1   --X

2   CITY OF NEW YORK 2022-2023 DISTRICTING COMMISSION

3   PUBLIC MEETING

4   TO VOTE ON PROPOSED DISTRICTING PLAN

5   --X

6
                               22 Reade Street
7   New York, New York

8   DATE: September 22, 2022
                               TIME: 11:01 a.m.
9

10

11   PUBLIC MEETING in the above-referenced

12   matter, held at the above-mentioned time and

13   location, before Sabrina Brown Stewart, a Notary

14   Public of the State of New York.

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In Re City of New York 2022-2023 Districting Commission Public Meeting to Vote on Proposed Districting Plan for City Council September 22nd, 2022

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 1    A P P E A R A N C E S:

 2    COMMISSIONERS:

 3    DENNIS M. WALCOTT, Chair

 4    YOVAN SAMUEL COLLADO

 5    HON. MARILYN D. GO

 6    KEVIN JOHN HANRATTY

 7    MARIA MATEO, ESQ.

 8    JOSHUA SCHNEPS

 9    LISA SORIN

10    MONSIGNOR KEVIN SULLIVAN

11    KAI-KI WONG

12    MAF MISBAH UDDIN

13    MICHAEL SCHNALL

14    KRISTEN JOHNSON

15    GREGORY W. KIRSCHENBAUM

16    MARC WURZEL

17    DR. DARRIN K. PORCHER

18

19    SENIOR STAFF:

20    DR. JOHN FLATEAU, Executive Director

21    GRACE PYUN, General Counsel

22    JOSEPH MALIGNO, Deputy Executive Director

23    ALI RASOULINEJAD, Chief of Staff

24    EDDIE BORGES, Communications Director

25    LATOYA BENJAMIN, Deputy Chief of Staff
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1   CHAIR WALCOTT: Good morning, all. It

2   is a pleasure and honor to be here. It is

3   now 11:01, and we want to start on time,

4   and -- is Joseph around? So, Joseph can call

5   the roll and then we'll take off from there.

6   There's Joseph coming out right now.

7   Joseph.

8   MR. MALIGNO: Good morning.

9   CHAIR WALCOTT: Good morning, sir.

10   MR. MALIGNO: So, I will conduct the

11   roll call for today, starting off with Dennis

12   Walcott.

13   CHAIR WALCOTT: I am definitely

14   present.

15   MR. MALIGNO: Kai-Ki Wong?

16   COMMISSIONER WONG: Present.

17   MR. MALIGNO: Marilyn Go?

18   (No response).

19   MR. MALIGNO: Kristen Johnson?

20   COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Present.

21   MR. MALIGNO: Maf Uddin?

22   COMMISSIONER UDDIN: Present.

23   MR. MALIGNO: Yovan Collado?

24   COMMISSIONER COLLADO: Present.

25   MR. MALIGNO: Lisa Sorin?

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1   CHAIR WALCOTT: She's finding a spot

2   right now.

3   MR. MALIGNO: Marc Wurzel?

4   COMMISSIONER WURZEL: Present.

5   MR. MALIGNO: Kevin Hanratty?

6   COMMISSIONER HANRATTY: Present.

7   MR. MALIGNO: Maria Mateo?

8   COMMISSIONER MATEO: Present.

9   MR. MALIGNO: Joshua Schneps?

10   (No response).

11   MR. MALIGNO: Kevin Sullivan?

12   COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Present.

13   MR. MALIGNO: Gregory Kirschenbaum?

14   (No response).

15   MR. MALIGNO: Michael Schnall?

16   COMMISSIONER SCHNALL: Present,

17   virtually.

18   MR. MALIGNO: Thank you.

19   Darrin Porcher?

20   COMMISSIONER PORCHER: Present,

21   virtually. Thanks for starting on time.

22   MR. MALIGNO: And that is the roll call

23   for today.

24   CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you. And as

25   others join us, we'll have them introduce

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1   themselves to the audience and to the general

2   public as well. And one of the things I'll

3   talk about in several minutes, not at this

4   moment, is the commitment of the group of

5   commissioners who are sitting here and who

6   are also part of our virtual world.

7   And why I say that, because we have one

8   of our commissioners who's sitting in a

9   waiting room at the airport right now. And

10   so, I know he's on a clock, so we don't want

11   to be accused of having him miss his plane.

12   So, Commissioner Schnall, we will

13   adjust our program accordingly and give you

14   the appropriate time in a little while,

15   before you have to catch your transportation

16   to your flight.

17   And with that being said, I'd like to

18   turn it over to our Executive Director, the

19   outstanding Dr. John Flateau.

20   Dr. Flateau.

21   DR. FLATEAU: Thank you, Mr. Chair and

22   Commission. Good morning, Commissioners.

23   Good morning, New Yorkers.

24   The Executive Director's Report is the

25   item that I'm about to share with you. It is

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1   a narrative of the district by district

2   changes from the preliminary plan from

3   July 15th to the proposed revised plan that

4   is under consideration at this meeting today.

5   This proposed revised plan is the collective

6   work of your commissioners, and the bright

7   and best staff of New York in the City of New

8   York, and I would like to have our general

9   audience at least give an acknowledgment to

10   our commissioners and staff and all of this

11   hard work --

12   (Applause).

13   DR. FLATEAU: -- in lightening speed,

14   and with a whole range of new mandates that

15   brought us to where we are right now. Let me

16   go right to -- I'm going to, as I narrate

17   each of the districts, let's start -- we'll

18   go through each borough and each district,

19   also, in lightening speed.

20   CHAIR WALCOTT: And Dr. Flateau, we've

21   been joined by Judge Go.

22   So, Judge, welcome as well.

23   DR. FLATEAU: Julia, so we're going to

24   start with Manhattan, District 1, at the

25   south end of Manhattan.

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1   This is where we are. According to the

2   proposed revised plan, District 1 consists of

3   Chinatown, Battery Park City, Tribeca, Soho,

4   the Financial District, Governors Island and

5   Greenwich Village. This district was

6   overpopulated by nearly 12,000 persons. This

7   district remains mostly intact with little

8   changes, small changes.

9   We'll go heading north on the Island of

10   Manhattan to District 2, one to two.

11   District 2 consists of the Lower East Side,

12   the East Village and parts of Kips Bay,

13   Murray Hill and Gramercy Park. This district

14   was slightly overpopulated by about 800

15   people. The southern boundary of this

16   district is now Houston Street and, clearly,

17   on the east side to the East River. Then,

18   we're moving north.

19   Chair, you may -- we have two

20   commissioners.

21   CHAIR WALCOTT: Yep. I'm waiting for

22   you to have your break for a second.

23   And we've been joined by Commissioner

24   Sorin, Commissioner Schneps. And online, we

25   also have Commissioner Kirschenbaum, so I

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1   think we have a full house of commissioners,

2   both in person as well as virtually.

3   DR. FLATEAU: So, we now are in

4   District 3 in Manhattan on the west side.

5   District 3 consists of Hell's Kitchen,

6   West Village, West Soho, Hudson Yards, parts

7   of Times Square, Flatiron and the Upper

8   West Side. District 3 was overpopulated

9   nearly 30,000 persons. There were clear

10   testimony that Hell's Kitchen wanted to be

11   kept intact, that was previously divided in

12   the preliminary plan. And this particular

13   objective was accomplished with the revised

14   plan.

15   Moving north. Actually, to the east

16   side, District 4. District 4 consists of

17   Stuyvesant Town, Peter Cooper Village, Times

18   Square, East Midtown and parts of the Upper

19   East Side. District 4 was overpopulated by

20   over 11,000 persons. So, then, some of these

21   boundaries were adjusted to take account the

22   requirement for population adjustments.

