

MINUTES
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING
LAWTON REDISTRICTING COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 1, 2012

George Moses, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 2:00 p.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; Knippenberg, Don; Moses, George; Smith, G. Wayne; Stewart, James.

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.

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1. Discuss and Review Draft Ward Boundaries and take action if necessary.

Moses stated I would like to welcome everyone. At the last meeting I stated I would be resigning as the committee Chairman at noon on the 14th. The records indicated that Henry is the Vice-Chair and she has agreed to Chair any necessary meetings after my resignation to elect a Chair and Vice-Chair if you wish. She is willing to continue as Vice-Chair but due to her other duties we need to elect a Chair.

Henry stated I think the Public Hearing needs a fulltime spokesperson and I'm not able to give that.

Moses stated I will be present and will comment as I feel is helpful. Rogalski has put together a couple more alternatives and they do look better. Why don't you explain what you have done.

Rogalski stated you have two new alternatives. H is what we had before and now you have I and J. The maps and tables go together as they did before. I separated the ongoing subdivisions in the block at the bottom. Population is based on actual census numbers and then you have the ongoing subdivision population numbers. At the top of the page I show the overall deviation based on the 2010 census number and accounting for the additional development. Every alternative is the same. Your packet also included a separate map that highlighted the areas that would be changing. The dark red lines represent the current Ward boundaries and the crossed out areas are the areas that would move from one Ward to another. At the back of the packet is a sheet with boxes and numbers in them. That is your key sheet which gives you the details. Box one for Alternate H shows that 2142 people will be moving from Ward 6 to Ward 8. The purpose for that shift is balancing population. Box two shows 1305 people are moving from Ward 7 to Ward 3 due to new precinct boundaries. They drew the precinct around that box so rather than splitting the precinct we moved the population. You see half the time was for precincts boundaries and half the time it was for population balance. That gives you the people that were affected.

Henry asked so of the 83,375 in Alternate H 8,869 will recognize a precinct/Ward change which is 11%.

Rogalski stated yes. With these various alternatives you see the different number of people being relocated for different reasons. This gives you something extra to evaluate your alternatives by. Alternate H didn't change at all. Alternate I is based on Councilperson Wells concerns about Ward 8 having two split precincts which impacted that Ward more than the others. I didn't make the top split so the Sherwood Village neighborhood was eliminated. To balance the population I split Precinct 9 a little less. Less people needed to go back into Ward 8 because we added a bunch by not splitting the precinct. The downside to Alternative I is it leaves Ward 1 with a low population. Ward 1 is at -12% so you end up with a deviation between the smallest and largest of 18%. There was a little growth of 135 in Ward 1 due to the Enclave. I realized it was necessary to take another look at the population. I hadn't tried to put population into Ward 1. Ward 1 is so low population has to come from somewhere. The Greer Addition located at the southeast corner of 38th and Cache Road is a synced neighborhood. There are not many roads that go between the two and all the lots back up to lots in another addition to create a nice clean line. I moved all the Greer Addition into Ward 1 and since I took population out of Ward 3 I completely removed the shift I was making into Ward 5. I left Ward 5 a little low because it wasn't as low as Ward 1. It was -5% without making any adjustments. The current population deviation on census came to 11% and future numbers is 15%. The downside to this alternative is the ongoing subdivision population deviation is worse. This is the best alternate we have in terms of three precinct splits and population deviation.

Moses asked which alternate are you referring to?

Rogalski stated J.

Jester stated another advantage is only 9% will be switched from one Ward to another as opposed to 11% on Alternate H.

Smith stated I like H better but I think J is probably the wisest.

Moses stated the numbers sure look better.

Godlove stated currently the numbers are better but H actually would be better in the future. On J you have 15% at the top and reading the bottom numbers it is 16%.

Rogalski stated the bottom numbers are a comparison to the average population. That is the percent they are above or below an average population. The top number is a direct comparison between the two numbers and it could shift by a slight arithmetic deviation.

Jester stated H probably would be better when looking towards the future. It concerns me the difference between the split precincts from four to three. To me that is a big deal due to confusion of the voters and other related problems. It is a tough choice.

