

Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission

Virtual Meeting via Zoom Webinar due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic,
pursuant to 2020 PA 254 (MCL 15.263)

Full agenda, presentations, transcripts, and video recordings are available at
RedistrictingMichigan.org

Thursday, April 22, 2021

1:00 PM – 3:27 PM

MINUTES

PRESENT: Douglas James Clark (attending remotely from Rochester Hills, MI)
Juanita Curry (attending remotely from Detroit, MI)
Anthony Eid (*joined meeting at 1:13 PM*) (attending remotely from West Bloomfield, MI)
Rhonda Lange (attending remotely from Reed City, MI)
Steven Terry Lett (attending remotely from Lee County, FL)
Cynthia Orton (attending remotely from Iowa County, IA)
MC Rothhorn (attending remotely from Lansing, MI)
Rebecca Szetela (attending remotely from Wayne County, MI)
Janice Vallette (attending remotely from Highland, MI)
Erin Wagner (attending remotely from Eaton County, MI)
Richard Weiss (attending remotely from Saginaw, MI)
Dustin Joseph Witjes (*left meeting at 2:08 PM, rejoined at 2:12 PM*)
(attending remotely from Ypsilanti, MI)

ABSENT: Brittni Kellom

OTHERS PRESENT: Suann Hammersmith, Executive Director
Julianne V. Pastula, General Counsel
Edward Woods III, Communications and Outreach Director
Michigan Department of State (“MDOS”) staff

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

Commissioner Szetela, Vice-Chair, called the meeting of the Michigan Independent Citizens Redistricting Commission (MICRC) to order at 1:00 PM.

ROLL CALL

MDOS staff called roll. All commissioners except Commissioners Kellom and Eid were present and a quorum was met.

Commissioner Eid joined the meeting at 1:13 PM

Commissioner Witjes left the meeting at 2:08 PM and rejoined at 2:12 PM

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

MOTION: Commissioner Szetela, Vice-Chair, called for a motion to approve the agenda. **Motion by Commissioner Lett. Supported by Commissioner Witjes. Commissioner Szetela, Vice-Chair, held a vote by show of hands. MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES - APRIL 15 AND APRIL 16, 2021

Commissioners discussed the April 15th and 16th draft minutes and offered no edits.

MOTION: Commissioner Szetela, Vice-Chair, called for a motion to approve the minutes from April 15th. **Motion by Commissioner Lett. Supported by Commissioner Curry. Commissioner Szetela, Vice-Chair, held a vote by show of hands. MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

MOTION: Commissioner Szetela, Vice-Chair, called for a motion to approve the minutes from April 16th. **Motion by Commissioner Rothhorn. Supported by Commissioner Clark. Commissioner Szetela, Vice-Chair, held a vote by show of hands. MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

PUBLIC COMMENT

Commissioner Szetela, Vice-Chair, opened the floor to public comment. There were three individuals who provided live public comment: Marjorie Sarbaugh-Thompson, Dale Milford, and Bwana Payeye Kizi.

A full inventory of live and written public comment is available at RedistrictingMichigan.org.

CORRESPONDENCE

Executive Director Hammersmith reported no specific correspondence to address.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Executive Director Hammersmith provided an update on negotiations with consultants. The contract for the VRA Legal Counsel, Federal Compliance Consulting, is ready to go out. The mapping contract with Electronic Data Services is almost finalized. Director Hammersmith explained that after contracts are extended, there is a five-day period where a notice of intent to award is posted and other bidders may object. If there are no objections, the contract goes into effect five days later. The executive director also hosted a brief icebreaker activity.

MICHIGAN DEPARTMENT OF STATE (MDOS) UPDATES

Director of Special Projects Sally Marsh updated the Commission on the public comment online portal. Projected to be ready in early May, Director Marsh walked the Commission through a framework of the online tool, explaining features such as the website layout, public mapping submission, public comment submission, file submission in general, and “tagging” to identify key submissions of interest. Moon Duchin, executive director of the Metric Geometry and Gerrymandering Group (MGGG), joined Director Marsh in answering questions by the Commissioners on the tool.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

There was no unfinished business.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Public Comment Process. Director of Special Projects Marsh provided an overview on receiving public comment at public hearings. The presentation expounded on recommended methods and processes associated with written public comment, live-virtual public comment, and in-person public comment as articulated in an April 21st memorandum. Director Marsh also explained how MICRC and MDOS staff would support the Commission during hearings. The Commissioners engaged in discussion on suggestions and potential modifications to the public comment process, particularly on the order of speakers and accommodating citizens with disabilities.

Executive Director Hammersmith provided a document, *Commissioner Engagement with Individuals Making Public Comment*, and discussed the roles and responsibilities of Commissioners. Scripts and information will be provided to the Commissioners at public hearings. Director Hammersmith emphasized the importance that Commissioners engage in active listening to

speakers. Lastly, Director Hammersmith reported staff was considering the idea of group presentations and that a future discussion will revolve around decision-making processes.