23   Moving north on the east side,

24   District 5 in Manhattan. District 5 consists

25   of parts of the Upper East Side, Yorkville

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1   and Roosevelt Island. District 5 was

2   overpopulated by over 8,000 persons. And it

3   includes now Roosevelt Island, Upper

4   East Side and Yorkville, particularly in

5   response to changes to the preliminary plan,

6   where there was a Queens/Manhattan crossover

7   district, and that no longer exists in the

8   revised plan.

9   District 6, Manhattan, Upper West Side.

10   This district consists of Central Park,

11   Clinton, Upper West Side and Lincoln Square.

12   This district was overpopulated by over 8,000

13   persons. The entirety of Central Park

14   remains in this District 6 in the proposed

15   revised plan.

16   Moving north on the west side,

17   District 7. District 7 consists of Manhattan

18   Valley, Morningside Heights, Hamilton

19   Heights, Manhattanville, parts of Washington

20   Heights. District 7 was underpopulated by

21   over 7,000 persons. The district boundaries

22   changed slightly to increase, to make up that

23   deficit of populations. And on the north

24   end, this area called the East 160s was added

25   to District 7.

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1   Moving to the east side, Manhattan,

2 District 8. District 8 consists of

3 El Barrio, Spanish East Harlem in Manhattan,

4 and a portion of the Bronx, South Bronx, Mott

5 Haven, Highbridge, Concourse, Longwood and

6 Port Morris. This continues to be a

7 Manhattan/Bronx cross-borough district.

8   District 9. District 9 consists of

9 Harlem, Hamilton Heights and parts of

10 Manhattanville. This district was

11 overpopulated by almost 6,000 persons.

12 Additionally, testimony from residents asked

13 to ensure that Schomburg Plaza, Lakeview

14 Apartments and Polo Grounds remain in

15 District 9.

16   Going north to northernmost district in

17 Manhattan, District 10. 10 consists of

18 Washington Heights, Inwood and Marble Hill.

19 District 10 was underpopulated by over 14,000

20 persons. Parts of the southern boundary,

21 therefore, was moved slightly lower in

22 District 10.

23   We're moving on now to the next

24 borough, the Bronx, Districts 11 through 18.

25   Maybe a little larger.

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1   So, District 11. District 11 consists

2   of parts of Kingsbridge, Riverdale,

3   North Riverdale, Spuyten Duyvil, Bedford

4   Park, Norwood, Woodlawn and Wakefield, as

5   well as Van Cortlandt Park. And this

6   district was over 7,000 underpopulated. And

7   slight border changes have made done to that

8   district to bring its population requirement

9   into focus.

10   Next over is District 12. It consists

11   of Eastchester, Williamsbridge, Co-op City

12   and parts of Wakefield. There was a

13   population growth in District 12, and it was

14   actually overpopulated by 4,000 persons. So,

15   slight adjustments were made, and the lower

16   boundary is now along Arnow Avenue and

17   East Gun Hill Road, as well as Gun Hill

18   Houses are contained in the 12th.

19   Now, District 13, which consists of

20   Pelham Bay, Pelham Gardens, Van Nest, Morris

21   Park, Bronxdale, Throgs Neck, Schuylerville,

22   Country Club and City Island. This district

23   was underpopulated by over 5,000 people. Van

24   Nest neighborhood was specifically asked to

25   be contained in District 13 in whole as a

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1   neighborhood.

2   Next district is District 14. Where

3   are you hiding?

4   CHAIR WALCOTT: (Indicating).

5   DR. FLATEAU: 14, West Bronx. 14,

6   District 14, it contains parts of

7   Kingsbridge, Kingsbridge Heights and

8   University Heights. This district was

9   underpopulated by more than 3,800 people, so

10   adjustments were made to that district as

11   well. And Kingsbridge Armory and surrounding

12   business corridors of this landmark were

13   restored to the district, 14th District.

14   Next, District 15. It consists of

15   Bedford Park, Fordham, Mount Hope, Bathgate,

16   Belmont, East Tremont, West Farms, Allerton

17   and Olinville. This district was slightly

18   overpopulated and minor adjustments to its

19   borders.

20   District 16. It consists of Claremont,

21   Concourse, Concourse Village, Highbridge,

22   Morris Heights, Mount Eden and Morrisania.

23   This district was slightly underpopulated by

24   2,000 persons, and that district's boundaries

25   were slightly adjusted to bring it into

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1   compliance.

2   District 17, it consists of Concourse

3   Village, Crotona Park East, East Tremont,

4   Hunts Point, Longwood, Melrose, Morrisania,

5   Port Morris, West Farms, North Brother Island

6   and South Brother Island. And this district

7   was slightly overpopulated by a thousand

8   people. The neighborhood of Longwood,

9   additionally, and Concourse Village were

10   maintained, its entire complex in

11   District 17.

12   District 18 consists of Soundview,

13   Castle Hill, Parkchester, Clason Point and

14   Harding Park. This was overpopulated by

15   almost 9,000 people. Westchester Square and

16   Soundview are also contained in this

17   district, and border adjustments to bring

18   population in compliance were made in that

19   district.

20   We're now going to Queens, starting

21   with District 19. This district consists of

22   Auburndale, Bay Terrace, Bayside, Beechhurst,

23   College Point, Douglaston, Flushing, Little

24   Neck, Malba and Whitestone. This district

25   was underpopulated by over 5,000 people,

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1   therefore, minor adjustments to its

2   boundaries were made. And the entirety of

3   Bayside Village, BID, Business Improvement

4   District, and a number of LIRR train stations

5   in that area were included in that district.

6   The next district, District 20. It

7   consists of Downtown Flushing, Murray Hill

8   and Queensboro Hill. This was slightly

9   underpopulated by about a thousand people.

10   We were asked to also include Mitchell-Linden

11   in that district, and other minor boundary

12   adjustments were made.

13   The next district, 21. This consists

14   of Corona, parts of Elmhurst, East Elmhurst

15   and Jackson Heights. This district was

16   underpopulated by approximately 1,700 people.

17   It also retained LaGuardia Airport, Flushing

18   Meadows Park within this district, as well as

19   Lefrak City.

20   Next, District 22 in Queens. Ah, 22.

21   22, this consists of Astoria, East Elmhurst,

22   Jackson Heights and Woodside. This district

23   was heavily underpopulated by over 13,000

24   people, so adjustments were required to the

25   borders of that district. Ravenswood,

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1   Queensbridge districts are in that -- no,

2   they're in 26. They came out of the

3   preliminary plan. This District 22 also

4   unifies the Steinway Street BID as requested

5   as well. District 22.

6   District 23, Queens. Here we are.

7   This district consists of Glen Oaks, Fresh

8   Meadows and Bellerose. This was heavily

9   underpopulated by over 12,000 persons. Its

10   main boundaries are still intact, but

11   population boundaries were made to adjust to

12   bring it into compliance for required

13   population.

14   Next, District 24. Consists of Kew

15   Gardens Hills, Pomonok, Electchester, Fresh

16   Meadows, Hillcrest, Jamaica Estates,

17   Briarwood, Parkway Village, Jamaica Hills and

18   Jamaica. This district was underpopulated by

19   nearly 7,000 persons, so boundaries had to be

20   made adjusted. We received testimony from

21   Jewish residents in the area required -- or

22   requested that Hillcrest remain intact within

23   24, which it does.

24   District 25. District 25 consists of

25   Elmhurst and Jackson Heights. This was

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1   slightly underpopulated by 600 persons, and

2   the boundaries were largely kept intact, and

3   the 82nd Street BID was also unified in that

4   district. It received, also, testimony from

5   residents that they were -- south of Queens

6   Boulevard requested to be moved into

7   District 30, and that request was also

8   accommodated.

