CITY OF BRIDGEPORT
REDISTRICTING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING
MAY 16, 2023

ATTENDANCE: Jeanette Herron, Co-chair; Tyler Mack, Rosalina Roman-Christy, Anthony Minutolo, Michael Garrett

OTHERS: Atty. James Maye; Kim Brace, Consultant; Anthony Paoletto, Special Projects Manager; Council Member Maria Pereira, City Clerk Lydia Martinez; Linda Grace, Republican Registrar of Voters; Judge Carmen Lopez

CALL TO ORDER

Co-chair Herron called the public hearing to order at 6:05 p.m. A quorum was present.

Ms. Martinez came forward and read the following into the record.

> Good evening. My name is Lydia Martinez. I am the Bridgeport City Clerk and I am here this evening to respectfully request a change in your proposed Plan 2.
>
> The change which I suggest involves the 137th District and the 139th District.
>
> By making my requested change, you will bring both districts closer to the "Target population" of 14,936 voters.
>
> You will also ensure that the process of Redistricting will not be used as a vehicle for recrimination, or personal political agendas.
>
> The map approved by the City Council, which prompted the litigation that I brought, along with Council Member Maria Pereira was seriously flawed.
>
> Now is the time for corrective action.
>
> This Commission was not designed to ratified errors made by the City last year.
>
> But that is precisely what you will be doing if you remove certain voters along Seaview Avenue from the 137th District and transfer them to the 139th District.
>
> I am one of those people but this is not a personal request.
>
> Rather I am asking you to affirm the "Rule of Law" and not to sanction a transfer of voters into the 139th District, when that district already exceeds the target population.

This is a simple case of elementary mathematics.

By adding 302 votes to District 137, the total number in that District, there will be 14,894.

By subtracting 302 votes, from the 15,231 voters in District 139, there will be 14,929 voters in District 139.

Both Districts will be very close to the target population which has been established.

By placing theses 32 voters in District 137, you will be sending a clear message.

Petty vendettas and personal animosities have no place in the critical process of drawing legislative Districts.

Thank you and I hope that you will do the right thing.

Ms. Martinez then stated that she would like to have her remarks from the May 4th meeting included in the record:

Memo
To: Members of the Bridgeport Commission on Redistricting.
From: Lydia Martinez, City Clerk City of Bridgeport
Date: May 4, 2023

It is important to remember that this Commission was created because of litigation filed in the Superior Court challenging the legality of the City Council's Redistricting of the City Council Districts.

The plaintiffs in the litigation included Maria Pereira and the undersigned, Lydia Martinez.

In March of this year, the City Council approved a resolution stating that the remedy/relief that was requested in the lawsuit should be granted. In other words, the City Council agreed with the claims in the lawsuit and therefore the process was to begin again.

This is an admission that errors were committed in the original approval of the redistricting plans. Decisions were made in a manner to settle political scores rather than to fairly and correctly set forth a redistricting plan designed to provide the City of Bridgeport with a balanced redistricting map.

The purpose of the redistricting does not include an authorization to get even or exact vengeance upon political opponents. Rather it is to establish a target population per

district and to make "each such district as equal in population to each other such district as possible," as required by our City Charter.

The population of District 137 was reduced by the new map approved by the City Council, even though the population of District 137 was already less than the target population.

The population removed from District 137 was added to District 139, which already exceeded the target population without the additional voters.

The new map moved my residence into the larger District 139. This had the effect of diluting the effectiveness of my vote for City Council as well as the votes of those who are similarly situated.

The objective of this Commission is to correct the errors in the initial City Council action which prompted the litigation in the first place.

This Commission was not designed to ratify the original errors made by the City Council. Rather it was established to correct those errors so that the City of Bridgeport will be in compliance with the law.

The issue here is not about personalities, but about the rule of law.

Thank you.

Ms. Martinez also submitted a document titled "City of Bridgeport City Council Districts Ranked by Population Target Population for City Council Districts: 14,936 Voters as of May 16, 2023, as set forth in Plan 2."

[This document is included on the following page.]

