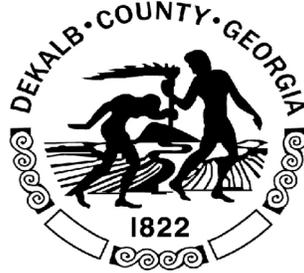


DeKalb County Government

*Manuel J. Maloof Center
1300 Commerce Drive
Decatur, Georgia 30030*



Meeting Minutes - Final

Thursday, December 16, 2021

5:00 PM

Manuel J. Maloof Auditorium

Special Called Meeting

*Commissioner Steve Bradshaw, Presiding Officer, District 4
Commissioner Lorraine Cochran-Johnson, Deputy, District 7*

Commissioner Robert Patrick, District 1

Commissioner Jeff Rader, District 2

Commissioner Larry Johnson, District 3

Commissioner Steve Bradshaw, District 4

Commissioner Mereda Davis Johnson, District 5

Commissioner Edward "Ted" Terry, Super District 6

Commissioner Lorraine Cochran-Johnson, Super District 7

Present 7 - Commissioner Robert Patrick, Commissioner Jeff Rader, Commissioner Larry Johnson, Commissioner Steve Bradshaw, Commissioner Mereda Davis Johnson, Commissioner Ted Terry, and Commissioner Lorraine Cochran-Johnson

This meeting will be conducted via teleconference (Zoom). Simultaneous public access to the meeting will be available (1) via live stream on DCTV's webpage, and (2) on DCTVChannel23.TV

I. Committee of the Whole

A. GIS Overview

II. Public Comment at 5:15 PM

Public Comment may be submitted by sending an email no longer than one page to PublicComment@dekalbcountyga.gov which must be received between 4:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting. Only those emails received during the allotted time may be read aloud and broadcast. Emails received outside of the allotted time will be included in the Public Comments record for the next meeting after the receipt of those emails. The body of your email must include your first and last name, followed by your address. By submitting an email at any time for public comment, you agree to have your name, address, and email broadcast on the teleconference (Zoom) and entered in the record/minutes. Abusive, profane or derogatory language will not be permitted. The Public Comment segment will not exceed 30 minutes and individual emails will be read by the Clerk for no more than 3 minutes each. The County reserves the right, at the County's sole discretion, to (1) add your email to the record/minutes without reading any of it into the broadcast or (2) add your email to the record/minutes and read all or a portion of your email into the broadcast.

1. Mary Hinkel, 1718 Mason Mill Road, Atlanta, GA 30329 - Speaking on behalf of the DeKalb Citizens Advocacy Council, we would encourage you to consider moving closer to a 3% or less population deviation number, instead of the 7.89% or 8.69% projected in two of the scenarios discussed at last week's meeting. As actual populations change in the county the overall deviation each year could go up. If the deviation is already close to 10% to start with there's a good chance it will be over 10% before the next decennial census count and county district reapportionment. While the State of Georgia's Legislative and Congressional Redistricting Office may allow up to a 10% deviation in population, best practice is less than 3%. We recommend that you strive to adhere to this practice as you consider various mapping options. We appreciate and commend your efforts to make this process more transparent to the public. Unfortunately, as far as we can tell, the GIS department has not posted the maps or the presentations from the last meeting, as was requested by the presiding officer. We would appreciate the Board following up on this matter to understand why this has not happened.

2. Ryan Brown, 780 Rowland Rd Stone Mountain, GA - Commissioners, Thank you for the opportunity to comment and for sharing the proposed district maps last meeting. I have not been able to find copies of these maps and population numbers posted on the county website as discussed at the last redistricting special meeting. Would you please provide this? I encourage DeKalb County to follow the example of Athens-Clarke County and their public reapportionment process. They have an excellent website and GIS interface to document the process -

<https://data-athensclarke.opendata.arcgis.com/pages/2021-commission-redistricting-process-archive>. Two main aspects of this example that DeKalb should follow are 1) post all of the proposed district maps with population and demographics information and add updated maps as they are developed with an iterative process for public input 2) provide a webform/survey or dedicated email address for public comments and a time period to collect these comments. On the Dekalb commission district map presented at last weeks meeting, I have the following comments: 7.8% deviation is too high. Best practice is 3% or below. Also as population distribution changes each year being this close to 10% deviation would make it very likely that the county commission districts would be out of balance (>10%) prior to the next decennial census count; My neighborhood and voting precinct would be split in half between two county districts. Keeping unincorporated neighborhoods/communities together should be prioritized over cities, since for unincorporated areas the county is our only local representation; More commission districts would be preferable. 150,000 people per district really dilutes the local representation in the county and makes it hard for smaller population groups - minorities and specific neighborhoods to be well represented. This would keep with fair district principles; City of Atlanta and Athens Clarke County have 10-30k people per district representative - which is much better than DeKalb County; This would help address a common cityhood argument that local areas are not well represented by county government; This would dilute each commissioner's overall power but would allow each commissioner more bandwidth to work with specific communities and local interests in DeKalb; The super districts are good for having a more countywide perspective on the BOC - especially if there were more smaller districts.

