



Town of Trumbull

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2020 TRUMBULL REDISTRICTING
COMMITTEE

LAUREL ANDERSON, CHAIRMAN
TOM KELLY
KEVIN SHIVELY
TONY SCINTO

2020 Trumbull Redistricting Committee March 11, 2020 MINUTES

The 2020 Trumbull Redistricting Committee meeting was called to order at 7:03 p.m. by Chairperson Laurel Anderson.

Members present: Laurel Anderson
Tom Kelly
Kevin Shively
Tony Scinto

Also present: Town Attorney Daniel Schopick
First Selectman Vicki Tesoro
Kathleen McGannon

Pledge of Allegiance

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

Minutes

Kevin Shively moved, and Tom Kelly seconded, that the Minutes of the March 4, 2020, Redistricting Committee meeting be approved as submitted; the vote in favor was unanimous.

Review of the Town Charter and state statutes regarding redistricting

Town Attorney Daniel Schopick reported that there are three legal aspects to redistricting: First, Connecticut General Statutes section 9-169 gives municipal legislative bodies, such as the Trumbull Town Council, the right and ability to set voting districts from time to time; second, the Trumbull Town Charter specifies that our Town Council be composed of 21 members; and third, state and federal law require that all persons have essentially equal representation in each of their electoral bodies ("one person one vote"). Under Connecticut's statutes "minority representation" is not required for legislative bodies, but Trumbull's Town Charter limits the majority party in any Town Council district to the number of councilpersons elected minus one, even though this is not a state statutory requirement. Taken together, these requirements could be satisfied by having one district, three districts, or seven districts.

Attorney Schopick stated that it was his legal opinion that the Town Council's charge to the 2020 Redistricting Committee was and is legal.

In response to a question from Tony Scinto, Attorney Schopick said that nothing in the law would prohibit Trumbull from having 1 district with 20 members from one party and 1 member from another.

In response to questions from Kevin Shively, Attorney Schopick said that he would investigate how much leeway the Committee has under one-person-one-vote in setting district sizes; Laurel Anderson reminded the Committee that their charge from the Town Council required "substantially" equal numbers of residents per district.

Discussion and review of expert information and next steps

In the Committee's following discussion of Trumbull's redistricting history, Tony Scinto said that in the redistricting following the 2010 Census Bill Holden had wanted to have five districts, because under a prior four-district system Districts 1, 2, and 4 each had five Councilpersons but District 3 had seven, which gave that district a distinct edge in Town Council deliberations; however, he and the majority of that committee decided to go back to four, so that District 4 would follow the state's Trumbull boundary for the 134th state House district; and that the other problem faced by that committee was general voter dissatisfaction with voting conditions at Frenchtown Road school, which has limited parking and was usually the site of in-service teacher training on Election Day. Tom Kelly noted that the locations of in-service training can be moved away from polling places, and Laurel Anderson reminded the Committee that polling places do not have to be inside the boundaries of the district they're linked to.

Kevin Shively and Laurel Anderson said that right now Districts 1, 2, and 3 have about 8,500 residents and three Councilpersons each; District 4 has about 10,300 residents and four Councilpersons. This means that in Districts 1, 2, and 3 each Councilperson represents about 2,833 residents; in District 4, each Councilperson represents about 2,575, a difference of over 9%. Tony Scinto reminded the Committee members that no matter how many districts the Committee decides to create, there will likely be some variances.

Laurel Anderson told the Committee that in addition to following the Town Council's charge that the Committee create districts of as equal size as possible, she would prefer to have as few split districts as possible, and would prefer to cause as little confusion for the voters as possible. The Committee members agreed.

Laurel then asked for a sense of the meeting on what steps the Committee should take next.

Tony Scinto and Kevin Shively said that no matter how many districts are created, the majority party is likely to lose two or more seats. It doesn't necessarily matter which party: in recent years the Town Council has swung from a 17-to-4 Republican majority to a 16-to-5 Democratic majority, and future voting could go in any number of different directions. In response, Laurel Anderson said that in her opinion the question of majority or minority Town Council proportion was less important than voter disenfranchisement because of limited parking and long lines at the polls. Tom Kelly noted that turnout in District 2 has been about 10% lower than turnout in the other districts, probably because of the location of the St. Joseph's High School polling place nearly at the Town's northern border; Laurel Anderson reminded the Committee that if we go to three districts, the distance from the edges of each district to that district's polling place are likely to be too long for the comfort of many voters. Kevin Shively said that with three districts the opportunities for across-the-aisle discussions among Town Councilpersons

would be too limited. It was the sense of the meeting that the Committee should create a seven-district map.

Tony Scinto asked whether it would then make sense to use the seven-district map that was replaced by the prior redistricting committee, but Vicki Tesoro said that one of the reasons for the post-2010 redistricting was that the prior map was already out of compliance with one-person-one-vote; and Kevin Shively noted that the pre-2010 map would leave Trumbull with three or four split districts. In response to a further question from Tony Scinto, Kevin Shively said that the seven-district map that the post-2010 committee rejected might work, or might work if modified slightly.

Laurel Anderson asked if the Committee should renumber the districts so that they at least could be read clockwise; Vicki Tesoro suggested that renumbering the districts might cause more voter confusion than was desirable, and the Committee members agreed.

Laurel Anderson then asked the Committee if they favored one, three, or seven districts; in response to a question from Tony Scinto she said that although we will need more poll workers if the number of districts is increased there are already volunteers. In any case, finding new poll locations and staffing the polls is a job for the Registrars, not the Committee. It was the unanimous sense of the meeting that the Committee should create a seven-district map.

Laurel Anderson then asked what other information the Committee wants. Tony Scinto said that even though the 2010 Census blocks do not necessarily reflect correct numbers of current residents, we need the census-block map with streets and street names overlaid; Vicki Tesoro said that the Town Engineer or Richard White could make that map and get it to the Committee. Tom Kelly and Kevin Shively said that they would not ask for the map to show where the current Town Council members live, and the others agreed. Laurel Anderson said that based on Richard White's presentation last week, she is not interested in looking at the number of voters per district, and she has not asked Mr. White for that data. Laurel asked for, and received, the Committee's unanimous agreement that neither the residence locations of current Town Council members nor the number of voters per district or their Party affiliations would be considered in any Committee decisions on District boundaries.

Laurel Anderson then asked what steps the Committee wants to take next. Vicki Tesoro volunteered to ask Steve Early to create the map with Census blocks and streets. The Committee members agreed that after reviewing that map they could make decisions about district boundaries and start writing their report. In response to a question, Vicki Tesoro said that once the Committee has set the boundaries, the Town Engineering Department can write the metes and bounds. Laurel Anderson volunteered to scan in Attorney Schopick's copy of the last metes-and-bounds report and the State Statute covering Districts and email them to the Committee members.

Old Business: Future meeting locations

Laurel Anderson reported that all of the Committee's future meetings, including the April 1st meeting, which no longer has to be moved, will be in the Nichols Room.

New Business:

There was no new business.

Adjournment

On a motion by Kevin Shively, seconded by Tom Kelly, and agreed to unanimously, Laurel Anderson adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Jean Rabinow
Clerk of the Committee