9   The next district, Council District 26.

10   It consists of Sunnyside, Woodside, Long

11   Island City, Astoria and Dutch Kills. This

12   district was originally overpopulated by

13   almost 11,000 persons. This district is now

14   based entirely in Queens, which was in the

15   preliminary plan linked to Manhattan. That

16   Manhattan/West Queens district no longer

17   exists. It's been delinked.

18   District 27. District 27 consists of

19   Cambria Heights, Hollis, Jamaica, St. Albans,

20   Queens Village and Springfield Gardens. This

21   district was very slightly underpopulated.

22   This district now, as request -- from public

23   testimony, requested unification of the

24   Downtown Jamaica Central Business District,

25   which is now in District 7, along with three

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1   business improvement districts, all unified

2   in one district.

3   District 28, it consists of Jamaica,

4   Richmond Hill, Rochdale Village and

5   South Ozone Park. District 28 was

6   overpopulated by 10,000 persons. The

7   boundaries of District 28 have been slightly

8   revised moving close to the Merrick Boulevard

9   corridor, as well Ozone Park is primarily

10   united into this one district.

11   Next district is 29. It consists of

12   Rego Park, Forest Hills, Kew Gardens and

13   Richmond Hill. This district was

14   underpopulated over 8,000 persons and

15   required adjustments to its boundaries. It

16   remains anchored with Forest Hills, Rego Park

17   and Kew Gardens.

18   Next district is District 30.

19   District 30, it consists of Glendale,

20   Maspeth, Middle Village, Ridgewood, Woodhaven

21   and Woodside. This district was

22   underpopulated by almost 6,000 persons. In

23   response to testimony, Elmhurst Triangle

24   located -- was near Woodhaven Boulevard have

25   been included in District 30.

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1   District 31. District 31, it consists

2   of Arverne, Brookville, Edgemere, Far

3   Rockaway, Laurelton, Rosedale and Springfield

4   Gardens. It was just slightly overpopulated

5   and retained most of its current district

6   lines. Additional testimony wanted the JFK

7   Airport kept in this district, 31.

8   32. District -- it consists of Ozone

9   Park, Howard Beach and Woodhaven. It was

10   underpopulated by over 7,000 persons and

11   required some boundary adjustments.

12   Now, we're moving to Brooklyn.

13   CHAIR WALCOTT: Hey, John, I don't want

14   to shortchange the other boroughs, but I also

15   want to be conscious of our Commissioner

16   who's sitting in the airport. So, continue

17   on, but --

18   DR. FLATEAU: Whenever I'm

19   interrupted --

20   CHAIR WALCOTT: No. No. I don't --

21   DR. FLATEAU: I can always come back.

22   CHAIR WALCOTT: -- want to interrupt

23   the other boroughs because I think we should

24   have full context, so I just want to let you

25   know, if you could just speed it up a little.

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1   DR. FLATEAU: Okay. Oh, you're

2   shortchanging Brooklyn, huh?

3   CHAIR WALCOTT: Not at all, sir.

4   DR. FLATEAU: Hey, hey. Okay. Yes,

5   sir.

6   Wow, we have the most districts to run

7   through, so this is going to be a lightening

8   round. Pay attention.

9   District 33, this is the waterfront

10   district, northern Brooklyn -- Boerum Hill,

11   Brooklyn Heights, Navy Yard, Dumbo, Fulton

12   Ferry. It is the largest overpopulated

13   district in the City, along with the west

14   side. So, clearly they needed a lot of

15   adjustments along 33. And there's an

16   important population in Williamsburg, the

17   Jewish community was kept intact there.

18   Next, District 34, coming around. This

19   is the only Latino voting rights district in

20   the borough. It was slightly underpopulated.

21   It is a cross-borough, that little horn you

22   see is actually going over the Queens line,

23   and it has been that way for the last

24   20 years, decades, and that minor adjustments

25   were made.

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1   Coming in 35. I mean, 35 right here.

2   Very minor changes to the current district

3   boundaries of 35, and you could say similarly

4   for 36. And you'll hear more about these

5   Central Brooklyn districts and the Southeast

6   Queens when we hear from our expert,

7   Dr. Handley, a little later.

8   Let's go to 37. This is another

9   district, was very underpopulated by over

10 9,000 people. It currently consists of

11 South Bushwick, Cypress Hills, parts of Ocean

12 Hill-Brownsville and Wyckoff Heights. No

13 major adjustments to 37.

14   38 consists now of Red Hook, most of

15 Sunset Park and parts of Park Slope, Windsor

16 Terrace, Dyker Heights, and a small portion

17 of Bensonhurst.

18   Next, District 39. Carroll Gardens,

19 Gowanus, Park Slope, parts of Windsor

20 Terrace, Kensington and Prospect Park. It

21 was slightly overpopulated and minor

22 adjustments were made.

23   Next, District 40, covers Ditmas Park,

24 East Flatbush, Flatbush, parts of Lefferts

25 Gardens, and Prospect Park South. It was

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1   severely underpopulated by 17,000 people, so

2   a lot of adjustments had to be made to make

3   that 40 come into compliance for population

4   requirements.

5   Next, District 41, consists of mainly

6   Ocean Hill, Brownsville, small parts of

7   East Flatbush and Crown Heights. It was also

8   underpopulated by almost 9,000 people, 41,

9   and some minor adjustments around this

10   bounder, therefore, had to be made.

11   Next, District 42. 42, mainly

12   East New York, Brownsville. It was slightly

13   underpopulated as well, over 4,000 people.

14   Slightly, adjustments were made.

15   The next district after 42, 43. This

16   is a newly-drawn councilmanic district there

17   in South Brooklyn. It consists primarily of

18   Sunset Park, parts of Dyker Heights and

19   Bensonhurst. It is a new district created

20   that research showed, and census, that

21   there's a very large, new and growing, Asian

22   American population in that area, and the

23   Commission created a new district. You'll

24   hear more, again, from Dr. Handley about that

25   district.

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1   Next, District 44. 44 consists of

2   Borough Park, Midwood, Gravesend and

3   Mapleton. And it was expressed, a request to

4   try to unite the Borough Park and Midwood

5   portion -- major part of those neighborhoods

6   together in one district, 44.

7   45 consists of Flatbush, East Flatbush,

8   Flatlands and a small part of Midwood. It

9   was severely underpopulated by over 15,000

10   people and, therefore, adjustments had to be

11   made along those borders to balance that

12   population for 45.

13   Next, District 46. 45, 46. It

14   consists of Gerritsen Beach, Mill Basin,

15   Canarsie, Georgetown and parts of Flatlands.

16   It was slightly overpopulated by about 4,000

17   people, so along the borders, slightly,

18   adjustments were made for that 46.

19   Next, District 47. 47 consists of Bay

20   Ridge, parts of Dyker Heights, Bath Beach,

21   Gravesend, Coney Island and Sea Gate. The

22   shape of this district results from the

23   creation of that 43. So, there was a small

24   corridor needed to unite these two

25   neighborhoods that expressed a request to be

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1   united in one district, 47.

2   48 consists of Manhattan Beach,

3   Brighton Beach, Sheepshead Bay and Midwood.

4   This district was overpopulated by almost

5   8,000 people. Therefore, 48, some slight

6   adjustments along its borders were made to

7   bring it into population compliance.

8   We're leading to our last wonderful

9   borough, Staten Island.

10   Staten Island. 48, now we're going to

11   49. 49 consists of -- that's the North Shore

12   district -- Arlington, Clifton, Clove Lakes,

13   Concord, Elm Park, Graniteville, Mariners

14   Harbor and a number of other neighborhoods on

15   that North Shore. It was slightly

16   underpopulation, some minor adjustments were

17   made to the 49th District proposed.