Godlove stated the voter will be directed to which polling place to go to based upon what precinct they are in as distinguished to what Ward they are in.

Jester stated when they get there they have to know which voting machine to go to.

Godlove stated staff will direct them.

Baughman stated if a voter states they live in a different Ward than what we show we have to allow them to vote a provisional ballot.

Godlove asked you don't look at your voter registration book to figure out which Ward they are in?

Baughman stated yes but if they dispute what we show we have to allow them to vote where they choose.

Henry asked doesn't every voter experiencing a Ward change get a letter explaining where they vote and the process?

Baughman stated yes. We mailed 3500 cards and letters after redistricting. If you change the Ward boundaries we don't mail notices.

Godlove asked so you are not going to tell them when mailing out the notices they are assigned to a certain Ward?

Baughman stated not the Wards. That is not the Counties or the States responsibility.

Henry asked how in the world are they going to know which Councilperson they want to vote for?

Baughman stated they will have to call us if they have a question.

Godlove asked is it possible for us as a City to advise those who will be impacted as to which Ward they have been assigned to?

Baughman stated the City can send notifications of the Ward changes.

Godlove stated why don't we do that.

Stewart stated I believe this is a municipal responsibility. I would recommend we request the City to send the proper notification.

Henry stated the City needs to provide the funds for the mailing.

Moses stated we can do that. We can also ask the newspaper to identify the precincts that are affected and state if they have questions to call the Election Board.

Henry stated lots of people will not read the newspaper. They will wait until they vote.

Moses stated the newspaper and mailing out notices are two ways of getting them informed of the changes.

Godlove stated I can appreciate the dilemma the voting staff has.

Baughman stated they will also say they have always voted for Ward 4 and now you are saying I'm Ward 3.

Henry asked and they will be given a provisional ballot to vote for a Councilperson that doesn't even represent them.

Moses stated this problem is not going away. It was prevalent during the last redistricting and is prevalent today. It is only going to get worse as the City gets bigger. We have to either get some coordination with those who establish the precincts or continue to deal with this on a routine basis.

Jester stated I believe we should adopt Alternate J and then reconvene shortly after this process has taken place to seriously look at asking the voters to change the Charter to either six or ten Wards. We have got to be able to balance to numbers.

Rogalski asked should the Redistricting Committee meet before the State to set our boundaries and then try to force the State to draw their boundaries along our lines?

Moses asked is that possible?

Baughman stated I spoke with the House and Senate members before their redistricting stating we have problem areas. I pleaded with them to make these changes and they did not.

Tenis stated in my Ward you have Evergreen and there are only three people registered to vote. That is where people from Ft. Sill vote and for whatever reason they don't vote. That could be one machine that could be used elsewhere.

Baughman stated the way the House and Senate lines are drawn it has to be a separate precinct.

Moses stated this committee is not able to solve that problem. The only thing we can do is deal with the complications it creates and try to balance the population the best we can.

Stewart asked should the City have a lobbyist at the Capitol prior to the redistricting?

Wells stated the City has a lobbyist. I'm not sure that anybody thought in those terms when the redistricting was being drawn. I don't understand why the State changes boundaries

within the City. In the future Councilpersons need to talk with the legislators and get involved in this process.

Moses stated this committee can write a letter to the legislators stating this is a reoccurring problem and the next time redistricting takes place we need to get some attention on this.

Wells stated due to term limits the legislator that did this redistricting will not be involved in the next redistricting. If the Charter passes the same thing will happen to the City.

Godlove stated same thing will happen the next time. This is really a question of being able to inform and educate the population. If the County and the City send out notices the more times I have something in my hands the more likely I'm going to realize that something has changed. I'm not going to depend upon the paper because there will be a precious few that identify with what the paper is saying.

Moses stated the value of having the paper highlight it would be to alert somebody. Getting an official mailing would tell you that you better listen up because there has been a change.

Henry stated I think it would be very difficult for whatever entity to advise nearly 9000 people what has happened. They need to know what precinct and Ward they are in. We ought to spend enough money to mail a letter to every person that is register to vote stating these changes.

