

Centreville Council of Five Ad Hoc Committee Meeting
January 7, 2020
6:30 p.m.

MINUTES

The January 7, 2020 Centreville Council of Five Ad Hoc Committee meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. at the Liberty Building, 107 N. Liberty Street, 2nd floor meeting room. The following members and staff were present: Eric Johnson, Jr., Chair; Joe Saboury, Vice Chair; Ashley Kaiser, Nick Rowdon, Joe Cichocki, Bill Seth, Members; Steve Walls, Town Manager; Sharon VanEmburch, Town Attorney; and Carolyn Brinkley, Town Clerk.

Approval of Minutes

Mr. Seth made a motion to approve the December 19, 2019 meeting minutes, as presented. Mr. Rowdon seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Deliverables from Last Meeting

Mr. Johnson provided a slide presentation for discussion:

1. Deliverables from the 12/19/19 Council of Five Meeting

- Review Maryland Municipal League (MML) Data
 - Data on Districting
 - Lessons Learned from Municipalities Transitioning
- Historical Data – Residency and # of Election Candidates
- Marketing Considerations / Soft Education for Citizens
- Legal Considerations
 - Foundational Principles
 - Charter Impact from Staggering Elections (TBD)
 - Timeline: Committee Recommendations – Election
- Review CENSUS Data to Conceptualize Districting
- It was requested that these slides be placed on the Town’s website for the public to view.
- Mr. Rowdon asked if another districting option could be presented such as, two or three districts as opposed to four.
- Mr. Johnson suggested getting a recommendation from the Town Council about their opinion on districts and if this is in the Committee’s purview to discuss the logistics.

2. Review Maryland Municipal League (MML) Data

A. June 1991 MML Memo:

- 31 (or 20%) of 154 incorporated cities/towns elect by wards/districts
- Of these 31 with districts:
 - 5 (or 17%) had at-large candidates
 - 9 (or 30%) have an elected mayor with full voting rights
 - 3 (or 10%) permit mayoral voting under special circumstances

B. Dec 2019 MML Data of 159 Maryland Municipalities:

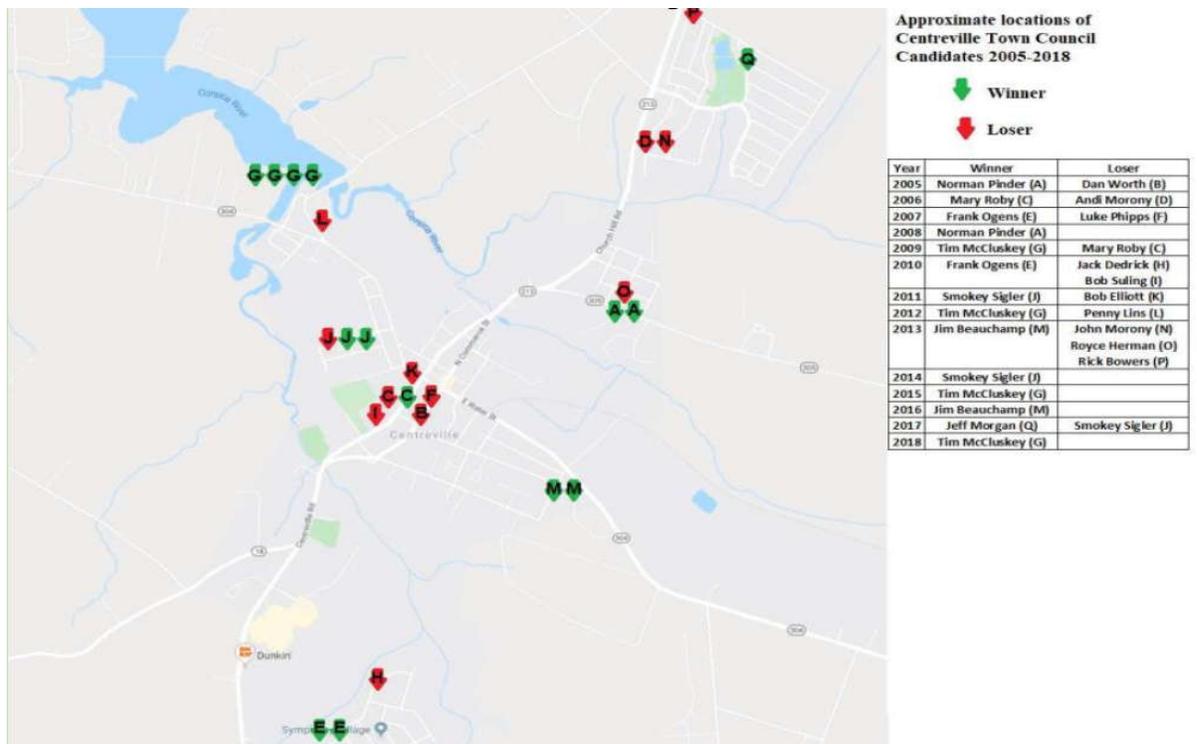
- Election Cycles:
 - 92 (or 58%) host elections ODD or EVEN years
 - 62 (or 29%) host YEARLY elections

