

NORMAN REAPPORTIONMENT AD HOC COMMITTEE MINUTES

September 2, 2021

The Reapportionment Ad Hoc Committee of the City of Norman, Cleveland County, State of Oklahoma met in the Executive Conference Room of the Norman Municipal Building at 201 West Gray Street on Thursday, September 2, 2021, at 6:00 p.m., and notice and agenda of the meeting were posted at the Norman Municipal Building at 201-A West Gray at least 24 hours prior to the beginning of the meeting and online at https://www.normanok.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2021-09-02_reapportionment_ad_hoc_committee_agenda.pdf (normanok.gov).

Item No. 1, being:
CALL TO ORDER.

Joyce Green called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m.

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Item No. 2, being:
ROLL CALL.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Aleisha Karjala
Katherine Leidy
Kay Holladay
Karen Goodchild (arrived 6:06)
Michael Zorba (arrived 6:32)
Rich Lubbers
Joshua Hinkle

MEMBERS ABSENT

Larla Turner
Christopher Tall Bear
John Johnson

A quorum was present.

CITY STAFF PRESENT

Joyce Green, GIS Services Manager
Kathryn Walker, City Attorney
Roné Tromble, Administrative Technician

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Item No. 3, being:

ELECTION OF OFFICERS.

Ms. Green asked for nominations for the position of Chair.

Joshua Hinkle nominated Aleisha Karjala for election to the position of Chair. Kay Holladay seconded the nomination. There being no further nominations, Aleisha Karjala was elected Chair by a unanimous vote.

Control of the meeting was turned over to new Chair Karjala.

Chair Karjala asked for nominations for the position of Vice-Chair.

Aleisha Karjala nominated Kay Holladay for election to the position of Vice-Chair. Rich Lubbers seconded the nomination. There being no further nominations, Kay Holladay was elected Vice-Chair by a unanimous vote.

Chair Karjala asked for nominations for the position of Secretary.

Aleisha Karjala nominated Rich Lubbers for election to the position of Secretary. Kay Holladay seconded the nomination. There being no further nominations, Rich Lubbers was elected Secretary by a unanimous vote.

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Item No. 4, being:

ORIENTATION OF MEMBERS.

Ms. Walker addressed several items regarding the Reapportionment Ad Hoc Committee:

- A quorum of the Committee is a simple majority, which is 5 members.
- This is a short-term committee, with a very important purpose.
- The typical policy is that if a member is absent for three consecutive meetings, they would be removed.
- This is an advisory committee, so Council will make the final determination, and they can act however they deem necessary on the Committee's recommendations.
- To make it easier for the transcription of the minutes, the Chair should recognize anyone before they speak, and it would be beneficial for the speaker to state their name.
- All meetings will be open to the public, and have to be properly posted on our website. If it's not posted for public comment, we don't necessarily have to take public comment. All of your discussions about these topics should occur within the meeting. Email is usually the biggest issue; if you hit "Reply All" it can result in a "meeting" that has not been posted. Please do not hit "Reply All".
- Staff will handle all the posting of minutes and agendas.
- Reapportionment Committee exists to address Census data, which we have finally received for 2020. The job is to look at the population and try to make, as much as possible, substantially similar between Wards, and to form Wards of compact, contiguous territory with boundaries drawn to reflect and respond to communities of common interest, ethnic background and physical boundaries, to the extent reasonably possible. Take into consideration areas of growth versus area that aren't going to grow, and try to anticipate how you can keep the Wards fairly similar over the next 10 years.

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Item No. 5, being:

DISCUSSION AND POSSIBLE ACTION RELATED TO ANNUAL POPULATION FIGURES AND THEIR EFFECT ON THE CITY'S WARD SYSTEM.

ITEMS SUBMITTED FOR THE RECORD.

1. Staff Memo
2. Reapportionment Section from Charter
3. City Council Wards with Precincts map
4. Residential Construction Permit Activity 2011-2020 map
5. Current Plat Activity map, through June 30, 2021

DISCUSSION BY THE COMMITTEE.

Ms. Green indicated population is our main concern. Hispanic is our highest number, and the highest number within the Ward is about 10%, so there is not going to be a voting block of Hispanic voters, or any other ethnicity, because we don't have compact neighborhoods. However, if there are some neighborhoods that you're aware of within your Wards, it would be good to keep them together as much as possible.

Wards 6 and 7 are the highest in growth, and 4 is the lowest. Wards 1, 2 and 3 are also pretty low. We will probably have to change the boundaries of all the Wards, even the ones that are more or less right, because you can't correct one without touching another.

The Residential Construction Permit Activity map shows where we have experienced growth over the last decade. There have been a lot of permits in Ward 4, but those are usually also tear-downs, so it hasn't had a lot of growth. Ward 3 also does not have a lot of potential for growth as currently drawn. The Current Plat Activity map shows where future plats are. We will probably see Ward 6 have a lot of growth, because there are new plats that are not currently built out. Ward 5, down in the southern part, has some developments coming in with a lot of growth. Some of the plats on University North Park are commercial, so we won't see growth there.

The ideal ward population is 16,003. Precincts are also something we try to take into consideration, because the times you will have problems with an election are when somebody is confused about where they're supposed to vote. It is good to have all of one precinct in the same ward, but it's not required and it's not part of the charge under the Charter.

Rich Lubbers referenced a case he remembers from law school regarding equal representation; he asked if we have a range that we're trying to hit. Ms. Green responded that we're absolutely trying to stay within 10; lower than that is better. If we get close to 10, she recommends that slow growing wards be left high and faster growing wards be left low, because they'll grow into that and be out of alignment less quickly.