CITY OF BRIDGEPORT CITY COUNCIL DISTRICTS RANKED BY POPULATION
TARGET POPULATION FOR CITY COUNCIL DISTRICTS: 14,936 VOTERS
AS OF MAY 16, 2023, AS SET FORTH IN PLAN 2*

1. DISTRICT 133	15,349 (+2.77%)
2. DISTRICT 135	15,293 (+2.39%)
3. DISTRICT 134	15,269 (+2.23%)
4. DISTRICT 139	15,231 (+1.98%)
5. DISTRICT 136	15,042 (+ 0.71%)
6. DISTRICT 132	14,903 (-0.222%)
7. DISTRICT 138	14,826 (-0.74%)
8. DISTRICT 137	14,594 (-2.29%)
9. DISTRICT 130	14,441 (-3.31%)
10. DISTRICT 131	14,412 (-3.51%)

*Submitted by City Clerk Lydia Martinez (5/16/2023)

Council Member Maria Pereira then came forward and read the following statement into the record.

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Good evening Commissioners,

The purpose of my testimony is not to change any of your minds this evening as it is pretty clear you are determined to approve clearly gerrymandered City Council maps. The purpose of my testimony is to preserve the record of our objections prior to your vote.

Although Mr. Brace shared with you at your first meeting that he had "discovered" an additional 860 residents when the 2020 Census was completed in November 2020, the data was released to CT in August 2021, and Mr. Brace created the maps that the City Council illegally approved on June 28, 2022, I did not hear one of you question how 860 additional residents can miraculously appear two and half years after the 2020 Census ended.

The data from the illegally approved maps showed the 138th district had 14,634 residents including the correctional population with the 138th district still being under populated by 302 residents or -1.9% and the 139th district had 15,423 residents over by 487 residents or + 3.3%.

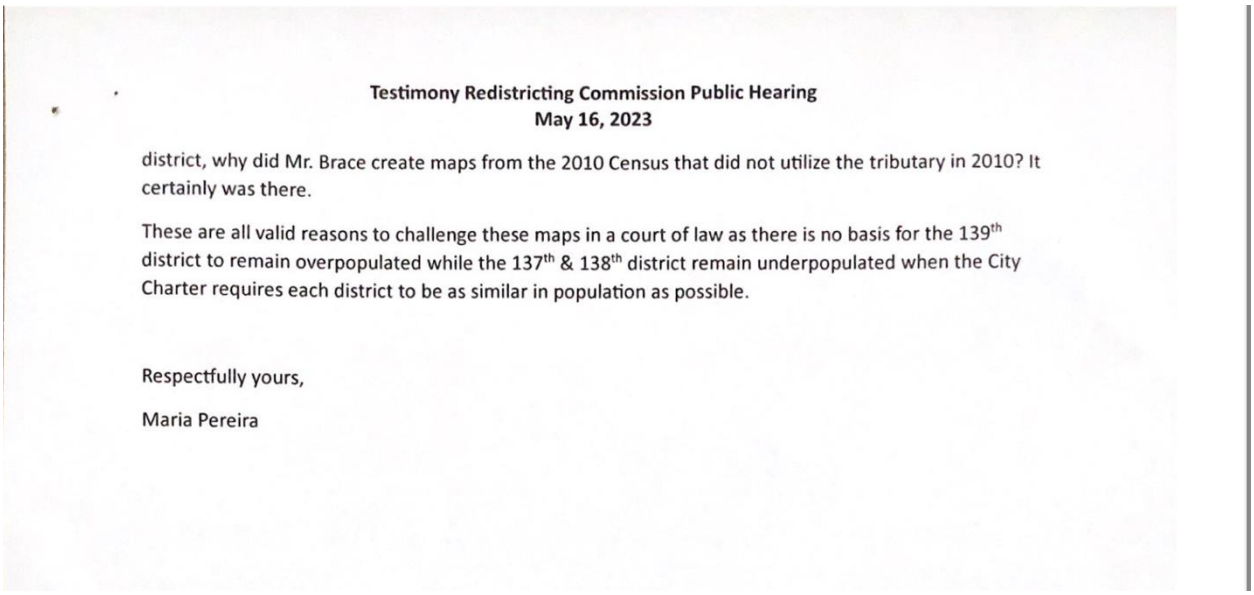
After the sudden amazing appearance of 860 residents, and after removing the sliver of the 135th district residents that were placed in the 138th district in the illegal June 2022 maps, somehow the 138th district population has now increased to 14,826 residents with an additional 192 residents. The 139th district map is exactly the same as the illegal June 2022 map, yet the population has been reduced by 192 residents, the exact same amount that the 138th district increased by. How is this possible if not a single change occurred in the district lines between the illegal June maps & the maps before you today.

