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STATE OF NEW YORK ONONDAGA COUNTY LEGISLATURE
COUNTY OF ONONDAGA

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In the Matter of
REAPPORTIONMENT

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Public Hearing
held in
Clay, New York
Friday, October 22, 2021

Reported by:
Mary Agnes Drury, RPR, NYACR, CLR

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A P P E A R A N C E S :

REAPPORTIONMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

DAVID KNAPP

MICHELE SARDO

DUSTIN CZARNY

JOE RAINONE

SHARON MORAN

- oOo -

PROCEEDINGS

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2 MR. KNAPP: I'll call the meeting to
3 order. Thanks, everybody, for coming out
4 today. My name is David Knapp, and I'm the
5 Chairman of the County Legislature, and by
6 the Charter, I'm a member of the
7 Commission.

8 We have five members of the
9 Commission up here, I'll have everybody
10 briefly introduce themselves, and then
11 we'll get started.

12 MR. CZARNY: Dustin Czarny,
13 Democratic Elections Commissioner, also
14 Commissioned by Charter.

15 MS. MORAN: I'm Sharon Moran, and I
16 teach at SUNY Environmental Science.

17 MR. RAINONE: Joe Rainone, small
18 business owner.

19 MS. SARDO: Michele Sardo,
20 Republican Elections Commissioner.

21 MR. KNAPP: Okay. So the purpose of
22 these meetings is to get out in the
23 community and, you know, get folks'
24 thoughts as we put the new lines together
25 based on the changes in population, et

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2 cetera. And so -- but we, you know, wanted
3 to get, again, folks' thoughts on the
4 current situation or thoughts on going
5 forward.

6 So with that, we've got seven folks
7 signed up to a say few words, so I'll just
8 say your name. If you'd like to, I guess
9 come up to the podium, is that what looks
10 good, and give us your comments. Again,
11 we're here to listen.

12 So we'll start off with Patrice
13 Keegan.

14 MS. KEEGAN: Okay. I'd like to
15 start, I'm an army veteran, I spent
16 nine-and-a-half years in the Army Reserve
17 as a nurse. And I have people telling me,
18 "Thank you for your service." I don't want
19 people to thank me for my service when they
20 take away the substance of my vote; and by
21 gerrymandering, my vote doesn't count.

22 We have seen unprecedented actions
23 by a recent president of trying to
24 overtake, you know, having power in audits.
25 That's not a far cry.

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2 Right now, about 24 percent of
3 people, the minority power party have more
4 representation than the rest of us.

5 I really do believe that this should
6 be a non-partisan commission. And when the
7 minority party tries to take the power of
8 the majority power and it's by
9 gerrymandering and by voting suppression,
10 we're on a long road to destroying our
11 democracy. And that's why I think it would
12 be important for a non-partisan commission
13 to continue, and I think that this is a
14 power grab led by the Republicans and
15 nothing more. Thank you.

16 MR. KNAPP: Okay. Thank you. Misse
17 Ross.

18 MS. ROSS: Good morning. With all
19 due respect, my comment is directed totally
20 at you Chairman Knapp.

21 You made a promise to voters two
22 years ago. You signed a pledge for
23 non-partisan redistricting. That's not
24 what you're doing here. That's not what
25 you are doing.

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2 By no wide concoction is that what
3 you are doing; pushing it through an a few
4 weeks. You're not even going to give us a
5 chance to look at it already -- you're not
6 going to tell us who is cutting it?

7 Disingenuous, disingenuous pledge
8 you made to your voters, and I hope they
9 are all paying attention right now, because
10 we have a vote coming up in a couple of
11 weeks, and I hope things change, because
12 this is not right.

13 You're stealing power. You got
14 gerrymandering in my district; one of the
15 worst -- it caused me to actually run for
16 the county legislature to try to stop this
17 madness. Stop it. This is our democracy.
18 This is our country, this is our democracy,
19 it's ours. It's not yours, it's ours.
20 Fair. That's what we're asking for, fair.

21 Please carry out the pledge that you
22 made to voters two years ago that voted for
23 you. Thank you.

24 MR. KNAPP: Just for the record, no
25 one on this Commission drew those lines ten

PROCEEDINGS

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2 years ago, none of us were part of this,
3 we're all --

4 Next, we have Rob Santucci, I think,
5 forgive me if I said that wrong.

6 MR. SANTUCCI: Hello, my name is Rob
7 Santucci. Thank you for allowing my a
8 chance to speak. I'm a concerned, and I'm
9 genuinely concerned for a number of
10 reasons.

11 First of all, the redistricting
12 that's being proposed now by Republicans is
13 being rushed. To have six hearings in a
14 period of just days, including one at
15 11:00 a.m. and one at 4:00 p.m. when people
16 are working, all to get the redistricting
17 done by November 12th, just shortly after
18 the voters have had a chance to express
19 their opinion to run the legislature just
20 doesn't seem to pass the smell test.

21 You got until February. You got
22 time. To rush it through, especially now
23 when we're starting early voting next week,
24 we're cramming all of this into a time
25 period that seems artificial; it doesn't

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seem transparent.

Now, let me direct you to a quote that Ryan McMahon, I'm going to paraphrase what he said. Mr. McMahon said, "You don't like the redistricting, run better candidates to win elections." I think the Democrats are doing that this cycle. Let that play out. Let the people decide who is going to run this county; then make the decisions on the redistricting. Not now, which is going to be a fete accompli for the Republicans. Thank you.

MR. KNAPP: Thank you. Next is Martha Ours.

MS. OURS: Okay. Thank you. I don't want to ramble.

New York State's charge to create County Reapportionment Committees to oversee drawing fair election districts, based on the latest census data, also set certain data to follow.

