



MARYLAND CITIZENS REDISTRICTING COMMISSION

Co-Chairs

Dr. Kathleen
Hetherington (I)

Walter
Olson (R)

Judge Alexander
Williams, Jr. (D)

Members

Jay V.
Amin (I)

Cheryl R.
Brooks (D)

Mary G.
Clawson (R)

Kimberly Rose
Cummings (R)

Jonathan
Fusfield (I)

William Tipper
Thomas, III (D)

Redistricting Commission Meeting

Virtual Meeting

May 5, 2021

7:00 p.m.

Minutes*

Members Present:

Co-Chairs: Walter Olson, Judge Alexander Williams, Jr., Dr. Kathleen Hetherington

- Cheryl Brooks
- Jonathan Fusfield
- Kim Cummings
- Jay Amin
- William Tipper Thomas, III
- Mary Clawson

Meeting began at 7:07 pm

- Judge Williams welcomed everyone and began introductions (members Cheryl Brooks and Mary Clawson had microphone issues).
- The two other co-chairs Walter Olson and Dr. Kate Hetherington introduced themselves.
- Each of the members then proceeded to give a brief bio of themselves (Walter Olson and Judge Williams gave brief bios for Cheryl Brooks and Mary Clawson because their microphones were not functioning).
- Judge Williams then began working through the [agenda](#) and introduced Secretary Robert McCord from the Maryland Department of Planning.
- Secretary McCord explained the [timeline](#) for redistricting and detailed the support that will be provided from the Department of Planning to the Commission through the process. Dates of note mentioned were:
 - Census data in “Legacy” format for redistricting will be received mid to late August.
 - Prisoner reallocation will occur within four weeks of receipt thus reassigning those in Maryland’s prisons back to their previous last known address prior to incarceration.
 - Sept 30th - Final census data will be delivered in a newer format. While the data should be a match to that received in August, it will be cross-referenced and finalized.
 - Jan 12th - Date maps are due to the legislature (it was noted the maps would need to be sent to the governor previously).
- Judge Williams introduced Chris Mincher, Senior Deputy Legal Counsel, Office of Legal Counsel.

- Chris Mincher provided an overview of the responsibilities of the Commission, legal issues associated with redistricting, their mission and reviewed the Executive Order pertaining to the Commission. He discussed that commissioners could reach out to him for further guidance if necessary. Specifically he mentioned:
 - An overview of open meetings and transparency
 - Elements of the Executive Order relating to drawing congressional and legislative district lines, what to consider and what not to consider, the process of planning public meetings and background law
 - A review of public and open meetings
 - The Commission can create committees to tackle specific issues/aspects of the process
 - Experts can be identified by the commission and looked to for assistance
 - Seven votes are required approve the maps drawn
 - Reasonable amount of advanced notice of meetings is required and an agenda must be posted 24 hours prior to meetings
 - Ensure that at least one member has open meetings training
 - A review of memorializing meetings via meeting minutes, video recordings and how long they must be kept
 - The Commission is to offer a report at the conclusion of their work
 - Any communications regarding their work would be subject to the Public Information Act and that he served as their Public Information Act officer for the process
- Judge Williams thanked Mr. Mincher and asked Walter Olson about structuring their meetings going forward
- Walter Olson recommended that the commission conduct two kinds of meetings:
 - Public meetings during which the commission would listen to the public comments
 - Workshop Meetings where the commission would perhaps listen to experts, review map submissions, etc.
- The commissioners agreed with that format.
- An agenda item was discussed regarding individual members being asked about speaking engagements or interviews.
 - Walter Olson mentioned from experience that sometimes press had a quick turnaround and that he has done some in the past. He advised that nonpartisan groups are OK
 - There was a discussion to consider these on a case-by-case basis
 - The topic will be revisited
- Judge Williams raised an agenda item concerning bringing on an advisor/partner to the Commission to represent the Hispanic community. Gloria Aparicio Blackwell was recommended as a nominee but it was decided to table the discussion and decision to the next meeting. Dr. Kate Hetherington recommended that the nominee's resume be sent to Commission members in advance.

- Judge Williams opened the discussion up to the other commissioners for comments and/or questions.
- Jonathan Fusfield asked about closed captioning and an ASL interpreter.
 - It was discussed that the plan had been to provide closed-captioning but a technological issue prevented that from happening during this initial meeting. **The meeting was supposed to be recorded in response to this issue but subsequent issues also prevented that as well and meeting minutes were created. The issue will be resolved for future meetings.*
- In an effort to plan for future meetings, Judge Williams asked the commissioners what days worked best for each of the commissioners for weekly meetings starting out and a discussion ensued among the members as to best times and days for each.
 - Jay Amin said Mondays and Wednesdays at 7 pm worked best
 - William Tipper Thomas, III also said Monday and Wednesdays worked best
 - Kim Cummings said Tuesdays and Wednesdays at 7 pm worked best
 - The remaining commissioners echoed or provided a “thumbs- up” for Wednesday evening meetings
- The next meeting was then set for Wednesday, May 12 at 7 pm

Meeting ended at 8:10pm

***PENDING APPROVAL OF COMMISSION AT MAY 12, 2021 MEETING**