

The 2021 Wicomico County Redistricting Committee met on October 27, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in the Government Office Building, Room 301, Salisbury, Maryland.

Members Present: Wendy Anspacher, Gail Bartkovich, Muir Boda, Bernadette Cannady, Mark Danderson, Julie Giordano, and William "Kel" Nagel, M.D.

Staff Present: Laura Hurley, Recording Secretary; Andrew Illuminati, Esq., County Attorney Representative; and Frank McKenzie, GIS Coordinator.

Approval of Minutes from October 19, 2021:

On motion by Ms. Giordano and seconded by Mr. Boda, the minutes from October 19, 2021 were unanimously approved.

Review of Maps

Special Request Map - October 19, 2021

Mr. McKenzie suggested starting with a review of what was discussed at the last meeting. He said he was asked if they could create a map where all the municipalities were contained within one district and not split among multiple districts. He said there was discussion about Hebron and Fruitland, and he will start with Hebron. He said Hebron was originally in District 1 and it remains entirely in District 1 in this new version of the map. He said District 1 remains intact from the original map that was done back in 2010, so those numbers for District 1 are the same as another map they will see in a few minutes.

Mr. McKenzie said they also discussed putting all of Fruitland together at the last meeting by putting Fruitland all in District 2 and not split. He said previously Camden Avenue split Fruitland in half, so part of it was in District 2 and part was in District 3, but now it is all in District 2. He said, in doing so there were 4,185 people moved from District 3 to District 2, and in order to compensate for that he had to move some other areas around, which moved 2,273 people from District 2 into District 3.

Mr. McKenzie said District 4 is similar to the minimal impact map where they only moved two blocks. He said, in this case there was a block at the City Park and also a subdivision next to the City Park where there were 49 people moved, but they still needed more people, so he looked at Aydelotte Farm where there were 459 people he moved out of District 5 into District 3.

Dr. Nagel asked if that was to make up for the Fruitland people who were moved into District 2, to which Mr. McKenzie responded, yes, to balance things out and keep things within the deviation.

Mr. McKenzie said they still needed more people, so he took 69 people from the southside of Mt. Hermon Road from District 5 into District 3 and 149 people in another area were moved.

Mr. McKenzie said they also looked at Willards, which runs a little south of Route 50, so there were three people moved into District 5.

Mr. McKenzie said, in all, seven areas were moved for a total of 7,187 people.

Mr. McKenzie said District 1 is basically as it had been previously approved and appears the same way in the different map versions they will be looking at.

Mr. McKenzie said District 4 is also as it was previously approved in the minimal impact map. He said all of the deviations are less than 5 percent, and District 4 is pretty close to 5 percent below, but is within the deviation.

Mr. McKenzie said District 1 has a 57.67 percent minority black, and the goal is to have it above 50 percent, and traditionally they have tried to make that percentage as high as possible.

Minimal Impact Map (Previously Approved)

Mr. McKenzie said this is the map where pretty much all of the districts fell in line except for District 4. He said they only needed to move 49 people in order to comply with redistricting requirements, and those are the 49 people they discussed earlier. He said all of the other districts except the one are the same as they were after the 2010 census.

Two-Percent Deviation Map

Mr. McKenzie said this map was a request that they try to get the deviation balanced as close as possible to 2 percent. He said they split Hebron and 108 people who were in District 1 are now in District 2, and, in this case, there were six people who live in the Town of Hebron and the rest were outside Hebron.

Mr. McKenzie said there was also an area with 115 people moved from District 1 into District 2, an area in Fruitland between Camden Avenue and Route 13 were 181 people moved from District 3 to District 2, and an area near the City Park with 613 people moved from District 3 into District 4. He said there were 45 people in another area moved, but one thing concerning is that Route 13 would logically be a good boundary; however, if he recalls, the black line on the map is there because that is an approved election district boundary, so by doing that it could create a precinct that might not be necessary as there are only 45 people. He clarified, he kept it on this one, but took it out on other maps. He said there is another area where 69 people and 149 people were previously discussed, and nothing else changed.

