

SENATE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON REDISTRICTING

Regular Meeting

October 25, 2021

Meeting Minutes

Members of the Senate Committee Present: Senator James Gray, Senator Regina Birdsell, Senator Rebecca Perkins Kwoka

Opening Summary

Senator Gray opened the meeting. The LSRs for the Senate and Executive Council districts have been submitted and they contain the districts as they are now. The County meetings have all been completed. They are having problems with communities like Manchester and Nashua. The way the Map-A-Thon project broke up Nashua will not work. They combined wards together in a way that does not give the ten percent criteria needed. He has asked the Senate Attorney to help him draft a letter to all of the municipalities that will have redistricting in their own community. Currently, the House has asked for a November 20th deadline for the return of all redistricting information. In Rochester they will be submitting their information just as soon after the 3rd as they can. Other communities are not as far along. He spoke with Rep. Bergeron and Nashua will not have their information ready by then. Based on those facts, the Senate Redistricting Committee will write a report based on the input that they received from the ten County meetings and issue that. That will be their last action as a committee. All other steps taken will happen in the Election Law and Municipal Affairs Committee. The conversation has been how to get their work done quickly and still give approximately two weeks for the maps to be reviewed. They will work out the timelines in the Election Law Committee.

Senator Soucy clarified that the legislation will be introduced and be treated as other legislation except for the fact that they may have the opportunity to do more than one public hearing for greater input.

Senator Gray replied that ELMA will meet and whoever wants to bring in a map, from the committee, they will introduce it and make sure that it is published for the public to review. Whether they have a public hearing before that or after will be determined but his preference is to have the hearing after the maps are introduced. He continued by saying that the committee just had ten meetings with input on how to draw the maps so the next meetings with the public should be input on how they did when they drew the maps.

Senator Perkins Kwoka wanted to clarify if the process will be to introduce the bills at the committee level and then amendments can be introduced with two weeks-notice for the public to review.

Senator Gray replied that is how he understands it will work. The intention was to get the maps out before Christmas but with the work they need to do in Nashua that might be close.

Liz Tentarelli commented that she understands the dilemma they are having with the city wards and asked what the delay is with the Executive Council District maps.

Senator Gray replied that he would like see how the Representative Districts are drawn before they complete the Senate and Executive Council Districts to know where common interests might be. If they do not know where to start from it will be hard to have cohesion within communities.

Senator Perkins Kwoka asked if one of the public hearings will have Zoom capability for public testimony.

Senator Gray replied that right now the Senate is back in normal session and they do not usually do Zoom. Anyone can submit video testimony and staff will post it to the website. If an organization wants to get together and do a Zoom video it can be uploaded like any other testimony for the committee to review. He added that he looks at everything that has been sent in so far.