, even be even better. So, is there any discussion from first of all from among the commissioners on the on the minutes of September 8? Okay. Is there any, are there any questions of clarification? Probably not. So, we have a motion and a second. And so, all those who are in favor of accepting medicine September 8, please, please vote by saying aye. Aye. Aye. Opposed? abstentions? Okay. Their vote appears unanimous. Thank you very much. The third, the third item on the agenda is the public comment on the agenda. So, I would ask, first of all, from the commissioners is are there any comments about the items on the agenda either for clarification or something is missing? So, any, any comments on that on the on the agenda commissioners? Okay. Anyone else who is on zoom, any comments about the agenda as you see it, or as you know it? Okay. All right, thank you very much. We'll move on to item four in the agenda which was raised by Andy Monk last month. And it has to do with the Ulster County Board of Elections. And so this is our feature film for tonight. Thank you very much, Commissioners Ashley Dittus and, and John Quigley.

The Commission on Reapportionment is are pleased to see that both of the Commissioners accepted, accepted our invitation and before I asked you to, to do your presentation or your commentary, I just want to remind all of us that, that the role of the Board of Elections is really at the end point of all of our work so that on July 20, of next year, 2022, we have to have in place of finalized version. One that's voted on by, by all of the approved by all of the by the commissioners by a majority of the commissioners, and we are to submit that to the Board of Elections for disposition. So that that one word disposition might be what you're going to be speaking to us about tonight, but we're, we're anxious to hear that so in any order alphabetical Ashley Dittus so we're in in in any order that the two of you may have come up with in the meantime it is fine with us. So, so, please proceed and welcome.

Ashley Dittus

Thank you for having both of us. Um, I see John is on, too. We work together on this project. This is obviously not something that we do every day. It's every 10 years. So 10 years ago, I was at the Board of Elections, I was a clerk, I didn't have a senior role. But I was certainly there on helping with the application, the administrative side of, of the work of that committee. I will say that our experience a decade ago was, it was not the best. It was pretty typical, from what we've heard, though, from other Boards of Elections across the state where the, the metes and bounds the descriptive language of the district boundaries was essentially the best source of data that was received by the boards. And then putting physical pen to paper and I'm talking about highlighters, crayons were used colored pencils, it was not very sophisticated.

And as a result of that lack of preparedness, or really a restaurant because I know that there were outstanding factors as to why it took so long for the board to get it to get the final product. Because of those reasons our, our management of people's election districts and our street, the street file maintenance that we do has been a cleanup from that, that, that first time starting point, which was rocky at best. So, myself and the other, there's only two other clerks that are still around that were around back then, we have sort of been preparing our staff of what to expect, and just letting them

know that technology obviously has come a really long way since that process. Our office, our software that we use to maintain the voter rolls, we have recently acquired shape, shapefile data. So, we're getting used to what that looks like, our vendor has coded all of our streets in this manner. So luckily, for us, also, the Information Services Department has a very good handle on shape file software, and what that looks like. So I am a lot more optimistic, especially since we'll have a lot of lead time to put this in place that we won't have a lot of those same problems.

It won't be as rushed as it was back in 2011 when we got that project to do. So much our concern, John and I, we've talked about this, from our standpoint. As we do get the final product, making sure that those descriptive language, the shapefile software, is something that we can work with so that we don't have to spend the next decade cleaning up people's election district files. Because if we make a mistake on someone's election district, the consequences are pretty bad. They could be coded in the wrong school district or fire district or a lot of the other sub districts that we do. The library districts also is something that we code for all of our voters. So, every voter has these district assignments that are connected to their street address. And for us having that be accurate, is paramount. That's the foundational building block of what we do at the board of elections. And John and I are obviously are very invested in making sure that that information is accurate. And I and I, I come from the standpoint of let's make sure that it's right from, from the start, and that we don't have to spend the next 10 years finding out through circumstances that somebody was misquoted. I mean, that's, that's a really bad situation for us. So that's, that's the first thing we're really interested in having a good data set so that we can follow it in a methodical way and making sure that the voters, when we apply these district boundaries to them, that's done accurately on our end. And so that'll be giving us enough time so that we can, we can do that while we do all the other processes that we do. And that's going to be incredibly important. I can't understate that enough. Before I go on, do you have any anything on that, John?

John Quigley

Also, I would just add, since you guys are being given this opportunity, I will either an opportunity or a disadvantage, however you look at it for yourselves. But since you have so much time right now Between now and getting to draw the districts to include the individuals such as Tom Hines, Tom Hines from the information services in some of your hobbies data is exploiting and how it is important, so that you can help save as a step for making our lives difficult and making sure that this will be done in a smooth and timely manner once it's executed, and those lines are drawn. As well as potentially if you find it difficult or even necessary, reaching out to our vendor who is responsible for our voter registration system, which we will be more than willing to provide you guys with a point of contact on who to speak with there, to better understand your end results and how they impact our office and how we get this into a dedicated system to draw these lines correctly.

I don't know, because I may be skipping in and out a bit. If Ashley had mentioned. Regarding poll sites, we, we would like to just heavily advise if you have an opportunity to see where our poll sites are mapped, that you can overlap that with where some of these districts are drawn. There have been situations in years past where districts are drawn, and the poll site is on the opposite side of the street. And we have to then send that voter all the way across their district to a new poll site. Other than that, I would just emphasize, use the data as presented to you. And I don't believe we'll have to do any

altering of it. But you guys got a challenging job. And I wouldn't want to be in your shoes. But I do hope that, Regis, wherever your backyard is, I hope that's an Ulster County somewhere.

