



MINUTES

**CUYAHOGA COUNTY DISTRICTING COMMISSION MEETING
THURSDAY, AUGUST 26, 2021
CUYAHOGA COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE HEADQUARTERS
2079 EAST NINTH STREET
C. ELLEN CONNALLY COUNCIL CHAMBERS – 4TH FLOOR
3:00 PM**

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Frost called the meeting to order at 3:09 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

Mr. Frost asked Clerk Richardson to call the role. Commission members Frost, Koesel, Lumpkin, Morgan, and Murphy were in attendance and a quorum was determined. Councilmembers Jones, Baker, Conwell and Miller were also in attendance.

3. APPROVAL OF THE AUGUST 23, 2021, MEETING MINUTES

A motion was made by Ms. Morgan, seconded by Mr. Koesel and approved by unanimous vote to approve the minutes from the August 23, 2021, meeting as presented.

4. PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Catherine LaCroix, Co-President, League of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland, addressed the Commission regarding the districting map that they presented to the Commission at the August 23rd Commission meeting which they felt presented the goals of minimal population variation, political and ethnic equity, geographic compactness, keeping communities of interest together and competitiveness. She addressed the concerns that the Leagues of Women Voters of Greater Cleveland had with the districting maps that were presented to the Commission at the August 25th Commission meeting which they feel were drawn

to contain the opinions of the Council and to include an emphasis on minimal disruption which will protect incumbents and stated that the goal of the new district lines should be drawn to empower voters.

Lou addressed the Commission and expressed concerns with the limited amount of time for outreach to the Citizens of Cuyahoga County pertaining to the education on districting and the opportunity for the Citizens to give an opinion on the districting process and the inequalities redistricting could possibly deliver to the low income and poor citizens within Cuyahoga County.

Pastor Anthony Small, East Cleveland Concerned Pastors, addressed the Commission and expressed his concern with the governmental influence while recreating the districting map and his concerns within the African American Community, specifically in East Cleveland, regarding their views on voting and the lack of participation in the Census which he felt had a negative impact on the population and district lines for the City of East Cleveland.

The Honorable Yvonne Conwell, Cuyahoga County Councilmember, addressed the Commission and advised that she has cause for concern regarding the districting maps that were presented at the August 25th Commission meeting and asked the Commission to take into consideration the African American population within Districts 7, 8 and 9.

The Honorable Mayor Patrick J. Cooney, Mayor of Fairview Park, provided public comment via a letter addressed to the Commission and stated his concerns regarding the redistricting maps that were presented at the August 25th Commission meeting. He expressed his concerns with the removal of the Cities of Rocky River and Brook Park from District 1 and advised the Commission on impacts that the removal of those cities would potentially have if they were removed from District 1.

Dr. Mark J. Salling, provided public comment via email addressed to Mr. Frost regarding the submission of his proposed map; limiting the change in districts for the population, its voters, the elected and administrative officials that have developed important relationships with the Council. Mr. Salling also expressed his concerns regarding the Commission not allowing sufficient input from others in the County by rushing the process.

5. ITEMS OF CONSIDERATION

a) Overview

Mr. Jeff Rusnak, President and Chief Executive Officer, for R Strategy Group, LLC, addressed the Commission and provided an overview of the presentation topics being presented.

b) Response To New Questions and Comments

Mr. Rusnak provided responses to questions posed at the August 25th Districting Commission meeting relating to maps submitted online from Cleveland State;

feedback to emails received; comments related to splitting up District 1 and keeping it whole; Highland Heights and Richmond Heights; compactness of District 6.

c) Discussion of Map Option(s)

Mr. Michael Muller, President of Muller Public Strategies, addressed the Commission and provided responses to online submission comments relating to the proposed map submitted by Robert Dykes, Senior Consultant, Triad Research Group, and Dr. Mark J. Salling, Maxine Goodman Levin College of Urban Affairs, Cleveland State University, regarding maintaining communities of interest and racial and demographic shifts; and online submission of correspondence received from William Tartar Jr., who served on the County Charter Commission, relating to the challenges of trying to achieve compactness of District 6.

Mr. Frost commented that he values all submissions received; stated that the efforts made by the Triad Research Group and Cleveland State University were admirable. Mr. Frost stated they encountered the same obstacles he experienced while he was working on the maps, as it relates to finding the best solutions to increase compactness in District 6 or to reduce the number of times the City of Cleveland was split; and said many of the factors that guided their efforts will be seen and embodied in the final map the Commission deliberates on and thanked them for their proposal. Members Murphy and Koesel concurred.

Discussion ensued.

Mr. Rusnak provided an update relating to the request to check with the County Councilmembers in terms of the shifting and changes that were occurring in the precincts; reported that emails were sent to all Councilmembers inviting comment, suggestions and feedback regarding the changes proposed at the August 25th Commission meeting; received responses from 9 of the 11 Councilmembers.

Mr. Matt Cassidy, Lead Strategic Consultant at TargetSmart Communications, addressed the Commission and presented response 1 to proposed map options utilizing the range of deviation from -3.9% to 6.0% for a total range of 9.9% for Districts 1 thru 11, which included constituency disruption, minority-majority districts and compactness, with a disruption of 29,351 residents (2.3%) of Cuyahoga County's population being placed into a new district.

Commission members commented that they were pleased to see their suggested changes addressed particularly in Districts 7 thru 10 with the greatest loss of population; are happy to see the minority-majority number was a little higher than perceived; asked if all the split precincts were eliminated in this proposal, as the Commission is not allowed to adopt a map that has split precincts.

d) Additional Meeting(s), if needed

No discussion took place.

e) Decision Point(s), if any

Mr. Rusnak addressed the Commission and asked if the members if there were any outstanding issues that needs to be addressed.

Mr. Frost stated it would be appropriate to formally adopt a standard; thanked the Law Department for providing a legal opinion; and invited a motion to adopt the 10% total deviation standard.

A motion was made by Ms. Murphy, seconded by Mr. Lumpkin, and approved by unanimous vote to adopt the 10% total deviation standard.

Discussion ensued.

f) Outreach Update

Mr. Jeff Rusnak addressed the Commission and reported that additional comments were received; the website is being updated constantly; and the public has access to the website.

Discussion ensued.

Commission members will reconvene on Monday, August 30th to consider and cast a final vote. Mr. Frost asked Mr. Koesel if he is comfortable where the Commission is in the process and if he feels he has everything he needs to make a decision even if he can't be in attendance to cast a vote on Monday. Mr. Koesel stated he is confident and has no objection to the Commission proceeding without him, as he is unable to attend Monday's meeting.

Discussion ensued.

6. MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

There was no miscellaneous business.

7. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss and on a motion by Mr. Lumpkin with a second by Ms. Morgan, the meeting was adjourned at 4:30 p.m., without objection.