

City of Wichita Commission of Electors

Meeting Notes

Tuesday, July 12, 2022
4:30 P.M.

455 N. Main Street
Council Board Room
Wichita, Kansas 67202



Attendance

Members Present: John Whitmer, Javen Gonzalez, Janet Johnson, Marcey Gregory, Lamont Anderson, Joseph Dozier, Patrick Penn
Members Absent: None
City Staff: Sharon Dickgrafe, Stephen Banks, Mike Kollmeyer, Scott Wadle, Jamie Buster, Sasha Beard
Public Attendance: Vice Mayor Tuttle, Council Member Frye,

1. Welcome and Introductions

Scott Wadle welcomed everyone to the meeting. Commission of Elector members went around the room with self introductions. The City of Wichita staff team introduced themselves.

2. Swearing In

Jamie Buster conducted the swearing in of the Commission members.

3. Chairperson Comments

Scott introduced the Commission of Electors Chairperson Marcey Gregory, who was appointed by the City Council as the Chairperson. Chairperson Gregory thanked everyone for giving up their evening to take part in the redistricting process. She expressed her honor and pride at being appointed and emphasized the importance of the redistricting process. Chairperson Gregory asked that everyone treats each other with respect and civility; especially with regards to staff. Chairperson Gregory also highlighted that the Commission work should be submitted to the Mayor and City Council in a timely manner.

4. Purpose and Ordinance Review

Sharon Dickgrafe provided a brief overview of the re-districting process. Outline provided for legal presentation on re-districting and the Charter ordinance 173 to serve as a road map. Below are highlights from the overview.

- Essential job description: To present district maps to the city council that divides the city up into 6 equal portions.
- The ordinance requires those populations to be no less than 5% either high or low on either side as part of the process.
- Stephen Banks will be providing information of areas with growth and other things considered as part of the process the ordinance requires certain items be taken into consideration.
- Items of consideration
- Items to be as compact as possible, you do not want strips of lines going here and there.
- Outlined precincts by the election commissioner must be followed.
- Cannot use numbers of registered voters, party lines, or partisan data.

- Staff will be presenting raw data as far as neighborhood associations can be considered areas of town can be considered but any other kind a data is preclude both by a federal law, case law as well as the city's ordinances.
- Purpose: It is to come up with maps the city council can review, adopt, revise and to send back for further clarification.
- GIS staff to provide help by looking at all the maps with moving precincts to different districts. There is caution stated that can affect numbers as well as the continuous contiguous of that area.
- Ordinance requires that maps be presented to the city council no later than the end of September.
- City council directs to have maps sooner by the end of August.
- Goal: Is to have members and staff have a time to take maps out to the neighborhood associations and/or to the Dabs for input.
- Group is subjected to the open meetings Kansas Act. Discussions need to occur as part of a meeting. Questions for staff to be sent to Scott Wadle and Stephen Banks. Reply All can be a big issue and a violation of the open meetings act. Discussions via email is a violation of that act. Meeting will be live stream and open to the public.

5. Existing Conditions

Stephen Banks shared a PowerPoint and provided an overview of 2020 Census Data, annexations and election precincts mapped with census block numbers (smallest geography). Below are highlights from the presentation.

- Council District Populations
 - Two outliers:
 - District 2 at 7.3% over the average
 - District 3 at 5.5% below the average number 66,255
- Redistricting Process
 - City Council Appoints commission of Electors – July 5, 2022
 - Commission of Electors Kickoff Meeting – 7/5-12/2022
 - Commission of Electors Develops Scenarios for Redistricting – July – August 2022
 - Commission of Electors Make Final recommendation to Council – August 31, 2022
 - City Council Approves of Makes Changes to Commission Recommendation – Sept. – Oct 2022
 - Presentation to District Advisory Board (Dab's) [Review process & neighborhood associations](#) – Oct – Nov 2022
 - City Council Adopts recommendation and passes ordinance by – December 31, 2022
- Things to consider
 - Election precincts must be used to define districts ([Used to build the districts](#)) “[District Building Blocks](#)”
 - Maintain a reasonably compact area
 - Maintain as much as possible integrity of broadly cohesive areas of interest. ([Neighborhood & homeowner associations](#))
 - Avoid using numbers of registered voters by party or other partisan data. ([Includes avoidance in race, ethnic data, and income data.](#)) [Income is not partisan data.](#)
 - Resulting districts must be with +/- 5% of 66,255 (62,942 to 69,568)
 - Think about the future – Where is growth occurring in the next ten years.
- Maps Presented:
 - City districts maps PDF to be sent out to all members & posted on city website.
 - Redistricting 2020 Election Districts & Total population – City of Wichita Map presented

