

MINUTES
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
LAWTON REDISTRICTING COMMISSION
JANUARY 11, 2012

George Moses, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. Notice of meeting and agenda were posted at City Hall as required by the Open Meeting Act.

ROLL CALL

Present: Godlove, Ernest; Henry, Pat; Jester, Kent; Knippenburg, Don; Moses, George; Smith, G. Wayne; Stewart, James (entered late)

Absent: Holland, Dennis.

Also Present: Frank Jensen, City Attorney; Richard Rogalski, Planner Director; Michael Jones, GIS; Monica Baughman, Election Board Secretary; Denise Ezell, Deputy City Clerk.

Moses stated I would ask that we go around the table and introduce ourselves. I'm George Moses and have been on the committee longer than I can remember. This is interesting work and I look forward to working with all of you. I'm a long time resident of Lawton. I was born and raised here and then retired from the military here. I went to high school here when we only had one high school and one football team.

Smith stated I'm G Wayne Smith representing Ward 1 and I'm a lifetime resident of Lawton.

Rogalski stated I'm Richard Rogalski the Director of Planning. I'm not on the commission but here as a helper.

Jones stated I'm Michael Jones the GIS Supervisor and I'm also a city staff helper.

Godlove stated I'm Ernest Godlove a new member of the commission. I'm probably the only one here that has actually attended a class in this room.

Baughman stated I'm Monica Baughman the Election Board Secretary. I'm here to answer any questions in regards to the precinct boundaries.

Jester stated I'm Kent Jester and I represent Ward 2. I have been on this commission since 2007 and I'm happy to serve.

Knippenburg stated I'm Don Knippenburg. I was recommended to this position by a friend of mine. I'm not certain but I think he is mad. It will be interesting to see what this Committee is all about.

Henry stated I'm Pat Henry and this is my third term on the Commission. I would like to say if it were not for George Moses I would not have returned the second time. He is a statistical mathematical wizard and is perfect for this job.

Smith stated he makes it easy to understand.

Moses stated thanks but I need all the help I can get. That was Frank Jensen the City Attorney. I wanted him here in case we needed answers to legal questions.

1. Discuss of 2010 Precincts 31 and 32.

Moses stated during the last redistricting there were voters from these precincts that were confused about their voting place. They ask us to take action to correct the problem and we told them it was not within our authority to do so. We did notify those who have the authority. Baughman is here to explain how that was corrected.

Baughman stated the Election Board has to follow the House, Senate and Commissioners lines. We cannot cross two House, Senate or Commissioners in one precinct. We have to follow the lines that are set by the State. Ten years ago in redistricting the House and Senate there was a portion on Carver Street that had to go all the way to MacArthur Jr. High to vote. We receive a lot of complaints on this precinct line. I spoke with the Senators and Representatives to see if changes could be made and they assured me they would look into it. At the last redistricting they did not move the lines. When I did the precinct lines we move the precinct line on the east side of the interstate. From the House and Senate lines there is a little gap that runs all the way to Rogers Lane. There are not voters in this gap. To correct the Carver Street issue this is what we did.

Rogalski stated I believe it runs up Lawrie Tatum Road.

Baughman stated that is correct. They will now go back to the Patterson Center to vote. Another issue was in the Sullivan Village Area. Precinct 33 polling was at Sullivan Village School and when they redrew the lines those that lived across the street from the school had to go to Park Lane School to vote. During the redistricting they change a few blocks but not the whole area. There may still be a few issues with this precinct.

Moses ask are those decisions documented anywhere.

Baughman stated I don't know. I would assume they take minutes at their meeting. This is all done at the State level and I don't know how they do their records. Another issue which might be a concern is the Pecan Valley Addition. When they did the redistricting ten years ago they split Pecan Valley down the middle. The west side voted in Cache and the east side voted either at precinct 50 Holy Family Catholic Church or precinct 1 First Assembly of God Church. When they redistricted this time they moved the line up about a half a mile. Now everyone in Pecan Valley has to go to Cache to vote. You may receive calls on this issue.