3. Stephen Binney, sbinney@earthlink.net (no physical address provided) - Good Evening Commissioners, The 3 redistricting maps from last week were uninspired. All of them seem to be basically the same, with minor differences. The most favored version had a deviation of over 8% and while the Legislative and Congressional Redistricting Office may allow up to 10% deviation, the best practice is listed as less than 3%. Taking into account that the population in Dekalb will be growing and moving the chances of deviation going over 10% is

too great. This map also lowers the amount of people in Districts 3 and 5. I had hoped for at least one map to break the mold, be a bit more imaginative and proactive while taking into account DeKalb County's rowing population. I had hoped that the County would have considered increasing the number of individual districts to seven. The concept of seven individual districts is a very positive idea. Currently each of the commissioners is serving over 150,000 constituents. That adds up to a lot of phone calls. Under seven individual districts this number would drop down to a little over 100,000 constituents, dropping the number of commissioners phone calls by a third and providing the opportunity for more effective client services. Consider what the number could be by 2030, over 200,000 constituents each. While the over 350,000 constituents in each super district is a lot of people, the concept is still valid. With the super districts running north to south the entire social economic strata of the county is included in each district. I believe that a map comprised of seven individual districts combined with two super districts will bring us better constituent services while also allowing all commissioners more time to work on the long range planning towards making DeKalb County a better place for all of us. Also, how will Section 23 of the Organizational Act affect this process, It states that any changes in the manner of electing the members of the governing body of DeKalb County” shall be conditioned on the “approval of a majority of the qualified electors of DeKalb County voting at elections held for such purpose.” Will DeKalb County voters get final approval after the DeKalb Legislative delegation and the state legislature finish drawing the map. The process the county has used to draw these maps has lacked transparency and left the public out of the process until the very end. In Clarke County public information was posted on November 9th and meetings were put on YouTube. The first chance DeKalb County residents were able to view proposed maps was last Thursday. Clarke County's timeline included provisions for a draft map for the Mayor and Commission to review with approval to be produced by November 11, 2021. These draft maps were available to the public. The Mayor and Commission of Clarke County continued discussion and had a vote at their Regular Session meeting on December 7, on a set of maps to be sent to the state for review. They were finished with the process before you started and allowed public input during the entire process. DeKalb County could work like this if you desired it. Thank you for your time and consideration, Stephen

4. Ed Williams, Ed.D. Chair, truthcrushtheearth@gmail.com (no physical address provided) - Good Evening Commissioners: DeKalb County has a population of over 750,000 residents. As an alternative to creating cities, DeKalb could consider adding more commissioners to provide more representation and local attention. Currently, there are 5 commissioner districts and two at large commissioners. The commissioners are part-time. DeKalb County has a CEO position who is elected countywide. There is no county manager position. The growth and diversity of the population is one reason that more commissioners are needed to provide greater representation. The city of Atlanta which has a population of 450,000 has 12 council districts, council president, and 3 at large council seats. There are several consolidated counties that have fewer people than DeKalb with more commissioners; Macon-Bibb, Clarke-Athens, Muscogee-Columbus are a few. One of the reasons there is a move to create more cities is that there has not been an increase in the numbers of commissioners in the metro Atlanta area, although the population in the metro area has doubled. There should be at least 9 to 11 separate county commission districts. Concerned Citizens for Effective Government - Government Reform Recommendations We believe that the form of DeKalb government should be studied to see if there are some changes that may be needed in terms of type CEO, Commission-Manager, County-Mayor, Full-time Chair. We believe that the GA General Assembly should revise the QBE funding for schools districts. The funding should be more dynamic and flexible to address the disparity in facilities and student performance. We believe that government should make public safety a top priority and it should be reflected in the budget. Police should protect and serve all its citizens equality. We believe that the recall and

