

Testimony to the New York City Districting Commission **regarding its first Public Hearing on June 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at York College in relations to the future of the New York City Council district lines.**

Good evening, Chairman and Council members - my name is Marcia O'Brien, and I am the President of the 148<sup>th</sup> Drive & Community Block Association, Inc., 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice Chairperson of Community Board Thirteen and President & Board Chairperson of the Rosedale Civic Association, Inc.

Thank you for inviting my testimony at this public hearing to address the redistricting of the New York City Council District lines. My colleagues from the Rosedale Civic Association have highlighted our history, infrastructure, zoning and quality of life concerns of our community.

Please allow me to make reference to the February 2013 Revised District Plan. There are three fundamental sources of law that governs redistricting: the U.S. Constitution's Fourteenth Amendment, the Federal Voting Rights Act of 1965, and the New York City Charter.

**U.S. Constitution's Fourteenth Amendment 372 U.S. 368, 381 (1963).** The Fourteenth Amendment's "Equal Protection" clause established the "one person, one vote" standard, which requires that districts be of generally equal population. We think our **District is able to successfully maintain the population size within the 10% of overall population deviation allowed under the Charter.** NYC Charter § 52(1)(a). **Please do not disrupt our district.**

**Voting Rights Act of 1965 – (Sections 2 and 5) a. Section 2 b. Section 5** The next fundamental source of law that governs redistricting is the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965, and in particular, Sections 2 which prohibits "minority vote dilution," which is the minimization or cancelling out of minority voting strength in favor that of non-minorities. **We are a strong voting community. We have a synergy. We need to ensure that changes suggested, for redistricting, in our District, is non-discriminatory. Please do not disrupt our district.**

**Keeping Neighborhoods and Communities of Interest Intact NYC Charter § 52(1)(b)(c).**

The third factor in the Charter is that district lines "keep intact neighborhoods and communities with established ties of common interest and association, whether historical, racial, economic, ethnic, religious or other. We must minimize the division of neighborhoods and communities of interest to the maximum extent practicable.

**Our district is reasonably compact and contiguous. We have similar priorities. Our elected are familiar with our priorities from flooding, zoning, quality of life issues, etc. It makes sense to keep our communities together. Redistricting will disproportionately impact our District. Many voters will disengage from the voting process. It will be demoralizing. It also contributes to the growing inability of local geography to bind people together as a cohesive community. Non-competitive districts produce unaccountable Legislators.**

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify.

**-Marcia O'Brien**