Ashley Dittus

Yeah, just to speak on the poll say issue. Knowing where those poll sites are, it is important because our voters, for us from an election standpoint, redirecting people to a new poll site, when they're used to going to the same site for every election. That is something we try to avoid as much as we can. They're used to going to the same site, it's part of their voting plan. While we've, since last redistricting, we've added different ways that people can vote. Usually voting on Election Day is still what people think of. And they want to go to the same place that they always have. And so, looking at where those sites are. And like John said, we do have an example of where Cedar Grove firehouse and Saugerties... Voters that live across the street are in a different legislative district. So they have to go and vote across town, which is like 15 minutes away. And every election, they call and complain about it. Because that wasn't in people's minds.

When they did the last redistricting. They didn't really look at where the sites were, and make those determinations. Poll sites are like schools, they're part of someone's community. And when that gets changed, it disrupts that. So, to the best of your ability, if that's something that you keep in your mind, that's that really speaks to the spirit of what this whole process is about. That's reflecting our communities in their political boundaries. So, if you don't have the poll site map, we can also provide that to you. We have 83 poll sites in Ulster County that we run every November election. And if we have a big primary in June, we use those 83 sites for the big primaries when both the republicans and democrats are having a primary. So, keeping those the same, or keeping the voters as much as we can in the same sites. And making those instances where we have to redirect people as, as minimized as we can. That that will help the voters avoid that confusion point which, when they get confused, they might just say I'm not going to vote today because I don't want to go to a new place. Another thing that sort of tripped us up the last time is when a street gets overly segmented. And it's in multiple, like a block radius is in multiple districts that has confused a lot of voters. I know a lot of the times that could be unavoidable in situations but not having as frequent segments along neighborhood lines. is another thing that I think would be helpful when we get the end product to try to acclimate people to these new district boundaries. We see like one side of the street votes in one district, the other side of the street votes in another district. That's really confusing when it's when it's chopped in half like that. So that's another thing to think of. I know you have a lot of things to think about. But I know what we've heard from the last go round. So, those are just really the, the negative aspects of the last redistricting that that we've heard with the most frequency, why does my neighbor who lives two doors down have to vote in a different poll site, and they have a different representative, and everything else is the same, our school district is the same our assembly person is the same. So having that kind of neighborhood feel of the districts, I think, makes more sense to voters when they get the end product.

Kenneth Panza

Ashley?

Ashley Dittus

Hey, Ken.

Kenneth Panza

Hi. Can you provide us with some examples of where there is a real problem that with street segmentation?

Ashley Dittus

Yeah, sure. I actually used to live on one on Clifton Avenue in Kingston, where I My house is where I, I used to live, you know, a couple of weeks ago, I moved, but I still have my house there. And that house is in district seven, across the street is in district five, and then two doors down is district nine. So, there's two different legislative districts. It's really confusing in our neighborhood who votes for who, what's going on? But we have a I can we can pull that from the office, we have all of those specific examples, because we've been dealing with them for a decade. So, we're happy to provide.

John Quigley

Yeah, it would be useful because as we shift these census blocks around, that's Y that we want to keep in mind. I mean, Kingston is particularly awkward,

Ashley Dittus

it is awkward. For sure we can we can put some work together and get you a report. If you think that that will be helpful, we're happy to do that.

Kenneth Panza

No, we're asked to solve a problem. If we have the list, we can at least take a look at it.

Ashley Dittus

Yep, I'm gonna write it down. So, I don't forget tomorrow to get it going. And, you know, actions for us. We're also and we're a resource to you if you need any data. We're really good at keeping the records. So we're happy to provide even the info from a decade ago, what we got what it looks like, to help you if you think it will be helpful.

Regis Obijiski

Yeah, I think it I think it would be helpful actually, and I think beginning with, with you two folks beginning with the end in mind, if you if you will, you know, how is this going to impact voters, I looked at your, your webpage, and I even noodled around a little bit and put my address and bingo, that thing pops, that's beautiful. You do a really nice job. There's, there's very...there's no confusion whatsoever, if you if you want to do early voting or you applicate, file an application for absentee. It's all there how to do it, how do you apply the timeframes? It really it really is very logical. I fear that, that, you know, I think we have to take keep in mind a lot of things but, but in a sense, our, the priority of our redistricting really has to do with counting heads and not voters. That's part of part of it. And, and these things, these things change. The new number is we have we have to form districts that are 7815 people. That's the latest the latest number, it seems. And you know, how do we get within, within 5% of that number? That's, that's tricky. I'm not saying that. It's impossible to pay attention. In fact, the charter, our county charters says that, you know, we have to keep districts compact and contiguous while taking into account, and I'm quoting from the charter, the existing town, city village, and election, election district

boundaries, defining geographic features, equal population within the applicable law. That's the hard part, equal population within the applicable law, but giving no consideration to providing advantage to one or another political party. And I know that that's not your you're not you're not trying to do that, that last piece. You just tried to make me make sure that this sensible.

John Quigley

Also Regis...

Regis Obijiski

Yeah.

John Quigley

To sort of throw on your radar there because you mentioned the districts as they are. It's due to the timetable. You may also see the state drawing their redistricting lines, they have the authority to change some of those election districts themselves. So, should the state pass a different map, which unintendedly changes some of the district lines, it will then have a snowball effect on your redistricting.

Regis Obijiski

Well, thank you for that comforting piece of news. John. (Laughter)

Fawn Tantillo

To clarify, it's right there can't change the county election districts,

John Quigley

They can change the election districts the very minute district be...below what is used to create these districts.

