

A Special Meeting of the 25th Board of Representatives of the City of Stamford will be held Tuesday, October 30, 2001 at 8:00 p.m. in the Legislative Chambers of the Board of Representatives in the Government Center, 888 Washington Boulevard, Stamford, Connecticut.

The Regular Meeting of the 25th Board of Representatives of the City of Stamford will be held Tuesday, October 30, 2001 at 8:00 p.m. in the Legislative Chambers of the Board of Representatives in the Government Center, 888 Washington Boulevard, Stamford, Connecticut.

Minutes

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 p.m. by President Carmen L. Domonkos. President Domonkos read the call of the meeting:

NOTICE OF SPECIAL MEETING

I, Carmen L. Domonkos, President of the 25th Board of Representatives of the City of Stamford, Connecticut, and pursuant to Section C2-10-4 of the Stamford Charter, hereby call a Special Meeting of said Board of Representatives at the following time and place:

Tuesday, October 30, 2001
8:00 p.m.
Legislative Chambers, 4th Floor
Government Center
888 Washington Boulevard
Stamford, CT 06904-2152

INVOCATION: Given by Rep. O'Neill.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE TO THE FLAG: Led by President Carmen L. Domonkos

A Special Meeting of the 25th Board of Representatives of the City of Stamford will be held Tuesday, October 30, 2001 at 8:00 p.m. in the Legislative Chambers of the Board of Representatives in the Government Center, 888 Washington Boulevard, Stamford, Connecticut.

ROLL CALL: Conducted by Clerk of the Board Annie M. Summerville. There were 30 members present and ten members absent/excused: Reps. Alswanger, Biancardi, Esposito, Gaztambide, Graber, Green-Carter, Hunter, Kernan, Mobilio and Shapiro.

MACHINE TEST VOTE: President Carmen L. Domonkos

President Domonkos thanked David Martin and Gabe DeLuca, along with the Committee, for their hard work. She stated that the Commission also worked very hard to prepare the initial report, and she especially thanked Rep. Martin for the time he put in to this project, adding that his expertise is invaluable.

SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON
REAPPORTIONMENT:

David Martin and Robert “Gabe” DeLuca,
Co-Chairs

Co-Chair Martin reported that the Special Committee on Reapportionment met on September 25, October 9 and again last Tuesday, October 23. There are minutes of the meeting, with attendance records, available on everyone’s desk this evening.

Mr. Martin stated that the Reapportionment Commission had met on a new plan, and the plan necessitated several major changes to district boundaries in the City. They submitted their Plan on September 5, 2001, and this Board must act within sixty days of the receipt of that Plan. The Reapportionment Committee voted unanimously to recommend a modified plan, which has been presented to everyone through maps and street descriptions that have been made around the maps. Mr. Martina also prepared a tract and block report, that is available in the Board Office.

Mr. Martin stated that this plan was devised to address several issues that remained after the Commission did its work. This plan offers the following improvements over the Commission’s Plan: 1) the downtown district, No. 6, is much more cohesive and makes a lot more sense than the district the Commission recommended, which excluded large numbers of people who were part of downtown and at the same time had the District split across I-95 to encompass areas that would not logically be considered part of the downtown district. 2) The Plan pulls together a housing complex, Lawn Avenue and Custer Street, that has historically been split between two districts. Mr. Martin stated this is a very important, positive development in this plan. 3) Although the balance in the Commission plan was good, the southern districts in the City were generally large and the northern districts were generally small, and there was in essence an imbalance north-to-south, that has largely been corrected with this Plan. 4) This Plan tends to follow streets and boundaries more closely than the Commission Plan. This Plan tends to follow Long Ridge or High Ridge or Newfield Avenue or I-95 more than the old plan. Mr. Martin added that he does not mean to say that every district is perfectly bounded, but there tends to be more of that in this Plan. You would know that because the street descriptions are about 20% shorter than the street descriptions that describe the old Plan.

Mr. Martin stated that he does not want to convey that this Plan is perfect, and it has some drawbacks. He stated that any time you make any type of change that you think might make one thing better, you are probably making something else worse. This is a best effort. The Committee has tried to communicate this Plan to everyone on the Board.

There have been three public hearings, and there have been calls to the Board Office. Both representatives and members of the public have called Mr. Martin directly with questions about this Plan.

Mr. Martin stated that the modified plan does come from the Commission Plan. There are some things in the modified plan that actually originated in the Commission Plan. Mr. Martin further stated that this Plan does in fact redistrict two of the current board members out of their districts. One is Rep. O'Neill and the other is Rep. Gasparri. Mr. Martin stated that it is extremely difficult and challenging to recommend this Plan because of this, and he realizes that both representatives have invested a lot in their current districts, and have done a lot for their current districts, and he is certain this is a very difficult thing for them to deal with.

