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City of Burlington

City Hall, Room 20, 149 Church Street, Burlington, VT 05401

Voice (802) 865-7000

Fax (802) 865-7014

TTY (802) 865-7142

**REDISTRICTING COMMITTEE
MONDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2012**

MINUTES

PRESENT: Mayor Weinberger; City Council President Shannon; Councilors Bushor, Decelles, and Siegel

ALSO PRESENT: Interim CAO Sisson; Councilors Brennan and Paul; Jay Appleton, Planning and Zoning; City Attorney Blackwood; Bernie O'Rourke, School Board; Emma Mulvaney-Stanak; Bill Keogh; Jim Holway

1. Agenda

On a motion by Councilors Bushor and Siegel, the agenda was adopted unanimously as presented.

2. Public Forum

Jim Holway spoke about public engagement in the redistricting process.

Bill Keogh recommended salary increases for City Councilors.

3. Approval of Minutes

- a. October 2, 2012
- b. October 30, 2012

Councilors Siegel inquired about a portion of the minutes that discussed reducing the number of Councilors. Mayor Weinberger stated the committee had decided that for the sake of time, they would not reduce the size significantly. City Council President Shannon stated the committee had agreed that a reduction of one or two councilors would be acceptable.

On a motion by Councilors Bushor and Siegel the minutes were adopted unanimously are presented.

4. Staff Presentation of Alternatives Discussed at October 30 Meeting

and

5. Continued Committee Discussion on Ward Redistricting

Councilor Decelles inquired if the committee must act in March or if it would be alright to defer action. Mayor Weinberger stated the City is at risk today and someone could challenge election results because wards are not evenly distributed. The City has already been slow in acting on this. There is reason to move now and if it can be done for March, it should be.

City Council President Shannon stated it is important to get this done, but also important to get this done right. It will be in place for ten or more years. She stated she has reservations about going forward with something that has not been properly vetted. She stated she is not adverse to taking more time.

Councilor Bushor stated at the last meeting Attorney Bergman had stated the timeline is really shorter than March and would like clarity on this. This meeting is open to the public and they had discussed bringing NPA members in. It would have been nice to cast a wider net to help engage people. She stated she feels rushed. She requested a list of dates from the City Attorney. City Attorney Blackwood provided the dates.

City Council President Shannon stated there are public hearings but if any changes are made as a result of those hearings, the process starts over. However, with this timeline, there is not time to change the plans. City Attorney Blackwood stated you can still make changes to the plan. The plan just can't be completely changed. Councilor Decelles stated small changes can be made as long as the public is warned. City Attorney Blackwood stated if the public is presented with backup plans as well, it may be acceptable to use them.

Councilor Bushor stated this changes the Charter and changes have always been brought forward from the Charter Change committee. Those changes would have to be in place for February to leave time for ballot printing and early voting. Mayor Weinberger inquired how this would work for early voting. City Attorney Blackwood stated this only takes legal requirements into account. Mayor Weinberger stated at the most recent election the CAO's Office needed the language much earlier.

Councilor Bushor inquired how other people can be included in the notice of this meeting. Everyone should have access to play with the tool. There should also be an email sent to NPA Steering Committee members. This will be brought to the Council soon and they should be included.

Councilor Siegel discussed the difficulties of the meeting schedule and stated people may not know about them. Interim CAO Sisson stated as staff of the committee he can include NPA Steering Committee Members in meeting notices, as directed. He stated legally, meetings need to be warned 24 hours in advance, but there could be more frequent communication with Committee Members. He stated all of the information is on the website.

Councilor Bushor stated people get notices all the time but they do not always acknowledge them. She would like to distribute information more broadly and would like to figure out the best way to do that. She suggested adding Public Forum attendees to the list.

Councilor Siegel stated there should be more communication from the CAO's Office. Mayor

Weinberger stated that is understood, and the CAO's office has been extremely busy for the last few weeks. Interim CAO Sisson stated he has done everything he could to get the minutes done as soon as possible, but it was the week before a large election. Mayor Weinberger stated they will advise the NPAs of the next meeting.

Councilor Bushor inquired if they should add a meeting to the schedule. Mayor Weinberger stated the next meeting will need to be a long one in order to complete all of the work. Councilor Decelles suggested notifying NPAs as soon as possible. Mayor Weinberger stated they could issue a press release explaining the upcoming process. Councilor Bushor suggested Front Porch Forum, Tweeting about it, and putting it on Facebook. Interim CAO Sisson stated he can warn the meeting date far in advance. A member of the audience, Jim Holway, stated the NPAs do not typically meet in December so they should be notified as soon as possible.

Attorney Blackwood discussed the requirements of notifying the public and explained that revisions may be made as the result of the public hearing. Mayor Weinberger stated the charter change will include a map of the districts. The language will be revised as lines are drawn differently. Councilor Bushor noted further options for meeting schedules. Mayor Weinberger stated they can continue to look at scheduling options. Interim CAO Sisson stated he expects the next meeting will be the longest and the largest attended. He inquired what room should be reserved with the expected increase in attendance. Councilor Bushor stated that Conference Room 12 may be too small. City Council President Shannon stated it could take place at the Police Station.

Jay Appleton, Planning and Zoning, displayed the website with resources for the public. He stated the map drawing tool is available to anyone who wants to use it. He displayed a map that reflected comments from the last meeting. One change is the portion of the New North End extending into the Old North End is more contiguous. He stated he changed Ward 1 to include more stable neighborhoods. He also made the deviations larger.

