

ITEM NO. 21-

**TO THE CITY COUNCIL OF PEORIA, ILLINOIS, IN COUNCIL,
ASSEMBLED YOUR COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE to Whom
was Referred a POLICY SESSION on REDISTRICTING in
Response to the 2020 Census Results.**

A Policy Session was held on Tuesday, October 12, 2021, beginning at 6:26 P.M. at City Hall, Council Chambers (Room 400), 419 Fulton Street, Peoria, with Mayor Ali presiding, and with proper notice having been posted.

ROLL CALL

Roll Call showed the following Council Members were present: Allen, Grayeb, Jackson, Jensen, Kelly, Oyler, Riggenbach, Ruckriegel, Velpula, Mayor Ali – 10. Absent: Cyr - 1.

Others present were: City Manager Patrick Urich, Interim Corporation Counsel Chrissie Kapustka, City Clerk Stefanie Tarr, Deputy Clerk II Courtney Coe, Police Chief Eric Echevarria, Desktop Services Manager Cory O'Brien, Strategic Communications Manager Stacy Peterson, Community Development Director Joe Dulin (electronic attendance), other City Staff (electronic attendance), Attorney Phillip B. Lenzini (electronic attendance), interested citizens and members of the media.

**Communication from the City Manager with a Request to
hold a POLICY SESSION on REDISTRICTING in Response to the 2020 Census Results**

Mayor Ali opened the Policy Session at 6:26 P.M.

Interim Corporation Counsel Chrissie Kapustka summarized the 2020 Census Presentation given by Community Development Director Joe Dulin at the September 28, 2021, Regular City Council Meeting (See [Item No. 21-290](#)). She described the required population adjustments for each Council District and reviewed information regarding restructuring the number of Council Districts and the number of Council Members. She offered comparisons to similar municipalities in the region regarding the structure of their Council and Districts. She concluded by introducing Attorney Phillip B. Lenzini, of Kavanagh, Scully, Sudow, White & Frederick, P.C., who had extensive experience regarding redistricting and was involved with the 1987 Consent Decree resulting from a voting rights lawsuit against the City of Peoria.

Mr. Lenzini reviewed the voting rights lawsuit, the resulting 1987 Consent Decree, and subsequent amendments to the Decree. Discussions were held regarding the procedure and potential consequences of altering the structure of the City Council or number of Districts, which would require amendments to the Consent Decree. The plaintiff's involvement in the voting rights lawsuits, the potential cost and timeline of the legal process to amend the Consent Decree, and how decisions could affect the Election Commission were also discussed.

In response to Council Member Riggenbach, Mr. Lenzini said the Consent Decree would not expire, and he explained the plaintiff's role in pursuit of an amendment concerning District or Council Member structure changes.

Council Member Riggenbach inquired whether cumulative voting had worked, stating he would like to hear from those involved in the lawsuit their view on the current electoral process. He said the City should take pride in the progress that was made. He questioned whether the Ad Hoc Committee should be comprised of At-Large Council Members versus the District Council Members, or if it should be the Committee of the Whole. He commented on the difficulties of District Council Members drawing their own boundaries.

Discussions were held regarding the efficacy of the cumulative voting system implemented as a result of the 1987 Consent Decree, and the proposed structure of the 2021 Ad Hoc Redistricting Committee. Mr. Lenzini advised the Council to consider separating the issue of Redistricting following the Census and restructuring the City Council Districts, to allow for proper consideration and time to implement the changes required for the latter.

Additional discussions were held regarding cumulative voting concerning At-Large Council Member elections, and the intention of the cumulative voting structure in the Consent Decree.

Council Member Kelly said he concurred with the recommendation to separate the redistricting and restructuring issues, but he expressed concern over cumulative voting.

In response to Council Member Oyler's question regarding the definition of majority and minority as used in the discussions, Mr. Lenzini confirmed discussions about voter's rights lawsuits against the City of Peoria addressed the African American population, while discussions regarding other cases nationwide addressed a variety of minorities.

In response to Council Member Ruckriegel, Mr. Lenzini explained the supervisory power of the Judge and the allowance for interpretation regarding the Consent Decree.

Mayor Ali thanked Mr. Lenzini for his presentation and said she appreciated his recommendation to separate the issues of redistricting and restructuring. She reviewed the composition of the Ad Hoc Redistricting Committee in 2010 and how it was used as a model for the proposed 2021 Committee; however, she said the Council could explore alternatives.

Council Member Ruckriegel said the 2010 Ad Hoc Redistricting Committee consisted of 5 Council Members to avoid a voting majority present at the meetings. At his request, Interim Corporation Counsel Kapustka said the deadline for submitting Redistricting criteria was one year after the 2020 Census results were received and filed, stating the deadline was August of 2022. She said other local organizations, such as the school district, were tied to a census tract and were looking for direction.

Mayor Ali said the goal was to approve the Redistricting maps by the end of March 2022. She said she preferred to start the Redistricting process after the 2022-2023 Biennial Budget was finalized. Council Member Ruckriegel concurred with the recommendation to begin meeting after the Budget was finalized. He discussed the importance of obtaining citizen since they would have to live within those boundaries for the next 10 years.

Discussions were held regarding the possibility of appointing the Committee of the Whole to the Ad Hoc Redistricting Committee and the benefit At-Large Council Members would offer. Council Member Kelly expressed a concern involving At-Large Council Members in the conversation, stating it could create some confusion. Council Member Oyler said the opinion and knowledge of the At-Large Council Members would be of utmost importance, stating they would have a more objective opinion. Mayor Ali and Council Members Riggensbach, Oyler and Grayeb said they would support appointing the Committee of the Whole to the Ad Hoc Redistricting Committee.

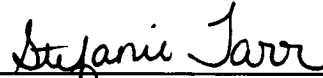
Council Member Jensen moved to close the Policy Session on Redistricting in response to the 2020 Census results; seconded by Council Member Grayeb.

Approved by roll call vote.

Yeas: Allen, Grayeb, Jackson, Jensen, Kelly, Oyler, Riggenbach, Ruckriegel, Velpula,
Mayor Ali - 10;

Nays: None.

Mayor Ali closed the Policy Session at 7:28 P.M.



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

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