



Albany County Redistricting Commission (ACRC)

Progress Report to the Public: Number 1, February 7, 2022

Pursuant to Section 207 of the Albany County Charter (as amended by Local Law 8 of 2019*), the initial four appointees to the ACRC met on September 2, 2021. These members are: Joan Ramsey (appointed by the Legislative Black Caucus Chair), Mark McCumber (appointed by the Legislature Minority Leader), Sita Subbaram (appointed by the Legislature Chair), and Thomas Clingan (appointed by the Legislature Majority Leader.) The purpose of the ACRC is to propose redistricting maps that will define the districts for the Albany County Legislative elections for the next decade.

The first task was to review questionnaires and resumes for appointment to the 5 other seats on the Commission from volunteer submissions via the County website. In the interest of completing this process rapidly, ACRC met via Zoom on September 16, 20, and 27 (including interviews.) The initial four then appointed Julia Reeb, Larry Volk, Leif Hartmark, Patricia Sibilia, and Warren E. Hamilton on September 28, and the first meeting of the full nine members was held on October 4, when Larry Volk was selected as Chair. The ACRC official website is <https://tinyurl.com/AlbanyCountyRedistricting> and additional information about each ACRC member can be found at <https://tinyurl.com/ACRCcommissioners>

ACRC established a weekly Zoom meeting time of Mondays at 4 pm until at least 5 pm, beginning on October 18 and continuing every week up to the present date (twenty meetings of the full ACRC as of February 7.) Initial tasks included (1) the appointment by ACRC on October 28 of three initial members (Adrienne Smith Kisse, Keshana Owens Cody and Marie Allen Campbell) to the Majority Minority District (MMD) subcommittee pursuant to subsection D3 of Local Law 8; (2) establishing a common email address (redistrictingcommission@albanycountyny.gov); (3) setting up a means to securely share documents and information; (4) preparing Requests for Proposals (RFPs) to hire both legal counsel and mapping services; and (5) hiring two graduate student interns as part-time staff to the ACRC.

We have followed Albany County's procurement policies in selecting ACRC legal counsel and mapping services; the County's Contracts Administration Board at its 1/10/2022 meeting approved contracts with NY Law School's New York Census and Redistricting Institute (Jeffrey M. Wice) as counsel and Applied Geographics Inc. as mapping contractor, and contracts have been signed by both organizations. Both contractors have excellent reputations in the field of redistricting, and have indicated a readiness to begin work immediately.

Our first Joint Public Hearing will be held online on Tuesday, March 8, 2022, from 4 to 7 pm. This first hearing is a "listening session" and is being held before any maps are drafted to give the public the chance to address both the ACRC and the MMD about the redistricting of the Albany County Legislature. The ACRC and MMD members would particularly like to hear from members of the public on their hopes, fears, concerns and communities of interest to be considered in the redistricting process. Further information (including how to register to speak, or to submit comments) will be posted on our website by February 22.

ACRC's preferred timetable is to complete work by the end of June 2022, with the understanding that unforeseen circumstances could delay this process until the end of August. Local Law 8's section L requires the Commission to submit our final report (accompanied by a proposed Local Law that details each of the 39 revised legislative districts) to the Clerk of the Legislature.

ACRC is required by Local Law 8 to hold at least four public hearings, and the MMD will also hold its own public hearings.

ACRC and the MMD Subcommittee will both be receiving initial briefings from our counsel and mapping contractors, including the impact of the new State law (Chapter 516 of the Laws of 2021, signed 10/27/2021) setting new standards for the drawing of County Legislative districts for all counties in New York State outside the City of New York.

Local Law 8 requires ACRC and the MMD to work closely together, and to that end all MMD subcommittee members have been encouraged to attend the weekly Zoom meetings of the ACRC. The MMD's own tasks included appointing a further four members as well as contracting for its own legal counsel and mapping services. Local Law 8's section D.4. assigns very specific tasks to the MMD, which is to report its findings to the ACRC when the MMD completes its work.

ACRC acknowledges and appreciates the assistance provided by numerous Albany County departments in facilitating our activities, including the Clerk of the Legislature, County Attorney, Information Services, Human Resources and Purchasing. especially given the extraordinary demands placed on the County workforce by the ongoing pandemic.

*The full text of Local Law 8 for 2019 (Albany County Charter, Section 207) along with a Guide and an FAQ is available online at <https://tinyurl.com/AlbanyCountyRedistricting>