

Minutes
**ANC 6A Community Outreach Committee (COC) of
Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 6A
Regular Meeting - October 25, 2021**

Meeting called to order at 7:04 pm.

Quorum present.

COC members present: Stephanie Thangavelu (Acting Chair), Gladys Mack and Marc Friend

COC members absent: Roni Hollmon (Chair), Jason Gresh, Sarah Bell

Commissioners present: Amber Gove, Sondra Phillips-Gilbert, Brian Alcorn, Mike Soderman, Keya Chatterjee, and Robb Dooling

Presenters: Samuel Rosen-Amy, Chief of Staff, Councilmember-at-Large Elissa Silverman

Community members present: 12

Presentation on redistricting: Samuel Rosen-Amy gave an initial presentation on how to use the map making tool for redistricting. Current DC population according to the last census is 698,000. One then divides that number by the 8 wards. Wards need to be a minimum of 81883 and a max of 90503, wards can be plus or minus 5% but must be within the numerical parameters. Ward 6 needs to shrink and Wards 7 and 8 need to grow. They cannot grow east and must grow west.

The Ward 6 meeting will take place on November 3rd. The second and final meeting where constituents can give input is on November 5th. The subcommittee will then meet and do their mockup mid-November 2021 and send it to the Council as a whole. The first Council vote will be December 7, 2021 and the final vote will be December 21, 2021. Emergency legislation will then be done and sent to the Mayor. Wards must be completed first because constituents appointed to the task force must be members of the Ward. Police and school boundaries are not affected by this process.

The Advisory Neighborhood Commissions (ANCs) timeline starts in December with the Wards assigning task forces to redraw the lines. In February, all task forces report out to the Council as a whole. March/April are boundary lines hearings for ANCs. May/June are the Council votes on ANC boundaries.

Parking permits will stay the same for at least a year. It is a lengthy process, so the Council decided to freeze it while they consider proposals and hold hearings on how to do parking permits in the future. Commissioner Alcorn inquired if Council Member Mary Che's committee would be involved in this process and Mr. Amy-Rosenthal answered that they are keeping everyone apprised of their intentions so there are no surprises.

Commissioner Soderman stated that he felt very strongly that all the Wards should be looked at and not just 6, 7 and 8 so that any changes are more equitable across the city. In his opinion that gives Ward 6 the best chance of staying largely intact. He stated if we have this great opportunity every 10 years to adjust boundaries, then look at all 8 wards. Historically speaking Wards 1, 2, 3 and 4 have not had a lot of tinkering, so again I say that to be the most equitable we need to look at all 8 wards.

Commissioner Phillips-Gilbert inquired that Ward 2 is also connected to Ward 8 according to the map and that was confirmed. Commissioner Phillips-Gilbert continued that Ward 2 is connected to Ward 6 as well as Ward 8; we could give Shaw to Ward 2, Ward 2 as well as Ward 6 can give to Ward 8 and Ward 8 can give towards Ward 7. Mr. Amy-Rosenthal promised the sub-committee would release maps by Thursday for input. Commissioner Phillips-Gilbert thanked him because she said it was imperative she knew where the Rosedale Community stands.

Commissioner Alcorn stated that he would like to reiterate the comments of Commissioner Soderman and that ANC6A has geographical integrity, some socio economic integrity and diversity and would be good for the citizens served by this commission to be able to count on and preserve some of those attributes. So he would just put in another plug, as it relates to this corner of the city, we are looking to capitalize on our strengths, remain together, embrace our fellow citizens and recognize the diverse community that we have right now, whether by purpose or happenstance, whatever it is, it is a unique and one that we feel very comfortable in the one that works.

Commissioner Alcorn also inquired about the historical context for the drawing of the wards and how we got here and stated that in light of the changes all across the country, it is important that DC makes a bold statement regarding equity. While DC does not have the problems that other states and municipalities have, we can still contribute to this dialogue. As Commissioner Phillips-Gilbert and others have stated, she does not view this as an exercise where Wards 6, 7 and 8 just trades streets and citizens to balance and just move on our way; and while you have made it clear that is not the process, there remains an opportunity to show what DC stands for in setting up our communities and political boundaries particularly if the wards are more fungible.

Mr. Rosen-Amy replied that due to the pandemic, he did not have a lot of information as to what the city looked like prior to the 1990 census as that information was not online and both the DC Archives and the DC Library Archives were closed. While some things are now reopening, he does not have the time required to do that research now.

