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OFFICE OF THE CITY COUNCIL

October 1, 2020
9:00 a.m.

MEMORANDUM

TO: Honorable City Council Members

FROM: The Honorable Council President Tommy Hazouri

SUBJECT: Special Committee on Redistricting

In accordance with Council Rule 2.103 (a) and Chapter 18, Ordinance Code, as President of the Jacksonville City Council, I hereby create the Special Committee on Redistricting.

Background:

Whenever the Council President deems appropriate, but not more than six months after the official date for taking the decennial census (April 1, 2020), the Council President shall appoint a special committee or designate a standing committee to serve as a Redistricting Committee.

Charter Sections 5.02 and 13.03 impose upon the Council the duty and responsibility of redistricting the Council districts and the School Board districts. The Council is obligated to ensure that all districts are as nearly equal in population and are arranged in a logical and compact geographical pattern as possible to achieve compliance with federal and state laws. The geographical arrangement and territorial boundaries must take into consideration other factors, particularly compactness and contiguity, so that residents of the City and their varied economic, social and ethnic interests and objectives are adequately represented in the configuration of Council and the School Board districts.

Charge:

a) Selection of Redistricting Consultant

The Redistricting Committee shall investigate possible persons or entities, including the Planning and Development Department (PDD), qualified to serve as a Redistricting Consultant, which may be sent out as a request for proposals. After its investigation, the Redistricting Committee shall present to the Council the names of the persons or entities recommended to be chosen as the Redistricting Consultant, based on their professional qualifications and experience in redistricting.

If a consultant other than the PDD is chosen, the Redistricting Committee shall follow Chapter 126, Ordinance Code, the City's Procurement Code. The final selection of the Redistricting Consultant shall be approved by Council.

In order to meet the 30-day deadline for submission of a proposed plan, discussed in c) below, the Redistricting Committee must work with the selected consultant well in advance in order to establish the City's assumptions, ground rules and expectations in a proposed plan. The consultant must have received the City's "marching orders" from your committee and be ready to work on various plan proposals as soon as the final Census date is certified (by March 31, 2021).

b) Obtain Legally Permissible Considerations for Redistricting in accordance with state, federal and case law

The Redistricting Committee will hear from the Office of General Counsel about the criteria and analysis consistent with the current status of federal law and court precedents that will determine what rules must be followed in developing legally defensible districts and the Redistricting Committee will develop guidelines based off of these legal considerations.

c) Schedule for Preparation of Plan to be Submitted to Council

The Redistricting Committee shall adopt a schedule for preparation of a plan and present the plan to Council. This plan must be submitted by the Redistricting Committee to Council within 30 days after the U.S. Census data is certified, which is scheduled to occur by March 31, 2021. The redistricting consultant or PDD shall begin drawing alternative proposals in early 2021 using guidelines for new districts supplied by the Redistricting Committee and preliminary census data that usually becomes available later in the year the Census is taken. By spring 2021, the consultant or PDD will produce the final proposed map(s) for presentation to the Redistricting Committee.

d) Reapportionment Committees Present a Plan to the Rules Committee and City Council

Within 150 days after the U.S. Bureau of the Census certification of the final population count for the City (before August 28, 2021), the Redistricting Committee will submit its final proposed plan to Council, in the form of an ordinance that will be referred to the Rules Committee.

The Redistricting Committee shall have available alternative plans considered but not recommended for review by Council. If the PDD is not selected as the Redistricting Consultant, the PDD shall serve to advise the Council and the Redistricting Committee as to matters related to the process.

I look forward to receiving the committee's work product as they complete their duties.

Members:

Council Member Garrett Dennis, Chairman
Council Member Randy DeFoor
Council Member Reggie Gaffney
Council Member Brenda Priestly Jackson
Council Member Randy White

Deadline:

The Special Committee on Redistricting is tasked to continue its duties through June 30, 2021, as may be extended by the next Council President.

Thank you to each of the Council Members and the staff who make the commitment to serve on this important committee.

cc: Council Members/Staff
Cheryl L. Brown, Director/Council Secretary
Jessica Matthews, Chief, Legislative Services Division
Kim Taylor, Council Auditor
Margaret M. Sidman, Deputy, General Counsel
Jeff Clements, Chief, Research Division
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