Rogalski stated this includes some within the city limits of Lawton. There are twenty-four residents.

Baughman stated twenty-four residents but only three registered voters.

Moses stated this highlights concerns that I have even more and that is as times goes on growth continues to the west. We are going to have some inter-city coordination issues to deal with. I don't know the solution but I can't image that it is unprecedented. That is only going to get more complicated as time goes on.

Rogalski stated LMPO has been looking at Cache and Lawton coming together at some point and our metropolitan area will include Cache. We will have representation and that will be a coordinating agency. I don't know if it will be done when we redo the 2030 Land Use Plan this time or the next time. We won't be dictating to Cache as to what is happening but we will have a coordinating agency in terms of transportation dollars that we will work together on.

Henry ask are there citizens of Lawton living in precinct 42 and are they represented by a Councilman?

Rogalski stated the current precinct has no residents but the area is represented by a Councilman. To vote for that Councilman they will have to go to Cache. With the new precinct we have three registered voters.

Moses ask are there any other questions.

2. Approve Minutes of November 28, 2005.

MOVED by Jester, **SECOND** by Smith, to approved the minutes of November 28, 2005 as written. **AYE:** Henry; Jester; Knippenburg; Moses; Smith. **NAY:** None. **ABSTAIN:** Godlove. **MOTION CARRIED.**

3. Staff briefing – Richard Rogalski, Planning Director

Moses stated staff is going to brief us on the data and information we will be dealing with. In your letter I told you we have a computer model that is designed to assist us. I want to emphasis that this is not an attempt to preempt your judgment. It is an attempt to try and inform your judgment. Mike Jones is the Supervisor for the Geographical Information Services department and he is the one that runs the model. He will be able to give us some real time output on the impact of the movements we make in the precincts from one Ward to another. Again I want to emphasis to often computer models get to be substitutes for peoples judgment and that is not what we are intending to do. It is intended to inform our judgments. We have to exercise our judgment as to the goodness and badness of the different alternatives that we look at. We will make a decision based on what the group thinks.

Rogalski stated the map before you shows the Wards in the various colors and the precinct lines. These are the new precinct lines and population figures per precinct. These numbers are from the 2010 census. Staff feels the first thing we need is direction on the criteria. The letter from the 2000 committee shows we have the same issues. The precinct lines are fairly large so there isn't that many blocks. There are only so many precincts that you can shuffle around. If you are not going to respect precinct lines then we are getting down to a detailed area of population and where to draw the lines. Our questions would be are you going to respect

precinct lines or draw the boundaries the best they can be drawn. How are you going to treat Ft. Sill and the prison population? The Ft. Sill population is a very large percentage of our overall. The final picture will look different based on how you consider those two. Precinct 43 isn't all that populous other than the prison. If you count just the prison population it becomes an insignificant precinct. Ft. Sill covers precincts 14, 30, and 51. Precincts 14 and 51 are completely Ft. Sill and precinct 30 has population from both Lawton and Ft. Sill. Precinct 30 has 884 residents that are part of the city and 2,460 that are residents of Ft. Sill. How you treat that can be fairly significant on how your blocks end up. I see those being your most significant decision that will be made because it is going to effect how the Wards are drawn. The third option is how close are we looking for. The laws stated you are looking for 10%. If you look at the draft guidelines the population equity guidelines are 10% from the highest to largest. If we are going to hold precincts that is not possible. One of the caveats is if you are holding precincts lines you don't meet that. What kind of target are you looking for?

Smith ask how hard would it be to get the actual number of the prison population.

Rogalski stated we can contact the prison. I would image it is around 2000 or more.

Moses stated Rogalski has done a good job of expanding the discussion on the criteria. To me the biggest target we have to hit is the population equity. In my view this becomes the prime criteria and then we can consider the other criteria. We don't want a salamander looking shape and that is kind of developing in Ward 7. All other things being equal we have got to meet the population equity.

Rogalski stated following precincts and population equity are exclusive goals. If you are going to follow precincts you will not get your population equity. It is not possible in terms of the 10%. It is more like 20% you will end up with.

