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The City of New York
Community Board 8 Manhattan
Voting Reform Task Force
Tuesday, March 29, 2022 - 6:30 PM
This meeting was conducted via Zoom

Minutes:

Present: Shari Weiner, Anthony Cohn, Ed Hertzog, Elaine Walsh, Michelle Bermbaum, Rita Popper, Alida Camp, Gayle Baron.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30.

The meeting was called to order by Co-Chair Shari Weiner. She stated that though we are all familiar with federal and state redistricting, we may not be aware that the New York City Council districts are also going to be redistricted, so she has invited a speaker to inform us about the City Council redistricting process.

Shari introduced our speaker, Dan Kaminsky, who was the policy manager for Citizens Union Foundation. Dan's presentation included the following:

1. The basics of Council redistricting.
2. Why engaging in the Council redistricting process is important.
3. An overview of the process and the criteria used to draw the maps.
4. How to look at and create your own maps.
5. How to testify before the Council's districting commission.
6. The essential elements of an affected testimony.

After going through an overview of the process, Dan took us through the impact that redistricting will have on City Council districts 4 and 5 which are in CB8. The "ideal population" number for each Council district is arrived at by taking the total population of New York City 8,104,190 divided by the 51 City Council districts. This came up with an ideal number of 172,881 per district plus a deviation permitted allowing districts to have a population of approximately 177,000 people.

The 2020 census number for District 4 is 184,033 with the permitted a maximum of 177,000, the district needs to shed 7,000 individuals from its population. In District 5, the current population is 181,432, so its population is 4,000 over the ideal population.

After Dan's presentation, the members of the Voting Reform Task Force discussed whether or not we thought it was appropriate for CB8 to be involved in the redistricting process. The consensus was that as we are aware that District 4 and District 5 boundary lines will be moved it was important to ensure that the Districting Commission and the City Council set up a district to be in conformity with the criteria set for redistricting. These criteria are racial equality, the district has to be contiguous, the district should be within one county, the ethnic, racial and economic groups should be kept together, the district should be compact, it should prevent partisan gerrymandering and avoid oddly shaped districts.

The newly appointed 15-member Districting Commission has to report its recommendations by June 7th. Both before that date and subsequent to that, the public will be invited to testify and give input.

Once the Task Force does its research and prepares a proposal, it will be presented to the full Board to get authorization to provide public testimony on behalf of CB8.

At the April 13th Board meeting, Shari will announce this endeavor by the Voting Task Force and will invite other members of Community Board 8 to join us.

Anthony Cohn and Shari Weiner, Co-Chairs