Godlove asked are these just actual people and not registered voters?

Henry stated yes.

Godlove stated so possibly just half of those are registered voters. All we have to do is notify the register voters.

Henry stated I don't think it will be a tremendous amount of money.

Jester stated to reach those below the age of 40 it needs to be posted on the website.

Godlove stated the register voter is the one that is going to pay the most attention. For those who come in to register for the first time they will be told as to which Ward and precinct they are in.

Jester stated I would guess we have to notify all the citizens.

Henry stated I would only notify the registered voters.

Moses stated I think we mail out notices to all registered voters. We want a letter that would contain the precinct, Ward and poling place for each registered voter.

Jester stated so those who have not registered they will find out when they go register to vote.

Moses asked is that a City function.

Baughman stated the State office stated that is not the responsibility of the State or the County. By law we inform the voters on the redistricting of the House, Senate and Commissioners lines. The City is responsible for this redistricting.

Stewart asked who will put it on the website.

Rogalski stated the City.

Moses asked do you have a data base of register voters?

Baughman stated yes.

Moses asked is it possible for a voter to go to the website and determine which precinct they are in and where they will be voting.

Baughman stated no. You can purchase a disk from the State Election Board and it can be broken down however you want.

Godlove asked if I were looking on the web could I find out as to which precinct and Ward that I live in.

Baughman stated no.

Moses asked would the City have this map on their website.

Rogalski stated yes.

Moses asked can you search by address and it will tell which Ward and precinct you live in?

Jones stated yes.

Moses stated that is another way of informing them. We agree we are going to ask the City to mail a letter to each registered voter and to post to their website a source where residents can determine which Ward and precinct they are in.

Henry stated we will also make that same request of the newspaper.

Wells stated you could add something to the water bill.

Jester stated that is a great idea.

Henry asked if that isn't hard to do that would be great. I would certainly hate to give the water department that responsibility.

Moses stated that is something we ought to explore if it is not too difficult. That is another source of information.

Smith stated I would recommend we approve Alternate H and reconvene at a later date to explore the idea of adding or deleting the number of Wards. There is a little more confusion with H but it addresses the population issue differential.

Moses stated we are in the phase of discussing the merits and disadvantages of each proposal. Let's continue.

Henry asked does H have four precinct splits?

Jester stated yes.

Moses stated it would be useful if we listed the pros and cons of each.

Godlove asked can we drop I and just consider H and J.

Smith and Jester agreed.

Wells stated when talking about future population we have no idea what that is going to be. The number shown makes H the better alternate. If BRAC goes through and something happens to Ft. Sill those numbers will look totally different. J comes closer to giving us the kind of split we need based on current population.

Moses stated let me say something about BRAC. From the AP articles I have read over the last month one would think that BRAC was a sure thing. I was talking with John Bonsell about the issue and he said Congress was not for this. The Air Force has excess bases due to the reduction in air wings and they want to unload that stuff. The Army and Marines are happy with what they have and the Navy always wants more. The only one that has a BRAC problem is the Air Force. They may ask congress for it but we do not think they will get the authority to proceed. That doesn't mean we will not lose strength here. We may lose strength due to another reason but I don't believe it will be due to another BRAC at this point and time. We have a perfect political storm brewing and we don't know how it is going to play out.

Wells stated that is why I think J is the better with the current population.

Moses stated we know from the development map that is where the developers intend to go if there is growth. We can safely assume that if there is growth it will probably be on the peripheral.

Henry stated the population map shows from 2000 to 2005 we had about a 2000 population grown and again from 2005 to 2010. Is that correct?

Rogalski stated the census shows from 2000 to 2010 a 4.4% growth which is just over 4000 people in ten years. I don't think that is correct.

Henry stated that would be 2000 every five years. You know I was a little critical of this but I now support the idea of using the ongoing subdivision development numbers as a talking point. What is the total number of people in the subdivision area where you expect the growth?

Jester stated about 2400.

