



King County

King County Districting Committee

May 11, 2011

6:30 p.m.

Robert Frost Elementary School, Common Room

11801 NE 140th Street, Kirkland, WA 98034

Minutes

Chair: Terrance Carroll

Staff: Simon Farretta, Council Staff

Members: Rod Dembowski

Joanne Rasmussen, Council Staff

John Jensen

Sally Nelson

Sally Poliak

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

Excused: None

I. Call to Order

Judge Terrence Carroll, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:38 p.m.

II. The King County Council redistricting process

Judge Carroll, Chair of the King County Districting Committee, offered introductory remarks. He noted that the law requires the county to redraw the district boundaries every ten years after the census. Districts grow at different rates and so boundaries need to be shifted to accommodate the change in population and ensure equal representation. He noted that the members of the redistricting committee were chosen by the King County Council and they in turn chose him as the Chair of the Districting Committee. They serve as volunteers. The committee will be hosting at least eight public hearings. He announced the website. He noted that comments from members of the public are important in the process.

III. King County population data

John Schlosser, Districting Master, using overhead maps, demonstrated population imbalance in the existing council districts and the process used to balance those districts. He briefly explained the challenges the committee will face in this process. This process is balancing the population and not just the registered voters in each district. The center of the county is near Mercer Island.

IV. Public Testimony

Prior to the formal public testimony the Chair opened the meeting for questions on Mr. Schlosser's presentation. Members of the audience asked Mr. Schlosser questions.

Robert Oppie asked for clarification on census counting. Mr. Schlosser answered that it is a count of the people that are in a house.

Dave Griffin asked if demographic shifts have been tracked? Mr. Schlosser answered that the 2010 data that has been made available from the census has a limited set of variables. It breaks out people that are 18 and older and those that are younger. It has breakdowns by Hispanic Latinos and five racial breakdowns. It does not have breakdowns according to gender, education, income, and journey to work. Census data is available at the census website factfinder.census.gov.

Tim Myers asked if the district boundaries on the maps are current boundaries. Mr. Schlosser answered yes.

The following people appeared before the committee to offer public comment and to answer questions from the members:

1. **Richard Cole**, Councilmember, City of Redmond, noted that he was not representing Redmond with his questions. He was offering personal comment. Thanked the committee for coming to the Eastside. The population is shifting from inside Seattle to outside Seattle. According to the latest census count on a proportional basis, Seattle would only be allotted 2.8 (or 3) council seats. As you change the boundaries he requests that the committee look at that in order to give the people outside Seattle a proportional representation.
2. **Dave Griffin**, resident of Kingsgate, said Kingsgate is a cohesive community and he would like the committee to keep that in mind in drawing boundaries. Kingsgate is divided at this time by many overlapping district boundaries. There are many people who come to eastern King County for recreation. The people in unincorporated King County don't always receive the best service because they aren't attached to a city.
3. **Ingolf Kronstad** discussed the Finn hill annexation. Is there a desire on the part of the Districting Committee to, as far as possible, make these neighborhood councils contiguous in the same district? It seems advantageous to keep the neighborhoods together. He asked about the political party balancing and whether the committee will consider that during the process. The Chair answered that the committee cannot use population data to favor or disfavor any race or political party.

Mr. Jensen asked what effect being in different districts has on a community. Mr. Kronstad noted that the swim teams are competing against each other. Mr. Griffin said there are times when competing public meetings are held and noted that tonight was an example of meetings that conflicted.

4. **Sonja Rossman**, Bellevue resident, said she hoped the committee would take into consideration the many changes on the Eastside. Council representation is the issue. Unincorporated areas are underserved. (answer to question by Mr. Jensen)
5. **Robert Shay**, Bellevue resident, President of the Wilburton Community Association, wondered how the committee could expand a district that is surrounded by districts that also need to expand. The Chair answered this question by using the population unbalance slide.

Mr. Dembowski asked for feedback on the attachment of Mercer Island to the Eastside. Both Ms. Rossman and Mr. Shay indicated that they felt Mercer Island was more aligned with the Eastside.

Ms. Poliak asked for feedback on having Bellevue in one council district. Both Ms. Rossman and Mr. Shay felt Bellevue should be in one council district.

6. **Kathy Lambert, Councilmember, District 3** thanked the committee for their hard work. She commented that she has four precincts in Bellevue and that it is difficult to represent such a small portion of a city effectively. If the committee splits a city, she encourages the split to contain at least one quarter of the city. She would like to see her district more compact. Even if there aren't people in some areas of a large district, the rivers and the trees can cause issues for other areas, such as flooding. It might be possible to condense the district on the southern and the western sides. She would like to keep her major cities. Breaking up the cities in the Snoqualmie Valley Government Association would not serve the area well.

V. Adjourn

Chair Carroll thanked the members of the public for attending and sharing their thoughts. He thanked staff and his fellow committee members.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 7:50 p.m.