Ashley Dittus

In other words, they can cut a neighborhood? No, they have never done that in Ulster County, but they can cut any neighborhood in one assembly district or one Senate District. And then the board has to go in and apply those changes. And that's an election district change. So, we would be coding voters to be in the correct Assembly District, which then would have an impact on the election district. So, for us, we we draw the election district boundaries, based off of what we get from the state reapportionment program, and also from the county. So, I fully expect, and it's part of this process that election district boundaries will change so that we have voters coded correctly for their representatives. But no, change them. It's it helps us on the on the end product side. But it's part of it, we will be changing districts based off of a full map we get from both this group as well as from what we get from the state. Luckily, last time around the state drew all of their lines on municipal lines. So that didn't impact us. And I don't really see them doing it differently. Because it is, um, it's what you're doing on a massive scale. But in the event that they did do that, we would have to go in and drill down and figure out where those lie. Now there are extremes, like cross the state where they've caught like a college dormitory into two different election districts, or floors one through four and one and floors five through seven are in another. We're not going to do that in Ulster County, because that's a bit chaotic. But that's an example of, of those things happening across the state that we've heard about.

Fawn Tantillo

But you're talking about like New Paltz has 10 election districts. You're talking about that level of election district.

Ashley Dittus

Yes. Yep. Those, those boundaries.

Fawn Tantillo

So, if they happen to cut across the town, you still can do the state ones without changing the districts that this committee is making.

Ashley Dittus

Exactly.

John Quigley

As long as they do that.

Dennis Doyle

I have a couple things. responses. One, we do have the polling data. So, I have I have a latest I have is 2017. So, if you have a shapefile. That's more recent, share it with us I can import into a program. That's a good start. Yeah, for sure. Our software, new software, this time has a metes and bounds reporting feature. So hopefully that will help a lot.

Ashley Dittus

Yes, for sure.

Robert Leibowitz

So those are, those are two little things, I'll hopefully help a lot in the process.

Ashley Dittus

That's really good to know. Because the metes and bounds, that information, that's really what they went off last time because they didn't have the shapefile data. So, having both of them together, it's just going to make this process that much easier to apply.

Dennis Doyle

I'll even share a link to it in the chat so you can see what it does.

Ashley Dittus

Cool.

Fawn Tantillo

Mr. Chairman, I have a question, if I might,

Regis Obijiski

Yeah, please.

Fawn Tantillo

There's been two schools of thought on how they this commission draws the districts. One was to start from scratch just the numbers and start completely from scratch. And the other one was to start with the existing districts and adjust the boundaries as necessary. Do you have just the map they're going to get it's gonna save this district is over like 2000 and this one's under 500. And they could just, in some cases, adjust the boundaries. Do you have any recommendation for which way They attack this.

Ashley Dittus

It seems from just hearing the description that you said that it would be easier to look work at what we have and adjust. But at the same time, that might not work for all of the districts I know. Some of them are, have become really disproportionate since they were drawn. So that might not be as helpful. But some of them are going to look I think relatively the same, like our Catskill Mountain district, what's that... district 23?

Kenneth Panza

22.

Ashley Dittus

22. Thank you. You'd think I didn't look at them all the time I look, we look at them every day. That one, I haven't really seen a lot of changes there. And in our at least our voter population. That's, that's what we look at all the time. We don't look at the census data, but other ones are going to be different. I know Kingston has had a lot of changes. Even in New Paltz has had a lot of changes, too. So, I, I'm not sure I think it's both of those schools of thought are pretty valid information base.

John Quigley

The information based off the census data, and the census data the way it is currently, I mean, suggests that there is no abnormally large percentage growth in a certain neighborhood. And the argument can be made that adjusting from where you're at, will save you guys the most amount of time, considering that you probably will not have too much time once you get in there. Between now and when you have to pass something. But if you choose to start from scratch, I would just take into consideration the geographical boundaries that I think most of these districts do. I can't say all but most of them do. And then the age-old question comes, how many seats does the City of Kingston get? Or does the City of Kingston become a overlapping District, which I don't envy you and when trying to figure out how to solve,

Fawn Tantillo

And I just have one observation about the polling places. I live on the far east side of the town of New Paltz, and my polling place is the farthest West, I drive past every other polling place to get to my polling place. So, I'm not sure how looking at the polling places may was, may still give me a different polling place if I was to vote closer to where I live. Just, just an observation.

Ashley Dittus

Well, that's what I mean by the poll sites like we can change the districts. If the poll sites are anchoring, what the neighborhood surrounding neighborhood looks like, I agree, it makes more sense for someone to vote at the nearest poll site. But the way that the legislative boundaries were cut, didn't make that necessarily a practical way, because we are our poll sites, to the best that we can, we want all of the voters voting the same kind of ballot because if they accidentally get the wrong ballot, then they're not voting for the people that represent their neighborhood. So, we only have a few of our poll sites that have over that have more than one ballot style, meaning that there's different candidates on the ballots. So, we try to put all of the voters in a poll sight we're only the same candidates are going to appear on the ballot as best that we can do that. Because we don't want people getting the wrong ballot style for whatever reason. They go to the wrong table or an inspector accidentally issues on the wrong ballot. So, there's obviously preventative things in place to stop people from doing that. But the best preventative thing is to have everybody who votes at a poll say, all getting the same contests on the ballot.

Fawn Tantillo

I'm just, I'm just not sure if what the information we're going to get is going to be clear to the commissioners. Looking at the map, if it was just the polling places superimposed on the map, I don't think it would be clear that someone that lives on this side of town drives all the way across town. I'm just I just want to make that observation while you're here that anybody has a way around.

Sarah DeStefano

Frankly, it sounds like we're at three polling places like this is not something that this is something we can keep in mind, but it's not it cannot be a driver of our discussions. Unfortunately. You know, it's certainly something that we're not looking to make extra work for the board of elections, but our mission is to redistrict. This county based on the census data and, and not the polling places. So while I, I know that this causes administrative issues for the board of elections, and we can try and do our best, but at the end of the day, it's going to be based on the population and not where people vote. I hate to say it, but that's just the nature of this.

Travis Rask

Yeah, I agree, Sarah.