Jester stated I understand we are not going to hit the 10% without crossing over the precinct lines.

Moses stated this is the problem we had last time. The precincts are so large and not granulized enough to be able to make fine adjustments among the Wards. We had difficulty meeting the population last time and decided that after BRAC we needed to come as close as we could. We may have to do some things we didn't want to in order to get it. Splitting up precincts is a very distasteful and I think Baughman can confirm why that creates problems.

Baughman stated one thing that has changed is our new voting machines. The way our new system is set up if a Ward has two different precincts it will not longer acknowledge the Ward district. You have to have two separate voting stations with separate workers. The cost on city elections could be astronomical if you split precincts and could confuse voters.

Moses stated we want to come to grips and meet the law criteria as closely as we can. We found it very difficult to do last time. We don't have control over where those precincts lines are drawn.

Baughman stated we don't either.

Moses stated we will deal with this the best we can. We will document what we did and why we did it. This is the criteria and I believe population equality is what we really have to strive for and then look at the others. To keep ourselves out of trouble with the City Attorney we have to get as close as we can to the Voting Rights Act. Are there any other questions for Rogalski in regards to the data or the precincts as they are drawn?

4. Discussion

Moses stated I think we all understand what the job task at hand is. The question I'm posing before the group is how do we want to proceed to create the alternative we look at. There are a couple of different ways conceptually to do that. First is to have staff produce a straw man that we come in and wicker the way the group wants or we each produce an alternative for our Ward and come back and try to symphonize that in some way. How do we want to proceed?

Smith stated when talking about population equity the Ft. Sill population in those three precincts greatly skew those Wards.

Moses stated the only reason they are in there is because the City wanted to up the economic development numbers. The way I see we handle that is to strip those numbers out and do the redistricting based on the population number of the City excluding Ft. Sill. Then we append those numbers onto the Wards. The research shows that very few of them vote. We need to handle the prison in a similar fashion. Do you have any voters at the prison?

Henry stated if you are a convicted felon you can't vote.

Moses stated we would view that the same way we do Ft. Sill.

Henry stated the thing that bothers me is we have eight Councilmen. Those Councilmen representing Ward 1, 2, 3 and 8 have a great influence and impact on the decisions made by City Council and represent a fewer number of people than those in Wards 4, 5, 6, and 7. This to me is one reason the population figures within the Wards are so important.

Moses stated that brings up the issue of the voting power of the Wards.

Henry stated those who represent the fewest number of people are the one who have the voting power.

Moses stated a way to deal with that is you develop a weighting factor for each Ward based on the voting propensity of the Ward population. You do that by looking at the voting records over the last so many number of years. I'm not recommending that at this point and legally I don't know if it will stand up.

Henry stated I would think who is eligible to vote would be a great factor than those who actually voted. I don't know if we have ever gone back and looked at who actually voted. The number of people who voted doesn't even show in our calculations. It is how many live in the Ward.

Moses stated that is what we use in our criteria for population.

Jester stated in looking at this map we split some of our precincts into two Wards. I would like to know the figure that puts us into the 10% range for each Ward.

Rogalski stated it depends on whether you include or exclude Ft. Sill.

Moses stated you would exclude them.

Rogalski stated 10,500 excluding Ft. Sill and the prison.

Jester ask why would we exclude Ft. Sill? Did we include them before?

Moses stated we appended them onto the resulting district. The reason for including Ft. Sill was strictly for economic development.

Rogalski stated the average with Ft. Sill is 12,100.

Moses stated I wouldn't include Ft. Sill in that average because it begins to skew the entire Ward. I think we all agree that is the target number. That will be the basis on which we develop our alternatives. Lets go back on how we proceed. Do we want staff to prepare a straw man that we can pick at or do we want to each prepare an alternative for our Ward. I believe the former is probably the simplest and cleaner thing to do. I put this on the table for discussion.

Henry stated I would say let the staff do it.

Moses stated then I would ask Rogalski to put together an alternative that we can work with at the next meeting. Off that we can create as many alternatives as we wish. Then Jones can give us a rundown on what the numbers look like. Is everyone in agreement with that?