- 5 (or 3%) host elections every THREE or FOUR years
- Terms
 - 107 (or 67%) have staggered terms
 - 72 (or X%) have 4-yr terms; 18 3-yr terms; 63 2-yr terms
- The Committee discussed the following:
 - unanimously agreed that terms should be limited to three or four years and 5 years should not be considered as an option
 - look at options for implementing the two (2) new seats into the process
 - look at off years for no elections
 - look at election cycles where there is never a majority turn over of seats (three members up for election at a time)
 - continue with no election if only one candidate per seat runs for office

3. Lessons Learned from Other Municipalities

- A. Impact of turf battles in districts (Arroyo Grande)
- B. Overwhelming reasons to do districts; only a few not (Colton)
- C. Intermittent requirement to redistrict; limit city's ability to recruit best elected officials; creation of fiefdoms (Corning)
- D. In large cities districting a necessity, but not for smaller ones; reduce campaign expenses of candidates; increase opportunities to minorities (Downey)
- E. Elected from districts maintains a stronger sense of common good (Fremont)
- F. No pros to districting, only cons (Fullerton)
- G. Poor minority representation impetus for districts (Glenora)
- H. 2 at-large members = statesmen (best interests of whole community); 4 district reps thought first about own districts and need for deal making (ICMA)
- I. Concern of losing whole city focus and generating more deal making (Pacifica)

4. Historical Data – Residency of Election Candidates



Historical Data – Number of Candidates

2009 – Two Candidates
2010 – Three Candidates
2011 – Two Candidates
2012 – Two Candidates
2013 – Four Candidates
2014 – One Candidate (still had election)
September 2014 – changed the charter to cancel elections if only one candidate filed for office
2015 – One Candidate (no election)
2016 – One Candidate (no election)
2017 – Two Candidates
2018 – One Candidate (no election)
2019 – Two Candidates

5. Marketing Considerations / Soft Education for Citizens

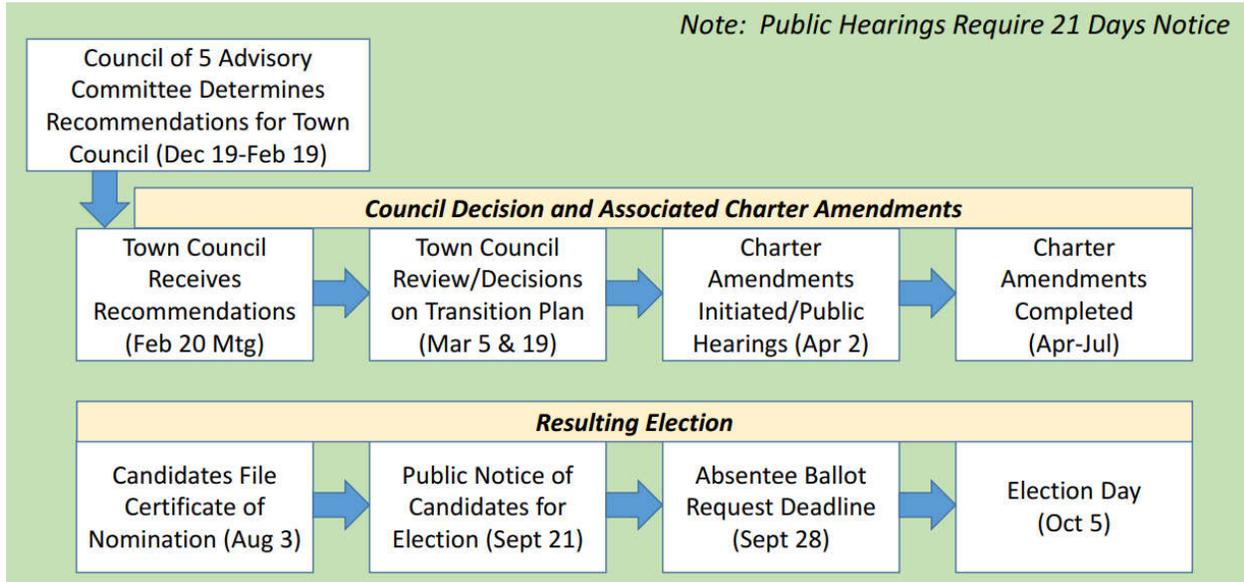
- A. Formal/Recurring Email Alerts from Town on Mtgs
 - *Town of Centreville Update - December 20, 2019*
 - B. Web Page with Advisory Committee Agendas/Minutes
 - C. Social Media Platforms – Unofficial
 - D. Option for Non-attendees to Submit Questions and Feedback?
- It was suggested to add Ms. Brinkley’s contact to the website for the Council of Five information in case the public has any questions or feedback and then she can forward out to the committee.

