



WASHTENAW COUNTY APPORTIONMENT COMMISSION

October 11, 2021

MINUTES

A meeting of the Washtenaw County Apportionment Commission was held remotely via Zoom.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lawrence Kestenbaum, Clerk/Register of Deeds (City of Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, MI)
Catherine McClary, Washtenaw County Treasurer (City of Ann Arbor, Washtenaw County, MI)
Eli Savit, Washtenaw County Prosecuting Attorney (Webster Township, Washtenaw County, MI)
David Frey, Washtenaw County Republican Party Chairperson (Augusta Township, Washtenaw County, MI) – 4:08 pm
Chris Savage, Washtenaw County Democratic Party Chairperson (Scio Township, Washtenaw County, MI)

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

OTHERS PRESENT: Ed Golembiewski, Chief Deputy Clerk/Register & Director of Elections
Chelsea Rozek, Washtenaw County GIS Developer

Lawrence Kestenbaum called the meeting to order at 4:03 p.m.

APPROVAL OF PREVIOUS MINUTES

Commissioner Savit, seconded by Commissioner Savage, moved to adopt the minutes of the October 5, 2021 Apportionment Commission Meeting.

Vote on the motion:

4 Yeas. 0 Nays. 1 Absent (Frey). Motion Carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Commissioner McClary, seconded by Commissioner Savage, moved to accept and file the written communications sent to the Apportionment Commission.

Vote on the motion:

4 Yeas. 0 Nays. 1 Absent (Frey). Motion Carried.

Vice Chair Frey joined the meeting by phone at 4:08 pm.

The following members of the public spoke during the public hearing:

- Brenda Stumbo
- Heather Jarrell Roe
- John Scharf
- Dirk Mayhew
- Jo Ann McCollum
- Desirae Simmons
- Stan Eldridge

The Apportionment Commission members responded to and thanked each member of the public who provided input.

Chair Kestenbaum stated that the Court of Appeals granted the Apportionment Commission's request to extend the deadline to approve an apportionment plan to November 15, 2021 at Noon.

NEW BUSINESS

- a. Deliberations toward 2022 Washtenaw County Apportionment Plan

Chair Kestenbaum stated that all proposed apportionment plans are available at [Washtenaw.org/Appportionment](https://www.washtenaw.org/Appportionment), or directly at this link:

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/646c4880d2db4106bef97bd301d2cd75>

Commissioner Savage requested that GIS staff add the name of each submitter to the maps available online.

Commissioner Savit presented an 11-district map, explaining that he began drawing the map beginning at the east side of the county. He described the details of the districts proposed.

Commissioners Savit and Vice Chair Frey discussed vote cracking, which divides minority voters among multiple districts resulting in de minimis representation therein, and vote packing wherein a district is comprised mainly of minority voters.

Vice Chair Frey commented that there are currently more elected County Commissioners who are black than the demographic's relative share of county population.

Commissioner Savit stated that these issues should still be considered even though there are currently County Commissioners of color elected to office.

Vice Chair Frey and Commissioner Savit discussed how Augusta Township is split in Commissioner Savit's proposed map.

Vice Chair Frey stated that the township could be split because part of the township is aligned with Ypsilanti Township, part of the township is not. He stated that splitting the West Willow neighborhood provides more representation to the community.

Commissioner Savit stated that he is open to splitting the neighborhood based on new feedback the commission has received.

Commissioner McClary stated that 10 years ago Ypsilanti Township and Pittsfield Township were outspoken about not wanting to be split into multiple districts. She stated she has received multiple phone calls from residents from many jurisdictions that there are good governance issues at stake and that they would prefer to keep the number and location of districts as they are as much as it is possible, adjusted for population.

Commissioner McClary stated that she was a member of a 15-district Board of Commissioners and that the board functioned well, but there was a significant improvement in the functioning of the board when it was reduced to 9 members. She said that she has heard that the Board of Commissioners should be expanded to serve as a "farm team" for other elected offices. She said the work is too important to simply be a training ground for other elected offices. She said she thinks Chair Kestenbaum's 9-district map would provide for good governance.

Chair Kestenbaum stated that it is not possible to adopt a plan that does not split at least some jurisdictions. He described the 9-district map he submitted and that he made minor changes to the existing districts. He described the 15-district map he submitted, explaining that he began drawing the map from the east side of the county. He stated that he believes that the commission should not begin by picking the number of districts to include in a plan, but rather by considering how a number of districts fit with geography and population.

Commissioner Savage thanked those who have submitted maps and agreed with Commissioner McClary that more commissioners may lead to a less effective Board of Commissioners. He said the current board works well together and that some districts are competitive for Republicans. He said that increasing the number districts to try to avoid the Board of Commissioners acting as a "farm team" is a weak argument. He said there is not consensus about splitting the West Willow neighborhood into multiple districts and will engage residents there to learn more. He said he would prefer to retain 9 districts but that there is a compelling argument to increase the number to 11.

Chair Kestenbaum and Commissioner McClary described the feedback the Apportionment Commission received when it was considering a plan in 2011.

OTHER BUSINESS

- a. Next meeting date

Commissioner McClary, seconded by Commissioner Frey, moved that the Apportionment Commission will meet via Zoom at 4:00 pm on October 18, 2021.

Vote on the motion:

5 Yeas. 0 Nays. 0 Absent. Motion Carried.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Kestenbaum adjourned the meeting at 5:23 p.m.

Lawrence Kestenbaum, County Clerk/Register

Approved: