

COMMISSIONERS RECORD 49
FRANKLIN COUNTY
Commissioners' Proceeding for May 22, 2008

The Honorable Board of Franklin County Commissioners met on the above date. Present for the meeting were Bob Koch, Chairman; Rick Miller, Chair Pro Tem; and Neva J. Corkrum, Member; Fred Bowen, County Administrator; and Mary Withers, Clerk to the Board.

COMMISSIONER REDISTRICTING

Public Hearing: To take testimony for and against the consideration of Franklin County Commissioner's redistricting plan

Public Hearing convened at 4:00 pm. Present: Commissioners Koch, Corkrum and Miller; County Administrator Fred Bowen; and Clerk to the Board Mary Withers.

Present in audience: At least 40 people including those on the sign-in list : Ramona Rommereim, Jan Nuenschwander, Richard (Dick) Moore, Jim Rabideau, David Chassin, Joyce Olson, Donna Heinen, Patrick Guettner, John and Janet Hughlett, Tri-City Herald Reporter Joe Chapman, Brenda High, Jackie Hanson, Donald E. Heinen, Mildred Heinen, Kevin Heinen, Darel Kohn, Jr., Shawn Sant, J. M. Wolfe, Matt Watkins, Barbara Poulson, Tom Larsen, Hans J. Engelke, J_____ Johnson, Todd N. Harris, Steve Cooper, Lee Barrow, Jeremy Meredith, Burl Booker, Zona Lenhart, Shane Thorson, Connie Curiel, Sue Boothe, Rosie H. Rumsey, Patricia Shults, Dann Borden, David Corkrum, Randi Renee Hammer, and two women TV reporters. The sign-in list is attached as Exhibit 1.

Mr. Koch asked if anyone would like to approach the Board. He asked them to state their name and address and use the microphone. He asked people to keep their comments short so we can listen to many people. If there are redundant statements, you can probably save them and just state your name and address and for or against, please.

Shawn Sant, 8016 Redondo Drive, Pasco, living in Commissioner District 3. He thanked the Board for presenting the four draft proposals. Basically what we have asked for is the public hearing. I think it's important to have a variety of input from members of our community so they could express fundamental reasons why they want this to happen for this election. We've had a couple different meetings where we've presented before the Board. I've tried to follow the issue since it was first presented in 2006.

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Now we're basically at the point where we're at a couple weeks before the filing period and the question is are we going to be able to make an adequate remedy. The biggest argument is the Commission has had an opportunity in its prior meetings with Ms. Lenhart and with the Auditor's office for being able to assess population growth. There's been an adequate period of time for discussion amongst commissioners. The commissioners know there has been explosive growth.

One of the reasons I think it's important why we adopt changes is that if we do not proceed forward with adoption of redistricting, essentially what we are doing is excluding a certain group of voters from our county from being able to exercise a fundamental right to file for a public office. I think we could still do it without running into legal problems. We are not restricting Commissioner Districts 1 and 2 but expanding those districts. We are making it more opportunistic for people to run for public office.

Based on the proposals here, if we wait until after the filing period, what is eventually going to happen is you will take existing District 3 and eventually say we're dividing District 3 because it has at least twice as many residents as the other two districts. Then we're excluding individuals who may or may not decide to run for office from even filing. He explained his point further. We would be excluding them from filing for this election but they would have to wait until 2012 to file for public office.

He thinks the commissioners have had plenty of notice. People have a fundamental right to be able to run for public office. By telling them we're going to put this off one more election, if we exclude them again and keep those people from being able to run for office, we're basically telling them, "You're not able to file in 2010 because you're not in District 3." This is why I think you have a legal protection here. He gave some examples. Mr. Sant said if we were restricting districts, I could see your point and I would suggest clearly now would not be the time. We're asking people to expand Districts 1 and 2 and restrict District 3. District 3 is not up for election so you take away the political implications of that and are not disenfranchising any voters in District 3 during this cycle. If you wait until after this filing period, now you have

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disenfranchised voters in District 3 not just for this election but now you're forcing them to wait until 2012.

Mr. Sant said he has looked at the four proposals and reviewed the case that was filed against the county previously in which the county did prevail. He talked about the word "compact." He pointed to the maps, saying he feels compact refers to answering the questions do you have lines that follow geographical boundaries and don't cut through natural boundaries. Clearly Draft 4 follows the line that was outlined in the *Franklin County v Kilbury* case in that compactness is trying to keep the community together. We have to make some adjustments because the majority of growth has been in the City of Pasco primarily from Road 44 to Road 100 and south of the freeway as well.

Mr. Sant asked that the commissioners look at that and consider the information that has been provided previously from the auditor. I think you've had adequate information before you. He asked are we facing a potential challenge by doing this shortly before an election? He asked who is going to challenge? You're not restricting or disenfranchising anyone's right to file for office but actually making it so more people can file. He explained his idea further.

He knows the argument on the other side is in 2010 we're going to have a census come out. If we wait again I'm afraid we'd end up waiting until 2012 and I think we may need to remedy this as soon as possible. I would ask the commission to adopt one of those proposals. I would suggest the compactness issue is best addressed with Proposal 4, but frankly I think satisfying the statute and the case law that supports it and gives definitions, I think any one of the proposals is adequate.

Mr. Sant said we recently redrafted the precincts. He understands the commissioner districts are in line with the precincts. We're using the existing precinct boundaries to format the lines. Because that information was recently gathered, I think you've had adequate information to be able to make a decision on an informed and justified basis.

Dave Chassin, 3821 West Havstad Street in Pasco, residing in Commissioner District #1. Mr. Chassin said I am also the chairman of the Franklin County Democratic

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Committee but really here to speak to you as a concerned citizen for the welfare of this county. I oppose any changes and even considering redistricting at this time.

He said the first reason is that a lot has been said about the June 2 filing date but I think you should keep in mind that the filing period for mail-in filing is already over, ending last Friday, May 16. I think it would be inappropriate to consider once people have filed. It's my understanding that two people have filed for election in two of the districts that are up this year. I don't think it's appropriate to consider redistricting once that process is underway. As far as I'm concerned that's reason enough to skip consideration of any redistricting plan at all. No matter how justified it is seen, it's likely a legal challenge would occur.

Mr. Chassin said he wanted to respond to some recent arguments that have been made in favor of redistricting. The county has gone through significant growth, particularly in District 3. I agree it's important we do something about it as soon as it's legally possible to do it. I think that's the crux of what we're talking about here.

I want to correct some misimpressions that have been made and some comments that have been recorded recently that people have made. I think these comments are confusing people in the county and misleading some residents into what is actually going on here. It's been claimed that failing to redistrict would bring about a lawsuit. I don't understand that. I don't think there could be anything further from the truth. The RCWs tell us you're supposed to redistrict within eight months of receipt of the federal census data you'll receive probably in late 2010 or in 2011. It seems to me you're under no legal obligation to do anything at this point. It's hard for me to see how you would get sued for something you're not obliged to do.

On the other hand, I think acting to redistrict precipitously is likely to bring about a lawsuit. I think there is a potential for legal consequences. I have to wonder about the motives of anyone who is pushing you to act hastily. It seems unwise and not good advice. I'm not an attorney and certainly not your attorney but it seems if I'm not obligated to act, my decision would be not to act rather than acting in a way that's likely to bring about a lawsuit.

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It also seems to me that you have a duty to redistrict within eight months of receiving census data so I would be concerned about doing a redistricting now. It should have been done some time ago but if we were to do that now we wouldn't be able to redistrict when we have to in 2011. It wouldn't be possible to do that until you have the good data. It seems to me that you've got a little bit of a conflict that the best way to resolve is to wait until then.

My counterpart Mr. Sant has claimed that district voting gives candidates in less-populated districts an advantage because they are more likely to be unopposed. I understand the argument but you've got to keep in mind that Districts 1 and 2 are just about equal now so we're talking about making a distinction where there is no difference. It doesn't give me a feeling of there's a good reason to act right now. In fact, you don't have good population figures to work with. Until federal decennial data comes in, we have to estimate. I'm concerned that we can't accurately estimate what the populations are. I respect and admire the staff who do the work on these maps. I think they have a challenge. There are a lot of problems. For example, how do you address the area that different socioeconomic areas of the county have different populations per household? We're just guessing about how many people there are. That leaves me uncomfortable. It's not about how many voters but about population. There's no disenfranchisement taking place when someone can't run for office. People in District 3 had an opportunity to run two years ago. I don't see that it's necessary to give them another opportunity to run. We have no obligation to do that.

Mr. Chassin said there are a couple procedural things that may bear on your decision: The County Auditor's office didn't distribute copies of the current map with these proposals so we can't tell the difference. That's problematic. People needed to see how this is changed with respect to what we have today.

I think advocates of prompt redistricting have had many years to address this. For some reason we had to wait until now. I'm not too clear on why that is.

Mr. Chassin said I'm color blind. These maps are drawn in a way I can't tell the difference between 1 and 2. These maps are very difficult for someone like me to deal

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with. Because we do these quickly, we make mistakes like these. This is just an example of a mistake that can be made that will cause problems later.

I think the commissioners are well advised to listen to wiser members of the community and some more judicious counsel that you've been given and defer consideration until the decennial census report is available.

You have my full support if you use an expression I'm fond of using in these type of circumstances: Poor planning on their part doesn't constitute an emergency on your part.

Joyce Olson said she is a 30-year county resident. She thanked the Board for having the hearing. She read from a statement. This hearing on the proposed boundary changes is the final step in a process to adopt new maps which hopefully will occur next week. Whether there are five people or 150 to speak to the issue today, it doesn't change the fact that the districts are extraordinarily disproportionate. It would be wrong to let the filing season go by without adjusting the boundaries beforehand.

Districts 1 and 2 have half the populations of District 3. No matter what is said today, that fact will not change and needs to be resolved. This issue should have been addressed long ago but it wasn't but I commend you for having a hearing today and taking the steps to try and do the right thing.

The solution is so simple: Enlarge the boundaries of Districts 1 and 2 so the county's population is evenly divided between the three districts. Any of the four draft versions of redistricting that you've previously considered would accomplish that objective. It would be wrong to wait until the US census in 2010 because 2010 just begins the census. It takes a year for them to compile the data. The data won't be released until 2011. So if you redistrict in 2008 you have good data to redistrict again.

If you leave the districts as they are, it gives the impression of ignoring principles of representational government. Enlarging boundaries of Districts 1 and 2 expands, not limits, candidates who may have already filed by mail.

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The fundamental issue is that the districts are extraordinarily disproportionate and the solution is long overdue. It's not too late to fix the problem. To do nothing would be the epitome of bad leadership.

Joachim Engelke, Basin City, 3rd District, 2061 West Klamath Road. I haven't been involved in this process. I trust in my elected officials to do the right thing more or less. When I read a newspaper article where elected officials stated that whatever was to be done could have political consequences -- We all have philosophies coming from all different areas, Democrat, Republican, whatever, but at no one time will I allow my philosophy to attempt to override that of the voters. By releasing a public statement like you did, if this were to happen, this redistricting now were to have potential political consequences, it circumvents the democratic process. When we go down that road, the threat is bigger than all its individual pieces. A lot of technical issues have been mentioned by other presenters and they're all valid. There are other issues. I may disagree with what you've ruled on in the past. In this case the reason I come forward is simply you owe it to the voters to keep this process open. It's the nature of the beast of political office that there will be opposition and people will be running against you. That could happen whether it's in the old districts the way they are or in the redistricted fashion. I would still urge you to consider redistricting just for the sake of the system itself, wherever the boundaries may fall after that.