Mr. Martin moved the resolution; said motion was seconded.

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| 1. | RESOLUTION; accepting, rejecting or modifying the Final Report of the Reapportionment Commission.
09/05/01 – Final Report Submitted
09/25/01 – First Public Hearing Held
10/23/01 – Second Public Hearing Held | APPROVED
BY ROLL CALL
VOTE (21-9-0)
Reps. Day, Fedeli,
Giordano,
Imbrogno, Loglisci,
Morrow, O'Neill,
Poltrack and Sherer
(opposed) |
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Mr. Martin stated that the vote was 6-0-0 in Committee. Mr. MacInnis stated that unless he misread the definitions of the new districts, he is also districted out of his district. Mr. Martin replied that he checked the addresses that were provided to him by the Planning Department upstairs, and if they provided an incorrect address, Mr. MacInnis may be correct. Mr. Martin apologized for this if in fact he is districted out.

Rep. Imbrogno stated that the old Commission Plan created few changes to his District. As of a month ago, he was satisfied with the Commission Plan. This plan changes his base, which is Linden House, where I have over 300 voters. Rep. Imbrogno stated these changes have been made in the last three weeks. He had kept up with the process up until three weeks ago and is surprised to find that the modified plan is so different from the Commission's Plan. Mr. Imbrogno stated he would vote no on the plan as presented tonight.

Rep. Loglisci stated everyone voted in favor of the plan, not realizing that District 7 was changed so much. Rep. Loglisci stated that other districts were discussed, but he certainly did not realize the extent of the changes to the 7th District.

Mr. Nanos joined the meeting at this time.

Rep. Loglisci stated that he tried to get a street and location list, and no communications were sent out on what the final plan would look like. Mr. Martin replied that street descriptions were sent out along with the maps, which would have reflected this change. Mr. Martin stated that a count total was included, which would show the change in District 7, a map was provided and street descriptions were subsequently set out. Mr. Martin stated he understands the challenge here of not seeing the change that was taking place. Mr. Martin made a point of mentioning that many of the districts had changed, mostly at the boundaries, and in particular the 15th District had changed considerably. Mr. Martin stated he might have been more clear by stating that if the 15th District had changed, that means that every district that touches the 15th is also changing.

Mr. Martin added that specifically, as discussed in the committee, in order for the northern district to grow larger, they must move south geographically.

Mr. Loglisci stated he was totally unaware of what happened, and this might be because it is going along a main artery. This change, however, is taking a whole development from Hope Street and Glenbrook Street out of the district, and drastically changing this district.

President Domonkos asked Mr. Martin to explain what has happened with reapportionment and why there are these changes.

Mr. Martin responded that state law and the charter require us to provide balance as well as we can, and they also require us to make districts that represent contiguous areas and neighborhoods. We can only set up districts composed of census tracts and blocks. We are not permitted to divide census blocks. One of the challenges, particularly when you try to squeeze twenty districts into a city of our size, is that if the blocks have a huge amount of population, it is difficult to balance. In this particular case, for example, there are 421 people listed in the census tract and block that Mr. Imbrogno is referring to. If we were to move those people into the 7th District, then the 7th District would rise to 6,095 people (the 2nd largest district). While this may be acceptable, the intersection of Glenbrook and Hope Street is a naturally-defining boundary that should define a district. The real issue is what happens to the 15th District. This District would now drop to 5,389 people, and that really is too low for a district. We would then be required to search and try to find population to move into the 15th District in order to balance it. However, when you look at the 15th District, you could move north and go to the 17th District, and we create a problem there. Mr. Martin stated that the real issue is to provide population to the 15th, and you have to get it somehow from a district to the south. If you take it from the 12th, it becomes too small. This is the conundrum that we are faced with. Mr. Martin stated he does not know of an easy way to fix this.

Mr. Martin stated that the goal is not that a neighborhood has to remain in the same district, that is almost irrelevant; it is that a neighborhood shouldn't be split in half. So, the housing complex at Custer Street and Lawn Avenue should be together, in any district. It could be argued in that case a legal challenge could be made to the

reapportionment plan because it might look like a deliberate attempt to get rid of a minority district.

Mr. Martin told Mr. Imbrogno that he cannot rectify this issue at this point in time.