Henry stated that is very similar to the growth figure from 2000 to 2005 and 2005 to 2010. It does allow you to speak to the potential growth in those areas.

Jester stated exactly.

Moses stated we would say we expect there to be growth and that is a talking point to be used.

Henry stated it is a very ligament talking point as far as figures are concerned but we have to use the figures in the first line.

Godlove stated so what you are suggesting by using the figures in the first line we are going back two years. We are going back to 2010 and we are in 2012.

Henry stated I understand but everything I have read our charge is to use the 2010 figures.

Godlove asked is that right?

Jensen stated that is the questions I answered last time and my opinion is the same. If we get challenged I can't go based upon what Rogalski might be projecting. I'm not able to do that and I understand we are in 2012.

Godlove asked can't you go with what is actually on the ground.

Jensen stated you can go with what we can prove is actual growth over and above the census numbers. We don't have that information. Projected growth in my opinion is not a valid consideration except as a talking point.

Moses stated let's set the growth issue aside a moment. Is everyone in agreement to set aside Alternate I and deal with an evaluation of H and J?

Jester stated definitely.

Moses stated okay let's go through the advantages and disadvantages relative to each of those. Let's open this up for general discussion and look at H. What are the pros and cons of this alternative relative to our criteria?

Jester stated four precinct splits would be a con.

Henry stated and the deviation percentage of 14%.

Jester stated as opposed to 11% for J.

Moses stated okay the deviation is worse than J.

Henry stated H has one more precinct split than J.

Jester stated that is two disadvantages in two of our main criteria.

Smith stated Councilperson Wells makes a good point that H is based on speculation and J isn't.

Jester stated we have to compare the 14 and 11.

Godlove stated J maintains the closeness of what the present Wards are particularly in Ward 8.

Jester stated J has fewer displacements of current Ward persons. J has three advantages.

Baughman stated I like J better. With H on the years that Wards 6, 7 and 8 run for office you have two splits at the same time and with J they are all separated. The splits would never all run together.

Jester stated that would be great.

Smith asked we would just have one per cycle?

Baughman stated yes. That might be less confusion on the voters.

Moses asked are there no merits to H.

Godlove stated H takes into consideration the longer term growth and I think that is something we need to be looking closely at.

Henry stated J does too.

Godlove stated J's deviation in long term growth is more than H. That could be offset by the other positives as far as J is concerned. I think we need to look at whether the communities

that are being moved are more consistent with where they have been moved as opposed to where they are previously.

Moses stated there is nothing perfect in the world so J has to have some disadvantages.

Jester stated if you are comparing J with H it doesn't other than the future population.

Moses asked how about the compactness and contiguous aspect of our criteria?

Smith stated J comes closer than H.

Jester stated I believe J is better than H.

Moses asked the Wards in H are less or more compact than J?

Jester stated it is fairly equal.

Henry agreed.

Moses asked how about contiguousness?

Henry stated they are all contiguous.

Godlove stated there is a difference just south of Cache Road between 38th and Sheridan. That addition has been moved and drops out of the contiguous nature of Ward 1.

Wells stated on H you have Sherwood Village.

Godlove stated it moves on one or the other so it is just a trade off.

Moses asked how compatible are the neighborhoods?

Rogalski stated looking at number one in the precincts we are splitting there is a very strong section line going north/south on the south. There is a little connection to the developing subdivision to the west. On the north boundary of one there is the railroad track so there is a nice strong line on the north boundary. H and J alternate as to which boot they are picking up. I used the one because it is right across the street from an existing neighborhood in Ward 8. It seemed a little more compact. Area number four is very well populated and there is not a really strong line. Precinct 4 picks up all of Greer Addition. The lots are back to back with another addition and only a couple of roads that interconnect. It is not as clean when I was going into Sherwood Village. You have a drainage that cuts between the neighborhoods. Definitely four is not as clean a cut in H where I was cutting Sherwood Village. Wards 6 and 7 are exactly the same for both alternates. Of the two alternates the least clean cut we have is in Greer Addition. There are three streets that connect to the adjacent neighborhoods. It is a separate subdivision and everybody in Greer went with the move.

