

ITEM NO. 22-

**TO THE CITY COUNCIL OF PEORIA, ILLINOIS, IN COUNCIL,
ASSEMBLED YOUR COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE to Whom
was Referred a POLICY SESSION on REDISTRICTING
COUNCIL DISTRICTS and Provide Direction to Staff as
Appropriate.**

A Policy Session was held on Tuesday, January 18, 2022, beginning at 6:00 P.M. by electronic means through Zoom, with Mayor Ali presiding, and with proper notice having been posted.

ROLL CALL

Roll Call showed the following Council Members were present: Allen, Cyr, Grayeb, Jackson, Jensen, Kelly, Oyler, Riggerbach, Ruckriegel, Velpula, Mayor Ali – 11. Absent: None.

Others present were: City Manager Patrick Ulrich, Interim Corporation Counsel Chrissie Kapustka, City Clerk Stefanie Tarr, Deputy Clerk Courtney Coe, Director of Community Development Joe Dulin, Senior Planner Josh Naven, Assistant Public Work Director and Superintendent of Operations Sie Maroon, Assistant Director of Community Development Leah Allison, Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer Melodi Green, Network Administrator Paul Peterson, interested citizens and members of the media.

**Communication from the City Manager and Finance Director with a Request to
hold a POLICY SESSION on REDISTRICTING COUNCIL DISTRICTS**

Mayor Ali opened the Policy Session at 6:08 P.M.

Mayor Ali reviewed the schedule for the Special City Council Meetings to hold Policy Sessions regarding Redistricting Council Districts. She said three maps were provided for initial consideration.

City Manager Patrick Ulrich summarized the 2020 Census Presentation (21-290) given at the September 28, 2021, City Council Meeting, and he reviewed the population alterations required for each District. He explained the criteria used to create the three initial redistricting maps presented to the Council, including population equality in contiguous and compact Districts while considering common interests and natural boundaries.

Senior Planner Josh Naven detailed each of the three redistricting maps for the Council. City Manager Ulrich invited the Council to ask questions or provide direction to Staff regarding the redistricting maps.

In response to Council Member Velpula regarding how the maps were constructed, Senior Planner Naven provided additional details on the criteria and considerations Staff used to create the map variations, noting the requests made by the Council and neighborhood associations and to stay within the 5% deviation in order to provide for a more equal population size. He said, after starting with those criteria, boundaries were shifted accordingly. In response to Council Member Jackson, he said demographic information was included in the map variations, noting an overall report along with a more detailed report.

Council Member Jensen said she was not in favor of splitting neighborhoods between multiple Districts, like the Moss-Bradley neighborhood in Version 3. Senior Planner Naven said every attempt was made to keep neighborhood associations in place; however, he said another version could be brought back with the attempt to keep the neighborhood associations intact.

He said not every single criterion was provided for, noting the difficulties in doing so.

Council Member Jensen said she was opposed to splitting the Moss-Bradley Neighborhood Association.

Senior Planner Naven compared the three redistricting maps to the existing District map.

Mayor Ali said the Moss-Bradley Neighborhood Association may not be the only situation where an association was represented by more than one Council Member.

Council Member Riggerbach expressed concern regarding Versions 1 and 3, including how the East Bluff was separated into multiple Council Districts. He remarked on the First District and the distinction between the Southside, the North Valley, and the East Bluff. He said he approved of the vertical District orientation in Version 2 and how the main thoroughfares were used as boundaries. He said using recognizable boundaries would benefit the citizens and the community. He also remarked on how Version 2 split the Riverfront into three different Districts. He said there were a lot of advantages with Version 2. He reviewed Version 3, noting the First District would expand up to the Peoria Heights boundary, which seemed unusual. In conclusion, he said he preferred Version 2, stating it seemed to use some of the main thoroughfares such as Knoxville Avenue, University Street, Sheridan Road, and I-74 as boundaries for the Districts.

Council Member Allen remarked on the importance of diversity in all Districts, specifically noting the demographics in the Fourth District were adversely affected in the proposed redistricting map variations, especially in Version 1 and Version 2.

Senior Planner Naven provided a side-by-side comparison of the current District map compared to each variation of the redistricting maps.

Council Member Ruckriegel said he was in favor of keeping neighborhoods intact in a single District. He requested a list of neighborhoods split across multiple Districts for each map. He asked, with Version 3, if there was a way to keep the left boundary of the Second District where it was on the current District map and shrink the east boundary away from the riverfront. He reviewed the Riverfront and inquired whether it could be split between two Districts, and he requested a version showing the same. He remarked on the importance of keeping neighborhoods together, stating they had a cohesion.

Senior Planner Naven said a new map could be constructed to prioritize keeping neighborhoods intact, like the Moss-Bradley and East Bluff neighborhoods, as well as provide for the various requests to see if they would fall within the 5% deviation. He noted District Council Members residences were not affected in the proposed maps.

Continued discussions were held regarding the East Bluff neighborhood and population considerations when constructing the redistricting maps. Mayor Ali asked for the East Bluff neighborhood to reside in a District other than the First District to allow for more equal representation for historical neighborhoods.

Further discussions on using main thoroughfares as boundaries and keeping entire neighborhoods in a single District were held. The West Peoria boundary, Bradley University, and strategies to achieve the Council's requested map alterations were also discussed.

Council Member Riggerbach said he preferred Version 2, stating it did a better job using significant thoroughfares and it was a cleaner version of the three versions provided.

Mayor Ali said it was clear the population of the City was moving north, stating the Fifth District gained approximately 5,000 people while the First District lost 4,000 – 5,000 people. She said it was clear, over then next ten years, growth would continue in the northern part of the City.

Council Member Grayeb said he agreed with many of the observations made by Council Members, and he noted Version 1 and Version 2 could be adjusted to fit the Council's requests. He summarized his history on the Council and the redistricting process in previous years.

Senior Planner Naven said he was working with GIS Manager Jason Biller to create an interactive map on the website.

City Manager Urich said the Redistricting information and maps were available on the City of Peoria's website for citizens to review at www.peoriagov.org/redistricting.

Council Member Oyler said he would advocate for Version 1 and Version 2, noting Version 3 was not the best option. He asked if the First District could be split to the north and south of the West Peoria boundaries, but Senior Planner Naven said it was not possible because the District would become noncontiguous.

In response to Mayor Ali regarding whether the Council should discard Version 3, Council Member Allen said Version 3 provided for a more diverse population in the Fourth District, but he said if those concerns were addressed in a new map, he would concur.

Council Member Kelly said he did not have a strong opinion on one version over another. He said he liked Council Districts being compact.

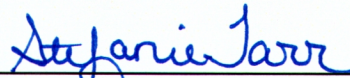
Council Member Jensen said she agreed with Council Members Grayeb, Riggenbach and Oyler, noting Version 3 was her least favorite. She said she would not be supportive of the Moss-Bradley Neighborhood Association being split between two Council Districts. She said she would rather see Version 1 or Version 2 with adjustments made to keep the Moss-Bradley Neighborhood in one district.

Council Member Cyr said he appreciated Council input, and he said he believed the Fifth District was distributed well in all three maps; however, he noted Version 1 was his preference.

Senior Planner Naven summarized the direction given by the Council for Staff to explore in the new construction of versions of the maps presented.

Mayor Ali said Staff would consider the direction given by the Council and construct new maps with the recommendations to be presented at the February 1, 2022, Policy Session.

Mayor Ali closed the Policy Session at 7:15 P.M.



Stefanie Tarr, RMC, CMC, City Clerk
City of Peoria, Illinois