Mr. McKenzie said he passed out tables that show each of the comparisons as well as the number of people moved for each different scenario. He said, for the 2 percent map, the deviation ranges from 0.88 percent to a high of 3.01 percent below, but the average of the five districts is around 2.16 percent deviation for the entire County, and District 1 has a black population of 57.96 percent.

Special Request Map

Mr. McKenzie said this map was a request for some modifications, one which had to do with a thin area along Route 54 where there was a request to widen the area, so 273 people were added from District 2 to District 1 in order to give that a little more width. He said in Hebron there were 1,264 people moved from District 1 to District 2, and 49 people were moved from District 3 to District 4. He said, in this case, there were three areas that were affected for a total of 1,586 people being moved, and all the deviations were within range.

Special Request Map – September 22, 2021

Mr. McKenzie said there was discussion on moving two precincts in Fruitland putting precinct 16004 into District 2, and 16005 was going to go into District 4. He said that was about 4,100 people, so he had to compensate for that. He said, in Sharptown, 40 people were taken out of District 2 and put into District 1. He said there were also 332 people moved to widen the Route 54 area; 1,154 in Hebron were moved from District 1 to District 2; 113 people from District 2 to District 1, and 108 people were moved from

District 2 to District 1. He said there is an area in District 4 which included 1,683 people who were removed and moved to District 3, so the area where they previously moved 49 people did not need to be done anymore. He said on Route 350 on the north side there were 356 people moved from District 5 to District 3, and there was another area where 423 people moved from District 5 to District 3. He said the deviation all falls within the 5 percent limitation with the largest being 4.97 percent. He said District 3 is at the other end of the spectrum with -4.01 percent deviation. He said the percent of black in this situation is 58.69 percent in District 1, which is above their target of 50 percent. He said there were ten areas total that were moved from one area to another for a total of 8,379 people being moved.

Discussion on Map Selection

Ms. Bartkovich said, on September 22, they removed the balanced map from consideration, the reason being that the number of people moved, which was 3,369, was considered to be too many people to move, which was unanimous. She said, therefore, she will not be supporting the request of September 22, 2021 or the request of October 19, 2021. She said she also thinks that request makes District 3, which is supposed to be reasonably compact, not reasonably compact anymore with the way things have been moved around going basically from the Worcester County line to the River. She clarified, those are two she will definitely oppose, but she is open to comments.

Special Request Map – September 22, 2021

Dr. Nagel asked for clarification on what the request was for the September 22 map, to which Mr. McKenzie responded, the request had to do with moving precincts in Fruitland. Dr. Nagel asked if this still put it all together, to which Mr. McKenzie responded, no, it did not.

There being no further discussion, on motion by Ms. Giordano, seconded by Ms. Anspacher, and unanimously approved, the special request map from September 22, 2021 was removed from consideration.

Special Request Map - October 19, 2021

Dr. Nagel asked if this map keeps Fruitland, Hebron, and Willards all intact, to which Ms. Bartkovich responded, yes. She said it moves District 3 over to the Wicomico River. Dr. Nagel asked if the rest of District 2 is across the River, to which Mr. Boda responded, the only part of District 2 that is across the River is the City of Fruitland. Dr. Nagel asked if the part of District 2 that is across the River is smaller than the part of District 2 that closer to the bridges, to which Ms. Giordano responded, she thinks land-wise, yes, but people wise, no. She said there are more people in the condensed part of Fruitland. Dr. Nagel suggested they keep this map for now and go back and look at the other maps.

There being no further discussion, on motion by Dr. Nagel, seconded by Mr. Danderson, and by roll call vote, Ms. Anspacher, nay; Ms. Giordano, nay; Mr. Boda, aye; Mr. Danderson, aye; Ms. Bartkovich, nay; Ms. Cannady, aye, and Dr. Nagel aye, the special request map from October 19 was kept for further consideration.

Special Request Map

Ms. Bartkovich said this is the map that moves 1,586 people, and they are widening District 1 along Route 54. She said there are also some changes in Hebron.