removal process of elected officials should be reviewed. It should not be easier to create a new city than it is to remove a corrupt politician, We believe that the voting machines used in our elections need to have a receipt and an audit trail to ensure accountability and reflect the will of the people. We believe that there should be an appointment process when there is a commission seat vacancy. A commission seat should not remain vacant for 10 months. We believe that the annexation and cityhood incorporation process should be reformed. Cities should not be able to annex commercial property which does not have a customer base of 60% We believe that the ethics, audit, and structure of government reforms should apply to the cities and other governmental institutions that are within the borders of DeKalb County. We believe that all new cities' residents should share in the legacy costs of the DeKalb pension system. We believe that the succession and appointments should be outlined and specified in the organization charter and it should be for a brief period of time. The real question, does the right of one individual to hold office outweigh the right of citizens to choose who represents them? No person should be able to hold two positions or offices. In particular, an executive and legislative position. In addition, no person should be incarcerated and hold an office, position or title. We believe that there should be term limits for commissioners. A commissioner should not be able to serve more than 12 years as a commissioner. We believe that the number of County commissioners should be increased. DeKalb County has a population of over 750,000 residents. As an alternative to creating cities, DeKalb could consider adding more commissioners to provide more representation and local attention. Currently there are 5 commissioner districts and two at large commissioners. The commissioners are part-time. DeKalb County has a CEO position who is elected countywide. There is no county manager position. The growth and diversity of the population is one reason that more commissioners are needed to provide greater representation. The city of Atlanta which has a population of 450,000 has 12 council districts, council president and 3 at large council seats. There are several consolidated counties that have less people than DeKalb with more commissioners; Macon-Bibb, Clarke-Athens, Muscogee-Columbus are a few. One of the reasons there is a move to create more cities is that there has not been any increase in the numbers of commissioners in the metro Atlanta area, although the population in the metro area has doubled. There should be at least 9 to 11 separate county commission districts. Ed Williams. Ed.D. Chair

5. Janet Grant, 239 Greenwood Circle, Decatur, GA 30030 - Dekalb County Commissioners, I appreciate the opportunity to comment today on the proposed new maps for the Dekalb Commission districts. I am a resident of the City of Decatur and a redistricting advocate. I serve as the vice chair of Fair Districts GA and directly witnessed the highly partisan redistricting process during the special session and hoped for a better process in our county. First, I am very disappointed in the lack of transparency and support for public engagement in this process. As I encouraged in my comments at the meeting last week, these maps (and the other options considered) should have been posted to the county web site with opportunities for the public to comment outside of this meeting process. They are still not posted with the only public access that I could locate through an AJC article. In addition, this meeting was not publicized, the only posting was on the event calendar—with no further information on the web site and no social media to inform the public of this important meeting. I ask that before voting on these maps, you obtain more meaningful public input. I have several concerns about the proposed maps based on the discussion in that first meeting: • While the three map plans that the GIS Department developed for the five districts strove to minimize deviation, the proposed map that was apparently developed after consultation with the commissioners has significant deviation (7.89%). This results in significant out sized or under sized representation for impacted district residents, violating the principle of equal representation and well outside of redistricting best practices. The statewide legislative maps that passed in the special session have less than 3% deviation and Dekalb should be able to meet or exceed this

level. • Priority should be given to preserving cities and communities. As the Brookhaven mayor expressed at the last meeting, municipalities value having one commissioner, and not being split between districts. The Decatur mayor testified to this point during the legislative special session asking to not be split into four vs three house districts. This is a strong desire of residents as well, they want a representative who can focus on their community as a whole. • I am relatively new to Georgia and am at a loss on the value of having super districts. While there is likely not time to address during this redistricting process, I would hope this can be addressed in the future. I would much rather have a representative that is focused on a smaller district than two spread thin across many communities/municipalities (seven districts would each represent 109,197 residents). I don't know the origin, but am concerned that this may be a hold over from discriminatory practices in the past. I ask that you seek real public engagement in this process. For instance, there are 8 Dekalb County community of interest maps loaded in Representable.org developed by members of the public as a resource to their elected official in redistricting. This is a once in a decade process and residents should be driving vs what appears to be commissioners choosing their voters. Thank you for the opportunity to comment today.

A. Law Department Overview

[2021-3579](#) Commission District(s): All Districts
A Resolution of the Governing Authority of DeKalb County, Georgia to the DeKalb County Delegation of the General Assembly to Authorize the Legislative and Congressional Reapportionment Office to Review Proposed District Maps
This agenda item was accepted to BOC agenda - Preliminary

[2021-3580](#) Commission District(s): All Commission Districts
To Authorize an Intergovernmental Agreement between the DeKalb County Development Authority and the County for economic development services.
This agenda item was accepted to BOC agenda - Preliminary

B. Commissioner Discussion