

June 21, 2022

Reapportionment Commission ----

Proceedings by Authority

State of New York,
City of Jamestown
Mayor's Conference Room

A meeting of the Reapportionment Commission of the City of Jamestown, New York was held on Tuesday, June 21, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. in the Mayor's Conference Room

Members Present: Tony Dolce, Brent Sheldon, Peter Johnson, Steven Muscarella, Jim Walton, Ellen Ditonto, Alyssa Porter, Elliot Raimondo, Jennifer Williams

Members Absent: Billy Torres, Michael Panebianco

Others Present: Zach Altschuler

The Commission Chair, Pete Johnson, called the meeting to order at 5:07 p.m. and the attendance was noted for the record.

The commission discussed the two maps that had been provided by Zach Altschuler and Mrs. Ditonto noted that she was also looking for voter registration and vote counts for each redistricted ward in an effort to avoid jerrymandering any of the wards. She emphasized that the shifts in the wards should be fairly neutral. She also mentioned that Mr. Altschuler had sent her the information that afternoon. Mr. Altschuler demonstrated the data that the website offers through the different elections that can be viewed. He noted the count for each ward with regard to the current lines and how people voted. Mr. Walton argued that there needs to be a count for the voter registration to avoid jerrymandering and not the candidates that got the vote. He noted that voting results aren't indicative of who is living in the ward, but the voter registration is. Mrs. Ditonto asked if the county used that data to adjust their lines. The answer to that question remained unclear. Mr. Sheldon noted that the county would be holding a public hearing next month regarding their two plans.

Mr. Altschuler offered to send the data out to the group for everyone to review and said that he could note the changes on the maps. Mrs. Ditonto noted that each ward needed to be reviewed to see if the shift resulted in any significant change. Mr. Dolce noted that we have the data of the registered voters for each ward and asked Mrs. Ditonto if she was looking for the areas of change and she said she was. Mr. Johnson clarified that the group was looking for the number of changes for the areas that moved. Mr. Altschuler said it may be just an issue of contacting the Board of Elections to get the registered voter data and he offered to send all the numbers to the group.

Mrs. Ditonto said that the responsibility of the commission is to come up with a plan that showed that there was no jerrymandering taking place and that the way to show that is with the data; most notable, with the registration numbers on the changed parts of the districts. Mr. Dolce noted the change on the "least changed" map and commented that he

didn't think there was too great of a shift. Mrs. Ditonto pointed out the change in ward 4 and ward 5. Mr. Altschuler noted that the numbers were still quite similar. Mr. Muscarella asked which map had the biggest territorial change and Ward 5 was shown to have given some territory to Ward 6. Ward 6 had the biggest drop in population in 2020 and so Ward 5 was pushed toward Martin Road, giving Ward 6 the Allen Park neighborhood.

Mr. Sheldon noted that the numbers didn't need to be reviewed on the "least changed" map, as it was based off of the historic ward lines that have been used for the last thirty years, but rather the map with the greater number of changes would most likely run the risk of being construed as gerrymandered. Mr. Johnson said that the concern could be raised using the "staff version 2" map whereas using the "least changed" map would not run that risk. Mr. Muscarella said that if the group were to pick a version, it would give direction to process.

Mr. Johnson asked if there was a consensus already around one of the maps. He noted that if the "least changed" map was selected, there wouldn't be as big a need to dig further into the data as the shifts were minimal. Mr. Walton pointed out that with the numbers, you can't see the registered voter information. Mr. Raimondo asked if the website had that data and the answer was no. Mr. Dolce noted that while the group did not have access to the voter registration, it could be easily obtained from the Board of Elections.

Mr. Sheldon said that the group should be looking at the population shifts and not the voter registrations. Mr. Johnson asked if the changes between the population shift could be quantified regardless of voter status. Mr. Altschuler noted that in the least changed map, the difference would be around 200 individuals with the biggest change being in Ward 3. Mr. Johnson asked how many Jamestown residents would move into a new ward under the "least changed" map versus how many would move under the "staff version 1" map. Mr. Altschuler said an estimate would be a couple of hundred people. The first version would be maybe a couple of thousand due to the section of 1200 people that shifted. Mr. Muscarella noted that the greater the number in the shift, the greater the chance for trouble. Mr. Sheldon pointed out the shift from the fourth ward into the third ward as well.

Ms. Porter asked to see the maps side by side with the data in an effort to see ward to ward comparisons between the map with the most change versus the current lines. The group reviewed each ward as Mr. Altschuler pulled up the data. She asked to see that total number with regard to population change.

Mr. Sheldon said if there was an accurate number of the people that will change wards between the least changed and most changed maps. Mrs. Ditonto agreed and noted that people will ask the question. Mr. Dolce noted that there is no way to know how many of those people will vote and will vote for the party they are registered for. Mr. Sheldon noted that it's important to note the population change versus registration status. Mr. Dolce noted that many people sometimes do not vote in the same manner as they are

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registered. Mrs. Ditonto noted that it's important to see that comparison to be able to say that you don't make a lot of swings as is shown by the major elections.

Mr. Johnson asked if Mr. Altschuler could get a definitive number between map one and map 2 before the next meeting. Mr. Walton asked if the group would be disregarding the registered voter status. Mrs. Ditonto said that it is another tool to have as it affects voting as well and that the group should take time to look at all the data. Ms. Williams noted that the group has until September first to submit their plan to the mayor and city council.

Mr. Muscarella noted that during the group's last meeting, it was determined that most ward changes were minimal and some voting places may not change at all. Mrs. Ditonto noted that as the population changes, where they will vote matters. If we get the comparison of the registration and the number of changes and where they are voting in what district or ward will help. Mr. Dolce noted that Ward 3 has been moved around the most as far as polling places in the past.

Mr. Johnson noted that there seemed to be a consensus around coming back to review the comparison data. The group agreed to meet on July 19th at 5:00 in the Mayor's Conference Room.

Mr. Dolce moved to adjourn and the motion was seconded by Mr. Muscarella.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

Jennifer Williams
City Clerk/Treasurer