Ms. Giordano made a motion to keep the map based on the fact that, just looking at the request, it is 1,500 people, but they are only affecting three areas. She said it is putting together a town, which was one of their tasks, so she makes a motion to keep this map, which was seconded by Ms. Anspacher.

Mr. Boda said he is not going to support this because it only keeps together one town and there is another town that will still be split. Dr. Nagel agreed, and said he is not sure they should fix Hebron but not Fruitland, to which Ms. Giordano responded, this one does not have Willards fixed either.

Dr. Nagel said he believes Willards should be fixed no matter what, as it is only a few people and it is simple. He said none of the rest of this is simple. Ms. Bartkovich said Willards was fixed on another map, to which Mr. McKenzie responded, it was fixed on the October 19 map. Dr. Nagel said he believes that, even if it is not in whatever final map they choose, they could always amend it to add Willards, to which Ms. Bartkovich responded, it is only three people, so that would not make much of a difference at all.

There being no further discussion, on motion by Ms. Giordano, seconded by Ms. Anspacher, and by roll call vote, Dr. Nagel, nay; Ms. Cannady, nay; Ms. Bartkovich, nay; Mr. Danderson, nay; Mr. Boda, nay; Ms. Giordano, aye; and Ms. Anspacher, aye, the motion to keep the special request map failed.

Ms. Bartkovich said this special request map is now taken out of consideration.

Two Percent Map

Ms. Cannady asked for clarification on the purpose of this map, to which Mr. McKenzie responded, they were trying to balance the districts to get near zero deviation, which became difficult and moved a lot of people, so the request was to get it to 2 percent deviation, which was able to be accomplished by moving 1,280 people. Ms. Bartkovich added, there were seven moves in that map, which vary from 45 people up to 613.

Ms. Cannady said right now they have gotten rid of two maps, so tonight they really need to get down to one, to which Ms. Bartkovich responded, the Charter says a plan, which to her means one, so she is guessing that is what they have to do.

Mr. Illuminati clarified, they do not need to reach one map tonight. He said, if they want to winnow it down to two tonight, then at the next meeting they can vote on one that will ultimately be presented. He said, in reviewing the Charter and the Resolution appointing this Committee, it requires a map, which is singular. He said the self-imposed deadline was November 10 because this has to get to the Council by December and it has to go through an additional process, and the Committee additionally has to make a presentation to the Council. He said, in theory, if there is a decision to walk away tonight and leave two or three maps, then at the next meeting they could winnow it down to the final map and then meet again to write the report, which would require an additional meeting. He said he believes there were previous offhand comments about the Chair presenting the report, but he does not know if that is still the decision of the Body when the ultimate presentation to the Council is made. He clarified, there is no actual requirement, other than the schedule that has been set, to conclude tonight and have a single map, but to begin a draft report and presentation there will probably need to be some more work, and he is more than happy to assist the Chair with working on the report. He said the previous presentation to Council is on the County's website in case anyone wants to view it and see the layout and how it flowed.

Ms. Cannady made a motion to not keep the 2 percent map, which was seconded by Mr. Danderson.

Dr. Nagel asked Mr. McKenzie to go over this map briefly. He clarified, this was his idea, but he thinks he is going to vote against it because it moves a lot of people, and he has not figured out if they have a sufficient reason to do that aside from a little mathematical balance.

Mr. McKenzie said he will start in the northernmost area where the people were moved. He said there is part of Hebron and an area outside of Hebron to the north that was moved from District 1 to District 2, and there is an area of Parsons Road that moved 150 people from District 1 to District 2. He said there was an area in Fruitland near Tony Tank and Camden Avenue where 181 people were moved from District 3 to District 2. He said one of the bigger areas was in the City of Salisbury in the area south of Glen Avenue between the City Park also to include Village in the Park where 613 people were moved from District 3 to District 4.

Mr. Illuminati said, in order to avoid any confusion, he suggests Ms. Cannady restate her motion to state that the motion is to keep the 2 percent map.

There being no further discussion, on motion by Ms. Cannady, seconded by Mr. Danderson, and by roll call vote, Ms. Anspacher, aye; Ms. Giordano, aye; Mr. Boda, aye; Mr. Danderson, aye; Ms. Bartkovich, aye; Ms. Cannady, nay; and Dr. Nagel, aye, the motion to keep the 2 percent map passed.