Regis Obijiski

Yeah, that's a that's a great point, Sarah, I mean, we, we have different, we do have different starting points. I mean, if you look at the charter, and if you were to refer to Fawn's, question again, where do we start from scratch? Or do we start with what, with what, what exists? It's really a punt, you know. Because it says, Please, take everything a consideration but follow, but follow the law on equal population. I mean, that's, that's the law that we have to follow. But you know, to take into consideration with what is but, but our but our starting point really is the populations, the numbers. And, you know, just to, to, to Ashley, and to John, you know, we're nice people, but we can see how, you know, you could love to hate us, you know, in due time I don't. We're not we're not looking, we're not looking, we're not looking to be to be loved or hated. But, you know, we certainly understand the endpoint where, where you folks come in and how you tried to manage, or even as you were saying earlier,

Ashley, how to clean up the mess. You know, even after, after 10 years, while we can at least promise we won't use crayons and colored pencils. But, and we'll try not to make it as last minute as possible. In fact, we're champing at the bit to really get, get started in earnest. We haven't we haven't begun. And so I think this this is this, this discussion is really, really, really helpful because we know we know where we're headed, that we knew need to be sincere, we need to be fair, and we need to be lawful. And so we're really going to be starting with what's, what's lawful so your, you know, all the considerations, all the things that you brought up, I took a page and a half my own notes for you, thank you. And I didn't realize that, you know, that you know, all the work that goes into it, on your end, I do now. I don't, I don't take as a threat. It's but it's, it's, it's very real. So, does anyone else have any, any comments or questions for Ashley and or John? Any, any the commissioners? Ashley and John. Is there anything that pops into your mind in the last minute or so that you want to get in? Thank you. You told us quite a bit already.

Ashley Dittus

No, I think we had all our talking points. Do you have anything john?

John Quigley

I would say no.

Regis Obijiski

All right. Well listen, thank you very much, you're more than welcome to stay on for the remainder, the remainder of our meeting. Or if you if you have things to do in places ago we under we understand that too. But thank you very much for taking the time to be with us and and spelling things out for us in a way that's unambiguous. Thank you.

Travis Rask

Yeah. Thank you very much.

Ashley Dittus

Have a good rest of your meeting.

Regis Obijiski

Thank you Thank you so much. Okay the, the fifth item on, on, on our agenda is the, the update of the mapping software and Dennis and Rob I know you're going to be taking, taking us on a on a little bit of a tour. And I personally want to thank Rob for catching me red handed for not reading his emails that he sent to us in between meetings. I thought it was being so smart and so chair-like you know and ask him to ask a really cool question that was already answered. What's up so thanks a lot Rob. And as promised Rob will also be giving us a primer on, on census, on census blocks, which you know, Ken knows quite a bit about He always talks about census black box and the rest of us are, are, are hoping to catch up they can someday. So, with that, I'd like to like to invite Rob, Dennis in whatever we're both of you are here. I take it as we're both here. Yeah. Okay. So wherever you want to want to approach this,

Robert Leibowitz

Sure I have a, sure I have a presentation here. And I did a PowerPoint. So, we have a census geography primer, and also have some surprises for you with adjusted census results, including mapping Oh, the 2011 districts with the adjusted data. And I also have some software updates for you. And, and we might even get a couple demos, too. So, I should, Fawn, I need to share my screen.

Fawn Tantillo

Okay, I just looked at that, huh, let me see if I can go on to this again. Oh, I see. I missed something again. There you go.

Robert Leibowitz

Yeah, I can do it now.

Fawn Tantillo

There you go.

Robert Leibowitz

Let's hopefully I'm doing Oh, that's, that's called that one. There we go. All right. Everybody see that? Just the presentation. That looks like a presentation version, not my software version.

Travis Rask

It does look like

Robert Leibowitz

Excellent. Okay. That's alright. So, get the easy board, the more basic stuff out away first, census geography. And just say no, I took this from the census itself. So, They're the experts. So, two types of data. One that's legal or administrative. So, states, counties, towns and villages, basically your political and school districts, too. The state, those are in the census. And then you have a statistical. So, census tracts are the largest. Then census Block Groups, and census blocks. There's also something called Metropolitan micropolitan areas, those are more for things like housing funding, and for this department, transportation funding. Urban areas come into that. And then there's something called census designated places. Census designated places (CDP) are basically units of geography that are not don't have a political but are often things you refer to, like Malden in Saugerties, not political boundary. Accord, Kerhonkson, Stone Ridge those are designated places.

Robert Leibowitz

It was not political. Rosendale used to be...Rosendale is the best example because it used to be a political, now it's just a place. So, everything feeds in this way. So, here's your hierarchy from the nation, down to the States, counties, census tracts, Block Groups and blocks being the smallest for our purposes. And just this is a little graphic representation. So, it might have, it actually is a little bit counterintuitive. But if you start in the lower left hand corner, block is the smallest piece, blocks are a piece of the block group. Block Groups are pieces of tracts. And then they might be a portion of a city. And some towns, cities or towns, not in Ulster County, but sometimes they're also portions of towns.

And then of course, towns or portions of counties. So just a little bit of information. Census tracks usually contain about 4000 people...

Dennis Doyle

I'm gonna stop you here, Rob. I'm just, just going to ask if the Commission has any, any questions about that geography? And I asked him to slow down a little bit.

Robert Leibowitz

Sure. Anything?

Travis Rask

So far it makes sense to me? All right. Yep. The real difference between...

Dennis Doyle

And Rob, that the committee can work down to a block level, am I correct? Correct. They can work down to the block level, you can but... so for our purposes, we can work to block a block groups, census tracks, and we can use what's called the minor civil divisions to form them. I mean, we could use technically use CDPs's to form it, but those wouldn't. Those might not align with everything else. So, I stay away from those.