General Counsel Pastula presented on the document, *Live Public Comment Guidelines*, including language on meeting accessibility, discussing business in open meetings, speaking times, responsibilities of the Chairperson, pandemic regulations, and public conduct. The first few words of one sentence: “No banners, signs, bullhorns or similar devices, items that could be used as weapons, or large bags or cases will be allowed into the meeting room.” was edited to begin as follows: “No oversize banners or signs . . .”

MOTION: Adopt the Recommendations in the April 21st, 2021 Memorandum from MDOS. **Motion by Commissioner Lett. Supported by Commissioner Rothhorn. Commissioner Szetela, Vice-Chair, held a vote by show of hands. MOTION APPROVED**
Voting Yes: Lange, Weiss, Witjes, Wagner, Szetela, Rothhorn, Curry, Vallette, Orton, Lett
Voting No: Commissioners Clark and Eid

MOTION: Adopt the *Commissioner Engagement with Individuals Making Public Comment* document. **Motion by Commissioner Lett. Supported by Commissioner Eid. Commissioner Szetela, Vice-Chair, held a vote by show of hands. MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

MOTION: Adopt the *Live Public Comment Guidelines*. **Motion by Commissioner Lett. Supported by Commissioner Eid. Commissioner Szetela, Vice-Chair, held a vote by show of hands. MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

2. Communities of Interest Discussion. Executive Director Hammersmith presented on Communities of the Interest (COI). After presenting the Constitutional description and characteristics of a COI and emphasizing its rank as the 3rd criteria in the Michigan Constitution, Director Hammersmith engaged in a discussion with the Commission regarding a shared explanation of COIs to provide to the public, and key questions the Commission would like to have answered about COIs to inform the mapping process. Additionally, future discussions will include group presentations and efforts to discern between well-resourced groups and others.

BREAK

Commissioner Szetela, Vice-Chair, called for a brief break from 2:34 PM to 2:45 PM.

3. Communications and Outreach Report. Communications and Outreach Director Woods provided an update on his work. First, Director Woods conveyed to the Commission that the public should be reminded about the fairness in the Commission selection process. Next, Director Woods discussed how his team is working with MICRC partners to increase awareness about the Commission's work. When providing information regarding transparency, he thanked MDOS staff for their assistance with re-vamping the website; noted that he was working with media to assure accuracy; and emphasized that the Commission adheres to the Constitutional mandates, as well as their Code of Conduct. Regarding engagement, he acknowledged groups promoting Town Hall Forums, including Communities 1st in Flint, the League of Women Voters, Voters Not Politicians, and Delta Sigma Theta.

Communications and Outreach Director Woods stated that seven bids had been received for Video Production Services. Per the procedure, MDOS and MICRC staff jointly evaluated the bids and recommended entering negotiations with Good Fruit, Message Makers, and Uno Deuce to further assess quality, assure fiscal responsibility, and obtain additional detailed information.

MOTION: Authorize MICRC staff to enter contract negotiations with Good Fruit, Message Makers, and Uno Deuce not to exceed \$49,999.99. **Motion by Commissioner Witjes. Supported by Commissioner Weiss. Commissioner Szetela, Vice-Chair, held a vote by show of hands. MOTION FAILED 7-5.**

Voting Yes: Commissioners Weiss, Witjes, Szetela, Rothhorn, Curry, Vallette, Lett

Voting No: Commissioners Lange, Clark, Orton, Wagner, Eid

MOTION: Authorize MICRC staff to enter contract negotiations with Good Fruit not to exceed \$49,999.99. **Motion by Commissioner Eid. Supported by Commissioner Lange. Commissioner Lett requested a roll call. Commissioner Szetela, Vice-Chair, held a vote by a roll call vote. MOTION FAILED 6-6.**

Voting Yes: Commissioners Rothhorn, Wagner, Clark, Eid, Lange, Orton

Voting No: Commissioners Szetela, Vallette, Weiss, Witjes, Curry, Lett

4. Legal Counsel Report. General Counsel Pastula updated the Commission on the status of its case in the Michigan Supreme Court. General Counsel Pastula detailed the specifics of the case, that due to the delay in census data availability, the MICRC would be seeking relief from the previous deadlines and recommending later dates to complete their business.

FUTURE MEETINGS AND AGENDA ITEMS

There were no additional agenda items to discuss.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Executive Director Hammersmith reminded the Commission that there will be a public hearing dry-run at the April 29th meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Commissioner Szetela, Vice Chair, called for a motion to adjourn.

MOTION: Adjourn the meeting. **Motion by Commissioner Lett. Supported by Commissioner Witjes. Commissioner Szetela, Vice-Chair, held a vote by show of hands. MOTION UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.**

The meeting was adjourned at 3:27 PM.