18   The Mid Island district, 50. And this,

19   how you might want to describe it, a thumb,

20   that is actually a piece of Brooklyn. The

21   Mid Island is now connected by the Verrazano

22   Bridge and takes in a small portion of

23   Brooklyn, South Brooklyn on the other side of

24   that bridge, to help pop -- balance the

25   populations for the three Staten Island

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1   districts.

2   And there were some changes along the

3   Mid Island 50th degree -- I mean, district

4   boundaries. And on the Brooklyn side, it

5   takes in Fort Hamilton, that rectangle, Fort

6   Hamilton Base, the VA Hospital, Dyker Beach

7   Park and a few other blocks; that's the 50th.

8   And then, the last district is the

9   51st, consisting of -- that's 51, South Shore

10   district on Staten Island, Annadale, Arden

11   Heights, Bay Terrace, Charleston, Great

12   Kills, and a number of neighborhoods

13   throughout that South Shore community. It

14   was underpopulated by over 13,000. So,

15   adjustments made across those three Staten

16   Island districts, so that's all 51 districts

17   throughout the City are in compliance with

18   the new 5 percent state-mandated deviation.

19   And there are -- just a highlight very

20   briefly. There are 29 majority/minority

21   districts. That's more than half of the

22   districts in the City of New York in this

23   revised plan, and you'll get more details now

24   on that last point.

25   Should I stop or hand off -- okay.

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1   We'll hear from our next presenter after we

2   hear from the Chair.

3   Thank you.

4   CHAIR WALCOTT: So, what I'd like to do

5   with the Commissioners' permission is to call

6   for a vote, and then we'll have Dr. Handley

7   speak afterwards. And this is out of respect

8   to our Commissioner, who has to take off. We

9   want to make sure all votes are recorded.

10   And in addition to that, just to add to

11   that part of the discussion, that when you do

12   vote -- obviously, we always have our back

13   and forth with each other, so as you vote,

14   you can feel free to talk about your vote, if

15   you still desire.

16   In addition to that, I just want the

17   Commission to know how much I appreciate all

18   the Commissioners, all the hard work, people

19   who had to postpone vacations, people who

20   were sick, the commitment, publications that

21   we got out into 70 newspapers, multiple

22   languages, over 9,600 responses.

23   We have been out in the community,

24   people meeting individually and we have laid

25   a foundation for the feedback that we

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1   received to influence it. And the way

2   Dr. Flateau laid it out, I wish it was that

3   easy in our discussions because as we know,

4   every change that is made has a domino effect

5   on something else. And we have been very,

6   hopefully, considerate. And where it needs

7   to be adjusted, if the vote is passed, then

8   that will be on City Council to either accept

9   or put it back to us and then we'll have

10   another round of public hearings and then

11   move it from there.

12   I just want the Commission to know that

13   I'm honored to be a part of this and honored

14   that the Mayor asked me to join. And I think

15   that we are well-served in serving the

16   public.

17   And if there's a motion to entertain

18   or --

19   COMMISSIONER UDDIN: So moved.

20   CHAIR WALCOTT: So moved.

21   Is there a second?

22   (No response).

23   CHAIR WALCOTT: Is there a second for

24   the vote?

25   (Hand gestures).

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1   CHAIR WALCOTT: Seconds around. And if

2   the transcriber -- do you need the names as

3   well, Counsel?

4   So, Maf is the originator of the motion

5   and I saw Josh Schneps and I saw Kristen also

6   second, so -- and Lisa Sorin.

7   COMMISSIONER PORCHER: And I second the

8   motion.

9   CHAIR WALCOTT: I hear Dr. Porcher as

10   well, so we have a number of seconds on the

11   table.

12   Commissioner Schnall, knowing of your

13   timeline and I think I see you up in the top

14   corner, and I want to make sure I don't get

15   accused of delaying you for other reasons,

16   the floor is yours, sir, for your vote.

17   COMMISSIONER SCHNALL: Thank you, Chair

18   Walcott. And I really, really appreciate the

19   ability to vote now, so that I can catch my

20   flight back, come back to the city that I

21   love and see my family, see all of you. So,

22   I just want to provide some quick context on

23   my vote, and again, thank Chair Walcott for

24   allowing me to speak for a few minutes.

25   Since the last vote in July, a lot has

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1   happened. We've met in all five boroughs.

2   We've hosted a lot of virtual participation.

3   We've seen over 9,500 pieces of testimony.

4   We've had meetings learning about racial bloc

5   voting, hundreds of hours of mapping

6   sessions, thousands of staff hours. We made

7   every intention and effort to make -- to

8   think about, deliberate and incorporate all

9   the feedback we've received.

10   It's an incredible amount of hard work

11   and energy and dedication that went in, and I

12   am so thankful for everyone's participation,

13   the staff's hard work, the education I've

14   gotten from this whole process and feel

15   honored to be here. With that said, I wanted

16   to make three quick points to explain my

17   vote.

18   First, I learned a long time ago that

19   it's best -- it's often best to listen and

20   rely on others with expertise when you don't

21   have any, and so this applied to my work on

22   the Commission. And I took the position that

23   if I wasn't intimately familiar with a

24   neighborhood, I would listen, observe but not

25   inject my uninformed viewpoint. And what I

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1   saw during this last round of mapping was a

2   little unsettling and frankly unfair.

3   A few individuals undid some of the

4   work of the many, often at the last minutes

5   of a mapping session, which got finalized in

6   these maps. Frankly, I think it's unfair to

7   the countless members of the public who took

8   time to testify and a little disrespectful to

9   the work of our staff and fellow

10   commissioners.

11   Second, process matters. Some lawyers

12   will tell you that if you cannot argue

13   substance, you argue process. And in this

14   instance, I'm talking about both. But since

15   July, most of our meetings have been held

16   during the workday, short notice was given

17   for some, and it made navigating the process

18   and being present very difficult.

19   I know, including myself, we did

20   everything we could to the best of our

21   abilities to participate as much as possible,

22   but it was very challenging and I know we

23   could do better. But I know that we also

24   can't let the perfect be the enemy of the

25   good. So, I know that if we go further in

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1   this process, we will do things better.

2   Third, and my last point is that the

3   two boroughs with the most to lose in the

4   second round of drafting did, the Bronx and

5   Staten Island. So, for the record, I wholly

6   oppose and oppose the dilution of Bronx

7   political power with the change in the ratio

8   of Council District 8, which now favors

9   Manhattan. Rebalancing this district would

10   have taken some really, really hard work, but

11   I think it would have been worth the effort

12   to better balance the district and restore

13   the power that Bronx deserves.

14   And I know that I'm a broken record on

15   this, and I resent the fact that Staten

16   Island has been blamed for all the troubles

17   identified in the first draft. The reality

18   is that there are three things that cause

19   more issues than anything else. A 5 percent

20   deviation handed down from Albany without any

21   challenge or pushback from the Law

22   Department, a newly redrawn South Brooklyn

23   district and intentionally underpopulated

24   districts.

25   So, when it comes to vilifying Staten

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1   Island, and there has been a lot of that

2   recently, frankly it's cliché. I've heard it

3   my entire life. I'm tired of it, and enough

4   is enough. Staten Island deserves the same

5   respect and chance at self-determination that

6   the other boroughs enjoy.

7   And speaking of Staten Island, and most

8   importantly why I am voting the way I am, I

9   am adamantly opposed to the addition of

10   approximately 16,000 people from Brooklyn to

11   Council District 50. This move

12   disenfranchises those 16,000 people, who

13   deserve adequate and accessible

14   representation. They will have to pay a $20

15   toll and drive 10 miles to see their council

16   member. This is unfair, inequitable and

17   completely avoidable.

18   This Brooklyn addition dilutes Staten

19   Island's political power and sets the borough

20   back ten years in the progress we've made to

21   establish ourselves and chart our own future

22   as a borough. So, as such, and as the only

23   Staten Islander on this Commission and for

24   all the reasons above, I vote no.

