

**CITY OF WINTER GARDEN
DISTRICTING COMMISSION
MINUTES OF JUNE 18, 2008**

The regular meeting of the Districting Commission was called to order by Chairman Derek Blakeslee at 6:00 p.m. on June 18, 2008 in City Hall Commission Chambers, 251 W. Plant Street, Winter Garden, Florida. Mr. Blakeslee called roll and declared that a quorum was present.

MEMBERS PRESENT

District 1 - Kent Horsley (*Vice Chairman*)
District 3 - Pat Angry
District 4 - Mark DeFuso
District 5 - Derek Blakeslee (*Chairman*)

ABSENT

District 2 - Fred Crabtree

ALSO PRESENT

Mayor John Rees
Commissioner Harold L. Boulter
Commissioner Bob Buchanan
Commissioner H. Gerald Jowers
Commissioner Colin Sharman
City Manager Mike Bollhoefer
City Clerk Kathy Golden
Asst. City Attorney Dan Langley
GIS Coordinator Alan Booker

APPROVAL OF THE JUNE 4, 2008 MINUTES

Motion by Commission Member Blakeslee to approve the regular minutes of June 4, 2008 as submitted. Seconded by Commission Member DeFuso and carried unanimously 4-0.

CITIZEN COMMENTS

City Commissioner H. Gerald Jowers, 235 N. Lakeview Avenue, Winter Garden, Florida, stated that it would be nice to keep the district's electorate in the district that elected them into office. However, after witnessing the last election and the north and south divide, he believes there is only one way to mend the divide and that would be to not refer to Winter Garden by a particular direction but to mesh all the districts together and start over. He suggested having each district either run from east to west or from the north to the south. This concept would make each district combined with a portion of another district. This could be accomplished without disenfranchising anyone and keeping it in a form of unanimity. Mr. Jowers added that where a current City Commissioner lives should not have any bearing on the new district boundaries.

DISCUSSION ON PROPOSED NEW CITY COMMISSION DISTRICT BOUNDARIES

City Manager Bollhoefer stated that GIS Coordinator Alan Booker is available to all members of the Districting Commission for drafting different map versions. Mr. Booker will not be able to also create maps for our citizens because his time is limited.

Mr. Blakeslee added that the map work Mr. Booker does for Commission members is not to be shared with other Commission members unless we are in a regular meeting.

Mr. DeFuso stated that he worked with Mr. Booker and came up with a map identified as number six. They started with a blank slate and looked at the requirements. He noted that he did not find the other proposed maps unacceptable, but he felt it was time to look at the boundaries with fresh eyes. His intent was to bring the city together as a whole. He asked the Districting

Commission to consider his proposed map that he believes meets all the necessary legal requirements.

Mr. Blakeslee commented that he does not think that whenever they were looking at any of the maps that a City Commissioner's residence was ever a consideration. They did discuss that they may want the same demographics there are now within a district. Mr. DeFuso responded that it is his understanding that a portion of District 3 that needs to remain as a whole entity as described by City Attorney Ardaman at our first meeting. He has followed those instructions in drafting his map (*four quadrants map*).

City Manager Bollhoefer submitted a completely redesigned map that is north to south in a horizontal pattern and is available for viewing on the table.

Mr. Blakeslee asked if out of the five maps submitted, were there any that doesn't work for the Commission members. He stated that he is not interested in the central or the north version that shows District 2 looping around District 4. He thinks that if you put all the growth into District 2 this will not work for the future. The other three south maps are similar and he thinks they will be movement maps to be worked on.

At this time, the Districting Commission reviewed each map displayed on the table in front of the dais and returned to the dais stating their likes and dislikes.

North/South Map (*Divides the city into four straight sections*) (Exhibit A)

Ms. Angry stated that the north to south map takes away from District 3 and she disagrees with the concept. Mr. DeFuso stated that he agrees with Ms. Angry and it has potential growth problems for District 4. Mr. Blakeslee stated that he does not see it as a viable alternative because it changes the current districting more than he would be happy with. Also because of all the growth the purple district will experience in the future and in another three years we would need to redistrict again. Mr. Horsley stated that he likes the map a little because he finds Commissioner Jowers' statements compelling. He thinks there are issues as defined by the economy and development. He would like to see if there is some way to resolve some of those issues. He thinks this will help eliminate some of the sociological issues that may be prevalent in our City and is worthy of our consideration.

Mr. Bollhoefer asked for clarification on the legal issue concerning the Federal lawsuit. Is it preservation of all of District 3 or the preservation of the historical African-American community? Assistant City Attorney Langley responded that he interprets the Federal judgment requiring for us to do what we can to not dilute the core of District 3 and to add to it but not divide it into parts. He suggested that the Districting Commission review the lawsuit map. He believes the core of District 3 is East of Ninth Street, North of Story Road, South of Plant and West of the Beltway, as discussed with staff. He reiterated that by maintaining the core of District 3 you will be complying with the judgment. We should not dilute the protected class under the judgment.