Rep. O'Neill stated that the 10th District is most affected by this plan. The natural geographic boundary, which is used as the dividing line, happens to be a golf course. Historically the golf course has worked to unify the neighborhoods around it, not separate them. It is not a river or a highway. The golf course has been a wonderful piece of open space to the neighbors in all directions. Mr. O'Neill said it is unfortunate that this new district orientation basically splits his district in half based on the population shift from north to south due to new high-rise apartment units downtown. Mr. O'Neill stated that it is unfortunate that old neighborhoods are going to be split up that basically join the golf course.

Mr. O'Neill stated he has always enjoyed the 10th district because of the diversity of the neighborhoods and the people within it. There is something a little bit cold about census tracts when we consider the fabric and texture of how we live in America, and Mr. O'Neill enjoys the different groups of people who live within the district. Mr. O'Neill stated he would vote against this revision because of these reasons.

President Domonkos asked Mr. Martin to explain what happens if the Plan is not approved tonight.

Co-Chair Martin replied that the Charter provides that we have 60 days to accept, reject or modify the plan. The Committee has recommended a modification of the plan. Once we have done either one of these, we then must pass an ordinance enabling the plan. Tonight, an ordinance, for which the Committee voted to waive publication, is presented for the Board's consideration. Mr. Martin stated that if we do not pass anything, then we get into a legal gray zone. Mr. Martin stated he is unsure of what happens. It could be argued that the Commission's plan becomes effective by default. If we reject the plan, we have only sixty days to modify the plan, and we will end up in another special meeting in November trying to modify the plan again. These changes do not take effect until four years from now.

Mr. Martin stated he is strongly in favor of moving ahead with this Plan, and while it impacts some favorably and some unfavorably, he feels it is the best, reasonable plan that can be developed in the time frame and with the limitations handed to us.

Mr. Martin stated the Board would have another sixty days from the date of rejection, however, the wisest decision would be to push this into another special meeting some time late in November, which Mr. Martin does not feel is an attractive alternative.

Mr. Loglisci asked whether the Board could vote to approve the Commission's Plan and reject the modifications to the Commission's Plan. Mr. Martin stated that is possible.

Rep. Boccuzzi stated that if this Board does not come to a conclusion, he understands that the State will come down and redistrict the City without any input at all. Mr. Martin replied that is a possible scenario, however, it also may be a court. Mr. Martin stated that a judge located in Norwalk may not be considerate of where the existing voting places are and where the people have traditionally voted.

Clerk of the Board Summerville stated that she truly sympathizes with those persons who are dissatisfied with the plan. But, as a committee member, along with Rep. Boccuzzi and Loglisci, the wheel that squeaked the loudest received satisfaction. Ms. Summerville stated she is baffled to hear comments about representatives being districted out of their district. Had she known of this earlier, she surely would have addressed it. Ms. Summerville stated that she wanted to give Mr. Zelinsky a lot of credit. Mr. Zelinsky came to every meeting, he was persistent, he argued his point, and the Committee worked until late at night to get it resolved, and his concerns were resolved. Ms. Summerville added that nothing was done deliberately, and the Committee really thought that they were all in sync. The Committee was happy when it ended it's last meeting with the results of its work. Ms. Summerville stated that she feels terrible in that she doesn't want anyone unhappy nor does she want people displaced, but she was confident that everyone with problems had come and talked about them. She added that many representatives attended the meetings and submitted their concerns.

Upon motion duly made and seconded, the Resolution was approved by a roll call vote of 21-9-0 with Reps. Day, Fedeli, Giordano, Imbrogno, Loglisci, Morrow, O'Neill, Poltrack and Sherer opposed).

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| 2. | PROPOSED ORDINANCE; <u>for Publication</u>;
concerning elections - boundaries of voting districts.
05/07/01 - Submitted by President Domonkos
06/04/01 - No action taken
06/14/01 - Placed on Pending Agenda | APPROVED BY
MACHINE VOTE
(22-8-0) (Reps.
Day, Fedeli,
Giordano,
Imbrogno, Loglisci,
Morrow, O'Neill
and Poltrack
opposed) |
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Chair Martin moved the ordinance; said motion was seconded. Mr. Martin stated that the Committee voted also to waive publication. Mr. Martin moved to waive publication; said motion was seconded and approved by a machine vote of 27-3-0 (Reps. Giordano, O'Neill and Poltrack opposed). The vote on the ordinance was approved by machine (22-8-0) with Reps. Day, Fedeli, Giordano, Imbrogno, Loglisci, Morrow, O'Neill and Poltrack opposed).

ADJOURNMENT: Upon motion duly made and seconded and approved by unanimous voice vote, the meeting was adjourned at 9;10 p.m.

*The proceedings are available on audio tape at the
Offices of the Board of Representatives.*