



Town of Amherst
Districting Advisory Board
October 5, 2021 at 6:00 p.m.
Virtual Meeting Minutes
Approved October 20, 2021

Complete video is available online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xQaj4abnv3k>

1. Call to order and declaration of a quorum.

After confirming all participants could hear and be heard, Chair Irene Dujovne declared the presence of a quorum, called the meeting to order at 6:11 p.m. and announced audio and video recording.

Note: Pursuant to Chapter 20 of the Acts of 2021, this meeting will be conducted via remote means. Members of the public who wish to access the meeting may do so in the following manner: via Zoom under webinar ID 824 1448 3355. No in-person attendance of members of the public will be permitted, and public participation in any public hearing conducted during this meeting shall be by remote means only.

Voting members present: Irene Dujovne, Tracy Zafian, Marilyn Blaustein, Peggy Shannon, and Joseph Gordon; Mahek Ghelani (joined the meeting at 8 pm)

Non-voting members present: Mike Warner, IT Staff, and Demetria Shabazz, Board of Registrars, and Susan Audette, Town Clerk

2. Announcements

a. Public Comment

- Freddie Manning asked what was going to be the result of tonight's meeting? What will the DAB's choice be and where will it go after tonight?
 - Irene said next Wednesday will be when the Board submits the final report to the town council to vote on and then it will go to the state. The DAB chooses one final map product which is submitted to the town council and after their vote of approval it is sent to the state, unless requested revisions from the council, this should be the last meeting of revisions.

b. Approval of Minutes

- Due to time constraints, The Board decided to postpone approval of the minutes so they could immediately discuss the final timeline moving forward.

c. Announcements

- Announcement of the resignation of DAB member Craig Meadows.
- Irene suggested making working groups to work on the report and a possible presentation and sought volunteers. Peggy, Tracy, and Marilyn volunteered.
 - Tracy said our presentation doesn't need to be extensive but should touch on key points of discussion over the past DAB meetings.
- Irene announced that Amherst Media will be broadcasting The Board's meetings moving forward.

3. Packet Items

a. Items not Anticipated 48 Hours in Advance

- Regarding the making of the DAB and the resolution from the Town Council to potentially allow non-voting members to vote to assist in reaching quorum was removed. Dee thanked Irene for standing strong against the resolution as Chair.

b. Non-Map Materials

- The Board got information from the state for what is needed in the final submission and one important piece of information is that the State can build the narrative of the borders of each precinct but their software is not perfect so The Board must make sure that the descriptions in the final proposal fit the map. This entails going precinct by precinct to ensure clarity.
- Tracy said we should also consider that council members may want changes.
 - Irene emphasized that we should be clear with the Town Council that simple changes in this process are not simple in this process, given the difficulty of balancing.
- Mike said The DAB should try to get this moving as fast as possible because a new law by Governor Baker which states communities that wait too long in this process could be shifted in the order for approval by the State.
- If the LEDRC has problems with the map, the DAB has seven days to do a turn around and if that is not met, the LEDRC will make the changes themselves.

c. Map Discussion

- Peggy proposed to eliminate two of the Map 1 versions since there are three versions, therefore after this elimination the option would be between two maps.
- Tracy suggested submitting more than one map to the town council to give them more insight.
 - Joseph stated it may be best to only submit one since their lack of experience with the process may lead to changes that are not possible.
- Marilyn likes Peggy's Map 1 Version 5 and would vote on that.
 - Peggy said she would be willing to explain the multiple versions of her map and wants input from non-voting members to get their perspective.
- Tracy said she wouldn't be for showing multiple maps at this stage but did support providing tables with information from other maps to justify our proposal. She also stated concern for Map 1 Version 5 due to the shrinking of Precinct 2.
- The Board voted to discard Map 1 Version 4 Scenario 2 from further consideration.
- Sue raised a concern with Map 3 Version 2. She said 0 registered voters were in Precinct 9 since it is all dorms and Sue was concerned since Amherst would have to run an election there and staff a precinct but there's a chance no one will come out to vote.
 - Tracy said there are other maps with small voter registration areas and said there are certain precincts with also the chance for low to no turnout.
- Peggy said there are a lot of things she likes about Map 3 and appreciates Tracy's thinking and doesn't necessarily want to see it get discarded.
- Tracy said she has been in touch with her two district (District 3) Council members and both have reviewed the maps. One is generally supportive, especially with the reuniting of the Lincoln & Sunset neighborhoods north of Amity into one precinct. The other has indicated that they support Map 3 (v2) over Map 1 (v4) and has listed the reasons why in their latest e-newsletter to district residents.
- Peggy said the changes to her map from Version 4 to Version 5 include moving a dorm from Precinct 9 to Precinct 2 and this change was a balancing of registered voters.
- Tracy asked if the Board would want to vote to keep Map 3 and Irene stated the imbalances are too large to keep.
 - Tracy said we could not move it forward at this point but keep the positives in mind and take those into account when writing data in the report.
- Peggy said a slide with the demographic data from Mike would be really helpful.
 - Peggy also said she drafted the map the way she did to avoid cutting up communities of interest and that could be seen with the demographic data overlaid on her map.

Respectfully submitted,
Joseph Gordon Minute-Taker

● Sue asked if it is possible to do a public presentation just to get public feedback on what The Board has already and explain the map(s) or is the town council meeting going to be the only opportunity.

- Irene said because of the timeline, if we had another month, we could have a public meeting but due to time constraints it seems not possible to fit it in. Sue said the maps have been up in the Jones Library for about a week with the opportunity to give feedback to the town clerk's office.
- A **MOTION** was made by Tracy and seconded by Marilyn to eliminate Map 3 Version 2 (4 in favor, 0 against, 1 abstention). This was a roll call vote.
- With the remaining two maps, Tracy and Joseph preferred Map 1 Version 4 and Peggy, Irene, and Marilyn preferred Map 1 Version 5 pending certain small census block changes.
 - Peggy asked Joseph why he preferred Version 4 over 5 and he stated he agrees with concerns Tracy had made but he would be happy with either map being the final product.
- Pending a few tweaks to Version 5 Irene made a **MOTION** which was seconded by Peggy to select it as the final map (6 in favor, 0 against, 0 abstentions) this was a roll call vote.
- Since Version 4 is so similar, it may not provide helpful data. Therefore, using Tracy's Map 3 could be very useful to show The Board's different thought processes during this process.

4. Timeline Moving Forward

- The final map will be posted at the Town Hall and replace the old maps hanging up.
- The next step is to write the report and possibly get some feedback in time.
 - Peggy said she would work on the draft and take comments from members of the Board and take those into account. Tracy suggested at the next meeting having one final pass of the proposal before its submission.
 - Peggy wants comments from Board members on the current version of the proposal by Thursday Evening (Oct. 7)

5. Public Comment

- Freddie Manning asked if The Board could give the numbers of the maps once again.
 - The Maps are presently named Map 3 Version 1 and Map 1 Version 4.

6. A **motion** was made by Peggy Shannon, seconded by Tracy Zafian to adjourn the meeting. **Voted** (6-0-0) to adjourn the meeting. Chair Dujovne declared the meeting adjourned at 8:15 pm. This was a roll call vote.

The next Districting Advisory Board meeting will be Tuesday, October 12th from 6-8PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Joseph Gordon Minute-Taker

