

Committee Report: SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON REDISTRICTING (MAY 2022)

This is the May 2022 monthly report of the FLCA's Special Committee on Redistricting.

Background:

Starting September 2021, the Council of the District of Columbia began its once-every-ten-year redistricting process. Normally, decennial redistricting begins in April, but a five-month delay in the release of 2020 Census data pushed the start back to September.

Chairman Phil Mendelson appointed a subcommittee to direct the Council's redistricting work, consisting of three at-large members: Elissa Silverman, who chaired the subcommittee, Anita Bonds, and Christina Henderson. Using data from the 2020 Census, the subcommittee was charged with making recommendations to the full Council on redrawing all 8 ward boundaries of the District of Columbia to ensure balanced ward populations and representation on the D.C. Council.

The subcommittee, along with ward-specific task forces, were also charged with making recommendations for redrawing Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) and Single Member District (SMD) boundaries to meet similar balancing and fair representation goals.

Recommendations On Ward Boundaries:

After a four month long process, new ward boundaries were unanimously approved on a second vote by the DC Council with one last-minute change. Ward 7 Councilmember Vincent Gray (D), who had been ill, did not attend either session.

An amendment put forward a second time by Ward 5 Councilmember Kenyan McDuffie was passed 7-5 on the second vote after extensive and sometimes heated advocacy by Ward 5 residents. Ward 2 Councilmember Brook Pinto voted for the amendment Dec. 21 after voting against it on Dec. 7. The redistricting map allocated the area around the Armed Forces Retirement Home and Children's Washington Hospital to Ward 1; the amendment restored it back to Ward 5.

Hearings On ANC & Single Member District Boundaries

The timeline for drawing ANC and SMD boundaries was/is as follows:

- January 2022: Ward task forces begin meeting
- April 1, 2022: Ward task force reports due to the Council
- April 7, 2022: First Council hearing on ANC and SMD boundaries
- April 28, 2022: Second Council hearing on ANC and SMD boundaries

- Mid-May 2022: Subcommittee vote on ANC and SMD boundaries bill
- May 24/June 7, 2022: full Council votes on ANC and SMD boundaries bill

According to District law, the redrawing of the Advisory Neighborhood Commission boundaries begins with the creation of eight ward-level task forces, one for each ward. Each task force is charged with drafting new recommended boundaries, which it must submit to the Council by April 1, 2022. Each ward Council-member appoints the members for the task force for his or her ward,

One Fort Lincoln Resident was selected for the Ward 5 Redistricting Task Force. He is Adrian Jordan, a resident of The Reserves at Dakota Crossing:



Another Fort Lincoln resident, while not on the Ward 5 Task Force, followed the ANC/SMD meetings of the Task Force closely. Her name is Tequia Hicks Delgado, a resident of The Village at Dakota Crossing:



[In January of 2022 Ms. Hicks Delgado filed a petition to complete Pierre Hines' term as the SMD Commissioner for ANC 5C. No other petitions were filed. The signatures on her petition have been verified, and she will be sworn in the week of April 10-16, 2022.]

The Ward 5 task force met several times over the months of January, February and March of 2022, before submitting their final recommendations to a Subcommittee of the D.C. Council. The task force meetings were open to the public. The final SMD map, approved by the Ward 5 task force by a vote of 16-0-1, is below:



It proposed two complete SMDs for Fort Lincoln (SMD 5C03 and SMD 5C01), instead of the 1-1/8th SMDs that Fort Lincoln now has as a result of the 2010 census. However, it carved out the northwest section of Fort Lincoln (Pin-view Court, 35th Street and part of Summit Village) and lumped that area with the Woodridge community, as part of SMD 5C02. And, at the last minute, the division of the two SMDs in Fort Lincoln, along Fort Lincoln Drive, was changed. And, instead, the line was redrawn to place Fort Lincoln Park in SMD 5C01.

The D.C. Council Subcommittee on Redistricting held a hearing on the proposed map on April 7, 2022. The final map was not circulated in time for the FLCA's monthly meeting and so FLCA President Pearson testified in his individual capacity, only, regarding the map.

Mr. Jordan supported the map but testified that, although it would place Fort Lincoln's SMDs over the 1,900-2,100 ceiling, a "population exception" should be made to keep all of Fort Lincoln in either SMD 5C03 or SMD 5C01.

During his testimony, Mr. Pearson provided a historical overview of the terms on which the federal government agreed to convey the 360-acre Fort Lincoln planned community to the District of Columbia, for development by a private developer. An essential premise was that the land would remain intact to demonstrate that it is possible for an economically and racially diverse community to thrive. Splintering off a key part of Fort Lincoln would be inconsistent with the terms of the unprecedented land grant the federal government made, and the reasons it made it.

Ms. Hicks Delgado presented the most comprehensive testimony, also opposing the splintering of the northwest portion of Fort Lincoln, but additionally opposing the last-minute change of the SMD dividing line along Fort Lincoln Drive. She detailed the reasons why Fort Lincoln Park, which is elevated and directly impacts The Village at Dakota Crossing environmentally, should be in SMD 5C03.

Final Stages of ANC/SMD Process:

A second Council hearing on ANC and SMD boundaries took place on April 28, 2022. In mid-May, the Council's Subcommittee on Redistricting will vote on an ANC and SMD boundaries bill. The full Council then plans to have an initial reading of the bill by May 24, and a final reading and vote no later than June 7.

The final boundaries in the approved law will be in effect for the November 2022 elections. And so if the map stays as is, Fort Lincoln residents below Fort Lincoln Drive (with the exception of residents of the Petersburg Apartments) will vote for one ANC representative (SMD 5C01). And Fort Lincoln residents above Fort Lincoln Drive (including residents of the Petersburg Apartments) will vote for a different ANC representative (SMD 5C03).