Robert Leibowitz

Census designated places. I wouldn't use those as a building block. The blocks are the basic. Think of them as your proteins, they build up to the whole. So, census tracts for those doing demographic work, those are basically your significant sample size, if you're doing research. The Block Groups are the smallest units for when you see the ACS, the American Community Survey, or when you used to have long form that was the lowest level you used to get to that, because of disclosure issues. For the decennial census, we can get all the way down to the block level. And that's your 100% level. So, any questions? You'll see them in action once I start doing the once I break out the...

Fawn Tantillo

CDPs are?

Regis Obijiski

Rob, it's Regis. Census, census blocks are these were these are formed by by the Census Bureau I take it right. So, it really has it really has nothing to do with pre-conceiving a number. So, it's it doesn't relate to us in terms of numbers. It's just, it's just a statistical tracking of sorts. That's, that's, that's bounded by some geographical feature.

Robert Leibowitz

Yeah, and you'll see a lot of census blocks that actually have zero population.

Regis Obijiski

Okay? What are they water are like behind me,

Robert Leibowitz

They could be once that's out to sea and beyond the municipal boundary.

Regis Obijiski

That'd be Japan way out there.

Dennis Doyle

Okay, so stuff you've been waiting for the adjusted data census results. So, you've seen this, I've shifted a little bit So, And I'm going to hit the next button here. So, 10 out of 23, districts have to greater variance from the mean, this is using the adjusted data. And they must either reduce or increase in size. So, the ones at the top, those are the ones that are too big, it was have to reduce in size. And by reducing size, not only population, usually that will be geographic area, consistently with that. The corollary, down the bottom you have those five districts, those have to increase in population, and also likely increase in geographic size in order to calculate capture that population. Now these are numbers. Hard to tell what that means without looking at the actual thing.

Robert Leibowitz

So, map I did. There are two different color ramps. One is a yellow kind of based ramp and one is a green based. The yellow one is the ones that are less than the mean. And the green ones are greater than mean. The dark green are the ones that are not compliant. And the mustard colored ones are the ones that are basically out of compliance as well. And those are ones that we'll have to work with. So you'll see, for example, kind of Woodstock. That one expands into Hurley that I will actually have to reduce in size. Um Let's see what else. Let me move on a little bit as well, we can come back to this while you're

Fawn Tantillo

While you're there. 15 and 13 are the districts that have the prisons by the way.

Robert Leibowitz

That's correct. And those are the ones that have to expand there. So what you'll see so for example, one inch easy things that you can see those Rochester is too big, Rochester went into Kerhonkson, which went into Wawarsing. It can probably fold back into Rochester. And then you can see that 15 expands, for example. That's one change they might be able to see. But you can see this is actually it's interesting, this is a geographic shift. It used to be for most of my time here that the southern portion of the county is the one that was getting all the population. With this adjusted data, it's flipped. And just call it out a little bit more. So you can see that the impact is county wide, and it's gonna go up and down a lot. The good news there are two good new points of good news angle go back to District number 22. As was mentioned earlier, which is Shandaken, Denning, Hardenberg and Olive is off by two people. So highly recommend you this committee may not have to do anything with that. District one in Saugerties is in a similar situation, but it's made of block group blocks the census blocks. So census blocks physically may have shifted. So, while it's only seven under, which is pretty, very good. Statistically, might have to have some shift just because of the way it's constructed. So but not much. So. So those are very good starting points because they're pretty stable. Any questions? So these are just some starting points. So, like I mentioned District 22 has .03 percent deviation from the mean,

that's exactly two people. And Saugerties, that with Northwest Saugerties is seven people off the mean or .09 percent. So, so just some general recommendations from me. If you'll take, except for Districts 22 and 21, you might want to start from scratch, given the amount of variance in the other districts and go from there and a good focus as was mentioned, you want to make the district as equal as possible. So, you might want to as a first draft, try to make them as equal as possible. And while taking in consideration the various portions of the charter. But then as you gather input, you look at the chart, you can make adjustments from there. So, first cut might be the most equal by each districts, but then you can take into the other factors into consideration like polling places, boundaries of towns, things like that. So that that would be a good process, I would think as a first cut for doing this.

Dennis Doyle

Yeah, Rob, can you can you go back and put your that one district map up that red and white?

Robert Leibowitz

Absolutely.

Dennis Doyle

And I just asked, I just asked the committee to, to look at this. And then I'm going to take you back route, if you could take you back to the chart, the, the spreadsheet form. And then you can see what happens in southern Ulster County with districts 13, 15 and 11, or 13, and 15, where the variance is significant. And that's, that's pulling that prison population out, and then the one in Ellenville, as well, that gets to pull that out. So from my perspective, just looking at this, and I haven't looked at it a lot, Rob has kind of gone through it, your biggest challenge is going to be in the southern half of the county, and then from there, into the into, the into the community into the areas in and around in and around the City of Kingston. I would like to tell you that it's that that, you know that this is this is an adjustment of boundaries. But the more I look at it, the more I think that it's a nice, good, fresh look at this. Maybe, maybe the way the commission goes particularly in the southern half of the county that we're not moving boundaries around, you're literally trying to say what what's the most compact, best district that you can, you can come up with in these areas. And just keep in mind last time we did this, the Commission had to do in about two months, they had like programs, we had to do about two months, two and a half months, this time we have till next May. So we do have a lot more time. And that one was done from scratch. In that time. Rob, do you? Do you get any? Did you get any data loaded or not? Ah, well, I do have some things. One, I have the adjusted data on the desktop version. So I can show you all that I can share the screen and take you through that a little bit. But as of last Thursday, the online version is up. But when I went when they were excited and told me about it, all they had loaded was congressional and senate data, and didn't realize that we had other data. So we're so we're working on that I worked, I will be loading up the actual local data, the adjusted data for your use. But I do have new... meantime, there's a link here that is... I can show it to you and I'll share it as well... the link that's a quickstart guide for it. And I'll show you the site to tomorrow, want to see the site first or you want to see the desktop with the data first. Leave it up to the commission. Your choice, Rob.