Mr. Horsley asked if the map showing the districts running north to south violate the City Attorney's advice on District 3. Mr. Langley responded that with respect to the Federal judgment, it appears the District 3 core remains intact with this proposal. He suggested that the Districting Commission not make decisions solely on one reason. He explained that they also need to look to the State law requirements, the City charter requirements, and weigh the compactness and contiguous requirements. Mr. DeFuso asked if there were any maps presented that do not meet the legal requirements and should not be considered.

Ms. Angry addressed maps identified as D3 South, D3 South Central, and D3 South/East maps; her first choice is D3 South as the most feasible selection that maintains the core.

Mr. Langley stated that as far as he can tell, the South Central, South/East, Four Quadrants, and the South maps all appear to maintain the core of District 3 as it is now known.

Mr. Blakeslee read from section 3 of their notebook the six items that the Districting Commission was required to keep in mind when selecting a map. He suggested that the Districting Commission discuss their likes and dislikes according the criteria.

Four Quadrants Map (Exhibit B)

Mr. DeFuso stated that he looked at the City as a whole and he believes his map meets all of the requirements and allows for growth in two districts; northwest district and southwest district.

Mr. Horsley stated that he likes a lot of what was done with the quadrant map and it does meet a lot of the criteria pointed out. Although it does not address a lot of the major sociological issues that he feels need to be addressed, he does like the map.

Ms. Angry stated that the quadrant map has a problem with north of Fuller's Cross Road that will cause the demographics to take away from the minorities in District 3.

Mr. Blakeslee stated that the lines are still being drawn north and south on State Road 50 which he does not know that he is that happy with. He described the main growth areas are within the yellow area such as Tucker Oaks. His initial big concern with this map is that it has almost eliminated a district from where it is at today. He expressed that this could be the map of the future but he does not like to see one district take so much of a hit at once.

Three South Maps (Exhibits C, D & E)

Mr. Horsley stated that the D3 South map is not compact as it could be if that is a primary goal. He is not excited about the purple district (District 1) that takes a strange turn going west and south. The three south maps could be blended together to make one proposal.

Ms. Angry restated that she likes the D3 South map best. She spoke of the 2010 census causing this process to be redone. Mr. Bollhoefer stated that in the year 2010 there will not be a significant change in our growth and any changes will be a matter of fine tuning the new boundaries from this process.

Mr. DeFuso stated that this is an okay plan but it is kind of intrusive; District 1 intrudes into District 2. He stated that there will be an addition to District 3 one way or another and the question is which part of the city will add to it and how this will impact the demographics of the district. It will be difficult and diluted. He is studying how to keep the core and keep it intact.

Mr. Blakeslee stated we have not drawn a line through the middle of District 3 and suggested keeping the district together and adding on to it. He stated that he sort of likes the South East and South Central maps and suggested some changes.

South East and South Central (Exhibits D & E)

Mr. Blakeslee stated that he likes leaving the industrial piece under Chapin Station. He likes the south plans and he would like to clean up along Lake Apopka and move them to District 1. Those neighborhoods toward the western side move them into District 2. He stated that what he likes about these maps is that when he looks to the future, District 3 will have to go to the south; District 1 will continue to go to the west and eventually take in old Winter Garden; District 2 will either hold its own with growth in Tucker Oaks and Oakland Park and not move very much in the future; District 4 will probably be giving to District 3. These maps allow for a future plans and do not take us tremendously away from our existing districts. He is not looking for change just to change. He does not feel he was charged with coming up with a brand new plan for the City. He stated that he would like to make sure we could morph into the future and not make the task so great in the future.

Mr. Blakeslee asked the Districting Commission what they thought the next plan should be on how to proceed.

Mr. Horsley stated his concerned about the sociology of our City and the composition. He would like to see our City Commissioners have a multiple of economic interests to represent. He stated there is only map presented that does that and yet he understands the inherent problems. He likes the South maps with the exception of taking more from the west side of District 1 and go ahead and give up some of District 2 to District 1 to make it more compact.

Ms. Angry stated that she has already given her comments and wants to take a closer look at her three preferred maps. She shared that she worked with the 2000 Census and Winter Garden has changed.

Mr. DeFuso stated that this is a real challenge. He shared that he was moved by what Commissioner Jowers' said and he agrees with Mr. Horsley's statement that it is a great opportunity to try and unify the City. He stated that we should look at things with fresh eyes, not rush the process, and he is willing to meet every two weeks to get it done by August.

Mr. Blakeslee asked everyone to review the three south maps and narrow it down to just one preferred map. He would like to see the discussions focus on as few maps as possible.

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July meeting dates were tentatively scheduled for Wednesday July 9, 16, and 23, 2008 in the new City Hall Chambers. Mr. Defuso noted that he would be on vacation the last week in July and the first week in August.

The meeting adjourned at 7:12 p.m.

ATTEST:

APPROVED:

/S/
Kathy Golden, City Clerk

/S/
Derek Blakeslee, Chairman