25   Thank you, Chair, for allowing me the

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1   grace and privilege to voting right now, and

2   I will see you back in New York.

3   CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you, Commissioner

4   Schnall. Have a safe flight. Look forward

5   to seeing you back in New York.

6   And with that being said, I will call

7   the roll and I will start, with the

8   Commission's permission, with myself. And I

9   will vote "Yes" for this plan. And in

10   addition to what I heard the Commissioner

11   say, Commissioner Schnall, I believe both in

12   the substance and the process, and I think

13   the substance and the process has been

14   adhered to.

15   I think the number of community

16   meetings, the input for the individuals as

17   well as the dialogue back and forth,

18   including Commissioner Schnall and others as

19   far as the line-drawing with the mappers as

20   well, has been extremely beneficial to the

21   process.

22   And again, I think the challenge is

23   making sure that we don't undermine all of

24   the hard work and allow the process to unfold

25   to the next step, because I think the

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1   Commission has done an excellent job in

2   meeting its responsibility and its due

3   diligence and for that reason, I vote yes.

4   Commission Collado.

5   COMMISSIONER COLLADO: Thank you,

6   Mr. Chair.

7   I wholeheartedly agree with those

8   comments. First and foremost, I'd like to

9   thank the staff, the Commission and everyone

10   who has put in countless hours into these

11   maps. Thank you. And most importantly the

12   public, for their input, which was our

13   guiding light in this process.

14   And with that, I vote yes.

15   CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you,

16   Commissioner.

17   Commissioner Go.

18   COMMISSIONER GO: Thank you, Chair,

19   Chairman Walcott. I join in your -- in the

20   praise that we've heard for the public

21   because voting is such an important right to

22   this country. And interestingly, I'm a judge

23   by training and a lawyer by training, it's

24   interesting that the Constitution never

25   explicitly protects the right to vote, but

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1   voting appears in the Constitution many

2   times. And the concept of equity

3   proportionality is so important to our life.

4   We want to be fair and we want every vote to

5   have the same weight.

6   So, I do feel Commissioner Schnall's

7   pain about Staten Island. I think the people

8   in Staten Island were wonderful. We were

9   very impressed with them in coming up with

10   the preliminary plans. But ultimately, the

11   principle of one-person, one-vote, equity

12   proportionality governs. And so, I do know

13   that I have received some requests to delay

14   the vote, and I share some of Commissioner

15   Schnall's reservation about the process.

16   I wish people had had the chance to see

17   these final maps that we are voting on.

18   However, the maps were made after

19   consideration of many comments, many hours of

20   hearings, many consultations with the

21   map-makers, and I really do thank the public.

22   How many districting commissions can have the

23   privilege of receiving over 9,000 comments?

24   That is a credit to John Q. Public. Thank

25   you. I applaud all of you who are here who

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1   are not reporters. Thank you for bearing

2   with us.

3   And that being said, and being so

4   long-winded about it, I vote "yes" in

5   favor -- even though I have no problems with

6   delaying this vote to consider additional

7   comments, I think the outreach has been

8   fabulous. We've received wonderful

9   responses, and there's just no reason for

10   further delay and consideration by the City

11   Council.

12   CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you,

13   Commissioner.

14   Commissioner Hanratty.

15   COMMISSIONER HANRATTY: Yes. First of

16   all, I'd like to say that it's an honor to

17   serve on this Commission. I feel privileged

18   to be here. And I'd like to thank

19   Chairman Walcott and all my fellow

20   Commissioners and Dr. John Flateau and the

21   entire staff for all the hard work they've

22   put in.

23   However, at this time, I will be voting

24   "no" on this proposal because of the --

25   what's perceived to be the adverse effect on

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1   certain communities of interest and certain

2   competitive districts. So, my vote this time

3   will be a "no." Thanks.

4   CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you, Commissioner

5   Hanratty.

6   Commissioner Mateo.

7   COMMISSIONER MATEO: Thank you.

8   Good morning, everyone. I would like

9   to join in the comments of all the

10   Commissioners, thanking the hard work, all

11   the hours of the staff and especially the

12   Commissioners who've been putting so many

13   hours and a lot of work into making these

14   maps come into fruition.

15   With that being said, there have

16   been -- even though we have been making great

17   strides as to making the districts much

18   better, there have been a lot of public

19   comments from my Dominican community,

20   especially in some districts in Manhattan,

21   specifically the second one and the seventh

22   one.

23   And my Dominican community has grave

24   concerns about the diluting of the Dominican

25   vote. For those reasons and some others that

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1   we will address in due time, I believe that

2   there is still work to be done before we

3   submit the maps to the City Council. So, I'm

4   voting no.

5   CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you, Commissioner

6   Mateo.

7   Commissioner Schneps.

8   COMMISSIONER SCHNEPS: My vote is no,

9   largely because this is an incredibly

10   thorough process, and I would say that the

11   amount of time that I spent on it, a lot, and

12   that's nothing compared to the staff here.

13   But just hearing some of the feedback here,

14   just the end of the process has been really

15   too quick for us to even hear each other's

16   feedback for the final decision.

17   CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you, Commissioner

18   Schneps.

19   Commissioner Sorin.

20   COMMISSIONER SORIN: Okay. So, I'm

21   going to echo, this has been a process like

22   nothing other, and I've learned a lot. I

23   will say that I want to move on to the next

24   process. Selfishly, I'm going to be

25   completely honest and say that what I don't

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1   want is another huge round of public

2   hearings. Because I think that among

3   ourselves there's been so much debate, so

4   much conversation.

5   We've listened to the testimony, but

6   there's still a lot to be heard. There's

7   still conversations among the Commission, and

8   I need to hear more from the Hispanic

9   community. So, for that reason, I vote no.

10   CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you, Commissioner

11   Sorin.

12   Commissioner Sullivan.

13   COMMISSIONER SULLIVAN: Thank you.

14   I want to just emphasize that the vote

15   we are taking today is not to -- is not to

16   approve this plan. As the draft letter of

17   the Chairman to the Speaker of the City

18   Council says, it is to present it to them for

19   their conversation. So, this is not an

20   approval of this plan. It is to take it to

21   the next stage of the process.

22   So, it's for that reason that I

23   believe, given all the hard work that has

24   been done, I think it is time for us to hear

25   from the City Council itself on this plan.

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1   And if the City Council chooses to send it

2   back to us for the additional work to deal

3   with any of the -- any of the deficiencies or

4   anything in the plan.

5   For that reason, I would -- I am voting

6   that we do present this plan for the

7   consideration of the City Council, as in

8   Chairman Walcott's letter to the Speaker.

9   CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you, Commissioner

10   Sullivan.

11   Commissioner Wong.

12   COMMISSIONER WONG: Okay. Good

13   morning, everybody. I'm such honor to be

14   sitting there as Chair, as Commissioner.

15   First of all, my -- I have to thank all

16   the people -- John and the team worked so

17   hard and diligently. But I have some

18   suggestions for the mapping working. Since I

19   worked City, for City for 35 years, I know

20   the zoning is so important. With New York,

21   we have 58 zoning districts, but the district

22   for the voting is 57. If all this zoning

23   district is changing constantly and every day

24   they're doing upgrade and downgrade, they're

25   going to affect the population.

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1   For example, Long Island City special

2   district, before it's M1-1, the zoning is

3   around that area, it's a manufacture zone.

4   Today, you could see Long Island City, they

5   have five different subdistricts for zoning,

6   and they have constructed the building,

7   60-story building, mixed-use building

8   increase population certainly.

9   So, the zoning has also affected the

10   population so quickly and we are -- maybe

11   it's not falling so fast. We have ten years

12   to redo the districting map, but the zoning

13   map, they change constantly. So, somehow we

14   have to link, incorporate with the zoning map

15   and that there's some kind of synchronization

16   to consider, the zoning map and districting

17   map. That's my idea. Thanks.