Robert Leibowitz

My choice? Let's see the let's go to website because that's what everybody's using.

Regis Obijiski

Thank you.

Robert Leibowitz

All right, what's gonna stop this? Sure. Let's go to hopefully this works. Nope, that is not that is the software. Only do a different show. There. Everybody see my, my browser. So this is what it's gonna look like this is the basics of the site. So the first thing you'll note is that we need a splash page before this, which has all the specifications and information, people who are going to be registering for this need so that they have some basics from the Ulster County side or otherwise, it's a Caliber product. But what you'll note, before I even log in, there's tips. And then there's a help page. And this is actually the link to the quick start guide. And it tells you pretty much how to use it. And I believe on every page of this. There'll be access to help they'll be right there for you. Plus there some webinars online I believe There's not... nothing on here right now. Oh, it didn't want me to log in. Okay, I'm not logging. Actually. I shouldn't be sharing my screen while I'm doing this, I gone. Fortunately, nobody can see hashes. Okay? Oh, that's weird. There we go. Okay, share my screen again. Sure.

Dennis Doyle

Alright, so I'm in. So this is what you'll come to when you do it. After you register for an account, it's pretty simple to register for an account. So what you'll do is you'll have plans here that you have worked on before. But if you're starting a new plan, you would go there. As you can see, there's only House and Senate data up here right now. We don't need that I'm going to have them remove that because we don't need that. There will also be an option to work with shared plans as well. See, the problem is, is that we don't have a starting point. So if I select this, and I create create date, this would be a house plan if I was to do that. I haven't tried this yet, because I don't want to store anything on the server. Yet, but so we're up and running. We just need the data. So I'll shift my share. Any questions on that so far? I'm wondering if our our election office or election commissioners are on?

Travis Rask

They are not.

Dennis Doyle

They have left me we can remind them that they have the ability to create their own plans.

Robert Leibowitz

Yes.

Dennis Doyle

I know, they kept telling you that they were sorry, that was your job, but you can make you can make it part of their jobs.

Regis Obijiski

Shoe on the other foot? Yeah.

Robert Leibowitz

So I'm gonna go do

Sarah DeStefano

i think that, i think that that might be a little problematic, though, um, where it is supposed to be an independent commission. I would, you know, they're citizens, too, I understand. But, again, we we went through a process to keep, like state and county officials and elected officials from being members of the Commission, and it starts to get like real fuzzy when we're inviting elected, and, you know, appointed and, and state, you know, employees to be making maps. So it's one thing if they do it on their own, but for us to invite them feels like a gray area that I was passing away from?

Dennis Doyle

No, I was I was literally considering them a members of the public that they could actually do it as members of the public. If they want to do it as members of the public.

Sarah DeStefano

Sure.

Robert Leibowitz

Not as an official capacity.

Sarah DeStefano

Okay. Just to further make the record clear, I just Yes. And that a little bit problematic.

Dennis Doyle

So do you see the Caliper screen the software that's on there right now?

Travis Rask

Yes,

Regis Obijiski

Yes.

Robert Leibowitz

So this is what's it. So what you're working with is the online version is going to look extremely similar to this. So this is a blank slate map here. And I can, for example, so what I can do is I can create a new district from the unassigned which is everything. And I for, since we know how good Olive and Hardenberg are... we can click the towns and then we can update the district. It'll ask me for a district name. We can rename the districts with the final plan by the way. So for this one, I just I can call it one. And there you go. And then it updates the field. So it tells me I'm at 7817 people with a deviation of two to 3%. That's a pretty good district. So this that's how simple literally this process is, I mean, that's at the town level that's at the county subdivision. But when you go down to the block level, that's when we get a little bit more... anybody want me to go any particular place. There's a my discretion.

Dennis Doyle

City of Kingston, Rob City, thanks. Alright, let's go to city kings. So I mean, literally when we're in meetings, though, if we're, what I'll be able to do, hopefully is I should be able to do is if you all have plans, I'll be able to bring them up and show them to you all at the same time so they can overlay each other. And we can compare and contrast. And we can have one plan is like a base plan that we edit and literally, you can say Rob, click there, click there. Well See how that looks. So we'll go all the way down. So this is what it looks like and I'll show you the population numbers as you go. And right now, I'm so, I'm doing a new district on the, from the unassigned data, and is that the census block though, because I know it's things can change real fast when you're in the City of Kingston here. So I slipped in, select it. And right now I'm respecting the City boundary, for example, so but one thing we may want to consider, and this is something I like to keep on...when I do it, is I bring in the imagery, I like to bring the satellite photos. This way, even though you have a town boundary here, if it comes to it, you can see that the land use here how this relates. This is Miller's lane. This is that whole area in Uptown Kingston, Miller's Lane, you have the junior high school in high school, and middle school and elementary school there, these relate better to this. Possibly then the top holster. So that's it's just something to consider when we're making districts, I don't know if that will be the way you end up going or what you end up doing. But keeping the aerials in mind is a good way to keep neighborhoods together. So, now a lot of times you have little slivers like you could see I just grabbed a rail trail there. There's no population. Yeah. So it's Yeah. Where is, where is it tracking? Where's it tracking your your current totals as you go as you go forward?

Robert Leibowitz

Do you see the top of the screen?

Dennis Doyle

Yes,

Robert Leibowitz

Under debut here, I'm gonna make it a little bigger. See that?

Dennis Doyle

Yep. Okay,

Robert Leibowitz

So district two currently only has 1240 people in it.

Travis Rask

The purple right? Yeah, there we go.