Dick Moore, Kahlotus. Commissioners, I'm opposed to this redistricting. I wouldn't be opposed to it if it would have happened a year ago or it happens next year but I'm a little afraid there's something happening that's under the rug where you're trying to push it through. Why wasn't it done last January or after a filing date in December? I oppose the redistricting.

Jim Rabideau, 732 West Henry, Pasco. My point will be that the filing period is already open. It was open last week. Two candidates have already filed. If you try to redistrict now, you will disenfranchise candidates who have already filed. You don't have to wait till January 2. That's for the walk-in people. (Clerk's Note: The clerk believes Mr. Rabideau meant June 2.)

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Patrick Guettner, 4605 Moline Lane, Pasco. I think there have been some really fine arguments made today. I would like to present an argument in favor of redistricting at this time.

Number one, there's never the right time to do anything. In this day of fast-changing technology and demographics such as we see in Pasco and Franklin County, this four-year law that you've allowed to assert your jurisdiction and judgment on as far as redistricting has been made just for that reason. We can't wait ten years in this day and time, particularly in one of the fastest growing counties in the United States.

As far as the issue as to whether someone may be wanting to speed this up or potentially run as a candidate, what's wrong with that? That's the American way. You expect opposition. To feel otherwise, someone's afraid of competition or afraid of losing their office.

There is still time to do this. That's why we're here today. We appreciate the fact you've given us the opportunity to stand and be counted as citizens and voters of Franklin County to state our opinion and our position.

In conclusion, I think there is a moral obligation as well as a constitutional obligation that overarches all the legalities here in all those districts. I would urge you to vote for redistricting at this time.

Shane Thorson. I've never been one to have a prepared speech or an agenda. I've always spoken from my heart. The point that I want to make is as I go to fight for our country for the second time, the reason I do this is for the reason of the freedom that we have to vote. Equal representation is the reason why I do things. What I want to see happen, what I ask to see happen, is that we all end up making an equal representation of everyone who's going to be running for an office. I wanted to run for office. I've tried running for office, but being that I get called off to war -- Those are things that happen.

What I ask is when I go that there's equal representation. He told about what is happening in Iraq regarding different militias and people wanting equal representation. He said this is what's supposed to be happening here. That's why I ask that we end up having the boundaries set for all of us to have equal representation.

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I live at 5706 West Sylvester. There's a limited boundary there. I think we need to end up putting everything into perspective regardless of what anyone else thinks and wants. Just do the right thing and put it in before the ballot.

One thing in the army I've learned, anything can happen if you want it to happen. You've just got to make it happen. If you want things to happen where there will be an equal representation just in the smallest level of our county, you can make that happen. It's all up to you to decide to make that happen and it needs to happen. We need to have equal representation. You guys are the ones that can make it happen. Work together to make it happen so the county is divided in an equal way before an election has to happen. That's what I ask of you.

John Talbott, 6712 West Octave, Pasco. I'm new to Pasco and just got involved four or five months ago in the whole redistricting process, something I thought might be interesting. I came down and listened to each commissioner saying yes, we need to redistrict. You were in favor of it and said it needed to be done, each one of you. Why didn't you pick up the ball and run with it three or four months ago? He said after studying this and trying to analyze it, he doesn't think there is any government reason. There isn't a political reason or advantage to it. So it must be personal. What could be the personal advantage? The personal advantage is, as Mr. Sant said, by leaving the districts the way they are, you minimize the number or pool of potential candidates that might be running for the two seats that are going to be vacant. You minimize those numbers and it makes your race that much easier. It kind of ensures that you have another term in office. Why would anybody want another term in office when the obvious thing to do some months ago was a very clear decision to make to do a job, to just do it? You want to stay in office and not make good decisions. That's one of the things you have done.