6. Foundational Principles of Districting

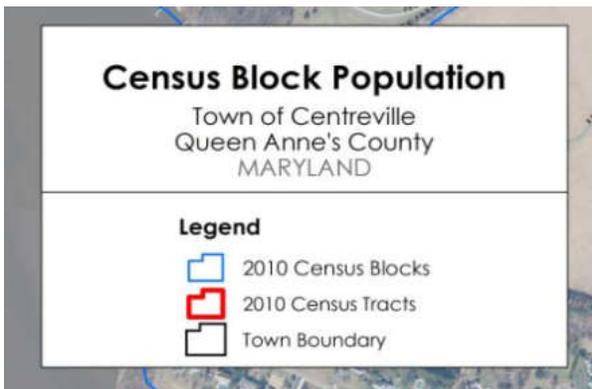
- A. 1960s – U.S. Supreme Court decisions: “Population equality” – “1 person, 1 vote”
 - Courts will accept variations in population between districts
 - District size above or below the average size is its variation
 - Total deviation of <10% is generally accepted
- B. Redistricting Decision Factors:
 - Districts should be compact (with regular boundaries)
 - Districts should be contiguous (not separated into 2 or more separate areas)
 - Boundaries should follow major geographical or neighborhood boundaries
 - And should group together neighborhoods/communities with shared interests/concerns
 - Districts should be based on the overall population – not simply adult/voting population
 - Redistricting should not result in 2 incumbents in the same district
- C. The Role of Race – the 1965 Voting Rights Act:
 - “a. No voting qualification or prerequisite to voting or standard, practice or procedure shall be imposed or applied by any State or political subdivision in a manner which results in a denial or abridgement of the right of any citizen of the United States to vote on account of race or color
 - b. . . . [N]othing in this section established a right to have members of a protected class elected in numbers equal to their proportion in the population.”
 - Courts recognize as valid/legitimate goals:

- Compactness, contiguity
- following major geographical/neighborhood boundaries
- Grouping communities with shared interests and concerns
- “Racial gerrymandering” is prohibited (any effort to include or exclude persons on racial lines regardless of intent)