All agreed.

Rogalski ask are we going to do clean precinct boundaries, population equity or both.

Moses stated take the current Wards the way they are and take the precincts that are contained within them and create an alternative that regroups the precincts to meet the population criteria. Be sure to label it as a staff draft and next time we meet we will have another map and sheet that will show the results of that straw man. We will use that to work off of to produce the decision/alternative that we can live with. Does that satisfy everybody?

Rogalski stated if we follow precincts this is going to be an easy task. You can't move them as much as you want to.

Moses stated the decision of splitting precincts is a lot of trouble and we can deal with that if we have to. I don't believe anybody here wants to do that but on the other hand we are wildly out of balance and we have to deal with it somehow.

Rogalski stated you can see that alternative and have a good feeling of how far you want to go. There will be a spread like 20 or 30%.

Moses stated we will deal with that when we get together. On the issue of voting power does anyone have any ideas of how we might deal with that?

Henry stated it will be taken care of if we get the numbers equalized in population.

Moses stated okay.

Henry stated Councilmen are going to want to be in on this from the word go. In the past they have had some very good suggestions. We just need to get started.

Moses stated lets get started and see what the condition is and what our possibilities are. From there if we need to we may want to have each member talk with their Councilman or we may want to brief the Council. We usually don't do that until it is over. The decision of how the redistricting lies with this group and not the Council. Is that correct?

Jensen stated yes. You will file a resolution with the City Clerk. I'm not sure of your timetable but we have our Charter election in February 14 and if certain propositions are passed the filing period will be in April, a primary in June and the runoff in November.

Moses stated I want us to be done no later than March 31st. Will that be too late?

Baughman stated yes. Once the Ward boundaries are decided we have to print maps. These maps have to be in place before the filing period. Everything is on hold until we get the Ward boundaries.

Moses stated we need to be done by the end of February.

Jensen stated I want to emphasis the statute says "a municipal governing body to the extent practicable shall not sub-divide precincts established by the County Election Board in establishing Ward Council boundaries." That has to be a primary consideration. This is not a criteria listed in our Charter and I would certainly agree population is the number one criteria. That doesn't say that we have to it says we shall to the extent of practicable knowledge.

Baughman stated the only reason for saying this is due to law suits.

Jester asked from a legal standpoint which criteria is the most important.

Jensen stated it doesn't give you a priority. I would agree with Col. Moses that population is more important from our standpoint. It is more important than compact and contiguous. I would also think that precinct boundaries are up there with population. This is my personal opinion.

Rogalski stated to give you an example Ward 1 is made up of two square miles with two precincts. The only way you can change Ward 1 is by adding an adjacent square mile which is 50% change in population. That is not going to get you very far. If we are going to use whole precincts this can be done very quickly. You don't have many options so this could be done in three meetings or so.

Moses stated when do you think you can produce an alternative.

Rogalski stated as early as Friday.

Moses stated given what we have just heard I think we probably should meet as quickly as possible.

Godlove stated is it my understanding when we freeze the precincts we will be moving them from Ward to Ward in order to get the balance.

Henry stated that is the only way you can do it.

Smith stated you can't move partial precincts if I understood you right.

Moses stated subdividing them gets into the problems that Baughman described. The issue is whether we want to take on those problem.

Knippenburg stated it might be a little late to take them on.

Jester ask what is our average now. Are we within the 10%?

Rogalski stated you are about 12 to 9%. There is a population difference of 3,000. The population range isn't going to get any better when we redistrict. Right now we have split precincts. Once you adjust that it will be a little different.

Jester stated I would suggest we not make the population distraction any worse than it is now.

Rogalski stated certainly and hopefully we improve it.

Godlove ask isn't Ward 7 a real problem.

Rogalski stated it isn't a population problem it is just not very contiguous. The boundary Wards have more flexibility than the interior Wards. That is where the population is the densest.

Moses stated the only issue is it is beginning to creep into a non-compact status. That is the only Ward with bleeding arms.

Godlove ask doesn't it have dramatically different demographics as far as the people in that Ward.