Why would you want to stay? Let's see. I know that Commissioner Corkrum has many terms in office and certainly qualifies for the retirement program that is available to elected officials. I'm not sure if Mr. Koch has served one or two terms. You have to have five years I believe in the state to qualify for retirement. But why delay

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redistricting? Well, there's 52,000 reasons. They just approved a \$13,000 pay raise that they will then get over the next four years. That is very personal and has nothing to do with politics. It has to do with their pocketbook. 52,000 reasons to stay in office. Also it's the basis upon which their retirement is going to be calculated. I don't think this meeting we're having today has anything to do with politics. It doesn't have a lot to do with government. It has to do with very personal reasons why two of our candidates want to hold onto office and minimize the pool of available candidates. I don't think anything's going to change out of this meeting today.

I think Proposal 4 is a good balance but any change would be an improvement over what we now have.

I think there are personal agendas here that are going to be pursued and are going to be realized and nothing is going to happen here today and that's a sad commentary for Franklin County. It's a sad commentary for the gentleman who was just up here saying how he fought for our country so that we would have a freedom to vote and good distribution and equality in the electoral process. I'm sure he's going to be sad at the result. I would like to be surprised. I would like to say yes, you're going to do the right thing, you're going to vote for redistricting and select one of the proposals. I'm afraid your personal reasons for delaying this will prevail. Thank you very much.

Shawn Sant asked Dann Borden to explain how the adequate basis of determining population was determined.

Dann Borden, manager of GIS division, Franklin County Information Services office, spoke. He said we have been searching for a good and accurate way to model census population because we've had to rely upon census data in the past which is only updated every 10 years. Mr. Borden explained the method that was used internally involving some figures provided by state forecasters in the Office of Financial Management (OFM). We start by analyzing the assessor's tax rolls to determine how many residential units there are. Then we compare that to data from OFM. OFM has a computer program product that is used to help agencies come up with an adequate population figure. There are several census tracts throughout the city where the

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population is concentrated. The method looks at average household size and provides us with the mechanism to estimate occupancy rates based upon delivery routes from the post office. It's the best information that we have to try to come up with an accurate model for how the number is derived.

We go to each precinct individually and count the total number of residences within the precinct. We multiply that by the household size based upon a census tract and then we multiply that by the occupancy rate for that census tract. We take all of the census tract numbers, all the population numbers, all those things within each precinct, and sum that for each individual district as it's drawn. That's where the population numbers come from. Like any other method you would apply, it's not perfect, just like the Census Bureau's numbers are not perfect. It's the best that basically I know of anyone being able to apply in a live mode where you're not actually taking the time to go out and actually count everyone. It's the best modeling method that we can come up with. From my discussions with the folks at the state, this should be as accurate as anyone else's models. They were very positive in their reception of the numbers we were generating. They think we're on the right track.

Mr. Chassin asked how many census tracts are there in the City of Pasco?
Mr. Borden said he doesn't know for sure but there are approximately nine.

Mr. Guettner asked a question about the margin of error for the local population census figures. Mr. Borden said he would have to defer that type of question to the Census Bureau itself. He said they are in the middle of a complete restructuring of how they're doing everything right now. We're working with them. They're trying to modernize their processes because there have been discrepancies in the past. They have been reluctant to quote a direct number to us so I'm not going to make one up.

Mr. Thorson said why not redistrict when it's plainly put out there for equal representation? What's the bottom line in not doing it right now?

Auditor Zona Lenhart said she may be able to answer that. She read a prepared statement (Exhibit 2). "I support the eventual equalization of commissioner districts by

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redistricting, but now is not the time. It would create confusion for voters and candidates. It is not prudent to change the rules after the candidate filing period of May 16 has begun.

“The Prosecuting Attorney’s office has reviewed legal matters relating to this action.

“Speaking administratively, if a new map is adopted on May 29, one business day is not sufficient time to do a thorough job for the public and allow for the entire process to be completed properly including, but not limited to, the correction of possible clerical errors. Attention to detail is critical. If a mistake is made in adjusting the boundaries in voter districts, it would affect multiple voters. We deal with multiple software systems to get our addressing systems to define boundaries. Consequently, we run the risk of issuing an incorrect ballot to a voter. That is not a risk the Franklin County Auditor’s Office is willing or should take. Accuracy is our number one priority.

