



OFFICE OF THE CHAMPAIGN COUNTY EXECUTIVE

1776 East Washington Street, Urbana, Illinois 61802-4581

Darlene A. Kloeppel, County Executive

Champaign County Redistricting Advisory Group MEETING NOTES FOR THURSDAY, May 6, 2021, 6:30PM

Members Present via Zoom: Emily Bluhm, Leanne Brehob-Riley, Trisha Crowley, Nicole Darby, Brian Gaines, Chuck Lansford, Gabe Lewis, Debbie Sweat, Shree Thaker and Lin Warfel

County Staff via Zoom: Darlene Kloeppel (County Executive) and Dan Busey (Administrative Assistant)

Others Present: None

County Executive Kloeppel started the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

County Executive Kloeppel informed the group that there are three new maps to consider since the last time the group met. Plan 6 was brought up for review, which is a “pie chart” that starts at the center of the County and moves outward. The Plan 6 map kept Rantoul and Mahomet together however split the University population and the rural and minority communities of interest. Mr. Warfel said he believed the maps mixture of populations could be democratic however for communities of interest, it is a disaster. Ms. Kloeppel noted that for the overall competitiveness it made districts closer, however in terms of maintaining communities of interest it was ineffective.

The next map viewed was Wayne Williams’ second map. Ms. Kloeppel spoke to the fact that the map slightly split Mahomet, slightly split Rantoul, and does not keep the University campus together. The same problem of not keeping the communities of interest together was pointed out. Mr. Warfel stated that District 2 was unimaginable, as the people split into that district would not be connected from one end of the county to the other. Mr. Gaines said it would have poor scores on the compactness indices.

The group moved on to the “Equity Map” which was created by Mr. Williams in conjunction with the Democratic Caucus of the County Board. Ms. Darby explained that it does split up campus into three districts. Rantoul remains all in the same district, keeps the rural and urban districts separate, and has two districts (6 and 11) with a fairly high minority population. Ms. Kloeppel mentioned that the idea was to split up the University population and not keep them in just one district. Mr. Langford and Mr. Warfel both thought that it puts Savoy more into a rural area. The “Equity Map” was then compared to other maps up for consideration regarding how the rural population was split out. Discussion ensued on the location of the borders.

Ms. Kloeppel then addressed the group that her goal for the remainder of their time for this meeting would be to try and narrow down which map they liked the best and why.

Plan 1 was reviewed. Which took the current working map and moved the lines to equalize the populations while trying to keep the communities of interest all together. Ms. Kloeppel gave a quick breakdown of the student population stressing how they are dispersed throughout the community. The same was done for the African American and all the minority population. Ms. Kloeppel mentioned that while trying to capture communities of interest they are also not trying to totally isolate them so as they don't have influence in any other area. Rural districts, while trying to be kept separate from the cities, are not trying to be isolated completely either. Mr. Warfel spoke about school districts and how they create communities of interest. A discussion of factors of the population estimate followed. The consensus was that the positives of this map are that it reflects neighborhood type splits, keeping communities of interest together. While the negative being that it does not keep Tolono and Philo together, which are in the same school district.

Plan 2 was reviewed. This plan resembles Plan 1 except for the fact that it takes all the campus housing and created a district out of it. Mr. Lansford pointed out that it does give a good voting block to the African American Community in district 6. Mr. Warfel spoke to district 3 and how this map has made it geographically so large that it could not be represented properly. Ms. Bluhm liked plan 1 better than this map since district 4 and 5 are continually growing. Ms. Bluhm liked the community of interest for the University but believes that it should probably be 3 districts due to the student population spreading out over the community after moving out of University housing.

Plan 3 was reviewed. Plan 3 was a map that was brought to the board 10 years ago but was updated for population changes. Ms. Kloeppel mentioned that the outlying areas infringe more into the city in different ways in this map. This is especially true for district 3 as it goes much further into the city in this map. Mr. Lansford pointed to the fact that it gives the African American population a real boost in district 6 to over 42%. Mr. Lansford said he believes the map is compact and certainly not gerrymandered when looked at objectively.

Plan 4 was reviewed. Ms. Kloeppel explained how this map has four mostly rural districts, but they do cut into the cities. Rantoul, Mahomet, Tolono, and Philo all remain pretty much separated. This map shows two large minority populated areas splitting the north side of the city. Mr. Warfel spoke to district 5 not really being a defensible neighborhood. As there is a disconnect with the south edge of Champaign Urbana and the north edge.

Plan 5 was reviewed. Ms. Kloeppel explained that this map was an attempt to keep all communities of interest as together as possible. This prompted a conversation about 5A a formerly withdrawn map. The differences between 5 and 5A were elaborated on. Plan 5A was then compared to Plan 3.

Plan 7 was reviewed. Mr. Gaines created this map and said that he was attempting to get districts that were close to 40% and close to 30% African American, but could only achieve 40/20 or 30/30. Mr. Gaines said that he did not believe that it scored very well in compactness indices.

Plan 8 was reviewed. Mr. Gaines second map. Mr. Gaines said that he created this map in attempt to create a higher level of competitiveness. Mr. Gaines pointed out that District 9 is underpopulated due to going back and forth between the two programs data sets (Dave's and ESRI). Mr. Warfel mentioned if you could get more of Savoy together that the population in District 9 would be closer. Mr. Gaines pointed out that doing so could have an effect on the competitiveness. Ms. Kloeppel pointed to the fact that 5 districts on this map go to the outer edges of the County with the result they go further into the urban part in order to spread out more. Mr. Warfel stated that St. Joe/Ogden are separated but have a common school district.

Plan 9 was reviewed. This was the first Wayne Williams' map submission. This map divided the minority districts into at least two districts, divides Mahomet into 3 districts, divides Rantoul, divides Tolono and Philo, and other small towns. Mr. Warfel thought that this was the least preferable of all the maps reviewed thus far. Since it splits Mahomet and Rantoul, Ms. Sweat said that this map perhaps looks slightly gerrymandered.

Plan 6 was reviewed. The "Pie Chart" map that was looked at in the beginning of the meeting. It creates four competitive districts but does not keep communities of interest together. Mr. Warfel said that from a neighborhood perspective it may be the worst. Mr. Gaines mentioned that the African American concentration is not much different than some of the others such as plan 4, and going on to say it could negatively affect rural representation. The consensus is that the rural areas become the minority in every district of this map.

Plan 10 was reviewed. Ms. Sweat said the cons are that the communities, such as Rantoul and Mahomet, are separated. Ms. Kloeppel said that the University and the African American Communities are also not together. Ms. Bluhm mentioned that the total population for each district seems more variable.

Plan 11 was reviewed. The map from earlier in the meeting, the "Equity Map". Ms. Sweat noticed Savoy and Tolono being divided once again. Mr. Gaines believed the city portions wind around and effect the compactness. Mr. Warfel still thought, as he did earlier, that District 3 was too large. The University was split to be an influencing population in four different districts. Ms. Crowley questioned if the goal was to give students more influence. Ms. Kloeppel said the rationale was that the students would influence more districts instead of just one, as with the African American Community also being split. Mr. Warfel spoke to the effectiveness of representing the entire county and does not believe this map does that. Mr. Gaines said the lack of knowledge of where the students live makes this map more of a guess.

The group came to a consensus that Plans 1, 3, and 5A all met the groups requirements for the most part and that they would feel comfortable bringing all three to the County Board.