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**REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE  
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2012  
CONFERENCE ROOM 12, CITY HALL  
5:00 P.M.**

**PRESENT:** Mayor Weinberger; City Council President Shannon; Councilor Bushor.

**ALSO PRESENT:** Councilor Tracy; Interim CAO Sisson; Jay Appleton, Planning and Zoning; City Attorney Eileen Blackwood

**ABSENT:** Councilors Decelles and Siegel.

**1. Agenda**

Councilors Bushor requested action on item 3 be deferred until a meeting when the whole committee is present.

On a motion by Councilor Bushor and City Council President Shannon, the agenda was adopted unanimously as amended.

**2. Public Forum**

Jim Holway spoke about the redistricting process.

Alan Matson spoke about the School Board and how they will be impacted by this process.

**3. Approval of the Redistricting Committee Minutes**

**a. October 2, 2012**

This item was removed from the agenda.

**4. Comparable City Analysis**

Jay Appleton, Planning and Zoning, stated he looked at all cities in Vermont and some in New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts and Rhode Island and determined how many Councilors each has. He presented this information as well as the number of people represented per Councilor. Some cities in New Hampshire have no wards and all Councilors are elected at large. He noted Everett, Massachusetts, has 26 members and a bi-cameral setup. There are two bodies that meet separately and vote on similar matters. The only City in Vermont that uses State Districts as wards is Rutland.

Councilor Bushor stated there is a large variety of ways to do this and it is up to a community to decide what works.

Mayor Weinberger stated it is amazing how many different ways local government is done around the country.

## **5. Mayor's Proposal on Redistricting**

Mayor Weinberger stated they had discussed putting forward a proposal that would take into account the schedule and the other initiatives going on in the City. He suggested using the wards that are currently in place and adjusting them as needed to come up with a seven district model.

City Council President Shannon inquired if the seven district arrangement is his recommendation. Mayor Weinberger stated there are two seven ward models. The maps are a basis to start the discussion. Mr. Appleton displayed a draft map.

Councilor Bushor stated she is concerned about the changes in Ward 1 and wants to ensure that the stable neighborhoods are represented. The Ward has a section of stable neighborhoods and a section with constant turnover. Citizens will not have their needs met if there is constant turnover in most of their ward. Putting all of the dorms in Ward 1 is challenging.

City Council President Shannon inquired if they can make changes to the map and know what the numbers are instantly. Mr. Appleton stated they can. He stated his map has not yet addressed Ward 1. He showed the committee how the software will work. City Council President Shannon stated she would like to identify problems with these maps. Ward 1 has a lot more people on the voter checklist than there are people living in that Ward. Many of the people living there are not registered voters in Vermont. Ward 1 should be the ward with the biggest deviation. It should not exceed the allowable deviation, but should anticipate trends in that ward as well as potential development in that ward. Mr. Appleton stated there is no requirement to minimize deviation, it just needs to be under 10%. City Council President Shannon stated that bringing in both sides of Colchester Avenue would add to the stability of the Ward.

Councilor Bushor stated Living and Learning is in Ward 1 but it could be moved to Ward 6. Those living in Living and Learning are an engaged type of student. The other side of Main Street has a neighborhood street that is in Ward 1. It is troubling because Main Street is a natural boundary that would address some of the larger structures. She stated she would like to look at how Wards 4 and 7 are done and what could be done with Ward 2. Mr. Appleton stated adjustments were made. He has no knowledge about how dorms should be split or combined, and his map is merely a starting point. He displayed a map of seven wards where each Councilor would remain in their current ward.

City Council President Shannon inquired what two three person wards for the New North End and the Old North End ward would look like. Councilor Bushor stated in the past the New North End used to have three Councilors and they were eventually separated into new wards. She stated she would like to keep people in areas they feel like are neighborhoods. If the resulting

configuration had thirteen Councilors instead of fourteen, that would not be the end of the world. It is hard to know what the best way to tackle this is.

Mr. Appleton stated representation has to be equal per Councilor. A ward with only one Councilor will be physically smaller.

A member of the audience, Councilor Tracy, stated that there are people living in Old North End neighborhoods who feel their issues do not lie with the New North End, the place they currently vote.

Mayor Weinberger stated if the intention is to keep seven districts, the area of the New North End needs to be expanded to make the numbers work. This may cause difficulty. City Council President Shannon stated she likes the four district model because it incorporates the New North End nicely. Mr. Appleton stated the target number for seven districts is 6,000 per ward. Two wards in the New North End would be 12,000, but only 10,000 people actually live there. This requires including some people in the Old North End. The four district model allows for 10,000 people in each ward, which matches the number of people in the New North End. City Council President Shannon stated the four ward model makes sense with the way the neighborhoods lie.

A member of the audience, Councilor Tracy stated it is more difficult for third party candidates or independent candidates to run in that ward because there are different values than in other parts of the City.

Councilor Bushor stated the downside to that is there will be fewer seats total. City Council President Shannon stated there will be incumbents at risk under this scenario. Mayor Weinberger stated the four ward model would result in a twelve seat council with three councilors per ward. City Council President Shannon stated there are certain wards that have had difficulty filling seats, so this may be a more optimal number.

A member of the audience, Alan Matson, spoke to how this would affect the School Board. He stated they would like diversity on the School Board.

Councilor Bushor stated there are a lot of different voices and diversity is important. It can be challenging for the administration and the Council. She stated she is not ready to decide which way she would like to proceed. There are some lines that she does not like in the proposed maps. She would like to know where City Councilors and School Board members live. She would like to be aware if an incumbent's district is moved. Mr. Appleton stated he can incorporate that feature.

Mayor Weinberger inquired if Councilors will be able to log in and draw their own maps. Mr. Appleton stated there is an app that was created to do this and demonstrated it. Mayor Weinberger stated deviations should be within 10%. City Council President Shannon inquired if the software would display the existing wards. Mr. Appleton stated it could be made to do that.

Councilor Bushor requested copies of the four ward and the modified seven ward proposals. Mayor Weinberger inquired who will be able to see the proposals. Mr. Appleton stated that the

committee can decide that. Mayor Weinberger inquired how the committee felt about that. City Council President Shannon stated she would like information on voter turnout in each of the wards. It is another piece of information to base decisions on other than census data. That is a reasonable thing to consider when looking at deviations. Councilor Bushor stated the number of student housing built by institutions is important to consider as well. Many of those individuals live here but vote elsewhere. It is important to be cognizant of that when considering the deviations.

#### **6. Date of Next Committee Meeting**

The Committee discussed the date of the next meeting and determined they would meet on October 30.

#### **7. Any Other Business**

n/a

#### **8. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 6:22 pm.