

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

**NAME OF GROUP:** Commission On Reapportionment

**DATE:** March 16, 2011

**TIME:** 3:00 P.M.

**PLACE:** Information Services Training Room, 25 S. Manor Ave., Kingston

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

**MEMBERS EXCUSED:** Rich Messina

**OTHERS ATTENDING:** Robert Leibowitz, Sr. Planner, UC Planning Department; Hugh Reynolds, Reporter; Lee Cane, LWV; Victoria Fabella, Deputy Clerk, Legislature

- The meeting was called to order by Paul Benkert at 3:06 PM.
- A motion was made by Bill West, Seconded by Cynthia Lowe, to approve the Minutes from the March 9, 2011 Meeting. All in favor, Carried.
  
- Recap Rosendale Town Board Meeting

Cynthia, Dare, Michael and Vernon were in attendance. Cynthia said they were the most engaged about e-mailing the Commission to express their desired affiliation.

Vernon said they spoke of three geographic connections: Marbletown, Rifton and Bloomington. A lot of the people were very interested in keeping Bloomington connected with the Village proper of Rosendale. With Marbletown it seems like the school district was the guiding element.

- Update: Public Comment Meeting Locations

Per the request of the Commission, Vicky arranged the following tentative meeting locations and times:

April 11<sup>th</sup>- County North- Olive Library, West Shokan - 7:00 PM

April 12<sup>th</sup>- Mid- County- Legislative Chairman Wadnola is willing to call a special informational meeting at 7:00 PM

April 13<sup>th</sup>- County South- New Paltz Community Center- 7:00 PM

The Commissioners agreed that they will be pressed for time to complete their task by the April Legislative Session, as they are still waiting to hear when the census data will be released. Paul Benkert said he would be away from April 2<sup>nd</sup> to April 8<sup>th</sup>.

Rob Leibowitz said once the data is released, the software vendor needs a couple of days to process the information so it can be formatted to work with the software.

Michael Catalinotto questioned the number of plans that will be presented at the public meetings, and suggested that the Commission present more than one.

Cynthia reiterated that in the last meeting, the Commission agreed to decide as a group what plans would be presented.

Vernon suggested an all day session on Saturday, April 9<sup>th</sup>. He said between now and then the Commission would have the opportunity to work on plans both together and individually, and then come together at 10AM on Saturday morning and resolve to come up with a few plans that would be in draft form to show to the Legislature. The Commission agreed this is a good idea.

Paul suggested presenting to the Legislature before the general public, and therefore moving the County North area public comment meeting scheduled on April 11<sup>th</sup> to Wednesday, April 20<sup>th</sup>. The Commissioners agreed.

Rob Leibowitz, understanding the time constraint concerns and uncertainty about the data release/software familiarity, hesitantly offered to sit down and come at it from 20 different perspectives, trying to keep the towns together, and present the different plans to the Commission. From there, the Commission can pick one or two and start tweaking them, as opposed to starting from scratch with one census block.

Dare Thompson said she wasn't sure of any reason why the Commission wouldn't take Rob up on his offer to make drafts? She thinks anything Rob would do would be helpful, and then the Commission would have a place to start.

Cynthia said she is not comfortable with the idea until the Commission tries it on its own first. "You get worn down over time and have a tendency to except something as presented as opposed to making it yourself. Our responsibility is to make it ourselves and to use Rob as a resource. We signed on for getting our hands dirty on our own."

Bill West: Q./ You are having problems with AutoBound today? A./ Rob: Yes.

Bill West: Q./ Are we too trusting of AutoBound? If we don't get the information until April 1<sup>st</sup> and it takes a few days to configure the data, is there a great risk of running into problems getting everything to function properly?

A./ Rob: I don't think that will be an issue that will hold the Commission back.

Bill West: Q./ Paul raised an interesting point being that he will be away the first week in April; What is the transportability of the data and software? A./ Rob: It's a download and I will give everyone the link. I am hoping to also give everyone a cd with the program and full instructions on how to install the program to make it as easy as possible. Bill: Q./ But if I have the program on my tower and then I want to put it on my laptop because I will be traveling can I do that? A./ Rob: Yes. You will be able to install it on two machines. A./ Dare: It's the person, not the computer that owns the software.

Cynthia Lowe: Q./ You made a comment earlier that the vendor is a two-person company and even though they knew we had a meeting scheduled, we were 3<sup>rd</sup> in the queue and they couldn't move anything up. Are you loosing any confidence in AutoBound? A./ Rob: A little. Cynthia: Q./ Should we reevaluate the software and look for another option if they can't deliver? A./ Rob: If you wanted to, we would go back to a GIS platform only option where you would have to have ARC. It would then only be on one machine or a couple machines at most. However, I do think that by the time we get data, we will have all our kinks and bugs worked out.

Rob played a 13 minute webcast for the Commission that demoed some of the AutoBound LE highlights. The webcast was conducted by the vendor product manager.

- Timeline After Data Release

Vernon suggested developing a structure for the all-day session, Saturday, April 9<sup>th</sup> at 10:00AM, to maximize efficiency. He commented that maybe the first hour or two should be dedicated to reviewing all developed plans, as

he believes each Commissioner will have individual plans that the Commission as a whole will have to weigh in on.

Rob said he believes he will have a line of people who come to his office looking to use the software to develop plans for submission to the Commission. Rob said he can take all plans and put them together in one file to make it easier for the Commission to review.

The Commissioners agreed to see what progress is made on April 9<sup>th</sup>. They may need to have a follow-up meeting on Monday the 11<sup>th</sup> to finalize which plans will be shown to the Legislature on the 12<sup>th</sup>. Those plans will then be taken to the meetings for public comment on the 13<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. After the public comment is complete, the Commission will take all input into consideration and hammer out which will be the final plan presented to the Legislature.

Vernon suggested putting a deadline on submission of input on the plans shown at the public comment meetings.

Dare suggested telling anyone who wants to provide input that it needs to be submitted immediately, as opposed to giving a drop-dead date, as everyone can then wait until the last minute. People should know that the Commission is very pressed for time and input should be submitted immediately to ensure it's considered.

The Commission agreed that their work should be complete and a final presentation be ready to present to the Legislature tentatively by April 25<sup>th</sup>. The above developed timeline is not set in stone and can be adjusted as necessary.

The Commission requested that Vicky arrange the details for April 9<sup>th</sup> and speak to Bea regarding her opinion of public involvement on that day.

- New Business

Beth Murphy did not film this meeting. She will be out of town and therefore not filming next week's meeting either.

- Next Week's Agenda

Next week's meeting will be at the usual time and location: 3:00 PM on the 6<sup>th</sup> Fl. of the County Building. Agenda items will include:

- Input from Bea: Voting Rights Act, April 9<sup>th</sup>, Prison Population, Conference calling into a meeting
- Any updates from Rob Leibowitz on census data and software

Cynthia and Michael will not be in attendance at next week's meeting. Vernon will be the facilitator.

- Adjournment

Hearing no further business, Paul Benkert asked for a motion to adjourn. Such motion was made by Bill West, Seconded by Michael Catalinotto, with all in favor. Carried. The meeting was adjourned at 4:42 P.M.

**Respectfully Submitted,**

**Victoria Fabella, Deputy Clerk, Ulster County Legislature**