



Linn County Temporary Redistricting Commission

Ray Dochterman
Cindy Golding
Sarah Halbrook
Dave Machacek
Nate Willems

Jean Oxley Public Service Center
935 Second Street SW
Cedar Rapids, IA 52404

Minutes

Linn County Temporary Redistricting Commission Friday, September 8, 2017

Call to Order: The Linn County Temporary Redistricting Commission met in the Informal Board Room at the Jean Oxley Linn County Public Service Center on September 8, 2017. Commission Chair Sarah Halbrook called the meeting to order at 9:04 a.m.

Members Present: Cindy Golding, Sarah Halbrook, Dave Machacek and Nate Willems.

Members Absent: Ray Dochterman (Vice-Chair)

Others Present: Lisa Epp, Assistant County Attorney; Darrin Gage, Director of Policy & Administration; James Houser, County Supervisor; Gary Jarvis, Assistant County Attorney; Dawn Jindrich, Budget Director; Joel Miller, County Auditor; B. A. Morelli, The Gazette; Brent Oleson, County Supervisor; Barbara Schmitz, Recording Secretary; Rebecca Shoop, Deputy Auditor; Jason Siebrecht, GIS Manager

Public Comment

Brent Oleson thanked the members of the Commission for their service to the County. He noted that he studied the four draft plans submitted by the GIS Department and prefers Draft Plan #2. He indicated that he believes including the rural areas in essentially one district allows for more rural influence, and he asked that the Commission give it full and fair consideration.

Approval of Minutes

Motion from Golding, seconded by Willems, to approve the minutes of the meeting of August 18, 2017, as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Review/Revise/Present Draft Supervisor District Plans

Gage noted that the commissioners had before them the four proposed district maps created by Linn County GIS; these are the same maps which had been previously provided to them but with compactness data at the bottom of the map and population variance data on the back. Siebrecht briefly reviewed the process used to arrive at the compactness numbers. Jarvis reminded the commissioners that Iowa Code does not set a standard for compactness but the statute implies that more compactness is preferable. He also noted that all four plans meet the minimum requirements for population, but the closer a plan is to the standards the better.

Golding indicated that she spent significant time studying the four proposed maps and believes Draft Plan #3 does the best job of keeping areas with common interests aligned, especially with regard to the issues that Supervisors have to deal with. She also noted that development on the south end of the county will impact Cedar Rapids and thus align those areas' interests more closely with Cedar Rapids. The northern part of the county does not have the same issues. Draft Plan #3 would be her first choice and Draft Plan #4 her second.

Halbrook sought clarification from staff as to issues that are allowable for consideration when choosing among the plans; Jarvis explained that factors such as common interests and development may be considered.

Willems noted his belief that Draft Plan #2 makes the most sense and is the most reflective of how districts are currently constituted; he indicated he feels the other three plans involved taking several small towns and simply adding them on to one of the Cedar Rapids districts. He also noted that Draft Plan #3 uses the river to divide Cedar Rapids, which he views as less desirable than the division of the Cedar Rapids districts used in Draft Plan #2.

Machacek reported that he favors either Draft Plan #2 or Draft Plan #3 and is pleased that one of the districts in either of those plans will be largely rural.

Halbrook noted she does not have a favorite; she indicated that she saw value in some rural and urban areas being included together in a district. She also advised that she felt more discussion was needed and did not want to proceed too far toward making a recommendation without input from Mr. Dochterman.

Motion from Golding, seconded by Machacek, to review Draft Plan #3. The Commission proceeded to discuss Draft Plan #3.

Golding reiterated her strong belief that Draft Plan #3 makes the most sense given the differing pressures that exist between the northern and southern rural areas of the county. Willems noted that as a resident of Mount Vernon, a former resident of Lisbon, and one who spends significant time in Ely, Draft Plan #3 seems like an effort to attain the population needed by adding a few rural areas to a Cedar Rapids district. He noted the split in population between Cedar Rapids residents and residents of small communities would be about 55,000/15,000 and advised that he does not believe that reflects a good balance for the district.

Willems proceeded with further discussion on Draft Plan #2. He noted the clean north/south division for Cedar Rapids and the plan to keep the rural areas together in one district, as they currently are. Machacek advised that he saw benefits in both plans and was undecided as to which he prefers. Halbrook indicated her reluctance to proceed much further given the absence of one of the commissioners.

Motion from Willems, seconded by Golding, to take a five-minute recess. The motion carried unanimously.

Upon reconvening, Halbrook noted the need for three votes in order to decide on one of the four plans and indicated that she personally did not feel comfortable proceeding with a vote without at least hearing input from Mr. Dochterman. There was a brief discussion of narrowing the possibilities to two plans, but it was agreed that was unnecessary. Golding stated that her research led to her strong belief that Draft Plans #3 and #4 best reflect the kinds of decisions Supervisors make. Willems indicated it was unlikely the Commission would be able to reach agreement and suggested scheduling another meeting.

Motion from Willems, seconded by Machacek, to set a date and time for the next meeting. Aye: Halbrook, Machacek, Willems. Nay: Golding. Motion carried, 3-1.

Next Meeting

Discussion was held regarding the next meeting date. It was agreed that the next meeting will be Thursday, September 14 at 9:30 a.m. The location of the meeting will be determined and communicated to the members of the Commission.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 9:56 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted
Barbara Schmitz, Recording Secretary

Approved
Sarah Halbrook, Chair