Robert Leibowitz

Yeah. So I don't know how much more you want me to do. But what do you like to see. But this is what we're all going to, this is what you're all going to be doing online, it's basically that when you're pointing clicking, it's the same exact feature. For 90% 99% of what you do with this software, you can complete with the online tool. And there are other ways there are easier ways of doing it too. Like for example,

I'm clicking one by one, you can do things like grab things by circle, you can use a line, which is really helpful. So it's easier way to just grab a whole bunch of things at once.

Donna Lutz

Oh, I see.

Robert Leibowitz

As you play with it, you'll get more comfortable with using the different tools. So so as you can see, that is a long way to go. It's still minus 65%. Wow. So I don't know if he wanted me to do any more, but I can I can conclude there. And if you have any questions.

Dennis Doyle

So if you have a district created Rob Right. But I can let me that's a good point. Let me show you something. So I'm doing a new district now. Unassigned, so we're gonna do it right next door. Okay, and finish that up. We're going to call it district three. All right, but now I'm like, Oh, I want from district three. And here's what I can do is my make my target district two, I can take from district three. And then I can It'll only take from District three and automatically make it part of District two. So pretty easy.

Robert Leibowitz

Yeah,

Dennis Doyle

And you want to and you run into you're either an overage or underage and you have to steal or I shouldn't use the word steal. But if you have to adjust using the adjoining using the adjoining district that that gets a bit complicated, because you're only dealing with unassigned now. Right?

Robert Leibowitz

You can also if you want to undo things, it's you can shift it, there's a let's say. So if my target is two, let's unassign you can there's a way to, it's not okay, there, see this back and forth button. You can reverse your selection so you can bring it back to the underside. So pretty intuitive.

Dennis Doyle

But the point being is is that once you use the software, you'll figure out the, the command structure fairly, fairly quickly, particularly with what's what, what your target is what your sources. And so if you keep that in mind when you're using a software, it'll be a lot less confusing for you. Yeah, that's it. It'll be good that hopefully, they get the data up there soon, and you all can start practicing. And then the second I get that data up there, all that gets up there, I'll email you, and you can create accounts, and then you can start practicing with it. And also, if anybody needs help with it, I'm certainly available to provide technical support.

Fawn Tantillo

Rob, when you pick the city boundaries is does that something you said or you were just following the line on the map?

Robert Leibowitz

Right now? Yeah, yeah, I would just follow, I was just using blocks, so I could switch it. I could use county subdivision. And we'll see right now my sources, district two. So actually, that was kind of interesting, because I clicked on the county subdivision and when I did it, it only took those things that were in district two for me, was always my source. If I had unassigned, when I did that for all, it wouldn't have taken the whole City. So okay.

Regis Obijiski

Rob, you mentioned that there was a there was a tutorial even before we get to even a little around on on our map. So I was just trying to follow your cursor around because you were you're pretty quick. That that the the tutorial explains it pretty easily.

Robert Leibowitz

Let me show it to you. Stop this year. Let's see. Where's my very good. Think I have too many screens open. Closing. Just you see my web browser now?

Fawn Tantillo

Yes, sir.

Dennis Doyle

Your're on Maptitude? Yeah, there you go.

Robert Leibowitz

Oh, this, this link, and then I'm going to put it in the I'll put it in the chat.

Fawn Tantillo

I'll send you all the chat after the meeting. Yeah,

Robert Leibowitz

I put the chat, everyone. There we go. That's the starter's guide. So it tells you how to create a map out of it. This is right from starting how to use it right here. That's from there. So it's pretty... shows you how to modify district, how to create a dress, modifying district and the plan and how to use each tool. And then also verifying some of your plans. So everything, all the basics, that you'll need to do it. All right there. And I think once you're in the program, you'll also be able to call the help as well and ask probably some more specific questions. There's also some tutorials online as well. Okay, all right.

Regis Obijiski

Yeah, I think you know, once once we get in and just start moving our own cursor around we'll we'll get a feel for it. But it seems it seems easy the way you do it, and the way you've explained it. Anybody have any questions? Rob, and Dennis? Okay. All right. Well, I think our next our next item relates to this. And this is the the update on the prison population. And Kristin, Kristin Gumaer. Are you here tonight?

Kristin Gumaer

Hi.

Regis Obijiski

Oh, Hi. How are you? Thank you for thank you for following up on this from the last the last meeting. And so please proceed with the what you what you found out.

Kristin Gumaer

The question presented to me was does the county legislature have to act to utilize the data where the prison population is counted in their home residents? And the answer I found is in Municipal Home Rule law and it actually states that you shall use the data To check that the term population means residents. And for such purposes, no person shall be deemed to have gained or lost or resident, or become a resident of a local government by being subject to the jurisdiction of Department of Corrections. So, they keep their home residents and it does not change by being in the Department of Corrections. So there's nothing to do you simply use the data with the people in their home residents.

Regis Obijiski

So it, it's pretty simple answer. Yes, we have to follow the state law and we will we don't need a confirmation vote or anything like that from our county legislature. It just is, right. And so it seems that, as Rob told us last time, that Calipers is ahead of us on this, and we actually got the data from them. They got it from LATFOT (The Task Force on Demographic Research and Reapportionment), and so so we're good to go. Is that pretty good summary?

Kristin Gumaer

Yeah.

Regis Obijiski

Okay. All right.

Kenneth Panza

So the data has been adjusted for the prison populations?

Dennis Doyle

Yes, that's all the data we showed you in the presentation. And in Calper, on the software just now.

Kenneth Panza

I mean, the census data would show the people in the prisons, and then it has to be modified to show the take those out and actually reallocate them to their residence. So that you were receiving is instead of that?

Robert Leibowitz

The data I showed you, has the prisoners adjusted.

Kenneth Panza

Okay. That's great.Thank you.

