



CITY OF CAMBRIDGE

BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS

51 Inman Street, Cambridge, Massachusetts 02139-1732 • Telephone 617-349-4361 • TTY: 617-492-0235
Fax: 617-349-4366 • Email: Elections2@cambridgema.gov • Website: www.cambridgema.gov/election

COMMISSIONERS
Ethridge A. King, Jr.
Larry W. Ward
Charles J. Marquardt
Victoria A. Harris

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
Tanya L. Ford-Crump

ASSISTANT DIRECTOR
Lesley Waxman

BOARD OF ELECTION COMMISSIONERS MEETING Minutes of October 6, 2021

The Chair called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm on October 6, 2021 via Zoom.

Roll Call:

Commissioner Larry Ward	Present
Commissioner Victoria Harris	Present
Commissioner Ethridge King	Present
Commissioner Charles Marquardt	Present

Also, present were Executive Director Tanya Ford-Crump, Assistant Director Lesley Waxman and Jeff Amero and Sean Sweeney from Geographic Information Systems "GIS".

I. PUBLIC COMMENT

Before opening the meeting for public comment, the Chair provided an overview of the reprecincting process. The Chair explained that the process:

every ten years after the Federal Census is complete, new ward and precinct boundary lines are drawn to reflect changes in the City's population and to anticipate the needs of the City's election system for the next decade.

Voting precincts established by a city or town must meet the following requirements:

- Each new precinct must be "composed of compact and contiguous territory" without protruding fingers or long tails to the extent possible.
- Precincts must be bounded by the center-line of streets or other well defined boundaries such as streams or other bodies of water, railroad tracks, power lines or other clearly visible geographic figures.
- No precinct may contain more than 4,000 residents.
- Every precinct's population must be within five percent (5%) of the average precinct population for that ward or town.
- Ward populations must be within five percent (5%) of the average ward population for the city.
- Redrawn ward and precinct boundaries must not result in the dilution of minority group members' votes

The Chair then explained other factors considered by the Commission and staff, including:

- Historic polling locations.
- Minimizing changes to the extent possible.
- Location of senior housing.
- Limiting crossings of train tracks and major streets.

The Chair then opened the meeting for public comment.

Ms. Elaine DeRosa, Pleasant Place, expressed her concern with the currently drawn Ward 2. As drawn, Ward 2 is heavily weighted towards MIT students which inhibits the creation of a Ward 2 committee and hinders the participation of

residents of Washington Elms and Newtowne Court in the political processes of the City. She strongly encouraged the Commission to redraw Ward 2 to include more residents on the surrounding community with Washington Elms and Newtowne Court.

Councillor E. Denise Simmons, Harvard Street, voiced her strong concerns with Ward 2. She conveyed that she feels the current map marginalizes the residents of Washington Elms and Newtowne Court by placing them in a ward dominated by MIT students. She encouraged the Commission to take the time required to rectify the issue.

Gerry McDonough, Hollis Street, expressed his concern with Rindge Towers being included in Ward 10 rather than Ward 11 citing both historic connections and the physical barrier created by the train tracks between Rindge Towers and the rest of Ward 10. He also highlighted that the Brickworks complex be considered as well. Mr. McDonough also highlighted a sliver of Ward 10 Precinct 2, including Bolton Street, that is on the other side of the train tracks that should, if possible, be included in the adjacent 10-3.

Esther Hanig, Pine Street, expressed her strong concerns about Washington Elms and Newtowne Court being included in Ward 2. She provided historical context regarding past reprecincting efforts, the difficulties in organizing a Ward Committee and how she believes the residents of Washington Elms and Newtowne Court may have been marginalized. She provided a potential solution in which precincts are renumbered rather than redrawn.

Margaret Donnelly Moran, Cambridge Housing Authority, expressed her concerns regarding Ward 2 and the inclusion of Washington Elms and Newtowne Court. Her preferred solution would be to incorporate Washington Elms and Newtowne Court with the Port neighborhood.

James Williamson, Jackson Place, voiced his belief that this effort is very important and expressed that more time and notice should be provided to residents to enable them to weigh in on the process and the maps. He also expressed his belief that Rindge Towers should be included in Ward 11 instead of 10 and provided historic context as a resident of Jackson Place.

There being no more public comment.

Motion: To close Public Comment.

Moved: Commissioner Ward

Seconded: Commissioner King

Roll Call

Commissioner Ward Yea

Commissioner Harris Yea

Commissioner King Yea

Commissioner Marquardt Yea

Passed: 4—0

Motion: To suspend the rules to bring forward the discussion of reprecincting.

Moved: Commissioner Ward

Seconded: Commissioner Harris

Roll Call

Commissioner Ward Yea

Commissioner Harris Yea

Commissioner King Yea

Commissioner Marquardt Yea

Passed: 4—0

Commissioner King thanked the members of the public who provided testimony noting that public input is an important part of the process. He also observed that many of the comments focused on ward committees.

Commissioner Harris thanked the commenters and noted that Ward 11 is one of the wards in her area of oversight. She pointed out that the Commission was also working on polling locations that would make it easier for people to vote regardless of which ward they were in. She commented that GIS has done a great job and she looked forward to seeing what they could do with Ward 11 based on the feedback received.

Jeff Amero commented that the process this year is being conducted under a very tight timeframe due to a significant delay in receiving Census data. This year the Census data was not received until the second half of August compared to April in 2011.

Ms. Waxman commented that she believed the comments, both written and verbal, received regarding Ward 2 were not asking for the precincts to be redrawn. Rather, they were suggesting the precincts be renumbered to address the concerns raised.