These did not include speeding up the process or setting committee schedules which would conflict or coincide with early

PROCEEDINGS

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2 voting. It is unlikely that any other
3 county in New York State has done so.
4 Onondaga County has distinguished itself as
5 having unique standards and ethics of
6 governing.

7 These people in power have
8 collaborated to craft this expedited
9 reapportionment schedule: County Executive
10 Ryan McMahon, his campaign attorney and
11 appointed chair of the committee,
12 Mr. Hulslander, and Legislature Majority
13 Leader David Knapp. Their unilateral
14 actions affect both public input
15 opportunities and the full participation of
16 Board of Election Commissioners who are
17 essential to the intended purpose of the
18 Reapportionment Commission.

19 The agenda of Onondaga County's
20 leaders in this effort is revealed by the
21 following: The appointments obviously
22 favor one party's interests. The
23 appointments clearly have conflicts of
24 interest, at least regarding the interests
25 of the general public. And, the committee

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2 schedule was announced so abruptly that it
3 minimizes public input and proper analysis
4 of census data.

5 The County Leg and the County Exec
6 currently have the power to implement the
7 Reapportionment Committee operating
8 criteria. They are using this power, in my
9 opinion, in a cavalier and aggressive
10 manner to achieve partisan goals. A
11 cautionary reminder: Absolute power
12 corrupts and absolute power corrupts
13 absolutely. Abuse of power never ends
14 well. Thank you.

15 MR. KNAPP: Next, Mike LaPoint.

16 MR. LaPOINT: Good morning. I
17 really don't have much to say, because
18 everything was just said, and I hope
19 everyone is paying really, really good
20 attention to everything. The entire thing
21 should be non-partisan. The voters are
22 going to speak all this month until the
23 first part of November. It is going to be
24 a new slate. It could be the same, it
25 could be different; they should be in power

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2 at that point to decide what the voters
3 have decided, not rush this through.

4 Look at the crowd today; 10, 12, 15
5 people out of how many in the county,
6 almost 60,000, I don't know. I don't know
7 the numbers, everybody here probably knows
8 those numbers. It's a very, very minute
9 fraction of opinions, and I think more
10 meetings should be held. So first of all,
11 it's more convenient. 11:00 a.m. is nice
12 for me, because I'm retired, and I can be
13 here. It's not for most people who are
14 working today and cannot be here. I don't
15 know how many other meetings are convening;
16 one in LaFayette tonight; I don't know how
17 many will show up, but it's not convenient
18 for anyone that lives central city into the
19 north.

20 There needs to be more meetings, and
21 there needs to be more input and more
22 analysis, and it needs to be non-partisan.

23 I can't say any more, because all
24 the other speakers did a great job in
25 giving their views. And hopefully, it will

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resonate with all of you to maybe listen
and go forward with what the people want
and not what politicians want.

Thank you for your time.

MR. KNAPP: Barbara Evanoff. How
are you doing, Barbara? I apologize.

MS. EVANOFF: It's Evanoff.

MR. KNAPP: Okay. Got it. Thank
you.

MS. EVANOFF: Hi. I just wanted to
say a few words. I have been a scientist
for my entire life. And I worked the
census this past year as I'm retired, and I
saw how that process went. And I know you
folks are charged with a mandate to do
something based on data that maybe isn't
the total best, but it's the best that
could be done under the circumstances,
because the timelines that were federally
mandated.

In your case, you don't have such a
time mandate and it is my contention that
you really need to look at the process,
slow down, and try to do the best job that

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you can within expanded timelines.

The other speakers, I agree with.
You have no reason to rush this process.
It really needs to be slowed down and
reconsidered.

I live in a very gerrymandering
district. I have -- I live in Cicero, my
problems are not the same as the people in
Minoa and it really needs to be considered
here. I think you people need -- this is
an opportunity to really make Onondaga
County shine, and I really hope you can do
that. Thank you.

MR. KNAPP: And Kevin Meaker.

MR. MEAKER: Thank you.

MR. KNAPP: I'd like to start off by
saying that this process is a necessity for
Onondaga County. I'd like to take the time
to say thank you to both the Republicans
and Democrats for the time and effort put
into this process. Thank you.

MR. CZARNY: Thank you, Kevin, you
too.

MR. KNAPP: Okay. Are there any

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2 others? That was our last speaker. Is
3 there anyone else who would like to speak
4 at this time?

5 Okay. Hearing none, our public
6 hearing portion is now closed. We can
7 stick around for a few minutes. If there
8 are a specific questions we can talk
9 informally, but that was the formal
10 portion.

11 MR. CZARNY: And I just want to say
12 to everybody in the room that I am
13 absolutely open to any suggestions that you
14 have for what you want in your districts.
15 Because we're under an expedited timeline
16 and we're all going to be getting draft
17 maps by October 27th, and that process
18 isn't going to be stopping anytime soon.
19 So suggestions that you have about what you
20 want your districts to look like, please
21 send them to me, send them to the
22 Reapportionment Committee and, you know, I
23 think everybody knows how to find me, if
24 you don't, just Google me, I guess. But if
25 you send it to the Reapportionment

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Committee, it will get to all of us.

And go to the website, all of GIS and census data is on the reapportionment website and meeting minutes and this video will be on there as well.

MR. KNAPP: We have set up the County Legislature website. We have a page there that is specifically dedicated to the Reapportionment Commission, and so you can, you know, send comments or ideas. And to echo Dustin's comments, we're all looking for thoughts and ideas on this, so that's why we're here.

And so, yeah, so go look at the Legislature website.

MS. MORAN: Speaking for all of us, thank you for coming out today; we really appreciate you taking the time to be here and do this.

(Proceedings concluded.)

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