

**OFFICE OF THE ULSTER COUNTY LEGISLATURE
MEETING MINUTES**

NAME OF GROUP: Commission On Reapportionment

DATE: February 9, 2011

TIME: 3:00 P.M.

PLACE: UCOB, Legislative Library Conference Room, 6th Floor

MEMBERS PRESENT: Vernon Benjamin, Paul Benkert, Michael Catalinotto, Cynthia Lowe, Rich Messina, Dare Thompson, Bill West

MEMBERS EXCUSED: None

OTHERS ATTENDING: Legislators Wadnola, Provenzano, Rodriguez, Hochberg, and Maloney; Bea Havranek, UC Attorney; Dennis Doyle, Planning Director; Robert Leibowitz, Sr. Planner; Sylvia Wohlfahrt, Director, IS; Rick Umble, IS Tech Team Leader; Hugh Reynolds, Reporter; Tom Kadgen, LWV; Victoria Fabella, Deputy Clerk, Legislature; Fawn Tantillo, Beth Murphy, Michael Harkavy, Philip Schacter, Rokki Carr, Trisha Schacter

- The meeting was called to order by Bill West at 3:02 PM.
- A motion was made by Michael Catalinotto, Seconded by Vernon Benjamin, to approve the Minutes from the January 26, 2011 Meeting. All in favor, Carried.
- Guidelines for Filming Meetings

The Commission has been asked to have their meetings videoed. Although permitted, the Commission has set guidelines for filming their meetings.

- The filming process can in no way be disruptive to, or interfere with, the meetings.
- There will be no artificial light.
- The camera will remain on the tripod during filming.
- The Commission requests the videos be shared with the County for use on the Commission's website.

- Sylvia Wohlfahrt, Rick Umble- Update: Commission Website

Sylvia showed the Commissioners the framework that has been developed for the website thus far.

Input is needed from the Commission to determine what the content on each page should be. Vicky will e-mail IS as necessary with new information to be posted to the site to keep it current.

Vernon Benjamin requested that the current 33 member district map be posted under the draft plan section until new information is available.

Beth Murphy, the citizen filming the meetings, will send all video to Sylvia and the video will be posted on the site along with the meeting agendas and minutes.

There was discussion about public feedback and ability to post comments to the site. Bea Havranek commented that legal would need to review this kind of public input before it's posted. The County has a duty and right to protect its personnel and also to protect the general public. There couldn't be anything on there that could be considered slanderous or libelous. This is not a blog. The purpose of it is to provide information through your authority as the Commission. Bea also told the Commission that she is the sole advisor for the County. If any issues come up as a result of this Commission, she would be the person that would represent the County.

The Commissioners discussed posting an e-mail address for the public to send comments to. E-mails sent to this address would automatically be forwarded to all members of the Commission.

Bea reminded the Commissioners that all e-mails, including the responses back from the Commissioners, are FOILable.

Sylvia said she could take all e-mails received and publish them on the site in one running document for people to scroll through.

There was discussion about adding a "Resources" page or posting links to resources.

The Commission agreed to post on the homepage of their website the 4 principles of redistricting developed at the Pocantico Redistricting Conference which Dare circulated amongst the Commission.

- IS and Planning Departments- Update: Software (See Redistricting Software Options handout)

Sylvia reviewed the Software Options handout with the Commission. Rick Umble explained that his and Rob Leibowitz's recommendation would be the Autobound Pro Redistricting Software (\$5,100). It is comparable to the Maptitude Software demoed for the Commission at the last meeting. It has a lite version, Autobound LE, which is geared towards Legislators who don't have a background in GIS. That version costs \$980 per user. It is geared towards generating proposed plans that can be imported into a more robust redistricting program. The Autobound LE application can be purchased and will open up in either the Maptitude or Autobound more robust software versions for analysis.

Vernon Benjamin: Q./ What about taking this on the road to show people? A./ Rick Umble: It is possible. The Autobound LE version would make it easiest to do that.

Dare Thompson: Q./ Are there free software versions out there that can be accessed by anyone interested? A./ Sylvia said she is not familiar with the accessibility of such software. Bill West commented that he has gotten calls from someone in Woodstock who is drafting plans with free software that Bill suspects requires a technical knowledge base to use. Bill has requested this individual provide info on this software to share with the Commission, but has yet to receive any information.