An anonymous question from the chat asked what is the metric used for determining the standard of diluting voting power? One could argue that putting white votes in to Wards 7 or 8 could be seen as diluting minority voting power, but putting black votes into Wards 7 or 8 could be seen as segregation and this is the crux of what we are dealing with right now. We are trying to grapple with this right now and I do not have an easy answer. He continued that

the Council now has an office of racial equity (CORE) and they are working with them, doing analysis of all legislation, including this, to ensure that it has racial equity included as part of it and we're working with them to think through this. There is no metric in law or case law or anything like that about how to think about or how to determine diluting minority power there is nothing there. So there is some push and pull on his issue. We do not want to put all the poor black people in one ward. We are trying to be compact and contiguous. So there is a lot of push and pull and we are trying to be fair and try to think through these issues in a public way, and get as much feedback from people as possible.

Acting Chair Thangavelu noted that the meeting was at the one hour mark and moved to the map portion of the meeting and if time allows come back to discussion.

Mr. Rosen-Amy then gave an in depth explanation on how to use the map making tool.

Maura Dundon, Chair of the ANC 6A Transportation and Public Space (TPS) Committee, commented as a resident of ANC 6A that working with Commissioner Phillips-Gilbert has made her see how ANC 6A is one of those diverse communities and we should not carve out portions that are economically and racially diverse. She continued that she was uncomfortable with any solutions that end up with greater segregation than we already have and her experience on TPS is that we work together to address the needs of our diverse community. She would really hate to see this opportunity or this strength taken away from us.

Commissioner Robb Dooling commented that he supported all the other Commissioners who had spoken and that he too agrees there are other ways to redraw the map and encouraged the use of natural boundaries, such as a highway, or giving Shaw to Ward 8, or even using New York Avenue as helpful to our community.

Mr. Rosen-Amy responded that there are only so many natural boundaries and in some places it cannot be done, but they are using natural boundaries as much as possible.

Commissioner Gove inquired as to how the Ward 7 meeting went and the general consensus regarding Fairlawn and other communities.

Mr. Rosen-Amy responded that Councilmember Silverman had pushed the issue in the Ward 8 meeting and he believed the Ward 7 meeting as well, but that most of the Ward 7 meeting was how to grow west. Council Member Kenyon McDuffie had attended the meeting and was not thrilled with many of the suggestions for Ward 5. People were generally okay with where the boundary is between Wards 7 and 8, but the best he could say there was not a lot of discussion about the boundary on Pennsylvania Avenue. It did not spark as much interest about what to do west of the river, but once we release the graph maps there will hopefully be more people interested in what to do about that boundary.

Commissioner Phillips-Gilbert inquired if the maps had been shared with CORE and what feedback they had received.

Mr. Rosen-Amy responded that they had not shown them the maps yet. They want to release the maps publicly first and then have a conversation with them. He is not sure what CORE will share publicly before they release their analysis. He is hopeful they will have a good dialogue. CORE has asked them to make sure their process is good, so they are trying to reach as many people as possible in an equitable manner, which is hard during a pandemic, so they are thinking about not doing just digital events, but in person events, which a lot of people are not comfortable with and there is a serious digital divide in large parts of our city and cannot jump on Zoom event. CORE encouraged the Committee to put ads in local papers, which we have done. They are also trying to do op eds, going out to some communities and trying to do some flyers in some of these neighborhoods.

Acting Chair Thagavelu inquired if there were processes for submissions as an individual versus an ANC or a subset of an ANC and how are the Committee is reviewing such submissions.

Mr. Rosen-Amy responded that they have received maps from groups, organizations, and individual commissioners. He is not sure if any ANC has been able to vote on a map, but they would be very happy to accept that and would give ANC commissions great weight. They probably will not be able to comment on all the map submissions, but will be attaching them to the report.

He also noted that many people in chat wanted an answer to what considerations carry the most weight outside of one person, one vote; like continuity of neighborhoods, for example or voting power. How can these considerations be challenged by outside powers? They are all kind of considered together, it is more of an art than a science, it is that balancing act of we want to look at communities with neighborhoods and we want to look at physical boundaries and census tracts. We want to try not to split census tracts if possible as there is some value in having a combined census tract together. We are going to be as transparent as possible about where we draw the lines and why.

Commissioner Phillips-Gilbert raised the issue that, while Kingman Park said they would be glad to have Rosedale come over in a blog, it still raises a problem because it would be removing Rosedale from Ward 6, leaving less diversity.

Meeting adjourned 8:45 pm.