

Reapportionment Public Hearing in Camillus

Thursday, October 28, 2021 5:30 p.m.

Members Present: Mr. Knapp, Ms. Maron, Mr. Czarny

Meeting called to order by Mr. Knapp at 5:35 p.m.

Mr. Knapp:

Welcome everyone to our fourth meeting – three members here tonight – introduced themselves - Sharon Maron, Dustin Czarny

Meeting is to hear from you – we have map 1 and 2 and we are here to hear your thoughts and feedback so when we are putting maps together we know what you are thinking - format is very simple – I'll call your name and you can come up and share your thoughts – we have 11 speakers - please keep your comments to three to five minutes

Ms. Maron:

Want to clarify there are four maps – each County map has a blow up of the city map

Dave Callahan:

This is what I get for coming early – thank you for letting us speak – My name is Dave Callahan and have been a resident for over 30 years – served as the Deputy Town Supervisor for 11 years – benefits of having three legislators for Camillus – three advocates from Camillus has helped us throughout the years – one legislator covers two villages which has different issues - allows them to zero in on village issues – second legislator covers rural parts of Camillus – third covers Onondaga Hill – I would be remiss if I didn't say there were benefits - Camillus has a ward system which is another benefit to voters - have a Councilor for each of the six districts – each Councilor represents one sixth of the population – I wouldn't get called to do something in the first ward because I represent the sixth ward – if you can't get answers you would go to the Supervisor - really works because you know who is responsible – we are responsible for 1,260 homes and 4,000 people – it's a monumental job – advantage of having three legislators to represent Camillus - they can represent you in a lot of special ways in which one person may not be able to do

Joyce Placuto:

Nice to have forums because I always tell my students we learn from each other – my name is Joyce Schmid Placuto - here with my husband Richard Portus – live in town of Onondaga – both have lived in Dewitt and Lysander at different times – for myself this is a learning process – I began becoming more involved in the community when kids were teens – I noticed no matter how the demographics in the area changed and how many voters were added the results are always the same - nothing really seemed to change – found out more recently it's because of partisan voting maps – felt insulted that no matter what we do we may not have a voice and the rush to push through similar maps will impact voters for a decade – discouraging because no matter how we vote will have the same results – brought up my adult children to know what's going on and vote and it would be awful for them to know their vote may not count – we should insist on a fair process from our leaders

Justin Polly:

Father in town of Onondaga – lived there for about six years – wife has lived there almost her entire life – now fourth generation in Town of Onondaga specifically in Nedrow – want to get to the point – why I have a problem with map 2 – living in Nedrow I'm sure you know where I'm going – Nedrow is a proud community, a working class community not a wealthy committee – share a lot of common interests – Chairman Knapp criticized Mr. Czarny's proposed map – southern portion of people don't have anything in common with the Skaneateles area – by splitting Nedrow in half - does Nedrow have anything in common with the village of Manlius – to separate Nedrow is perplexing – wonders why the split happened – would like answers as to how they were split and why. I do have an issue as well – we are looking at 28,000 people per district – there will be some circumstances where towns have to be split – but some towns have just under the population and they are split four different ways – Dewitt was split four ways and it has 26,000 people – pretty democratic town – the biggest suggestion I would make is preserving the municipalities whenever possible – can't be done every

single time but the people living in Dewitt identify with living in Dewitt - we know that always can't happen – people identify with where they live and that commonality is important

Lillian Welych:

Declined to speak

Diane M. Dwire:

When I served on the Camillus town board I liked the ward system but I always felt I served and was responsible for the whole town – I differ with three legislators serving the town of Camillus - 10 years ago we had four legislators and Dewitt had three – so I feel like I only ever see one legislator – so serious problem with always being split up – both are under the 28,000 for a district - you mentioned Clay – technically proposing to have four legislators – but yet Clay has twice the number of people as Camillus and Dewitt – I feel sorry for Geddes – Geddes have three legislators but only have a population of 17,000 people – Manlius had three legislators last time with a population of 33,000 – greater than the other towns I've mentioned– reduced to two legislative districts – feel it's inconsistent – haven't had time to evaluate the maps – but it has been said at many other meetings – we are in the middle of an election next Tuesday – there is no reason to start this so early – I have been at all the meetings actually think I have been at all of them – could have easily started this process after the election and still had the maps drawn in time – remember these districts won't be applied until 2023 – and I think this is still 2021 - we've had a lot of time – saw the video from LaFayette and they didn't even have maps – seems a little unfair - all they could talk about is the process which I think was flawed - it could have been a little more nonpartisan after the election when everyone wasn't running around crazy – as you know we have local and city elections.

Joan Johnson:

My name is Joan Johnson and I have been a resident of Onondaga County for over 50 years.

I have followed the redistricting process for the last three cycles, beginning in 2000, as a voter and an active member of the League of Women Voters, a non-partisan political organization organized over 100 years ago after women finally got the right to vote.

Looking through my files on Redistricting efforts, I found a copy of a Press Release submitted by the County Legislator's Republican Caucus dated July 7, 2000 after a proposal for a Non-partisan Redistricting Commission (Local Law C) by Legislator Chad Ryan was turned down by the republican majority. I would like to read this Press Release.

Many of the proposed changes offered in this press release need confirmation including the following:

1. Do the Floor Leaders' and the County Executive's appointments to the Commission belong to one of the two major political parties?
2. Does the present commission prohibit incumbency from being considered in the formation of any new districts?
3. Has the Commission entertained proposals from the public for review?
4. Did the Legislature solicit or accept any applications from Onondaga County citizens that had interest in sitting on the Commission?

There are many more questions including did the Legislature solicit mathematicians or technology experts who are able to draw fair maps to serve on the Commission. This process need more time as many have testified during these recent hearings. There is no need to rush this through before Election Day. New maps do not need to be available until early 2021.

In 2020 more than 1,500 Onondaga County Citizens signed a position in favor of a non-partisan redistricting process. We have not given up! People not politician should draw these maps!

Michele Gagu:

Thank you for giving us the opportunity to speak and give you our thoughts - town of Onondaga resident – proud Onondaga county resident- West Genesee graduate – raised two boys – curious about things that are impacting all of us – background of 25 years in industry as a process improvement specialist – lead projects that have a major impact on stakeholders – typically what we do in industry when we lead a project that will have a major impact on our numerous stakeholders, that will be more successful if we gather feedback from all our stakeholders – methodically assess what can be done to improve these areas listening to all sides – to develop and deliver a solution that is successful for all involved -

I enjoyed hearing some of the words I have heard tonight – thoughtful, transparent, engaged, methodical as we lead this type of project – we have an election next Tuesday and instead our energy is directed at something that has been on the plate for two years – taken back as all of you are our community leaders earning hefty salaries from our tax dollars to represent all of us – that you are paid to be effective leaders – would like to leave with this - it's not give and take why then do we quickly go through these changes – my graver concern is that if this is characteristic and descriptive of this solution my concern is all the other decisions that are made by our community leaders – plea to please consider in the future to be more thoughtful and engage all of us – thank you

Denise Androvetti:

Live in Lyncourt in legislative district 5 - better known as the lobster claw which makes it the poster child of everything that is wrong with gerrymandering our maps – I'm intrigued that the lobster claw is gone but I don't like either map – the 5th district keeps splitting off little pieces of the north side and that includes the 4th district gets a little piece and the seventh district gets a little piece – whether any of that is being taken care of – my current legislator broke her promise to take care of fair districting – I am tired and disappointed in this process – needs to slow down and it must be bipartisan if people in our county are going to feel comfortable with this process - I don't like either map – let's have a real nonpartisan group look at this – live in the 4th ward in Salina – we are cut off from the legislative person and we don't see the 5th ward person – that is a problem for the town of Salina – it isn't beneficial that we're split – it's not beneficial like Camillus – do something for all of us

