

Redistricting Committee of 2012  
Wicomico County, Maryland

April 27, 2012

There being a quorum present, The Redistricting Committee of 2012 held its second meeting on Friday April 27, 2012. Chairman, Joe Collins called the meeting to order in room 301 of the Government Office Building at 9:00 a.m. with all members present, those being: Harry Basehart, Eddie Boyd, Joe Collins, Charlie Gray, G.A. Harrison, Deke Sheller and Stacey Weisner.

County support staff to the committee: Frank McKenzie, Edgar Baker and Matthew Creamer

The meeting was called to order by Chairman, Joe Collins. On motion by Mr. Harrison, second by Ms. Weisner and unanimously carried, the meeting agenda was adopted.

Following discussion of the minutes Mr. Collins asked if there were any additions or corrections to the minutes. There being none, **a motion to approve the minutes as written was offered by Ms. Weisner, seconded by Mr. Harrison and unanimously carried.**

Mr. Collins yielded the floor to Mr. McKenzie who presented an introduction and methodology of GIS (Geographic Information Systems) utilizing census block data from the 2010 US Census. Mr. McKenzie demonstrated that each census block contained data on population and racial characteristics, including the number of African American residents in each census block. He explained that by clicking on a census block with the computer mouse the program software identified the contents of the block. By moving a Councilmanic District line to include different census blocks, the program software would tabulate the population within each census block and increase or decrease the total population of a district, as well as the racial composition of the district as, a district line was moved along different alignments. From Mr. McKenzie's demonstration it became clear that the committee could create different scenarios with district boundaries to work towards

establishing districts, the composition of which would be consistent with the Charge the Redistricting Committee had adopted.

Dr. Basehart asked that the Salisbury municipal boundaries be included as an overlay on the existing Councilmanic District map from which the committee will be making its adjustments. In response to Mr. Collins' question why the city boundaries would be relevant, Dr. Basehart said the committee could be mindful to not cut Salisbury up too much. It was noted that parts of the city are included in four council districts. It was further noted that as geographically central as Salisbury is in the county that it may not be practical to avoid having parts of the city in several districts in order to have all districts with close to the same population, in compact and contiguous districts and at the same time have a minority district with a minority population significantly in the district majority. Mr. Collins said he wondered whether taking municipal boundaries into consideration would make the committee's job easier, or more difficult in achieving a bipartisan outcome.

**Dr. Basehart made a motion to at some time show municipal boundaries on the district map. The motion was seconded by Mr. Harrison.**

Mr. Harrison commented it's not a bad idea, but he thinks the district boundaries should be determined first and municipal boundaries added afterward. **After further discussion the vote on Dr. Base hart's motion was unanimously approved.**

Mr. Harrison commented that District #1, the minority district has to include part of the city to get the minority population numbers for the minority high enough, but there is no way that all of Salisbury could fit in the minority district as it would make it too large. Mr. McKenzie commented for the record, that at some point the municipal boundaries will be added to the map.

Mr. McKenzie continued his explanation:

The adjusted county population is	99,183
The white population is	67,875
The black population is	24,229 (24.4%)

All other races	7,079
The ideal district population is (with 5% deviation)	19,837
District Population range w/in +/- 5%	18,846 – 20,829

Districts must be contiguous

Cannot split census blocks

The Census Bureau established the database and defined the racial categories used in the database. Racial categories in the database analyzed for this project are – black and white.

The minority population in district 1 must be greater than 50%. The district 1 population can be up to 5% below the ideal district population, but the black population must be greater than 50% of the district population.

Example"

Black population 51%	10,117
White population 49%	9,720
Total	19,837

Existing District Population

Dist 1	19,176	-661 below ideal.....	-3.33% deviation
Dist 2	21,636	+1,799 above ideal.....	+9.07% deviation
Dist 3	18,907	-930 below ideal.....	-4.69% deviation
Dist 4	21,265	+1,428 above ideal.....	+7.20% deviation
Dist 5	18,199	-1,638 below ideal.....	-8.26% deviation

Racial Composition

Dist 1	
White	8,837
Black	9,213
% Black	48.04% (below 50% minimum requirements)

Ms. Weisner commented that people think that GIS is all about mapping, but she added, the real work is in the tables. Mr. McKenzie then demonstrated moving census blocks with population into District 1. Dr. Boyd asked if there is a target number, or percentage the committee should be shooting for? Mr. Harrison commented that typically voter turnout among African Americans is lower than among whites, so that needs to be considered, tending toward raising the minority percentage. Other committee members concurred. There followed a series of tweaking the boundaries of District 1 to see how the numbers and the percentages changed. After a time the committee agreed to continue the work at the next meeting and requested that Mr. McKenzie save a draft map which had a District 1 population that is 58.1% black, -1.11 % deviation and a total population of 19,617. There was consensus that at the next meeting the committee would explore what this draft of a District 1 would look like and whether the other districts could be adjusted to meet the requirements, giving particular attention to bringing Districts 5 and 3 up in population. Under New Business **Dr. Basehart made a motion that the committee hold one or more public hearings to gain public input to the effort. Mr. Harrison seconded the motion.** There was discussion that publication of a public hearing could be gained through a runner on PAC 14, a press release to the Daily Times and notice on the county web page. Mr. Creamer said that he would make an announcement at the County Council meeting before a public hearing. Dr. Boyd pointed out that the County Council will hold a public hearing on the recommendations from the committee. **After further discussion a vote on the motion was one “yes”, four “no”, Mr. Harrison abstained and Ms. Weisner had left the meeting for another appointment. The motion failed.** The date of the next meeting will be announced once a consensus has been reached. There being no further business, at 11:55 a.m. **there was a motion by Mr. Harrison and second by Dr. Basehart to adjourn. The vote was unanimous.**

Matthew Creamer