Although I was short 302 residents or -1.9 %, and now lost all the residents that had been moved from the 135th district in June, somehow the maps before you tonight show I am only short 130 residents or -0.74%. The differential from the target population should have increased not been reduced.

The 139th maps have no changes when compared to the illegal June 2022 maps, yet it is now showing a reduction of residents with only 15,231 or +295 residents or +1.8 %. Instead of 15,423 residents or over by 487 residents. Exactly 192 residents disappeared from the 139th district.

The Census Block map for the last block of Bond St., Stewart St., and Palisade Ave. shows 1, 259 residents. How is that possible when Behavioral Health was closed in 2019 with a loss of 240 beds and Bridgeport Manor was closed in Spring 2020 with a loss of 70 beds totalling a loss of 310 residents. Augustana Homes has 180 units with the vast majority housing one resident and Fireside Senior Apts. has 269 units with the vast majority housing one resident. How is it possible that only 449 units of senior & disabled housing remain on that Census Block with zero families or children residing there, yet 1,259 residents are residing in 449 units of senior housing. That would mean there was an average of 2.8 residents housed in each unit in 2020 which is not possible.

In addition, Mr. Brace told you that the portion of the 137th that borders a tributary was a "natural border" that required Lydia Martinez' portion of the 137th district to be shifted into the 139th district. If that is valid reasoning, that very same tributary originates in the 138th district bordering Bond St. where my district is being gerrymandered out of my district and into the 139th. Surely what is good for the goose is good for the gander. If the tributary is a basis to shift that portion of the 137th into the 139th



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district, why did Mr. Brace create maps from the 2010 Census that did not utilize the tributary in 2010? It certainly was there.

These are all valid reasons to challenge these maps in a court of law as there is no basis for the 139th district to remain overpopulated while the 137th & 138th district remain underpopulated when the City Charter requires each district to be as similar in population as possible.

Respectfully yours,

Maria Pereira

She concluded her remarks by saying that she had given the recording secretary a copy of her remarks to be codified in the minutes in preparation for the legal challenge.

Council Member Newton came forward to address the Committee. He said that he was a City Council Member and former State Representative. He said that the redistricting lines were not supposed be drawn based on politics, but that's what happened. It wasn't until James Holloway redrew the lines to correct the situation. The legislature changed the laws about how the prisoners were counted and the Committee incorporated those changes.

The argument here is about the schools. In the past, voters had to cross West Main, so this is a poor excuse. Now the jagged lines have been straightened out. There have been four elections at Harding High School since 2017. There was never an issue. The Committee's job is to make sure that the districts are fair.

No matter what happens, Harding will still be a precinct determined by the Registrar of Voters. There is no other school that provides parking or handicapped access. The legislature has already approved this location by the State Representatives and State Senators.

Council Member Newton requested that the Committee support this matter because 99.9% support this. Mr. Brace is an expert that has worked on this type of project all over the country. He concluded his remarks by asking the Committee to consider this matter carefully.

Judge Carmen Lopez came forward to address the Committee. She read the following statement into the record:

PUBLIC HEARING BEFORE
BRIDGEPORT COMMISSION ON REDISTRICTING
MAY 16, 2023
REMARKS OF CARMEN L. LOPEZ

GOOD EVENING,

MY NAME IS CARMEN L. LOPEZ.

I RESIDE AT 175 BALMFORTH STREET BRIDGEPORT.

ALTHOUGH I AM A MEMBER OF THE BRIDGEPORT DEMOCRATIC TOWN COMMITTEE, FOR THE 130TH DISTRICT, AS WILL SOON BECOME APPARENT, I AM SPEAKING ONLY FOR MYSELF.

THIS COMMITTEE IS CHARGED WITH AN IMPORTANT TASK, AND I URGE YOU TO RISE ABOVE THE PERSONAL AND THE PETTY, AND TO PRODUCE A PRODUCT WHICH WILL SERVE THE ENTIRE CITY.

