

101118 Charter Commission Nov 18, 2010
First meeting reconvened after election.

Members present: Claude Morgan (chair), Lisa Villa (co-chair), David Lunt, Neil Jamieson, Steve Gorden, Richard Feeney, John Eder
Others present: Elizabeth Trice (staff), Sue Witonis (County Commissioner elect)

Morgan: The charter passed by 65%. We are no longer operating under the statutory rule; we are now operating directly under the charter. Standards for transparency will stay high. There will only be one vote taken, so these will all be workshops until we get to our final meeting. There are a mathematically limited number of options. If you find a solution you think works, call for a straw vote.

Gorden: Once the governor signs the result of the election, thinks Board of County Commissioners should create ad-hoc committee made up of charter commission members.

Morgan: the board of county commissioners did convene the charter commission formally at their last meeting, and the commissioners are willing to revote again after the results of the election have been signed. There is nothing against us meeting in workshop format in the meantime. Once the results have been signed, we only have 45 days. We don't know when the governor is going to sign the results.

Eder: Why would we want to tackle this now only to have it reconfigured when new census data comes out in 2011?

Morgan: We don't necessarily want to, but we have to act under the charter within this window, and the only decennial census data available is 2000. The state tends to take a very long time to do their redistricting.

Gorden: Also, the state may not do their reapportionment until 2013.

Sent out Redistricting Strawman Constraints and Criteria (attached) for discussion.

1. Use 2000 official census data: the latest official census data is 2000. If we use that data, then the Districts' boundaries will be adjusted through the state apportionment Commission when the new census figures become official sometime in 2011:
 - a. County population – 265612
 - b. Average District Population – 53,122
 - c. Allowed Population Deviation of plus/minus 5% - 2,656
2. Contiguous district areas
3.
 - a. Fewest number of incomplete community boundaries
 - b. Fewest number of communities as possible in what turns out to be the largest District geographically (measured by number of municipalities)
4. Portland must have at least one complete district located within its boundaries; thus, its ancillary population will be included in another District of which the majority population will lie external to the city.

5. If a municipality is split into two districts, adherence will be given to commonalities between the two municipalities.

Discussion of using redistricting software/GIS ability:

- Eder will check on software that he saw used
- Trice will check with Bill Whitten for the 2007 experience with software
- Trice will check with GPCOG for their capability

Feeney: if we do break up a municipality, it makes sense to look at what commonalities are between towns: are two towns sharing schools, fire departments? (Group adds item 5 above)

Morgan: Something we may want to consider is doing this without partisan incentives. I haven't asked here what people's political parties are, but know we are multi-party. We may hear voices in favor or against some of our moves that may be partisan in nature. We need to commit that the choices we make will be good for the county as a whole.

Villa, Feeney: this process hasn't been politically tainted so far

Lunt: agrees, but believes there will be [political] pressure, and we need to say up front that this is not based on party lines

Morgan: Does anyone need to make a disclosure that they should not be involved in making these decisions based on having too much partisan involvement?

Group: No.

Gorden: real tussle will be between item 2 and item 5

Feeney: suggests that we break into small groups

Group views version D at Villa's suggestion – idea of how to keep smaller number of communities in the largest district.

Witonis suggests it would be better to keep the Lakes Region towns together.

Morgan: before we get into details, hold a straw vote of whether to start with version D.

* Morgan will see if it's possible to get new 2010 data soon enough to make districts based on that data.

Eder: that would make it more likely that the districts we create will be maintained into the future.

Lunt: we could look at the American Community Survey 2006-2008 numbers.

* Morgan will check with legal about using more recent but uncertified numbers.
Question of how much this is determined by state law or by the charter.

Eder: could we block off 3 or 4 hours and really go at this, and do clean-up in smaller meetings.

Morgan: has work 9-5 but can do evenings or weekends. First, we would need to decide what data we're going to use, and know what our goals are for the day, what materials we'll need, legal opinion on data.

Group decides to meet on Saturday December 4, 9am-1pm with lunch.

- Trice will arrange to have staff support for that day.
- Trice will send 2006-2008 data to all members
- Trice will arrange to have blank maps 11x17, colored markers

Discussion of whether to ask legal about which data we should use.

Jamieson: Let's do this on our own and use the best available numbers we have. Frame question tightly: do state rules for apportionment have any oversight of how we do this?