Robert Leibowitz

Okay.

Regis Obijiski

Well, that's, that's very clear, very quick. So thank you. Thank you very much. Thank you Kristin, for double checking that. Anything else? Before we move on? Okay. Item number seven is some old business. And it's setting criteria for public mapping submissions. Travis raised this the last time and he is graciously agreed to, you know, Chair, chair, a committee to begin to shape criteria for public submissions, and to the same process that we're talking about. So this is these are instructions, these are criteria, these are close to the close and dear to the heart of Sarah DeStefano, of what we would expect from the public and how we would expect them to, to use this and submit it. Is that correct, folks?

Sarah DeStefano

I agree.

Regis Obijiski

Yeah. Travis, what do you think?

Travis Rask

Yeah, I think it's necessary.

Regis Obijiski

Okay. Do you think it's Let me ask you, let me ask you this, let me ask Andy, Do you think it's necessary for us to do this now to get a start on.

Andy Monk

I mean, I think since we have this time now, to run all this preparation work, I think it's a great idea to use the time productively. And so coming up with these guidelines now, or at least a framework for how we want to think about these guidelines would would be helpful. I'm not sure what the process would be if, as we're going, I would like to wait to finalize the guidelines until after we've had a chance to play with the software, just so that we will know if there are any particular areas that we want to ensure are considered But yeah, I think I don't see it as a bad idea to start that process. Now just to come up with what we'd like, from the public.

Travis Rask

I think it's pretty straightforward. I'm just gonna use the charter and, you know, go down that list and make our criteria based on that. And like I said, we can make it make the criteria subject to change based on a, you know, popular opinion and, you know, further use, but at this point, I think it's pretty straightforward what we need to we need to do, but if it needs to get into writing a little bit further, that's not a problem at all.

Andy Monk

And, Rob, is it true that we can actually set up the software to not allow them to submit plans unless it meets certain criteria,

Dennis Doyle

Right, I haven't seen the admin side, I'm trying to get admin access to the side of it, but you should be able to... some of the basic things you should be able to set are: one complete plan: it has to be completed has to have used all the data. Two they have to fit within that margin minus five plus five, to submit it So I would, I would keep it as simple as possible. I would just use those two. And then also note that they should respect the boundaries and all that places and they those are considerations, not requirements,

Andy Monk

Right.

Robert Leibowitz

That's my sense.

Travis Rask

I agree., Rob.

Dennis Doyle

But as far as getting it into the board, the Commission's consideration, I would say that they have to meet at least those two criteria. You don't want to be looking at partial plans or plans that don't meet the minimums?

Andy Monk

Right?

Robert Leibowitz

That's my thought. ,

Regis Obijiski

So, Travis and Andy, would you be willing to, to lead us lead us in an effort to these ends that were just speaking of?

Andy Monk

I would, okay.

Regis Obijiski

I guess what we need to do, Fawn, This is procedural? Should Should we take a vote on creating a subcommittee that would be activated?

Fawn Tantillo

You could formally vote on it. But I believe is chairman, you can just form a subcommittee.

Regis Obijiski

Okay. So why don't we consider this subcommittee to to have begun and, and taking both Travis and Andy's suggestion that we we're not we're not going to finalize anything. For some time until we've we've dug up to data. I think that's part of the wisdom that can can pass that offered offered me earlier today. So I think that's, that's good, great advice. So, okay, so let's consider that to be a news subcommittee to set criteria for public mapping submissions. Okay. Okay, New business, the the the eighth item, other than what we discussed tonight. Anyone, anyone here any one of the commissioners have anything that's just regarding new business for for our consideration? A few things came up last time, anybody could feel free to suggest something that, you know, if we want to invite somebody else for the next meeting, whatever that is, you know, that occurred, as I say, last month. So any, any new business we want to recognize tonight and maybe do something with later?

Travis Rask

I currently don't have anything.

Regis Obijiski

Okay. All right. All right. Then, for the last, this second to the last item on the agenda, we'll open the floor for public comment on anything relevant to the work of the Commission on Reapportionment. And so if anyone is on this on this call, we would rather submit anything by email, just look up "reapportionment" on the county site to get the email address. So we would get your. your your suggestions are so noted.

Fawn Tantillo

Carol, or Patricia, if you want to say anything you'd have to unmute,

Regis Obijiski

Right.

Travis Rask

Sounds like a no.

Regis Obijiski

Okay. All right. All right, then. Then I'm going to request a motion for German. Anyone?

Sarah DeStefano

Before we adjourn, if I could just ask a quick question. Without putting any pressure on our friends in the planning committee. Do we have a sense of when we'll be getting the data and access to the online website just so that we, you know, know what to look forward to? And, and not in any accusatory way of it?

Robert Leibowitz

They should have the data, they just need to figure out how to get it up there.

Sarah DeStefano

Okay.

Robert Leibowitz

So working with them. I spoke to them yesterday. Hopefully they're working on it. And so I mean, it could be as soon as the end of this week, it could be longer. I don't I don't have a timeframe on how long it will take them to get up there.

Travis Rask

So we're waiting on Maptitude?

Robert Leibowitz

Yeah.

Dennis Doyle

We'll push for a timeframe. How's that? Well, we'll try to make sure that they have that they give us a time frame so that we're not just waiting on them. Right, and it will ask them for a timeframe.

Sarah DeStefano

Thank you very much.

Regis Obijiski

Perfect. Perfect. Thank you so much. Okay, so a motion for adjournment.

Donna Lutz

So moved.

Regis Obijiski

Motioned. Okay. Donna. Second, please.

Kathleen Waithe

Second.

Regis Obijiski

Second. Thank you, Kathy. Okay, all those in favor?

Committee Members

Aye. Aye.

Regis Obijiski

All right. Thank you very much, everyone. Have a good evening. Thank you.