18   CHAIR WALCOTT: And your vote is, sir?

19   Your vote.

20   COMMISSIONER WONG: Temporarily, I say

21   no.

22   CHAIR WALCOTT: No, okay. Thank you,

23   Commissioner.

24   Next is Commissioner Uddin.

25   COMMISSIONER UDDIN: Yes. Good

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1   morning, everybody. It is an honor that I

2   sit with these distinguished people, we have

3   worked very hard. I want to thank the staff,

4   especially Dr. John Flateau, and Chair, you

5   have been so kind.

6   I think the most important thank you

7   deserve our community, over 9,000 people

8   testified in different ways, in different

9   format, twice in each borough, and the

10   Commissioner was so kind. Everybody gave

11   their time, thoughts and analysis and we

12   arrived here.

13   I agree with the Commissioner that this

14   is the process. We have preliminary maps on

15   July 15th, we received feedback. We worked

16   harder, and now September 22nd, we're going

17   to send to the City Council. If City Council

18   wants to do some of those legal things or do

19   better, we have time to do it.

20   And that is why I am going to vote yes.

21   And with that, I want to thank you, everyone

22   who is here, and just to let you know how

23   proud I -- how honored I am because I think

24   this is one of the commissions that I have

25   seen in the last 38 years in this country,

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1   most diverse, most intelligent, and most

2   analytical. And so, I feel so proud that I

3   am part of it.

4   Thank you very much.

5   CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you,

6   Commissioner.

7   Commissioner Johnson.

8   COMMISSIONER JOHNSON: Hi, everyone.

9   So, I'll start off with my vote. My

10   vote is a "yes," to the current iteration of

11   the maps. And I want to echo the thanks to

12   my fellow Commissioners, to the staff. I

13   mean, it's clear a lot of work has gone into

14   this, including the public's work, right?

15   And so, the one thing I will say is I

16   think part of the hard work is, how do we

17   reconcile all of the public comments, right?

18   Into like -- there's conflicting testimony,

19   right, every -- it's not all kumbaya in all

20   the comments. So, how do we reconcile that

21   with the reality of complying with the Voting

22   Rights -- the Constitution, the Voting Rights

23   Act, the City Charter?

24   And I believe this Commission has

25   worked hard to do that, and so my vote is

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1   yes, for the current iteration of the map.

2   CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you,

3   Commissioner.

4   Commissioner Kirschenbaum.

5   COMMISSIONER KIRSCHENBAUM: Good

6   afternoon, everyone. It's just after noon.

7   I want to echo a lot of the same sentiment

8   that has been mentioned by my fellow

9   Commissioners. I think the staff has worked

10   extremely hard incorporating a lot of the

11   feedback that we received from the public

12   here, and I want to thank all of the public

13   members who came out to the public hearings

14   in person and submitted testimony

15   electronically and via Zoom.

16   By no means do I think that this is the

17   most perfect map in the history of the world,

18   but I do think that we made a lot of progress

19   and put a lot of time into this. And that

20   time is now to send it to the next step,

21   which is submitting it to the New York City

22   Council.

23   If there is feedback for things that

24   need to be tweaked, I think we're all happy

25   to review that. But I vote yes in the moving

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1   forward with this process. And I just want

2   to echo again, thanking everybody for their

3   hard work on this process.

4   CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you,

5   Commissioner.

6   Commissioner Porcher.

7   COMMISSIONER PORCHER: Thank you.

8   First, I want to say -- I want to give

9   a special thank you to Chair Dennis Walcott.

10   I think you did an amazing job dealing with a

11   polarizing topic in connection with the

12   redistricting of the City of New York.

13   Dr. Plateau (sic), your efforts were

14   phenomenal in organizing one of the Herculean

15   feats that's known to this city's history. I

16   think we, as a Commission, did a great job in

17   exchanging our ideas, especially in

18   connection with the public hearings. Because

19   on many instances, we may have had diametric

20   opposition to specific topics. However, I

21   believe that we coalesce behind the ultimate,

22   and that was to support the democracy of the

23   City of New York to ensure that the

24   redistricting process was sound.

25   That being said, I had a number of

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1   concerns, more so specific to Staten Island,

2   Brooklyn -- Brooklyn South specifically and

3   Manhattan, which I felt that there were some

4   very challenging issues that were introduced,

5   that I don't think we're fully satisfied in

6   connection with the redistricting.

7   So, as a result of that, I'm voting no,

8   and I'm hopeful that we can get to a point

9   whereas we can all -- and I know it's not

10   going to be 100, but eventually I believe

11   that we can coalesce behind a strategy that

12   supports the eight and three-quarter million

13   residents of the City of New York, to ensure

14   the voting process is sound moving forward.

15   So, in synopsis, my vote is no.

16   CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you, Commissioner

17   Porcher.

18   Commissioner Wurzel.

19   COMMISSIONER WURZEL: Thank you,

20   Mr. Chair.

21   I, too, would like to acknowledge the

22   hard work and long hours that our staff, our

23   map team from District R, our consultants,

24   our volunteer commissioners have invested in

25   this process to date. I'd also like to thank

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1   the thousands of New Yorkers who testified

2   and participated in this process.

3   I'd also like to thank, on behalf of

4   the Commissioners and the staff, our families

5   and as it applies to Commissioners, many of

6   our employers, who have tolerated and

7   supported us through this time-consuming

8   process.

9   Unlike the preliminary plan, which I

10   supported as a working draft, I cannot

11   support the formal submission of this

12   districting plan to the City Council because

13   I don't think it meets an acceptable standard

14   that addresses all of the criteria set forth

15   in the Charter.

16   As Commissioner Schnall said in his

17   opening remarks, there was a false narrative

18   after we published the preliminary plan, that

19   having three wholly contained districts in

20   Staten Island was the root of each and every

21   perceived problem with the preliminary plan.

22   It's ironic that as soon as we -- as the

23   Commission walked away from having three

24   districts on Staten Island, more problems

25   developed, some inevitable and some

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1   self-inflicted.

2   There are several improvements in this

3   current plan that Commissioners worked

4   cooperatively to address. For example, this

5   plan, as a preliminary plan, continues to

6   meet and exceed voting and civil rights

7   standards established by state, federal and

8   local law, and by the courts. But there are

9   a number of serious problems that still

10 precludes me from endorsing this document.

11   Quite frankly, we just ran out of time

12 because we're adhering to an aggressive

13 schedule and deadline that we were forced to

14 follow. We'd rather not meet a deadline or

15 push that deadline to get something right

16 rather than meet an arbitrary deadline with a

17 less than satisfactory product.

18   As we began this process in the spring,

19 and as we proceeded through it, we have been

20 hamstrung by an unfortunate act by the

21 governor and the legislature this fall, this

22 past fall, to dust off a poorly drafted piece

23 of legislation that has eviscerated the

24 population variance that was approved by city

25 voters and has been used to draw New York

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1   Council districts for the past 30 years.

2   As a result, communities like the

3   south -- south Brooklyn have been twisted

4   into a mess because we have interjected a

5   Staten Island appendage that was supposed to

6   solve problems but somehow trigger more of

7   them. We've shifted a South Bronx-dominated

8   district that was connected to Manhattan, to

9   now a Manhattan-dominated district that

10   connects to Southwest Bronx. And we've

11   twisted, divided and cannibalized several

12   communities in a handful of competitive fair

13   fight districts in Queens and Brooklyn,

14   deeply concern me.

15   That is an important priority for me

16   and has been ten and 20 years ago when I

17   served on this very same Commission to draw

18   balanced districts that support competitive

19   elections. That's a basic tenet of good

20   government. Every voter deserves a chance to

21   elect the representatives of their choice,

22   not just the voters who are enrolled in a

23   certain political party and who can vote in a

24   closed primary.