Ms. Bartkovich said they have the 2 percent map, the minimal impact map, and then the request map of October 19 all still in consideration. She said, as Mr. Illuminati said, if they have more than one map in consideration for their next meeting, they will need to schedule another meeting after that so they can approve or discuss the report that will be sent to Council. She clarified, if they get down to one map tonight, she will need to write a report and then they will need to discuss and approve that report before it goes to the Council, so that would be on November 10. She said, if they have more than one map still in consideration, they will have to do consideration of those maps on November 10, make a decision, and then they will have to write the report and will have to come back at another date to discuss and approve that report so it can go to Council, and their deadline is December.

Ms. Anspacher said she would like to see if they can try and get it down to one map tonight so they do not have to add another meeting, to which there was general agreement.

Ms. Giordano said, about the request for October 19, she knows one of the tasks was to keep all the towns and cities together, but she has a very hard time moving 7,000 people, especially when the idea has been brought up numerous times that they did not like the balanced map because it moved 3,000 people and that was too many, but now they are saying they are going to move 7,000. She said, if they were even contemplating moving 7,000, she might have voted on the balanced map before she voted on moving 7,000 people. She clarified, she understands the idea of combing everything, but she cannot see this moving forward, even if they decided to send this to the Council.

Mr. Boda said personally he is between two maps – either they fix everything and put all the towns together in their own districts, or go with the minimal impact. He said, going forward, for him it will be either one of those two; they either fix it or they do the minimal impact and kick the can down the road for ten more years from now.

Ms. Cannady said Ms. Bartkovich suggested the Committee read the minutes from the Charter Review Committee when Dr. Basehart gave a presentation on redistricting. She said she knows Dr. Basehart is a political person, but she still likes him, and she listened to everything he said on redistricting, but what

he basically said is absolutely true. She clarified, she says all that to say exactly what Mr. Boda said – if they are not going to fix this, then leave it as it is. She said, for her, personally, what they need is to get rid of the at-large seats and go to a seven councilmanic district, but they just do not have enough people. She said, if they are not going to fix it, why move all of these people?

Ms. Anspacher said she agrees with Ms. Giordano that the map from October 19 is moving way too many people and, from everyone she has talked to on the Council, they would not approve that and would not even look at it, so to her it is not even worth sending it to them at all. She said, for her, it is between the 2 percent and the minimal.

Dr. Nagel said he thinks one of the main reasons that Mr. Danderson brought up the issue of Fruitland was looking at the issue of equity with adequate minority representation. He said it turns out that they have roughly 30 percent African Americans in this community, according to the census, but they have one out of seven African American Councilmembers, or 14 percent. He said, even with this rather drastic moving of putting all of Fruitland together and all the 7,000 people being moved, still the second highest African American population is going to be in District 4 at 29 percent, and then Districts 2 and 3 having roughly 16 to 17 percent. He said the question is whether it is worth it to do that just to put the towns together. He said he has been thinking things over, and he agrees that really the only way they are going to get equity in terms of the black community is to eliminate the two at-large positions and have seven Council districts of which two would likely be minority, therefore two out of seven, or 28 percent of the Council would be representative, more or less, of 30 percent of the community. He clarified, not that all the Councilmembers do not represent all of the community, and he is not accusing anyone of anything along those lines. He said, unfortunately, that is not anywhere near the scope of their charge, as that belongs to the Charter Review Committee. He said he sent an email to one of the members of the Charter Review Committee today suggesting that is the only way they are going to fix things. He said it will not be ten years, but it will not be two either because that would require a referendum, and to get a referendum they would need to have the Council put it on there, or have a petition drive, and it would not take affect until after the Council elected in 2022 finishes their term, which would be 2026 at the earliest they could get that done. He said he hopes he is around to see that.