“In this day and age, many elections are won or lost by the narrowest of margins. We have seen in Franklin County races being determined by one vote or a tie.

“For the above mentioned reasons, I urge the commissioners to not make any changes to commissioner boundary lines at this time.”

Brenda High, 7624 Deseret Drive, Pasco. Just for the record, Zona, I love you, but you’re a Democrat. I just want everyone to know that the head of the Democratic party is here. She’s (Ms. High pointed at Zona Lenhart) a Democrat. I don’t know if there is some sort of communication but that’s all I have to say.

Mr. Chassin said I’ll answer that. I haven’t talked to Zona in months.

Kevin Heinen, Mesa, Washington. I just don’t know what the confusion is about. The gentleman who is fighting for us over there, what’s so difficult to make a decision? It’s pretty simple. Give everyone a fair chance. If you’re the best person to be elected for that district, open it up. I support the redistricting, and a whole bunch of farmers do, too, who can’t be here today because they’re out baling hay.

Mr. Thorson asked can I speak again? Mr. Koch said we’ve got till 5 o’clock.

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Mr. Thorson said in the army if you want it to happen, you can make it happen. He asked when the votes are taken, in August or September? Mr. Koch said the general election is in November. Others answered that the primary election is in August.

Mr. Thorson said it's not like this decision has to be made tomorrow and you have to end up deciding where the boundaries are. You can't tell me that within the next 30 days or within the next two weeks, you can't end up redistricting, you can't put it all out there. There's a time line that has to be met; you're absolutely correct. But you put it out there. If you work together -- What we're supposed to be is a democratic society to be able to work together and be able to make things come together, to take personal agendas out of the question, and put what's right and wrong into the question, and putting it out how it's supposed to be, things can happen. Yes, it can happen way before to where the confusion doesn't need to be there.

Mr. Thorson talked about the need to educate the voters.

Mr. Thorson said like the gentleman said earlier, you've got a personal agenda on why you want to be voted in. \$80,000 is a good job. It's a lot more than I've made being a police officer. It's a lot more than I get paid fighting for our country in Iraq. If you end up putting the salaries on what the district you're representing, representing 80% of the district, give them 80% of the salary, then you'll probably not get a whole lot of people who want to run for the position. It's a cold hard position. I don't want to be that way. I like people. What's right is right, what's wrong is wrong. There's a way to make this happen to where no one is confused, where voters aren't disenfranchised. If there's a personal agenda, you can always make it a personal agenda to end up making excuses for stuff.

All I ask again is to make it equal for everybody because as soon as you encourage -- People in Iraq want it equal for everybody, too. If we can't have it here, how in the world are we going to fight for it over there.

Connie Curiel, 1824 West Shoshone. I work for the Auditor's office but I'm on my lunch hour. I wanted to speak for this. I keep hearing about equal representation. Is there a problem with how Mr. Miller is representing his constituents in District 3? I don't

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know. I'm a Democrat but I vote for the person. I have to tell you right now I would vote for either of those two (indicated Commissioners Koch and Corkrum). I vote for the person, what they stand for and what they do for the county. I just don't like the personal things that are being said because knowing these two people, they're not that way; I know that. Equal representation means my vote counts as much even though I'm not in Iraq and fighting like Mr. Thorson. I do appreciate him doing that. You need to pay attention to everybody and everybody's vote does count and I think we're all equally represented right now. I'm against this because we live in a world where we work with software, we work with different things. I don't want to see any mistakes made and they would not be made and they would not be made because Zona Lenhart does her job well and thoroughly and so does Diana Killian. This has nothing to do with Democrats at least as far as I am concerned. So I vote against. I think you should say no and put it off until we need to.

