

Cuyahoga Falls City Council
Ad Hoc Committee Meeting for Redistricting
October 10, 2011

Members: Don Walters, Chair
Jerry James
Jeff Iula

Mr. Walters called the meeting to order at 6:40 p.m. All members were present.

The minutes from the September 26, 2011 Ad Hoc Committee meeting were approved as corrected.

Discussion

Mr. Walters had a map which showed the areas that each ward would be gaining territory under his proposal. This version of the map also showed the streets to make it easier to see the new boundaries. All of the changes were shown on the map except for Ward 5, which is the simplest to determine. He colored in the areas that were gained. Because streets are being used as boundaries, there will be one side of a street in one ward, and the opposite side of the street in another ward. He determined the boundaries by using census blocks. The goal was to make it as minimally invasive as possible. He gave a list of the census blocks that have changed to Hope Jones. It will be up to the Law Department to decide how to put it into ordinance form when the time comes but the changes are minimal. This is the proposal that is front of the committee and he invited anyone who wanted to look at the map to do so.

Mrs. Pyke didn't understand why she was being given six houses on High Bridge since the houses on the other side have another councilperson. She thought it made better sense to make it all under one councilperson. Mr. Walters stated he did this by census block and those houses were part of that block. A census block cannot be divided in half. He said if you did that, what would a representative do if one qualified for CDGB money and the other did not. He stated for this purpose, the whole block had to be used. As far as two different ward representatives on one street, all wards will have that since streets are used as boundaries. Mrs. Pyke didn't see anything wrong with saying that Ward 2 stops at 17th Street. Mr. Walters stated if he did that on all of these, he would not know the population in the affected area. Mrs. Pyke stated that Ward 2 has been that way for ten years and now Mr. Walters is saying it has to be done this way. She asked Ms. Jones if the previous committee was wrong when it split the census block. Ms. Jones stated not that she was aware of. Mr. Walters stated the committee could take a look at this block if it was going to be burdensome for Mrs. Pyke. It is a very small area and encompasses the whole census block. It is important to use the census blocks to make all boundaries. This little area was the only situation like that, and he does not think it is that extreme. Mrs. Pyke stated these people have been used to being in Ward 3 and feels it is just bizarre. She does not see why the border can't be 17th Street. Mr. Walters stated if it is that important to her, the committee can look at it. However, the reasoning behind what he did is sound, and it is the only way the committee can arrive at these numbers according to the Charter. He does not know why this particular census block is the way it is. He did not define the census blocks. That was done by the Census Bureau.

Mr. Iula stated he has been working on a proposal and has five of the wards completed. He does not understand why the east side is divided into so many wards. He feels there should be only two wards there. He will continue working on his proposal and present it to the committee when it is completed. Mr. Walters stated the current ward boundaries are the result of the redistricting that occurred ten years ago. If the east side is made into two wards, more residents will be affected. The goal is to keep as many people in their

current wards as possible. He had originally considered doing that on the east side but decided doing so would be a disservice to the residents. He felt it was best to shoot for the target number and not play with a crystal ball in trying to determine potential future growth in certain wards. He did not put more weight on future development when he did these numbers because he wanted to move wards as little as possible. He felt he owed it to the residents to not displace any more people than he had to. Mr. Iula acknowledged what Mr. Walters was saying. He felt Wards 5 and 8 would be growing because those are the only two wards with area to grow in. That is why he is doing a proposal for the east side. Mr. Walters stated some future growth could come from just filling vacant homes. He added that the last paragraph in the *Falls News Press* article stated that any resident who had a concern could either call or email him. No one contacted him.

Mrs. Colavecchio stated, from a procedural perspective, Council has time constraints to get this done before the end of the year. With that in mind, she asked what the drop-dead date would be to receive any other proposals. She also asked when Mr. Walters anticipated bringing this matter before Council for a vote. Mr. Walters stated he defined these boundaries by street so residents will know where they fall. He asked that the press get this information out to the residents which would then give them two weeks to comment. He stressed this is being done for the residents and not for Council members. Ward representatives will do a good job regardless whether their boundaries move or not. He would like residents to respond. Of course, if they start marching in front of his house, the committee may need to relook at it. The goal is to make the numbers work and make the process as painless as possible for the public. He will be scheduling the next meeting in two weeks. It took him ten weeks to come up with the plan that is before the group now, but if someone wants to throw something else out there in two weeks, they should plan on presenting it at the next meeting.

Mrs. Hummel stated she did not stay for the discussion two weeks ago. She felt Mr. Walters has been very fair and did what he needed to do to get the numbers close to where they need to be. This proposal brings each ward within 2.2% of the target number of 6,206. Mr. Walters has moved the least amount of people necessary, unlike ten years ago when there was a significant number of people moved. She did not think people would look at a map. She appreciated the comments about making the east side into two wards. It would be nice to straighten it out but people just want to know who their Council representative is. They are not aware of how strange the boundaries look. She thinks it would be admirable to make two wards on the east side but that would involve moving a lot of people which she does not think is a good idea.

Frank Tompkins, 124 Chart Road, stated he is a current resident in Ward 8 and apparently will remain in Ward 8. He thanked the *Falls News Press* for its article. He was not aware this was being discussed. His only concern is how the moving of a part of Ward 8 into Ward 5 would affect the merger agreement dealing with the old Northampton Township area. There are certain things that are permitted in Ward 8 under that agreement and he wondered if those things would be jeopardized once the area transfers into Ward 5. Mr. Walters stated that was a good question. He would assume the ordinance would still apply regardless of where Ward 8 is but deferred to Hope Jones. Ms. Jones stated she had not read the exact language regarding this and will give a formal answer in two weeks. Mrs. Colavecchio stated there may be some cleanup needed in the ordinance dealing with the old Northampton Township area that would include properties to the north of Remington, for example. Mrs. Hummel asked how Mr. Tompkin's question would be impacted by the zoning changes that have occurred in those areas. Obviously, someone who builds a home in a newer development in Ward 8 would not be expecting his neighbor to start raising chickens. Ms. Jones stated there may be some leeway in the merger agreement that states the City would keep it as rural as it possibly could but zoning may have an impact. She will research it and have an answer in two weeks.

Mr. Walters scheduled the next meeting for Monday, October 24 at 6:31 p.m. immediately after the Council meeting, and will see what feedback comes in and what proposals are submitted at that time.

Meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.