Christopher Hess:

I do not have any prepared words – I have my opinions – want to echo that I don't like either map – I would prefer map 2 – have a process that is being pushed through without any public discourse – first time seeing maps in a public forum – no answers to why it's getting pushed through - issue with politics become identity with what's best for party – brazen need for ignoring the truth – trying to stretch out the city – take a population that is overwhelming democrat – not being said publically - every legislator signed the document with their name and they lied – not sure why we don't use that word – a lie is a lie is a lie – don't think that the ward system is working well – running in ward 3 and my ward is gerrymandering and it has a crazy shape – representatives are supposed to represent the people not parts of the people or section of the people – have no idea why south east has the same – representation at the county level – not reelection concerns - – not talking about – why are we ignoring – not their reelection concerns – tired of politicians lying – tired of signatures that don't mean anything – want to stop the process and slow down and reassess after the election

Note: Christopher Hess sent an email dated October 28, 2021 and added the following “In my statement, I have mistakenly referenced the maps wrong. My explanation of my complaints was appropriate but I may have swapped #1 and #2. That was an error. I would hope that my statement is not taken out of context and submitted to the press.

To further explain my complaint, I feel both maps have their issues. Ultimately, I demand a halt to the rush that is taking place so that we can address the redistricting with a non-partisan approach.”

Kevin Rode:

Town of Lysander resident – echo everything that was said – just received the maps early this morning on the website– would suggest putting the original map up so people have a reference point– very difficult to see the changes - maybe an overlay of each map– the timeline is way too rushed – decision will last over 10 years should not be done in six weeks – maps show Lysander gets carved up – would guess the majority of Lysander leans a little more republican regardless of which map – resident of Radisson – I do like that county legislators have to represent a different monochrome of people – go from rural areas to city – they should know who they represent have to do that no matter what they represent – should have the concerns of everyone – believe saw something in the media that people in Skaneateles have different concerns than people on the east side – the way they current maps are right now southern side of Skaneateles have different concerns from the village of Skaneateles– farmers don't care about what Adam Weitsman is building in the village of Skaneateles

Joan Durant:

I'm glad to see the maps – live in Marcellus and grew up in Dewitt – I don't understand them because I have no data – need population data – that's not all what it's about – spent most of adult life registering voters and educating voters – voting is a right and education is a responsibility – not everyone has the time for education so that's part of what I'm about is to educate voters – this process has not allowed citizens of this county to be educate - I've done this in a

nonpartisan way because truthfully in my heart I want you to vote – I just want you to know what you're doing – every 10 years we have this opportunity to look at our population and see the changes – need data – need to be contiguous so we have lobster claws – need to be compact – we need to keep communities whole – need to go to representative and feel that we know that person actually cares – will answer their phone calls and emails - I don't feel that a lot of where I live – did hear population changed very little – so all we need to do is tweak the maps – in the first 13 min that I listened I thought why are we going through all this – but I thought dam I want to be on the record – haven't heard all the details – I ask why are we having these public meetings – I know the answer we have to - are you going to listen and do you care what we have to say – we have to work on this together – do we believe people should choose the representative not representative choosing the people – do we believe that – 10 years ago we worked out a regional approach - its more than just tweaking we need a redoing – not sure if these are the final maps – I've heard no we are just playing games – I don't play games well – I do know that when we are in conflict situations we can figure things out - on the way here the Beatles played we can work it out because to resolve conflicts we have to want to – from the discussions I've heard at the commission level – I've heard they haven't been civil - there has been yelling, no discussion, some people haven't spoke at all – these decisions that you're making are going to be with us for 10 years - let's give us some time to make it right

Dana Balter:

Good evening everybody – I saw a clip online of what I think was yesterday's commission meeting – the chair of this commission – am I saying it correctly - Mr. Huslander – saw a clip of Mr. Huslander telling someone that came to speak at a meeting that the commission is not here to answer our questions – I was really hoping he would be here tonight because I have questions for him – I understand you are not going to answer my questions but I am going to ask them anyways - how many on the commission- three in the room right now – six total – half are absent – why - if according to Mr. Huslander the point of these meetings is to listen to what we have to say it is hard to do that if your ears are not in the room – I also heard him mention something about reading transcripts so, Mr. Huslander, even though you are not in the room I am speaking to you and I'm hoping you are reading these transcripts – I think the people are owed a lot of answers and if the purpose of these public meetings is intended to have the people understand and learn there would be questions and answers – it is not enough to put pictures on the wall and say you can come and sound off at the microphone for a couple of minutes – we'll record what you say and check off that we had the meetings and then make the decision we made before you entered the room - and let's be real we all know that is what is happening – we know the process has been complete bullshit from the beginning and the fact that the maps will be voted on we are now hearing by November 3 is just further indication that nothing that has been said at any of these meetings has been taken into account in a meaningful or serious way...as a resident of Onondaga County that is supposed to be represented by this commission and that is doing the work – I'm mad as hell and offended by that - what we are talking about here is not a partisan game - we are talking about the essence of our democracy - this country is founded on a set of principles that we all hold very dear - the idea that we work together to do what is best for our communities - the idea that our voice matters - we are guaranteed by birth a right to vote – not a right in name only – this is about self-determination – we as human beings have the right to say what is being done on our behalf for us and to us in our communities – that is what democracy is about - that is why the right to vote is sacred – it is beyond partisanship it is supposed to be beyond partisanship - this map drawing exercise is done every 10 years as an opportunity to reevaluate our communities and to make sure everyone is represented – supposed to be nonpartisan - you know me as a well-known democrat in this area – I argue with democrats – I lobby state legislators when the democrats are in power to not gerrymander congressional maps in favor of democrats – because gerrymandering maps is bad for all – I don't care who is in power – it damages democracy and undermines our abilities to be represented and damages all the principles that this country was founded on – we need to be serious about protecting democracy- when democrats are in power I say the same thing- don't gerrymander our maps – I want fair representation - there are experts that know how to draw fair maps and it should not be controversial

I liked the term there are adults in the room – guess what - this whole process wouldn't pass muster with a 4 year old child – fair is fair and what we are asking for is a fair process - when we have a fair process we can trust the outcome – sometimes the outcome doesn't go our way oh well that's life but if the process is rigged we can't trust the outcome and the process and our government and by the way this has serious effects on people's lives – this is not some abstract thing about lines on a paper – the representatives that get elected determine how much we get for the health department which keeps us safe in a pandemic – the rate of investment in public schools and environmental protection – you name it the things you care about most in your life - decisions are made at this level – over one billion dollars in funding to our community that these folks get control over – the process to get them elected matters and it starts with drawing maps - it

needs to be fair - I am not beyond calling out the partisanship – we were lied to by a whole slew of legislators – to those that are on the commission I hope that other folks read the transcripts I would not bet my piggy bank on it – to make a pledge to the people in order to get elected and then to turn around immediately after election and have the audacity to look the voters in the eye and then say I never made that promise to you in the first place – most disgusting type of cynicism and we cannot tolerate – we cannot allow a process to be dominated by people that are putting partisan power above all else and we cannot certainly have them look us in the eye and say the other team is the one doing it - that is unacceptable – as I said I will take it to any democrat to not gerrymander – I put my money where my mouth is - I'm doing it in the state legislature right now– I, as a resident of Onondaga County, cannot tolerate this process - I am furious that the local media is not doing a better job of informing the public – outraged at the behavior of this commission and infuriated by the republican caucus and the County legislators and Mr. Huslander the absolute disrespect and contempt that I have seen from you in the very few meetings you have showed up to for the people that step up here to voice their opinions is abominable and I wish you were here in person - I am demanding on behalf of all of us that the people that are being stewards of the public goods treat us with the respect that we deserve - thank you

Mr. Knapp:

That was the final speaker of the evening – feel free to stay and look at the maps

Meeting ended at 6:33 p.m.