Rogalski stated the thing you want to look at is precincts 25, 29 and 26. You want to keep that core together. That is where the minority population is the greatest. You want to avoid diluting the minority voting population. Beyond that we are pretty demographically equal.

Godlove stated it seems to me when we were talking about the Charter considerations there was a great deal of discussion about how Ward 7 has changed in its demographics. There are different types of people there that when you elect one you are really disenfranchising another segment of that Ward.

Moses stated they have more minority criteria that has been diluted.

Godlove stated the minority criteria is actually dominate right now. Because of the far west side and it increasing population those people on the west side are crying they are not represented by the representative of the Ward.

Rogalski stated the west side is broken into two precincts which are 11 and 45. Dove Creek and the other development on 52nd Street are in precinct 11 and 67th Street is the dividing line.

Godlove ask are we talking about moving the precincts around to keep the Wards.

Jester stated no it is the other way around. Precincts can't be moved.

Godlove stated I'm saying we designate a precinct to a different Ward. We are not moving the precincts around rather we are moving the Wards around.

Jester stated correct.

Godlove stated so possibly part of Ward 7 would go in the Ward just above it.

Jester stated exactly.

Rogalski stated those are some of the choices that you can readily make.

Moses stated we can move the Ward boundary wherever we want.

Godlove ask is our draft going to be primarily concerned about number or demographics.

Rogalski stated both. Another option is if a Ward has a smaller population you may want to leave it small due to the growth potential. The south, west and east are all growing in populations.

Moses ask did the members get a copy of the map that shows where all the developments are within the City.

Rogalski stated no.

Moses stated we might want to send that out to them for the next meeting.

Rogalski stated okay.

Moses stated this maps show where all the real estate development has gone since the last census. I believe it would be worth looking at. Some other things to be mindful of is this terrible political situation going on right now. Nobody knows what is going to happen at Ft. Sill and the impact it will have on the City eventually. I would say ignore it at this time. We do have some promising thing going on that are going to cause growth here in the downtown areas and hopefully growth will continue on the east and west side.

5. Establish date for next meeting.

Moses stated our work is important and we will come together again on Monday the 16th at 9:00 if that is good for everyone.

All agreed Monday at 9:00 a.m. was good.

Godlove ask is this an open meeting and is this room sufficient to accommodate an open meeting.

Moses stated yes it is an open meeting and no this room probably will not accommodate everyone.

Godlove ask should we extend an invitation to City Council to suggest to them what is on the agenda, see if they have some insight/input and welcome them to attend the meeting.

Moses stated I believe Council Persons have attended before.

Henry stated we have faced this problem twice before when in the end it seem to be so complex we have thrown our hands up and said we will deal with this next time. That is where we are now. We are at next time.

Godlove stated it seems to me the more openness we have the less possibility for litigation.

Moses stated I tend to agree although we can't have guidance placed on us that becomes impossible to meet.

Godlove stated you are going to have to confront that. I'm suggesting through the benefit of the newspaper we keep everyone aware that this meeting is open and we are extending an invitation to come to the meeting. I just think you are going to cut down on the potential litigation if you have it open.

Moses stated that appeals to me.

Henry stated I agree. I think you build up resentment when you don't keep people informed along the way.

Jensen asked where are we going to schedule the meetings.

Ezell stated in the 3rd Floor Conference Room.

Moses stated okay we will meet on Monday in the 3rd Floor Conference Room at 9:00 a.m.

Henry stated we as a group have been given the problem of the disparities in the population figures in the Wards. That is a problem that we are directed to try and solve. Now we are considering ways to do that.

Moses stated I'm all for your ideas that will help to address that issue.

Godlove ask do you want to attempt to preset limits to the meetings such as the meeting should not exceed so long.

Moses stated I think if we meet frequently for at least an hour we can get the work done.

6. Adjournment.

MOVED by Smith, **SECOND** by Jester, to adjourn. **AYE:** Henry; Jester; Knippenburg; Moses; Smith; Stewart; Godlove. **NAY:** None. **MOTION CARRIED.**

George Moses, Chairman
Redistricting Commission