25   Election Day, not primary day, should

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1   not determine who our elected representatives

2   are, and that's the case in fair fight

3   competitive districts that I have long sought

4   in this city. So, I certainly plan to focus

5   my energies to correct some of these issues

6   when the City Council responds to this plan

7   and we consider the modifications this fall.

8   But I cannot lend my name to this document

9   that we're proposing to submit to the City

10   Council.

11   Finally, I cannot let this opportunity

12   pass and not express my profound

13   disappointment that confidential maps were

14   shared with media outlets before they were

15   adopted or even subjected to a vote by the

16   Commissioners, and share -- and not shared

17   with the public. A plan is not a plan until

18   it is adopted and authorized by

19   Commissioners.

20   I do not know who thought it was a good

21   idea to share these intimate and confidential

22   details of the maps hours and minutes after

23   the mapping process concluded. I do not

24   share an assessment. Consequently, I vote no

25   on this plan.

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1   CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you, Commissioner

2   Wurzel.

3   So, based on the vote, we will not be

4   submitting these plans to the City Council.

5   And then we will reconvene to discuss our

6   next steps. And I want to thank the

7   Commissioners, but also, I do want to take

8   advantage, since we rearranged our schedule

9   to accommodate Commissioner Schnall.

10   Dr. Handley, if you don't mind giving a

11   brief presentation or I think it's important

12   because you've put a lot of work into this,

13   and I do not want to ignore all the hard work

14   both from the Commissioners, the staff and

15   those experts who've been part of this

16   process.

17   DR. HANDLEY: Well, I was going to tell

18   you that the plan that you drew passed Voting

19   Rights Act muster, in my opinion. I'm not

20   sure what's going to happen now, but let me

21   tell you how I went about doing this.

22   I was retained by the Commission to do

23   an analysis of voting patterns by race. This

24   is required, essentially, by the Voting

25   Rights Act if you have a significant minority

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1   population. Here in New York, you have three

2   significant -- I mean three protected

3   minority populations that are significantly

4   large enough to draw districts.

5   So, we're interested here in what the

6   voting patterns of black voters, Hispanic

7   voters and Asian voters are, relative to

8   white voters. So, this is what I analyzed:

9   It turns out the voting is polarized in New

10   York City. It has been -- this shouldn't

11   have been a surprise. It was ten years ago.

12   It was 20 years ago. It was 30 years ago.

13   It is still.

14   This is particularly true in democratic

15   primaries, but the democratic primary is

16   particularly important in New York City, so

17   this is important. So, what this means is

18   that you have to draw districts that comply

19   with the Voting Rights Act.

20   First slide. I have some slides here.

21   So, as I said, voting is polarized in

22   New York City and you have to draw districts

23   or if you already have them, you have to

24   maintain them in a way that allows minority

25   voters to elect their candidates of choice.

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1   Now, this doesn't necessarily mean you

2   draw majority/minority districts. An

3   opportunity district is one that allows

4   minorities to elect their candidates of

5   choice, but it may be the case that they're

6   only a plurality in the district and they get

7   enough votes from, say, white voters or other

8   minorities if you're talking, say, about a

9   Hispanic district to elect the candidate of

10   choice.

11   So, what I'm focusing on are districts

12   with significant minority populations, that

13   is, are -- is the minority a -- are blacks,

14   Hispanics or Asians, a majority or a

15   plurality in the district? And those are the

16   districts that I focused on to determine how

17   many opportunity districts you have in the

18   current plan and how many you will have in

19   any proposed plan that you put forward.

20   Okay. Next slide.

21   So, how do we do this? No elections

22   have taken place under the district you've

23   drawn, so we have to come up with some method

24   just as if -- just as I use statistics to

25   come up with a way of determining whether

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1   voting was polarized. I'm going to use a

2   method called recompiled election results to

3   see if you have districts that will allow

4   each of these minority groups to elect their

5   candidates of choice.

6   We do this by looking at previous

7   elections and we call these Bellwether

8   elections, elections that were polarized

9   previously and we want to see by recompiling

10   the election results to the proposed

11   districts if the minority-preferred candidate

12   would carry these proposed districts. So,

13   this is how we tell if you have maintained a

14   minority district. And here is a list of the

15   district, the elections that I looked at to

16   determine if you had succeeded in drawing

17   minority opportunity districts.

18   Now, each of these districts in general

19   elections, black voters, Hispanic voters and

20   usually Asian voters vote alike. But in

21   democratic primaries, not necessarily so at

22   all. So, each of these groups have to be

23   considered separately and each of these

24   districts have to be considered separately.

25   Next slide.

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1   Okay. So, the first thing I did was,

2   given that voting was polarized, identify how

3   many districts currently could be called

4   opportunity districts for each of these

5   groups, and I did that by determining whether

6   the minority-preferred candidate was being

7   elected to City Council.

8   Next step was looking at the proposed

9   districts and comparing the -- not just the

10   demographic composition of these districts,

11   but because we're supposed to be doing a

12   district-specific functional analysis,

13   looking at possible electoral outcomes. So,

14   that's what I was going to do with each of

15   the proposed districts.

16   Next slide.

17   So, I'm going to go through borough by

18   borough. Here are the data, but let me just

19   summarize and say -- so, in Manhattan, you

20   had one district, District 9. And you can

21   see the statistics for this, what it's in --

22   what exists in the current plan and what the

23   revised plan is. And this remains an

24   effective district. That means it's an

25   opportunity district for black voters.

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1   Next slide.

2   You have two majority Hispanic

3   districts that are going to remain effective,

4   District 7 was a different story. It was a

5   plurality Hispanic voting-age populations

6   district. This was -- Hispanic voting-age

7   population was decreased. The white

8   population was increased, so now it's a

9   plurality white district.

10   Now, the voting in this district was

11   not polarized between Hispanics and whites.

12   It was between Hispanics and black voters, I

13   believe, but not between Hispanics and

14   whites. The current representative was

15   supported by both Hispanics and whites. And

16   presumably, in the future, it's possible that

17   a Hispanic can win with white support, but

18   not with Hispanic support alone because it's

19   no longer a plurality Hispanic district.

20   Next slide.

21   Okay. So, you have one majority black

22   district in the Bronx and you maintained that

23   district. It's as effective as it was in the

24   currently plan.

25   Next slide.

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1   There are five majority Hispanic

2   districts, four of them elect

3   Hispanic-preferred candidates. The other one

4   is an opportunity district, but it elect a

5   black-preferred candidate. The -- you

6   increase the black -- the Hispanic VAP, so

7   it's going to trend towards a Hispanic

8   district. It is a minority opportunity

9   district, but not a Hispanic minority

10   opportunity district.

11   Next slide.

12   This is the data for that. Next slide.

13   So, you have two plurality Hispanic

14   districts, one of which is not an opportunity

15   district. It did not elect a

16   Hispanic-preferred candidate and the other

17   did, and that district did not change very

18   much. So, you have one plurality district

19   that's an opportunity district that remains

20   an opportunity district. And the other,

21   which was not and remains not an opportunity

22   district. Again, these -- this is not a

23   majority district. This is a plurality

24   district.

25   Next slide.

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1   In Queens, you have two majority black

2   districts and they remain effective

3   opportunity districts for black voters in the

4   revised plan.

5   Next slide.

6   Then you have a plurality black

7   district that was -- that you increase the

8   black population and this will increase the

9   effectiveness of that particular district,

10   which was already an opportunity district.

11   Next slide.

12   You have one majority Hispanic

13   district, which changed very little and will

14   remain an Hispanic district in Queens.