Moses stated from what I'm hearing J stands above H. Did we disrupt the neighborhoods severely in one or the other?

Rogalski stated as I drew my boundaries I ignored the census tract boundaries and stayed with the neighborhood boundaries. I counted the home in that census tract divided it by the population and that is how I determined the population deviation. Those moves are within a few people. They are both bad in terms of the census tract.

Moses asked in your opinion that is not a variable to be concerned about?

Rogalski stated either way we will have to make the adjustment based on the census tracts. I think we are really close.

Moses stated J maintains the current Wards closer than H with less disruptions.

Rogalski stated they both have seven disruptions and the population is less for Alternate J by 1000.

Moses stated we have fewer precinct splits and 11% deviation. That is significant improvement over 27%.

Jester stated what Baughman bought out is very significant as well.

Moses stated with that kind of assessment it looks like J would be the Preferred Alternative. Is everyone comfortable with this?

MOVED by Jester, SECOND by Smith, to identify staff Alternative J as the preferred alternative. **AYE:** Henry; Jester; Knippenberg; Moses; Smith; Stewart; Godlove. **NAY:** None. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Henry stated during our tenure we have looked at eleven maps. We have diligently tried to get the population in very precinct and Ward equal. I don't mean 10% I mean to zero as near as possible. I think we have done a commendable job that anybody would be proud to defend even if we are 11% deviation instead of 10%. I think that anybody who looks at our maps no matter where you start you have to rob Peter to pay Paul in every Ward in order to get them close. I think we have done a very successful job and it has not been easy.

Moses stated I have to commend the City staff for this.

Jester stated of yes.

Henry stated absolutely.

Moses stated Jones has done a great job in bringing the numbers to look at. Rogalski has done a great job in creating the alternatives to get us as close as possible. We have looked at a lot of alternatives. Last time we only looked at one or two and to create them was a real hair

puller. In the future I would encourage this committee to use the GIS data base and generate as many alternatives that you want. Try to keep on an even ground. Now the question is how do we proceed? The things on my mind are to get a notice out to the public, establish a Public Hearing date, and hold a meeting to sign the resolution. We have discussed a lot of things we want to recommend to different people. One is how to get the State Redistricting Committee to ease the burden of huge precincts so we don't have to split them in order to get equal population. My intent was to prepare a draft public statement that would contain the rationale for going with Preferred Alternative J and include the kind of recommendations we make. I would ask if you have any thoughts along the lines of recommendations email them to me. We did that the last time and it was very helpful.

Stewart stated I would ask that these three gentlemen stay in close contact with the State when the time comes for them to redistrict again.

Jester stated it would be interesting to know if Oklahoma City, Tulsa or Edmond struggle with these same issues.

Jensen stated Rogalski and I will get the Resolution and the map ready today. Do we have direction for the Public Hearing date?

Ezell stated Col. Moses and I established February 7th as the date for publication, the 17th for the Public Hearing and the 28th for the signing of the Resolution.

Godlove asked when are you sworn in?

Moses stated the 14th.

Henry asked could we have a meeting on the 14th to elect the Chairman.

Godlove asked can we hold the Public Hearing on the 14th?

Ezell stated that doesn't allow enough time. If we run the notice in the paper on the 6th we have to wait ten days to hold a Public Hearing. Then we have to wait another ten days to sign the resolution.

Henry stated I'm asking we have a brief meeting prior to the Public Hearing to elect a new Chair. That person is going to have a big job taking care of the Public Hearing.

Moses stated we can do that the morning of the 14th. Are there any other comments or concerns? Baughman we would like to thank you for your assistance.

Baughman stated thanks for allowing me to be a part.

3. Audience Participation

5. Establish date for next meeting.

Moses stated the next meeting will be February 14th at 9:00 a.m. in the 3rd Floor Conference Room. We will hold our Public Hearing on February 17, at 6:00 p.m. in the auditorium/council chambers. Our last meeting will be held on February 28, at 9:00 a.m. in the 3rd Floor Conference Room.

5. Adjournment.

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

George Moses, Chairman
Redistricting Commission