Dave Cortinas, 1807 West Yakima Avenue. I was going to come as a newspaper media person and report in my newspaper but it's only a hearing with no vote going to happen so instead I wanted to come as a citizen and listen to what was being said because not everything you hear in the streets is always positive. I think my newspaper supported each and every one of you (indicating the three commissioners) with endorsements. That tells you there was difference, the opposite as to political lines.

I have two nephews that just came back, one from Afghanistan and one from Iraq. With all due respect to the military, I think it doesn't have anything to do with what we're doing here in the county. Last night I was with two farmers north of us in Pasco who can't be here today. They don't support ramrodding a change this late. The elections are almost here. It's just way too late.

If you act today or the next time you come together -- And I know you made changes in your schedules to be here today. That shows that you're not ignoring the community as was said earlier today, that if you don't do anything you're ignoring the voters. I don't believe you're ignoring anybody by you changing your schedules. You are listening to what we want to do and it's your decision to do what is right. Ramrodding

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and changing the schedule and re-educating the community in the districts, it's going to be tough to let everyone know in the entire city and county of who and what they're voting for, especially for those who don't speak English that are US citizens. I just got back from Yakima where a whole bunch of Asians and Latinos became citizens today. Eight of them fought in the war and came back and became citizens.

By redistricting this late in the game because we have some political-clout people who come in and attack you personally -- which offends me because I know I voted for all of you. It offends me to have people come in here and offend you. It's nothing about money. It's nothing about your position as a commissioner. I think all three of you are doing a wonderful job and you listen to people. That's why the county is doing as well as it is because you are listening to the people and you are doing a good job. I wouldn't allow people with political clout to help you make up your mind. I think you know how to make up your mind. I think by ramrodding this down voters' throats by redistricting is a mistake.

I'd have to support Zona Lenhart about putting pressure on that office, which they're already busy. This is going to take a lot of work and time for that office to be able to send everything out at the right time to the right people. I think it would be making a mistake by putting the pressure on that office to spend the kind of money they're going to have to spend to be able to make changes to the district.

I'd encourage the three of you to put a hold on it, come back with a good thought in mind instead of just listening and ramrodding this redistricting down the voters' throats.

Mr. Chassin asked for permission to speak again. Mr. Koch said we have a couple minutes.

Mr. Chassin said in answer to the question of how many tracts we had, in the 2000 census there were nine tracts. Some of the tracts were set after the 2000 census based on the data so they're set with information for that region in District 3 which at the time had almost nobody in it. So I have to question the validity of any extrapolation based on particularly those tracts in District 3 that we would be talking about moving because the

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census data for that is probably no longer consistent with the population you are looking at now. Although I understand a lot about how those calculations get made, that's why I question the validity and would be very concerned about trying to make a statistical extrapolation based on that. I know there are a lot of people very uncomfortable about doing statistical sampling for the census and this is essentially what we're talking about doing here. I think you need to think carefully about that.

I want to make one point. Although I probably don't have to tell you this -- I'm sure you know how the election works. But it's pretty apparent from the comments being made here that a lot of people here don't understand the process for the commissioners' election. The voting in the primaries is only what's done by the district. Nobody is disenfranchised by redistricting. Everyone gets to vote for all of you in the election. Mr. Chassin restated it: There's no disenfranchisement that takes place here. All we're doing is changing what happens in the primary which is why it's all the more important to be careful about what we're doing today because the primary is just over the horizon and we're messing around with stuff and it's very clear in my mind that we're messing around with it in order to give people the ability to short circuit the election cycle and fast cycle their ability to run. I think that's wrong. It's not what the process is about. The process is about making sure that the representation in the general election is fair and balanced. I don't think we have a concern about that. We know it will be.

Matt Watkins, 8616 Massey Drive. There's been a lot of talk today about this becoming emotional. It really has become emotional. The problem I see though is that this is an issue that isn't this week or last week or three or four months ago. It is an issue that has at least occurred since 2006 and has also been longer. The thing that should have been done should have been done a year or more ago. The fact that we're now up against the clock I think represents the frustration that it wasn't done. I don't know of the motivations of all of that but I know there is a big difference between disenfranchisement of voters. This very much is an issue about who could potentially run. I do know that the idea that the one district is a problem and the other two aren't is totally erroneous. The fact is that Ms. Corkrum's district is 255% larger than another district. That is a

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significant difference. I think Mr. Koch's district is over 250% larger than _____. All three are synonymous. It's not one or the other.