15   Next slide.

16   So, there is one majority Asian

17   district in the revised plan, as there was in

18   the current plan and is equally effective in

19   both plans. There were four plurality Asian

20   districts, three of which were opportunity

21   districts for Asian voters and remain

22   opportunity districts. And the fourth of

23   which, District 25, although it elects

24   an Asian, turns out that's the Asian

25   candidate of choice of white voters. Asian

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 1   voters supported a different Asian candidate,

 2   so that's not an opportunity district and it

 3   remains not an opportunity district in the

 4   revised plan.

 5   Next slide. Next slide.

 6   In Brooklyn, you have six majority

 7   black districts. They've all -- in the

 8   revised plan, as in the current plan, are

 9   effective or opportunity districts for black

10   voters.

11   Next slide. Next slide.

12   You have one district that's a majority

13   Hispanic district, District 37, that remains

14   essentially the same and it is an effective

15   Hispanic district.

16   Next slide.

17   So, you have -- you have created a

18   new Asian district. It is an effective Asian

19   district. You can tell by the votes for

20   Yang, Andrew Yang, when he ran for mayor.

21   District 38 was an Asian plurality district

22   and the current plan is an Asian plurality

23   district. Now, it was not electing the Asian

24   candidate of choice. It was electing

25   Hispanic candidate of choice. This was

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1   traditionally a Hispanic district.

2   What the revised plan does, it

3   maintains the same Hispanic percentage,

4   decreases the Asian percentage and increases

5   the white percentage. Now, the Hispanic

6   incumbent won with Hispanic vote and white

7   vote, so there's no reason to believe that

8   the current incumbent wouldn't win this

9   district. It was Asian voters who did not

10   support this candidate. This district, Asian

11   voters and Hispanic voters were quite

12   polarized in this district.

13   Next slide.

14   In Staten Island, you maintained your

15   majority/minority district with essentially

16   the same black, Hispanic and Asian voting-age

17   population.

18   And finally, my conclusion.

19   You have maintained the exact same

20   numbers of black and Hispanic opportunity

21   districts in the revised plan, as in the

22   current plan, and you've increased the number

23   of Asian districts, Asian opportunity

24   districts, by one. And this, of course, is

25   the fastest growing minority population and

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1   it certainly -- I would say that you would

2   have been successfully sued had you not done

3   that, if somebody brought a suit, because it

4   was possible to draw one and voting in that

5   area was very polarized.

6   And that concludes my comments on the

7   revised plan.

8   CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you, Dr. Handley.

9   And questions for Dr. Handley?

10   Commission Wurzel.

11   COMMISSIONER WURZEL: Dr. Handley,

12   correct me if I'm wrong with this

13   characterization: You're analysis, there

14   are -- and I think John highlighted this in

15   his presentation. There are 29 effective

16   performing majority districts that were part

17   of your detailed analysis, and one

18   additional -- I guess for lack of a better

19   way of describing it, we've used this

20   description, a coalition district.

21   Is that correct?

22   DR. HANDLEY: Not exactly.

23   COMMISSIONER WURZEL: So, please

24   correct me.

25   DR. HANDLEY: So, as I said, a majority

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1   district isn't necessarily an opportunity

2   district, and some plurality districts might

3   be opportunity districts. Now, let me see if

4   I can get the numbers. There are currently,

5   let's see, 19 majority districts in which

6   either black, Hispanic or Asians are a

7   majority.

8   All of those are effective opportunity

9   districts, except that one of these Hispanic

10   majority, as I mentioned, is actually a black

11   opportunity district. There are also a

12   number of plurality districts, some of which

13   are opportunity districts.

14   So, the numbers are a little -- the

15   number shift. So, do you want to know about

16   majority districts, plurality districts,

17   opportunity districts?

18   COMMISSIONER WURZEL: No, I would --

19   the point I'm trying to get to by asking this

20   is that these are 29 districts, but I guess

21   30 districts, that if they -- as we go back

22   to the drawing board, if they're -- if we

23   maintained the demographics of those

24   districts, your analysis moves on to cover

25   these districts as well?

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1   DR. HANDLEY: Yes. Yes. I'm not sure

2   about your numbers, but yes, that's correct.

3   COMMISSIONER WURZEL: Well, I just

4   added up the numbers. I added up the

5   districts --

6   DR. HANDLEY: Again, it's not just

7   majority districts.

8   COMMISSIONER WURZEL: Well, I didn't --

9   I'm talking about the combination of, you

10   know, the majority performing, you know. I

11   put everybody in the same, you know, set to,

12   you know, ask my question, you know, if we --

13   as we move forward, if we keep these

14   districts, the demographics of these

15   districts somewhat comparable to where they

16   are now, they would meet the standards of

17   voting rights, civil rights, local law and

18   court findings about polarized voting.

19   DR. HANDLEY: With the caveat that it's

20   not just the demographics. You're going to

21   look at recompiled election results as well,

22   because it has to be a functional analysis.

23   But, yes. Yes.

24   COMMISSIONER WURZEL: Thank you.

25   CHAIR WALCOTT: So, to take

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1   Commissioner Wurzel's question to a different

2   level and also trying to tie together as far

3   as next steps, we would still have to make

4   sure that you are reviewing what we post and

5   make sure that we're in compliance, no matter

6   where those districts are, if there are any

7   reconfiguration that meets a new need, as

8   identified by other Commissioners, that role

9   that you play is still extremely important as

10   far as those next steps are concerned.

11   DR. HANDLEY: If these districts that

12   I've identified as opportunity districts are

13   modified, I would have to review them; that's

14   correct.

15   CHAIR WALCOTT: Thank you very much.

16   Any other questions for Dr. Handley?

17   (No response).

18   CHAIR WALCOTT: So, for next steps,

19   since we are not submitting this plan to the

20   City Council, that means we'll be reconvening

21   at some point.

22   Staff, we'll be getting back to all of

23   you within 24 to 48 hours to set a date for

24   the next meeting. And then, we will go

25   through the process of addressing any of the

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1   concerns because we still have a

2   responsibility to submit these plans to the

3   City Council for their review, as Commission

4   Sullivan indicated. And if they have

5   concerns around them, then they will get back

6   to us with those concerns or they can pass on

7   the maps once we do submit them.

8   Is that a correct way to articulate the

9   next steps?

10   MS. PYUN: Yes.

11   CHAIR WALCOTT: Okay. Fine. So,

12   you'll be hearing from staff shortly to find

13   a mutually satisfactory date for all.

14   And if that is it, if there aren't any

15   other questions, can I have a motion to

16   adjourn?

17   COMMISSIONER UDDIN: So moved.

18   CHAIR WALCOTT: There's a motion to

19   adjourn.

20   Is there a second?

21   COMMISSIONER SORIN: (Hand gesture).

22   COMMISSIONER MATEO: (Hand gesture).

23   COMMISSIONER COLLADO: (Hand gesture).

24   COMMISSIONER HANRATTY: (Hand gesture).

25   CHAIR WALCOTT: All in favor?

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1   (Chorus of ayes.)

2   CHAIR WALCOTT: All opposed?

3   (No response).

4   CHAIR WALCOTT: And thank you for your

5   time and your energy and your commitment as

6   well.

7   (TIME ADJOURNED: 12:27 p.m.)

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1   C E R T I F I C A T E

2

3   STATE OF NEW YORK)

4   :SS

5   COUNTY OF QUEENS)

6

7   I, Sabrina Brown Stewart, a shorthand

8   reporter within and for the State of New York, do

9   hereby certify that the within is a true and

10   accurate transcript of the statement taken on

11   September 22, 2022.

12   I further certify that I am not related to

13   any of the parties to this action by blood or by

14   marriage, and that I am in no way interested in the

15   outcome of this matter.

16   IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my

17   hand this 8th day of October 2022.

18

19

20   *Sabrina Brown-Stewart*
                      Sabrina Brown Stewart

21

22

23

24

25

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