- Neighborhood Associations and City Districts
- Homeowners Associations and City Council Districts
- 2035 Wichita Future Growth Concept Map from the comprehensive plan. (Accurate for the last 10 years with well over 90% of the development and increase in employment occurring within map bubbles.)
- District 5, 2, and 4 have quite a bit of development, less for district 6, 1, and 3.
- District 2 has grown in population, and District 3 has fallen behind (landlocked by McConnell and the industrial improvement districts to the Southeast in which poses an issue.) Since the districts are next to each other that may provide a solution to part of the problem.
- *(Opens for questions/discussion)*
- Stephen Banks requests that members to sketch out and return ideas. Each elector to produce a couple of ideas by the end of Monday so staff will have time to process those ideas for the next meeting.
- There was discussion about the redistricting process and the possibility of redistricting council members out of the district they were elected to represent. Staff indicated that they would review preferred options and will let the Commission know if that might occur.
- Commission members requested a map of the neighborhood associations to be provided, and staff indicated that they would.
- In response to a question, staff indicated that income has not been historically used as a basis, and race has been considered partisan data. Race data is not provided to avoid issues.
- Commission members requested the basic city-wide numbers of city demographics to help give a better understanding/idea of they are looking at. This is to be mindful of race without targeting certain racial groups.

6. Potential Options

Scott opened up the discussion about potential options. Below are highlights from the discussion.

- Commission members request a few maps that prioritized population equivalency, and for staff to come up with 4-5 map options.
- Staff indicated that they would provide analysis of maps submitted to staff and also of options/scenarios developed by staff.
- A Commission member expressed a desire to explore the addition of two (2) additional City Council districts, to bring more representation down to a municipal level. The Committee member suggested that staff could come up with some maps to explore the option of eight council districts. Another Commission member, expressed opposition – indicating that the charge of the Commission is to develop a recommendation for six (6) council districts. In response to the discussion, City staff shared that at least two (2) charter ordinances would need to be changed in order to increase the number of council members and council districts. Staff also shared the opinion that the Commission of Electors does not have the authority to branch out and recommend eight (8) council districts. Some of the Commission members expressed interest in possibly exploring the concept of eight (8) council districts further - after the Commission of Electors has provided a recommendation for six (6) council districts to the City Council. Some Commission members emphasized that time is limited as well as resources; and there are deadlines and objective to be considered.
- There was discussion about the need and benefits of having public input; and how it can be accommodated as part of the City redistricting process.
- Recommendation to gather input from the community recommendations, can pose to be beneficial. To get a tight zero balance map, with zero deviation to have a springboard for conversation and those tweaks that can be done up to the threshold of the + or – 5 percent.

- Recommendation for transparency in the maps being brought in by the members if they're coming from city council members. If so, electors will need to be aware of this due to maps the county commission agreed to cut out that were submitted by county commissioners. Not her to push political agendas as well as outside groups.
- Recommendation/request for comment portal going live for feedback to be reviewed by Electors to take in consideration of community thoughts. Staff recommends adding an option for the next meeting to discuss different input options for the communities to participate in. Community input and comments to be added in later meetings.

7. Next Steps

City staff provided an overview of the process goals, preferred meeting dates, and next steps. Below are highlights from the discussion.

- The goal is to get a preliminary recommendation by August 31st.
- Preferred meeting dates and times: Wednesday July 20, 2022 @ 5:30PM (1.5 hours).
- Zoom link will be available. (Go to meeting option)
- Patrick Penn and Marcey Gregory noted to be out of town July 20, 2022.
- MOTION: That a Commission member has to be present, in person or at least using zoom/virtually, in order to vote; and that for the final recommendation to the City Council Commission members need to be present in-person to vote.
 - GREGORY moved, GONZALEZ seconded the motion, and it carried (7-1) Patrick Penn - Nay.
- Michael Kollmeyer, provided a demonstration of the GIS redistricting system.
 - Scenarios in a dashboard format to be posted for Elector and public.
 - The tool is not manipulated by the public, due to licensing and costs.
 - Ability to view neighborhood associations.
 - Homeowner associations are not available with the GIS tool but will be added along with the neighborhood associations
- Staff indicated that they are available to help with analysis. Monday is the deadline to have an analyst for the next meeting. Following submission of the maps, staff will provide an analysis of the submitted maps.
- There was City code of ethics to be applied with clean and clear objectives. To take consideration so the process is not prolonged.
- There was a discussion regarding concerns of potential scenarios where maps would be submitted by Commission members as their own, after being developed by other stakeholder/advocacy groups. Staff from the Law Department confirmed that the Commission of Electors falls under the City's ethics policy that applies to City advisory boards.
- like to extend to staff drawing any maps that would be and they did not disclose it would be perceived as unethical as an ethics violation. Friendly amendment for organizations and corporations as well.
- MOTION: That the Commission of Electors expects that Commission of Electors member or staff would disclose that if any of the maps or alterations of maps have been directed / recommended at the direction or advice from any council member, mayor, organizations, corporations, partisan group, campaign organizations. If that is not disclosed, then that that would be considered an ethics violation.
 - DOZIER moved, seconded by GONZALEZ (Approved 7-0)
- In response to a question, City staff indicated that ethics violations could be for a complaint to be submitted to the ethics board.

Adjournment:

- MOTION: To adjourn,
 - DOZIER moved, seconded by PENN, and it carried (7-0).

DRAFT