

**OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL**

**RESEARCH DIVISION**

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4TH FLOOR, CITY HALL

JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA 32202

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**SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON REDISTRICTING**

**Meeting minutes**

**May 27, 2021**

**9:00 a.m.**

**Location:** City Council Chamber

**In attendance:** Council Members Randy DeFoor, Randy White, Brenda Priestly Jackson

**Excused**: School Board Members Kelly Coker and Daryl Willie

**Also:** Council Member Ju’Coby Pittman (via Zoom); Jeff Clements and Yvonne Mitchell – Council Research Division; Paige Johnston – Office of General Counsel; Jerry Holland – Property Appraiser; Eric Grantham – Council Support Services; James Reed – Planning and Development Department

**Meeting Convened**: 9:04 a.m.

Council Member DeFoor convened the meeting and the attendees introduced themselves for the record.

General Counsel Update

Assistant General Counsel Paige Johnston re-circulated the draft policy document she distributed at the previous meeting regarding the subject matter experts and their engagement with the general public, which the committee may wish to adopt formally. Council Member DeFoor briefly reviewed the contents of the policy and the members present determined to defer formal adoption of the policy until the next meeting. Council Member Priestly Jackson asked that the policy be sent to the School Board members of the committee for their comments and any recommendations they may have for additions to the policy.

Council Member White suggested that meetings of the Special Committee might be suspended until Census data is available and there is more substantive work for the committee to do.

Consolidated Subject Matter Expert

Property Appraiser Jerry Holland said that there is little the committee can do until the 2020 Census data is released. He will be coordinating with the Planning Department when the data is released to start analysis and mapping of the data.

Planning and Development Department

James Reed of the Planning Department’s Geographic Information System (GIS) office discussed the difference between reapportionment (allocating seats in a legislative body, such as redistributing seats in the U.S. Congress among the states based on population changes) and redistricting (redrawing representation districts within a jurisdiction, such as city council districts).

Mr. Reed described the hierarchy of census geographies. Census tracts are small, relatively permanent subdivisions of a county, roughly the equivalent of a neighborhood, typically with about 4,000 inhabitants. Tracts are composed of smaller census blocks (the smallest level of data collection, with typically 50-100 people, the equivalent of a city block) which are aggregated into larger block groups within a tract. Census tracts are intended to be relatively homogenous in composition.

Council Member DeFoor asked Mr. Reed about Florida’s upcoming redistricting and where the new Congressional seat allocated by federal reapportionment may be located. Mr. Reed said that will be determined by the Florida Legislature. Council Member Priestly Jackson asked for an update at the next meeting about the status of litigation by various states with the Census Bureau on the delayed release of the 2020 Census data.

Mr. Reed played a video describing the process by which the Census data will be manipulated in the GIS system to assign Census tracts to districts and adjust boundaries to equalize population.

Next meeting

Scheduled for June 24, 2021.

**Meeting adjourned:** 9:29 a.m.

Minutes: Jeff Clements, Research Division

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5.28.21 Posted 2:00 p.m.