

The Strategic Planning Meeting

Monday, March 20, 2023

1. CALL TO ORDER: President Stewart called the meeting to order at 8:22 P.M.

2. BUSINESS OF THE MEETING:

1. The matter of a presentation ward redistricting: ward boundaries required for small population- balancing changes.

President Stewart called Community Development Director Ashley Scott to share the business of the meeting. Law Director Deery explained the business of the meeting. Ward redistricting occurs every ten years in conjunction with the census. Due to the covid-19 pandemic, the census was delayed, results were delayed, the process of redistricting has also been delayed. Ward changes will not go into effect until the 2025 council election cycle.

Director Scott explained that in 2022 the community development department placed a request for RFP seeking consultant services to assist with a redistricting plan in accordance with all federal, state, local laws. The result was an agreement that was entered into with Timmons Group Geospatial Solutions and National Demographics Corporation to analyze and redraw ward boundaries pursuant to the results of the 2020 census. Consultants analyzed existing data and it had been determined that ward boundaries would require some small population balancing changes. Director Scott introduced Doug Johnson with NDC as the subject matter expert for the team, Mr. Johnson carries an exhaustive list of experience, including, but not limited to advisory redistricting projects, Voting rights analysis along with a list of state, county and municipal districting and redistricting clients.

Data reports and mapping tools have been prepared to disclose what the existing conditions are, along with some potential draft solutions. Director Scott shared that the presentation was informational and no consideration was being requested. Community development would schedule a future meeting in thirty to forty -five days and perhaps request consideration at that time. Meeting was turned over to Mr. Johnson for presentation.

Mr. Johnson provided information regarding the ease of use of the website provided by the Timmons Group: <https://elyria-redistricting-timmons-group.hub.arcgis.com/pages/draft-maps>

A preview of the current ward maps was provided. The federal law rule states that if there is more than 10 difference between the largest and smallest wards, then you must go through the process of redistricting. Elyria wards two and six fall significantly short of the rule, ward five is overpopulated. Wards four and seven do not require any adjustments at all, no changes are being proposed. Wards one and three, could possibly stay as they are, however they are getting close to the maximum range. Mr. Johnson explained that consideration could be given to look at bringing wards one and three closer or leave them as they are. However in ten years they will require adjustment.

What was presented required by federal law, was two options: number one, adjust slightly the west side of town, and the east side of town entirely optional. The plans presented are draft plans. West side option maps are reflected as A1 and B2, East side options are reflected as B1 and B2. Mr. Johnson explained balancing A1 would be near the curve of the river just across from city hall, the area from the bend of the river to West Ave., north of the railroad tracks, would be the bend of the river all the way to Washington Ave. According to the census, 243 people would be affected. The population of Elyria being 52,000 plus, the ideal ward size would be 7,500. The recommendation to balance ward 6, would be the railroad to the west end of the river, coming down Third St., coming up West Ave. McDonald's would stay in ward 5, Taco Bell and Burger King would move into ward 6, 314 people would be affected. Map A2 option provides for a balance of wards one and three. Ward one would increase, ward three would decrease by 259 people. The area is the end of University and Abbe Rd., from the Abbe Wood to Christ Church. The west side of the road would stay in three, on the east side it would move into ward one. The third change

of B1, recommends both sides of the railroad tracks and all 500 people would move into ward six, small portion of six would move to ward two, this option would balance ward five.

Th demographics are listed on the website. Two federal requirements exist, one is equal populations in each ward, the second is complying with the federal Voting Rights Act and ensuring that they are not diluting any voting strength of the law across protected classes.

Council members were encouraged to review the website maps and reach out to Director Scott with any questions or to contact the consultant.

3. ADJOURNMENT:

Cerra moved, Schneider seconded to adjourn.

Meeting adjourned at 8:41 P.M.

RLP/