



King County

King County Districting Committee

April 21, 2011

2:00 p.m.

Chinook Building, Room 116
401 Fifth Avenue, Seattle, WA 98104

Minutes

Chair: Terrance Carroll
Members: Rod Dembowski
John Jensen
Sally Nelson
Sally Poliak

Staff: Simon Farretta, Council Staff
Joanne Rasmussen, Council Staff

The following members were present: Terrance Carroll, Chair, Rod Dembowski, John Jensen, Sally Nelson and Sally Poliak.

Excused: None

Outside Attendees: John Schlosser, Districting Master
Mike Sinsky, Senior Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, King
County Prosecuting Attorney's Office
David Wilson, King County Elections
Rebecha Cusack, Director of Strategic Policy Issues, King
County Council
Kathy Elias, Municipal League of King County
James W. Burrows, Citizen
Suellen Roche, Citizen

I. Call to Order

Judge Terrence Carroll called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m. and welcomed the members.

II. Approval of Minutes

Mr. Dembowski moved to approve the March 21, 2011 meeting minutes. Ms. Poliak seconded the motion. The motion passed.

III. Public Comment

No one appeared before the committee to offer public comment.

IV. Chair's Report

The Chair noted that May and June will be busy months for the committee. He introduced John Schlosser, the Districting Master and noted that he looks forward to his able assistance in this redistricting process. He also noted his appreciation for Simon Farretta and Mike Sinsky

V. Districting Master's Report

Mr. Schlosser, Districting Master, introduced himself and briefly told the members about his educational background and work experience. He briefed the committee on the redistricting process that has used for past redistricting committees. He noted that the 2011 process does not have to follow previous patterns. He said that his job was technical and the committee members have the difficult decisions.

Mr. Schlosser noted that some of the issues that past committees have discussed related to communities of interest have pertained to race, the suburban-rural split, maintaining the cohesiveness of cities, watersheds, and school districts.

The committee discussed protocols for committee members contacting Mr. Schlosser.

Mr. Schlosser demonstrated the software he uses in his work (MapInfo Professional) as well as giving a demographic overview of the county and census information.

Copies of the following materials were distributed to the members:

- a. King County Council District 2010 Population Imbalance including target changes
- b. Population Imbalance 2010 County Council Districts
- c. Population Balance 2005 County Council Districts
- d. White-Non-White Population Change by King County Council District

Mr. Farretta was asked to provide copies of Mr. Schlosser's maps for the committee members as well as on the website. Members requested a preview of the meeting materials prior to each meeting.

Following Item V, the committee was recessed for ten minutes.

VI. Briefing: Law and standards for redistricting

Mr. Sinsky, Sr. Senior Deputy Prosecuting Attorney, King County Civil Division, briefed the members on the subject of litigation on redistricting and the state and local criteria the committee is tasked to follow in the redistricting process. He noted that state law supersedes county law. He noted that "nearly equal in population" is a standard that if deviated from by the

committee must be justified. One person – one vote is the standard. He discussed the standards of compact, contiguous, use of natural boundaries, and communities of related and mutual interest.

Mr. Sinsky noted that population data cannot be used to favor or disfavor political parties or racial groups. A Supreme Court case found that race alone cannot define a community of interest. Mr. Farretta noted that during public outreach members of the public may submit plans or materials. The committee members will need to analyze these plans in order to assure that they do not favor or disfavor any group.

Mr. Sinsky briefed the members on their responsibility to comply with the Public Records Act. If a member receives a request for information, alert Mr. Farretta and Mr. Sinsky. The Act requires a written response within five business days. Mr. Sinsky also reminded the members to use the county email address for all committee business.

Mr. Sinsky briefed the members on the Open Public Meetings Act. He reminded the members that they cannot transact business outside of a formal meeting that is open to the public and there should not be any phone or email trees with more than two members. The Chair requested the Mr. Sinsky alert the committee if there is a time when the matter under discussion is subject to an Executive Session. Otherwise, the committee will keep all discussions open to the public.

If members have legal questions they can contact Mr. Sinsky directly. These conversations are privileged.

A packet of materials outlining laws and standards for redistricting was distributed to the members.

VII. Briefing: Best practices in dividing geography

Dave Wilson, GIS Supervisor, King County Elections, briefed the committee on King County census blocks. During this census, some blocks were created that have zero population. He requested that the members look closely at the geography when making districts. Mr. Wilson offered to send a link to the interactive map for precincts. He requested that the committee keep precincts and census blocks intact as much as possible during the redistricting process.

VIII. Community Outreach

Simon Farretta, Committee Staff, announced the locations of the first three public hearings which are scheduled in May. He has sent letters to all county elected officials, emailed 4,000 stakeholders, sent press releases and encouraged King County Councilmembers to include the information on the public hearings in mailings to their districts. It was noted that a draft of the letter to elected officials was provided to the members prior to mailing. The next round of public hearings

will be in June. The members discussed the locations for the second round of meetings. It was suggested that Shoreline, Lake Forest Park or Northgate might be a location for the second round. The Redmond and South Bellevue meetings should not be back to back

IX. Committee Calendar

There is a business meeting at 6:00 p.m. prior to the May 11 public meeting. The members scheduled a meeting on May 23, 2011 at 2:00 p.m.

The members discussed the following issues as a wrap-up to the meeting:

1. The members discussed the format for the public hearing.
2. Ms. Poliak requested ground rules for communicating with Mr. Schlosser. The committee discussed potential protocols. The Chair indicated the committee should give the matter further consideration and revisit the issue.
3. The members indicated that they would be interested in trying to use the software tools that Mr. Schlosser uses. He indicated that a free 30-day trial is available.
4. The Chair suggested that since the King County is non-partisan the committee needs to examine what that means in terms of the committee's task regarding not favoring or disfavoring a political party.

X. Other Business

There was no further business to come before the committee.

XI. Adjourn

Ms. Poliak moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Dembowski seconded the motion. The Chair so ordered and the meeting was adjourned at 4:44 p.m.