I also came today and took off work because I read that you wanted to make sure the people came out. I would just also mention there are people in the hallway and this is an important issue and it's become emotional because maybe something should have been done earlier. So we'll look to see what you do to make the best of a bad situation and hopefully we'll have something that works for everyone.

Jan Nuenschwander, 6303 Wrigley Drive. I'm a new resident of Pasco but have been in the Tri-Cities area for many years. I hear some problems. There is a problem. The band-aid is not going to fix it by telling us that we'll wait and then wait some more times. I know the members of the Commission are aware of how many people live where. We get paid money from the state and federal money based upon population so we keep our population accurate. This is an action that has been put off too long. I'm sorry some are upset. The problem needs to be fixed. I would encourage the commissioners to go ahead and do the thing that's correct. We have two people. I'm not sure why that's going to upset them. We can get the information out. It can be done as it should have been done.

Lee Barrow, 511 East Davis, Connell. I hadn't planned on speaking but I heard someone talk about ramrodding this through. I think Mr. Miller started this two years ago. I don't think that's ramrodding. I'm for the redistricting but I think some people are probably right, that it's too late and it should have been done long ago. My frustration is that it's come to this point and that's basically what I wanted to let you know.

Shawn Sant asked to speak briefly. Mr. Koch said that will be the last speaker.

Mr. Sant said as everybody has addressed, we have a couple of concerns. Can we make a rational decision on the information we have based on population? I think it's important because when we are talking about our primary system the way it is, that's the election that this whole redistricting issue focuses on is the primary because you can't win in the general election unless you win in the primary. Well, you can't run in the primary if your district is still within these boundaries. That's why I think time is of the essence.

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We need to change it because if you wait until after this filing period then you might take away potentially my right to vote. Maybe I don't like Mr. Miller and I want to run against him but you're going to tell me we're going to change it after this filing period so now you're going to take me out of District 3 which is up for election in 2010 and now I have to wait for 2012. That's really what the point comes down to is that this has gone on for so long. You can remedy it. There is time to remedy it. Set it for a vote next week because if you make the changes and the filing period is still open -- again, we're expanding the boundaries. I think that's an important distinction. We're not saying anybody in District 1 or 2 -- I don't care if there are 10 people that have already filed. Nothing is going to change -- With this proposal, if you adopt Draft 4 or my understanding is if you adopt any of them, you've expanded those regions. Districts 1 and 2 are growing. So 10 people could have filed, five people in each district. It's not going to change a darn thing about their filing because you're actually expanding the boundaries. That's the question there is that people have filed. You're simply enlarging the boundaries. On District 3, basically District 3 is the one that's losing. Frankly I feel that with the majority of the residents living in District 3, we will be the losers if you don't adopt the new plan this filing period. That's really the people that are going to be affected.

The disenfranchisement is going to be by instead of adopting it and expanding boundaries, the next election cycle, guess what? You basically are restricting the boundaries. That's what I think the whole discussion has been about. If you do it now you're allowing more people to file, more people to run. If you do it next cycle, you're basically shrinking from my boundaries.

Mr. Koch said that will end today's public hearing. I appreciate everyone coming in and bringing their views. There will be a meeting on May 29 at 9:00 am.

Mr. Sant asked if the meeting is set to determine whether there is a vote on one of the drafts. Mr. Koch said yes.

Adjourned at 5:02 pm.

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There being no further business, the Franklin County Board of Commissioners meeting was adjourned until May 28, 2008.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
FRANKLIN COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Chairman

Chairman Pro Tem

Member

Attest:

Clerk to the Board

Approved and signed June 4, 2008.