Councilor Decelles stated when Ward 7 extends south, it captures a neighborhood that has little in common with the rest of the Wards. Mr. Appleton stated he can put this into the app and Councilors can start to draw lines. Councilor Decelles suggested tweaking lines in this example to agree on some common elements. Councilor Bushor stated she does not like that it tries to link two neighborhoods that have little in common. Mayor Weinberger stated if there is a seven ward model, something like this has to happen because the New North End does not have enough people for four Councilors. If the committee does not want to do that, they should look to a model with a different number of wards. Councilor Bushor stated they could have a district with one Councilor. Mr. Appleton stated it is difficult to do this because the Old North End is so dense. City Council President Shannon inquired if they were to add a ward, would they have to add a polling place. Interim CAO Sisson stated that they likely would.

A member of the audience, Emma Mulvaney-Stanak, displayed a map that would allow for thirteen Councilors. This would keep Old North End and New North End communities together.

City Council President Shannon stated in the past they had considered having at-large Councilors, and Councilors in districts. Other communities have said that by doing that, the

Councilors who represent the whole City think they are better and more important than the others. She suggested that by having districts with different numbers of Councilors, some Councilors may feel more important than others.

Councilor Bushor stated Ward 4 was once a very large ward and it was split because of the growth in that area. There is a chance that all three councilors could be from one part of that large area. With two wards, there will be representation from both sides of the street. She stated she would like to have overlays of the existing wards and proposed wards to make it clear what is being changed. Mr. Appleton stated he can do that and displayed a map that looked like that.

Councilor Decelles commented that the map is not much different than the current layout. This could be one of the proposals, but he would like to hear voter comments. Mayor Weinberger stated there is a four ward model, a seven ward model with thirteen councilors, a proposal that is about the same as the current layout, and a ten ward proposal. He stated they already ruled out the current state representative district layout. It was rejected because it contains a section of Winooski. This is not a large problem because it only affects about 50 people. Voting day becomes more complicated when there are different districts in each wards. It creates the opportunity for error. That proposal has been vetted already and may be worth considering. Councilor Siegel stated the people who have been moved into the New North End district do not like it at all. It is not a natural neighborhood. City Council President Shannon stated it is good that there is more mass around Lakeview Terrace. Mayor Weinberger stated that although that neighborhood is different from other parts of the district, there is a higher number of people that are included in that neighborhood.

Councilor Decelles stated they had planned to have a discussion about changes in governance structure with committee assignments and City Council salaries. This will all need to be explained to voters. Mayor Weinberger stated the committee did not feel that there was time to have that conversation.

Councilor Bushor stated she does not know how districts deal with neighborhoods and would like to see that map before voicing an opinion.

Mayor Weinberger stated the models on the table are the four ward twelve councilor model, the thirteen councilor model, the fourteen councilor seven ward version, the three ward models, and the ten ward model.

Councilor Siegel stated only having ten councilors would be a significant reduction. Although it would simplify things, it could complicate other things.

Councilor Bushor stated that these models will need some tweaking. She suggested each Councilor should consider making some small changes and decide if they can live with each model. Mayor Weinberger stated that if people are ok with it, he would like to limit discussion to these four models. The committee continued to discuss pros and cons of each model.

Attorney Blackwood stated that for state districts, the deviations had to be much smaller. Mr. Appleton noted several development projects that could affect the numbers in the future.

Councilor Bushor stated they need to base their decisions off of 2010 census numbers.

A member of the audience, Councilor Paul stated a disadvantage to larger wards would be that it would require Councilors to do more fundraising to win the election. City Council has been accused of not being inclusive. It is difficult for someone without financial means to run. There are streets with so many apartments on them it would be impossible to go door-to-door to get elected, as most candidates do. Mayor Weinberger stated no one seems to have a lot of love for the four ward model.

A member of the audience, Jim Holway, state that having four wards would make running for Council more of a profession. Councilor Bushor stated she appreciates that thought and the difficulties in campaigning that may be added.

A member of the audience, Councilor Paul, stated that the reapportionment process was a good one. Mayor Weinberger inquired if they are happy with the product. Councilor Paul stated there are some who are very happy and others who are not.

Councilor Siegel stated the next meeting should be announced to NPAs and they will outline the upcoming process. Mayor Weinberger stated they will need to make more than minor tweaks and they will present to the City Council after the next meeting. He suggested keeping all of the proposals until there is some more public comment.

Councilor Decelles inquired if they will be able to tweak the four proposed models. Mr. Appleton stated that they can do that. Councilor Decelles stated it would be useful to do that as a group as well as at home.

Councilor Bushor inquired what the harm is to having people overrepresented. Underrepresentation makes sense, but she is unsure why overrepresentation is a problem. City Council President Shannon stated if someone is overrepresented, then everyone else is underrepresented. Mr. Appleton stated Ward 1 is currently underrepresented. He outlined the current deviations. Mayor Weinberger stated that deviations should be no more than 10%. Attorney Blackwood stated there are examples of cases where larger deviations have been justified. Councilor Bushor stated if there is growth at the university, there are stable neighborhoods whose interests get left behind. City Council President Shannon inquired if there is a way to determine how many people living in those wards are permanent residents. Attorney Blackwood stated that the most important factor is that each person has one vote. It is alright to have deviations because there are student neighborhoods that will not vote here, and that is known.

Councilor Decelles inquired if the software is smart enough to draw something that would look similar. Mr. Appleton stated the computer could do the work, but it would be a futile exercise because there is more that goes into it than numbers.

City Council President Shannon stated she worked on a scenario that dealt with students, particularly because there are not a lot of student voters. Her scenario went over the 10% deviation, which is justified. Interim CAO Sisson noted that a lot more people in Ward 1 voted in

the presidential election than in other elections.

5. Any Other Business

n/a

6. Adjournment

Without objection, Mayor Weinberger adjourned the redistricting committee meeting at 7:25 pm.