Dennis Doyle asked the Commissioners if they each want a copy of Autobound LE or are they comfortable with a lesser number of licenses that would be available for their use.

Discussion ensued about the location of the computer(s) containing the redistricting software. No decision was reached.

Bill West said the woman from Dutchess County who is in charge if their reapportionment was going to send Bill an e-mail with the description of the software they are using there. She has yet to do so. Bill requested that the Planning Department follow-up with Dutchess County to see what kind of software they have.

The Commission agreed to vote on a software package at the next meeting based upon all of the information available to the Commission as of the time of the next meeting.

Dennis Doyle reviewed the handout *Principles for Transparency and Public Participation in Redistricting* from the Brookings Institute which he believes may be useful to the Commissioners.

- Public Comment Venues

The Commissioners reviewed the Town Board Meeting Schedule. Although all Commissioners are welcome to attend all/any meetings, the Commission decided to designate two specific Commissioners to appear at each meeting. Designations are as follows:

Tuesday, February 15, 2011- 6:45 PM- Meeting with the Legislature- All Commissioners in Attendance

Thurs., Feb. 17th- 7:00PM **Town of Ulster** Town Board Mtg, 1 Town Hall Dr. Lake Katrine- **Cynthia & Paul**

Thurs., Feb. 24th- 7:30PM Town of **New Paltz** Town Board Mtg, 1 Veterans Drive- **Dare & Paul**

Monday, Feb. 28th- 7:00PM Town of **Marlborough** Town Board Meeting, Rte. 9W, Milton- **Dare & Richard**

Tues., March 1st- 7:00PM **Marbletown** Town Board Meeting, 3775 Main St., Stone Ridge- **Bill & Richard**

Weds., March 2nd-7:00PM **Saugerties** Town Board Mtg, Frank Greco Sr. Ctr, Market St.- **Michael & Vernon**

Thursday, March 3rd- 7:00PM **Shawangunk** Board Mtg, 14 Central Ave., Wallkill- **Paul & Richard**

Monday, March 7th- 7:30 PM **Esopus** Town Board Mtg, 284 Broadway, Port Ewen- **Bill & Paul**

Tuesday, March 8th- 7:30 PM **Woodstock** Town Board Meeting, 45 Comeau Drive- **Bill & Vernon**

Although all Commissioners will try to attend, the Town Board Meetings on the schedule for April will be designated to specific Commissioners at a later date.

Any Commissioner who can not make one of their designated meetings will call Vicky so she can find a replacement.

Bill West said the purpose of attending the Town Board Meetings is to begin to gather input from the public, to listen to concerns of the Boards, specific problems they would like to be considered, etc.

Michael Catalinotto said the Commissioners attending the meetings should introduce themselves, state their purpose, and listen to suggestions to take back to the rest of the Commissioners.

Paul Benkert suggested the two Commissioners assigned to a meeting take the lead at that meeting.

Cynthia Lowe suggested coming up with a script so that every Town Board gets the same information. Cynthia will draft a script and circulate it amongst the Commissioners for input.

- Meeting with the Legislature

The Commissioners agreed to have Legislative Chairman Wadnola introduce them at the meeting. Vicky will speak to the Chairman about introductions in alpha order.

- Deadline for Agenda Items

The Commissioners agreed that any suggestions for the agenda, other than what's been discussed and agreed upon at a previous meeting, need to be submitted to Vicky by noon on Monday for Wednesday's meeting. Vicky will send out the agenda by COB on Monday.

- Legislative Counsel Opinion

The Commissioners reviewed the opinion of Legislative Counsel which concurs with the opinion of Bea Havranek dated November 18, 2010. The Commission is hopeful their plan will remain intact.

- Next Week's Agenda

- Make Software Decision
- Fine tune Town Board Meeting Script
- Review of Informational Meeting with the Legislature on 2/15/11

- Adjournment

A motion was made by Michael Catalinotto to adjourn the meeting, Seconded by Bill West, with all in favor. Carried. The meeting was adjourned at 5:05 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Victoria Fabella, Deputy Clerk, Ulster County Legislature