Dr. Nagel said he thinks he favors going to the map they started out with, the minimal impact map, but adding the change in Willards, which he thinks is fairly simple. He said he cannot see a better alternative at this point, but he personally would like the Charter Review Committee to consider a recommendation of altering the Charter to eliminate the at-large members, which he never favored in the first place. He said they could go to a five district Council, but he thinks it would take seven to do what he thinks should be done.

There being no further discussion, on motion by Dr. Nagel, seconded by Mr. Danderson, and by roll call vote, Dr. Nagel, aye; Ms. Cannady, aye; Ms. Bartkovich, aye; Mr. Danderson, aye; Mr. Boda, aye; Ms. Giordano, aye; Ms. Anspacher, aye, the October 19 map was unanimously eliminated.

There being no further discussion, on motion by Dr. Nagel, seconded by Mr. Danderson, and by roll call vote, Ms. Anspacher, aye; Ms. Giordano, aye; Mr. Boda, aye; Mr. Danderson, aye; Ms. Bartkovich, aye; Ms. Cannady, aye; and Dr. Nagel, aye, the 2 percent map was eliminated unanimously.

Ms. Bartkovich said this leaves them with the minimal impact map.

Dr. Nagel made a motion to approve the minimal impact map with an amendment to adjust the border of the Town of Willards so the entire town is within District 5, which was seconded by Mr. Danderson.

Ms. Bartkovich said this will move three people, but there is some construction going on in that area and she does not know whether it is commercial.

There being no further discussion, on motion by Dr. Nagel, seconded by Mr. Danderson, and by roll call vote, Dr. Nagel, aye; Ms. Cannady, aye; Ms. Bartkovich, aye; Mr. Danderson, aye; Mr. Boda, aye; Ms. Giordano, aye; and Ms. Anspacher, aye, the minimal impact map with an amendment to adjust the border of the Town of Willards so the entire town is within District 5 was unanimously approved.

Ms. Bartkovich said they will send the minimal impact map recommendation to the County Council. She said from here they will put together a report, and Mr. Illuminati has said he will help with that.

There was then discussion about the process for writing the report based on the report that was submitted to the Council ten years ago.

Dr. Nagel suggested coming up with a narrative to present the Council so they know what the Committee considered, such as the ideas of getting entire towns together, ideas of achieving equity as best as they could, but none of the proposed solutions were worth moving as many people as it would take to do that.

Mr. Boda said the attempt to put all municipalities, with the exception of Salisbury, completely in their own districts simply just did not work because they would have moved too many people, and that is pretty much what it came down to.

Ms. Bartkovich said, if the Council has questions, the Committee can tell them that the maps they worked on are on the County website if they want to see what the Committee attempted to do. Mrs. Hurley asked if they want her to add the balanced map to the website because that is the only map that is not on there, to which Ms. Bartkovich responded, she thinks they should all be there.

Ms. Bartkovich reminded everyone that they are going to have a public hearing on this, so the public may have input and the public may disagree with the Committee's report, and the Council may make some changes because they can do that.

Ms. Anspacher asked if the public hearing will be at one of the Committee's meetings, or the Council meeting, to which Ms. Bartkovich responded, the Council will hold the public hearing and they will have to advertise it. She said that will be their final decision, and then they may want to make some amendments as Anthony Gutierrez at the Board of Elections starts getting the information from the State because sometimes they have to smooth out precinct lines to make everything work. She clarified, sometimes they have precincts with nobody in them and they have to be eliminated, so there is still quite a bit of work to be done after the Committee is done.

Mr. McKenzie said the maps that are online now all say draft. He then suggested he could put a new title on them to say they are no longer under consideration.

Dr. Nagel asked if the Committee has to meet again, to which Mrs. Hurley responded, she thinks it is a good idea to meet to review the final plan.

Mr. Danderson asked if they will have to vote on the final report, to which Mrs. Hurley responded, she thinks the final presentation should be presented to the Committee before it goes to Council. Ms. Bartkovich asked if they have to do that publicly, to which Mr. Illuminati responded, yes. He said, additionally, at the next meeting they will approve the minutes from today, so in order to close out the Committee's work, there will probably be just a short session that can be voted on via email.

There was no further discussion.


Gail Bartkovich, Chair


Laura Hurley, Recording Secretary