7. Timelines



8. Districting Scenarios Based on Census Data



A. Assumptions:

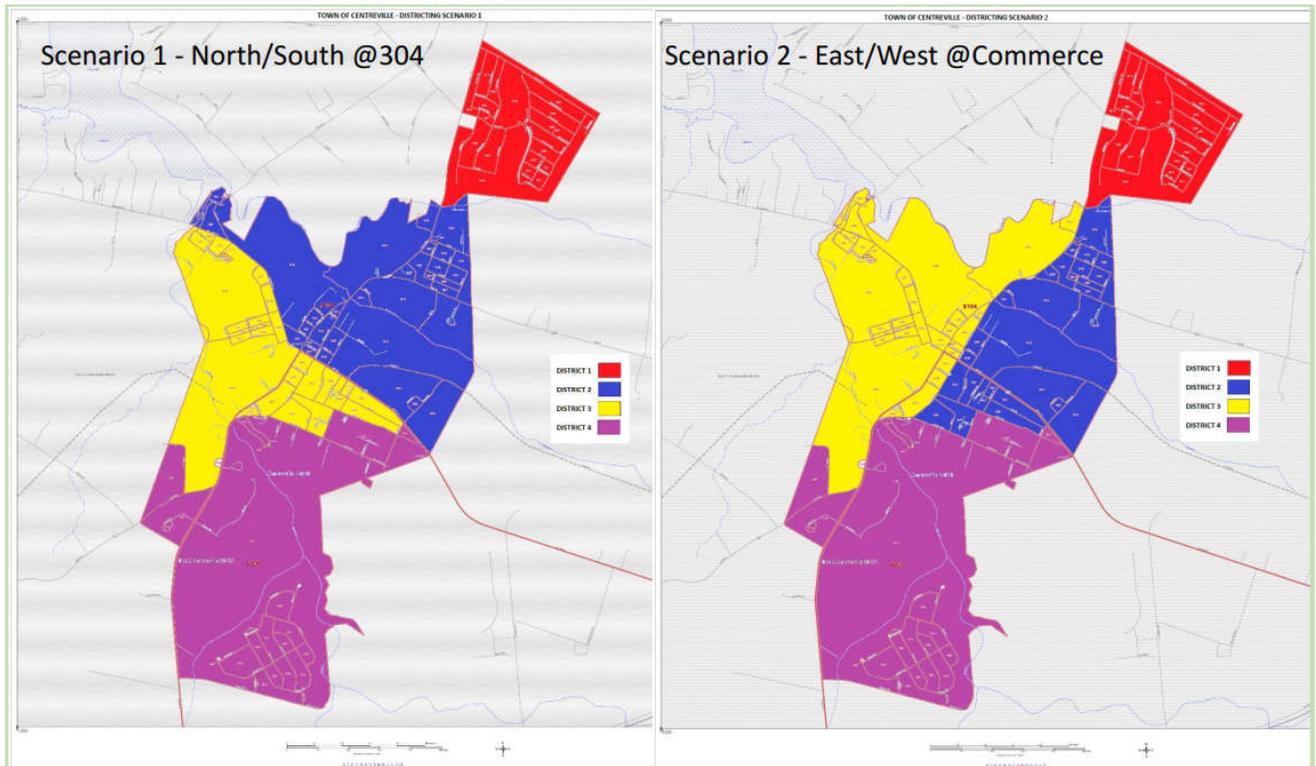
1. 4 Total Districts; 1 Candidate from Each; 1 At-Large
2. 2010 Population Total of 4,285
3. 4,285 divided by 4 = 1,071.25

Scen 1	Dist 1	Dist 2	Dist 3	Dist 4
Population	1126	1032	1131	996
Differential	5%	-4%	6%	-7%

B. Potential Scenarios:

1. Scenario 1 - North/South @304
2. Scenario 2 - East/West @Commerce

Scen 1	Dist 1	Dist 2	Dist 3	Dist 4
Population	1126	1140	1023	996
Differential	5%	6%	-5%	-7%



Next Meeting Date:

The Committee agreed on January 22, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. and February 5, 2020 at 6:30 p.m. at the Liberty Building.

Committee Roundtable

- Mr. Seth stated that he feels the committee is making great progress.
- Mr. Cichocki stated that he also feels they are making great progress and in relation to districts, feels two or three districts should be considered.
- Mr. Rowdon feels the committee needs to get the opinion of the Town Council in relation to districts to determine if there is a true drive for districts at this time.
- Ms. Kaiser stated that she is in favor of districting.
- Mr. Saboury stated that the committee should stay focused on what is needed to present to the Town Council.

- Mr. Johnson stated that he is not in support of districts however, if the majority of the committee and the Town Council is in favor, he would support the effort.

Citizens Comments

Elaine Studley, Liberty Street; Joe Brown on behalf of Tom Love, Orchestra Place; Joe Brown, Concerto Avenue; and Bob Hardy, Symphony Way; offered comments.

Follow-Up

Mr. Johnson reviewed the following as a follow-up to the meeting:

- in favor of having registered voters by block
- Mr. Worth will help with a 2-district map
- unanimously opposed to 5-year terms; in favor of 3 or 4-year terms
- Mr. Saboury will present the requested update to the Town Council at their January 16th meeting

Adjourn

There being no further business the January 7, 2020 Centreville Council of Five Ad-Hoc Committee meeting adjourned at 8:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Carolyn M. Brinkley
Town Clerk