YOU SHOULD ATTEMPT TO ENSURE THAT ALL DISTRICTS ARE AS CLOSE AS POSSIBLE TO THE "TARGET POPULATION" OF 14, 936, AS REQUIRED BY OUR CITY CHARTER AND THE PRINCIPLE OF "ONE PERSON ONE VOTE."

THIS COMMISSION WAS FORMED DUE TO THE LEGAL ACTION INITIATED BY CITY CLERK LYDIA MARTINEZ AND COUNCIL MEMBER MARIA PEREIRA.

I COMMEND THEM FOR THEIR EFFORTS.

I AM SURE THAT OUR CITY CLERK WILL EXPLAIN THE ADJUSTMENT PROPOSED IN PLAN 2, BETWEEN THE 137TH DISTRICT AND THE 139TH DISTRICT; THE INFAMOUS, ***"HAYDEE-MANDER***, OPPOSED TO GERRYMANDER, AS IT SHOULD BE KNOWN.

I WILL NOT DISCUSS THAT TOPIC.

INSTEAD, I WOULD LIKE TO FOCUS ON THE PROPOSED DISTRICTS IN THE WEST END, DISTRICT 130, 131, 132 AND 133.

THERE ARE FEW CHANGES IN THESE DISTRICTS, AND IT IS FAIR TO ASK WHY?

1

MY DISTRICT, THE 130TH, WHICH INCLUDES BLACK ROCK, HAS A POPULATION OF 14,441, SLIGHTLY MORE THAN THE NEIGHBORING SOUTH END DISTRICT, NUMBER 131, WHICH CONTAINS 14, 412 RESIDENTS, ACCORDING TO YOUR PLAN 2.

BOTH ARE WELL BELOW THE 14, 936 TARGET, AND, WHEN COMBINED, THEY ARE 1,019, LESS THAN THE TARGET.

THERE IS NO CHANGE WHICH HAS BEEN PROPOSED DESIGNED TO RECTIFY THIS MATHAMATICAL DISPARITY, PROBABLY BECAUSE NO CORRECTION CAN BE MADE WITHOUT IMPACTING THE 132ND DISTRICT.

AND THAT IS THE RUB.

PLAN 2, WITH ONE INSIGNIFICANT EXCEPTION SEEMS TO HAVE HUNG A **"DO NOT DISTURB"** SIGN ON THE 132ND DISTRICT, WHERE MAYORAL AIDE THOMAS GAUDETT, AN ADVISOR TO THIS COMMISSION, WEARS ANOTHER HAT; THAT OF DISTRICT LEADER.

SHOULDN'T THIS COMMITTEE AND ITS PAID CONSULTANT AT LEAST CONSIDER ADDING RESIDENTS TO THE 130TH AND 131ST DISTRICTS, IN ORDER TO ADDRESS THE MATHAMATICAL IMBALANCE.

ALSO, IN SHARP CONTRAST TO DISTRICTS 130 AND 131, THE 133RD DISTRICT REPRESENTED ON THE CITY COUNCIL BY THIS COMMITTEE'S CO-CHAIR, CONTAINS MORE PEOPLE THAN ANY PROPOSED DISTRICT: A TOTAL POPULATION OF 15, 349.

THIS FIGURE IS 2.77% ABOVE THE TARGET.

HAS ANYBODY BOTHERED TO ASK WHY?

THE MAKEUP OF THIS COMMITTEE IS THEORTICALLY DESIGNED TO MINIMIZE PARTISANSHIP.

THE PRESENCE OF THREE DEMOCRATS AND THREE REPUBLICANS SHOULD ENSURE THAT THE MINORITY IS HEARD.

HOWEVER, BECAUSE THIS IS BRIDGEPORT AND MINORITY REPUBLICANS ARE BOTH INVISIBLE AND IRRELEVANT, I FEEL CONFIDENT IN PREDICTING A UNANIMOUS VOTE FOR ALL THINGS PROMOTING THE BRIDGEPORT DEMOCRATIC MACHINE AND THE COUNCIL LEADERSHIP.

PERHAPS YOU CAN PROVE ME WRONG. THANK YOU FOR LISTENING.

At the conclusion of Judge Lopez's remarks, Council Member Herron asked if there was anyone else present who wished to speak to the Committee regarding the proposed Redistricting. Hearing none, Council Member Herron closed the public hearing at 6:26 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Council Member Herron adjourned the meeting at 6:27 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Telesco Secretarial Services