Karen Goodchild, in Ward 5, said there's a lot of interest in City wells, and a lot of interest in the growth of neighborhoods in that area. I know that you keep talking about 3 – I

know that that used to be high growth and it is not very much growth there any more because of the arsenic in the water. Me and several others in Ward 5 are worried about the number of wells that are being drilled and the growth that's going on in Ward 5. I just wanted to throw that out there to everybody. Water. It's population, but it's also water. I'm concerned that this is a watershed where all of us get water. I'm just very concerned about population growth in Ward 5.

Ms. Walker responded that the water wells that are being talked about out there now are actually serving the urban areas of Norman and the growth that is anticipated there based on zoning and the Land Use Plan. Right now most of Council is, as far as I can tell, very committed to restricting a lot of growth east of 48th, differently than what it's already zoned or set aside on the Land Use Plan, so that's still the status from the City's standpoint of maintaining that, even though we're giving these water rights, it's really to bring that water back into the City into the more urban areas to address the water needs there.

Ms. Green demonstrated how moving boundaries impacts population numbers and the deviation. The Committee can work on making adjustments during the meetings, or they can ask her to make some adjustments and bring the results back to the next meeting.

Mr. Hinkle suggested moving a section of Ward 5 into Ward 1 – the area east of 24th Avenue S.E. to 48th Avenue S.E. on the north side of Highway 9 – just to see the impact on the numbers. Ms. Green reported that would make Ward 1 almost 10% over. Ms. Goodchild asked how the large development south of Highway 9 at 48th Avenue S.E. would affect Ward 5. Ms. Green responded that we might want to leave Ward 5 a little bit low. Mr. Lubbers suggested adding the neighborhood north of Alameda between 24th and 36th to Ward 1.

Ms. Goodchild suggested moving the triangle on the east side of the railroad tracks in Ward 7 into Ward 4. Ms. Holladay suggested moving the sliver on the northwest side of Ward 7 into Ward 4. Mr. Lubbers commented that Ward 7 has a low voter turnout; although there are lots of registered voters, a lot of them are students that don't vote in City elections. Ms. Green added that we really don't have to take into consideration whether or not the population of a ward is registered; we deal with total population. Mr. Lubbers clarified that the vertical sliver is north Greek Row.

Mr. Lubbers noted that the three largest outliers are Wards 4, 6 and 7. It would seem to make sense to attack this from how to normalize those kinds of things.

Mr. Lubbers asked if street names can be added to the map. Ms. Green was able to add some street names.

Ms. Green reported that adding the area north of Alameda between 24th and 36th to Ward 1 moved it up to 1.8%. Taking the vertical sliver out of Ward 7 and adding it to Ward 4 unspits a precinct and takes Ward 4 down a little bit.

Ms. Holladay asked for clarification of what the deviation should be. Ms. Green explained

it should go from -5 to +5, or -6 in a really fast growing area and +6 in a really slow growing area. So Wards 2, 3 and 4 should be on the positive side, because they don't grow very much. Wards 5, 6 and 7 have been growing, and Ward 8 will probably continue to grow.

Ms. Leidy suggested moving the boundary between Wards 3 and 8 (Precinct 76) to the east to the interstate. Ms. Green indicated that would put Ward 3 at 6.7.

Ms. Goodchild suggested moving some of the area north of Franklin Road into Ward 8. The suggestion was also made to move the west edge of Ward 8 over to 72nd Avenue. Mr. Zorba suggested adding Precinct 1 to Ward 8.

Ms. Karjala suggested taking the portion of Precinct 19 south of Robinson out of Ward 8 and adding it to Ward 2. Ms. Green indicated that brings Ward 2 up to 4.7.

Mr. Hinkle asked whether it would be acceptable for people to send Ms. Green suggestions of changes they would like to see.

Ms. Green asked about holding the next meeting on Tuesday, September 7 or Wednesday, September 8. Mr. Lubbers is unavailable on the 7th and 8th. Ms. Leidy is not available the 7th. Mr. Zorba is not available the 7th. The next meeting was scheduled on September 8 at 6:00 p.m., with a possible meeting on September 13.

Ms. Walker noted the Committee needs to hold a public hearing, and it's not clear in the Charter how much notice we need to give for that. The hearing has to be 10 days before the Committee votes to forward their recommendation to Council. The filing deadline for the next Council election is during the first week of December, which is what is driving the schedule for this Committee.

Ms. Walker again said that wards are to be formed of compact, contiguous territory, with boundaries drawn to reflect and respond to communities of common interest, ethnic background, and physical boundaries, to the extent reasonably possible. We try not to split precincts. We want the dividing line to be on major streets, not in the middle of a residential block, etc. We want to focus on numbers, first and foremost, and get as close as we can on the numbers. We don't have any strong communities of common interest or ethnic background in Norman.

Ms. Green will email a PDF of the map as it has been changed, along with the statistics.

Chair Karjala asked members to send any recommended changes to Joyce before the next meeting.

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Item No. 6, being:

MISCELLANEOUS DISCUSSION OF COMMITTEE AND STAFF.

None

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Item No. 7, being:

ADJOURNMENT.

There being no further discussion and no objection, the meeting adjourned at 7:02 p.m.

Passed and approved this 21st day of October, 2021.



Rich Lubbers, Secretary
Reapportionment Ad Hoc Committee