Commissioner Marquardt commented that he concurred with Ms. Waxman regarding the suggestions to renumber precincts in response to concerns raised regarding Ward 2 and Newtowne Court and Washington Elms.

Discussion then moved to Rindge Towers and Ward 11. GIS was asked how hard would it be to reconfigure Ward 11 to include Rindge Towers. Discussion also focused on Brickworks which is split by Census blocks so some is in Ward 11 currently and the remainder in Ward 10. This would be corrected if Ward 11 was reconfigured to incorporate Rindge Towers.

Jeff Amero then mentioned that in Simulation 3 there was considerable impacts felt into the center of Cambridge from reconfiguring North Cambridge. Therefore, it is possible that reconfiguring Ward 11 could have similar effects, but they would not know for sure until they worked on the map.

Ms. Ford-Crump pointed out that the Secretary of the Commonwealth wants the maps turned in earlier rather than later to help with potential legislative map impacts on Cambridge Wards and Precincts. She also highlighted that precincts have to have a similar number of residents which limits how much redrawing can be done. She also highlighted that the Commission does not incorporate political considerations into the map whereas the Legislature does.

Commissioner Ward asked what the next steps would be after today.

In response, the Commissioners were informed that comments received, both written (attached) and provided today in Public Comment would be considered, to the extent possible, in a revisited Simulation that would be provided to the Commission and reviewed in a public meeting.

Commissioner King noted that the Commission should continue to consider where people vote, particularly for those residents living in Senior Housing where distance to the polls could affect residents' ability to vote.

Commissioner Ward observed that the polling location for 10-3 would most likely be on the Rindge Towers side of the tracks making it easier for residents to vote even if they remained in 10-3.

Commissioner Marquardt asked if renumbering precincts as well as boundary changes would require Ward Committees to be reconstituted. Ms. Waxman said she was not sure but that was probably best a question for the respective parties.

Commissioner Harris commented that it is important to notify the public regarding whatever changes are made to the map so that they have a chance to review and comment. She asked if the Public Information Office could be involved in disseminating information regarding reprecincting.

Ms. Waxman commented that the map might still have to have changes based on whatever the State Legislature does with redistricting. She also asked if she should post Simulation 3 as it had been discussed during the meeting.

Commissioner King commented that he was not in favor of posting Simulation 3 as it is not the map under consideration and may just lead to confusion.

Commissioner Marquardt noted that Simulation 3 created significant changes in precincts throughout the City.

Commissioner Harris commented that she concurred with her colleagues regarding posting Simulation 3.

Commissioners agreed that it was best to stick with Simulation 2B and try and address the issues raised.

Commissioner Ward thanked the public for their comments and noted that the Commission and GIS would do what they could to address issues.

II: MINUTES

Motion: To approve the Minutes of September 29, 2021 with corrections.

Moved: Commissioner Ward

Seconded: Commissioner King

Roll Call

Commissioner Ward Yea

Commissioner Harris Yea

Commissioner King Yea

Commissioner Marquardt Yea

Passed: 4—0

III: REPORTS

1. Executive Director's Report

Ms. Ford-Crump noted that her report was the reprecincting.

2. Assistant Director's Report

Ms. Waxman made the following report:

a. Wardens and Clerks Voting List

In response to feedback from Wardens and Clerks we have provided a separate list of voters for the use of the Wardens and Clerks. They will have Poll Pads this year so will they still need a printed list.

Commissioners discussed and agreed that the Poll Pads should replace printed lists.

b. Evacuation Procedures

The procedures are being simplified and will be provided as a separate piece from the manuals.

c. Early Voting by Mail Update

Approximately 8,600 applications have been received and approximately 3,000 have been mailed. Over 100 Absentee Ballots have been mailed.

3. Commissioners' Reports

Commissioner Harris reported that:

- She has been in communication with the Harvard Votes Project at Harvard Law and they are planning an event on 10/21 and would like a Commissioner to attend.

Commissioner Marquardt indicated he could attend.

Commissioner Marquardt reported that:

- 155 Putnam Ave is NOT a valid address
- 2 Florence Street is NOT a valid address
- The Buildings and Grounds Subcommittee of the School Committee would be holding a hearing on Tuesday, October 12, 2021 to discuss the use of school buildings for the upcoming Special Election.

Commissioner Marquardt agreed to send Commissioner Ward the meeting notice. Commissioners Ward and Harris to attend the meeting.

Commissioner Ward reported that:

- He and Victor from DPW visited the Community Charter School of Cambridge on Bent Street to plan the layout for the upcoming Municipal Election. There is plenty of space for 2 precincts.

IV. ACTION AGENDA

Old Business

Public Outreach

Time is of the essence for the PSA's as Early Voting by Mail ballots are being mailed.

Discussion was to focus on the PSA's around "How to fill out a ballot" and "How to mail in a ballot".

Calvin from CityTV is available to film and Commissioner Harris asked if anyone in the office would like to be involved. She will coordinate with Ms. Ford-Crump to reach out to staff.

Motion: To adjourn the meeting at 7:29 pm

Moved: Commissioner Ward

Seconded: Commissioner King

Roll Call

Commissioner Ward Yea

Commissioner Harris Yea

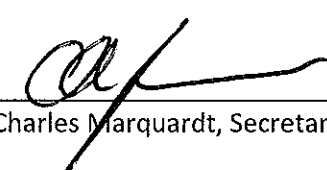
Commissioner King Yea

Commissioner Marquardt Yea

Passed: 4—0

^ True Record

Attested by: _____


Charles Marquardt, Secretary