

# 1. Lessons Learned – Observations/Suggestions - to be removed - Considerations

- FEEDBACK FROM LEGISLATURE TO ACRC. In the event that the County Legislature rejects the Commission's proposal, Local Law 8 permits the Legislature to provide reasons and suggestions. Without input from the Legislature any revision by the Commission and the Subcommittee is unlikely to correct flaws found by the Legislature unless specific feedback is provided. The Legislature may wish to amend Local Law 8 to require such feedback similar to that required in the event of a veto by the County Executive.
- POTENTIAL CHANGES TO LEGISLATION current law, the first Legislative election following the 2030 census will be in 2031. It will be critically important that volunteers be sought for positions on the Commission and the Subcommittee, and appointments made, early in 2030 – even before census results are available – so that the bodies have both completed their organizational and administrative functions and be in a position to begin working on public engagement and mapping as soon as census data is available.
- Finding a legal resource proved difficult. While it was fortuitous that we were approached by and accepted an expert in redistricting, we recognized that we would have to engage additional resources should litigation occur. Consideration should be given early on how to better identify and approach potential legal resources.
- (I BELIEVE THE LEGISLATION MANDATED SEPARATE MAPPERS, BUT NOT COUNSEL. AT OUR RECENT MEETING, PROFESSOR WICE MADE SOME EXCELLENT COMMENTS THAT I DID NOT CAPTURE ABOUT THIS SUBJECT) The proprietary online mapping software, MORE, made available via AppGeo was positioned as being a tool that both the Commissioners and the public could use for online mapping. Early submissions of maps from the public were done via the industry standard freeware tools (e.g., Dave's Redistricting), and later when done via MORE the public users did not always complete the process of submission to the public correctly. Very

few Commissioners became proficient in using MORe as its interface is not very intuitive. The Commission made the decision when publishing their versions of maps to include “shapefiles” which could be imported into the industry standard tools.

- [POTENTIAL CHANGES TO OPERATING PROCEDURES OF ACRC](#)
- Suggested defined sub-groups:

Secretary: Responsible for Minutes of all meetings and tacking decisions and open items.

1. Legal Counsel RFP (Creating of RFP, Evaluation of Responses, Coordination/Planning with firm)
2. Mapping RFP/Evaluation (Creating of RFP, Evaluation of Responses, Coordination/Planning with firm)
3. Interns (Hiring, Managing)
4. Website (development and maintenance Technology: Responsible Commission’s website and for liaison with the County web master or equivalent and interface with County staff on technology and communication functions of the Commission.)
5. Budget/Finances The Current Commission and Subcommittee established a joint budget committee to recommend budgets for each body and the allocation of resources between the two bodies, and this process worked well. However, reporting and tracking of expenses proved to be cumbersome. One member of each body should be designated with oversight of the budget and expenditures of that body. A formal orientation to the County’s accounting and budgeting system is needed. In addition, all expenses by each body need to be reported to the respective member with budget oversight responsibility for information, and on a timely basis.
6. Public Hearings
7. Public Engagement / Publicity - Consideration should be given to hiring or contracting for a public information officer to facilitate public announcements and dissemination of information about the Commission and it’s work via print, electronic and social media.

- Commissioners and Subcommittee members should understand the commitment required in undertaking their positions (THIS CANNOT BE CONFIRMED AND IS ESSENTIALLY EDITORIALIZING).
- It is the experience of the 2020 Commission that weekly meetings really are essential to completing the work in a reasonable time. It is recommended that regular meeting times be established and that all understand that their regular attendance is critical to carrying out the work.(DITTO. THIS CANNOT BE CONFIRMED AND IS ESSENTIALLY EDITORIALIZING. ARE WE PLANNING TO MAKE PEOPLE SIGN A PLEDGE? THAT IS MICRO MANAGING GROWN ADULTS).
- Commission appointees should determine a set of prospective time slots for such meetings, and in considering candidates for the remaining appointments, should take each candidate's availability into account in making these appointments. (DITTO. THIS WAS DONE AS PART OF THE PROCESS).
- Commissioners are part-time volunteers who don't necessarily have the skills or time to plan out the entire process, manage the coordination with the various departments needed for support in Albany, and the technical skills required to drive the process in an efficient manner, and create the work items needed (Ads, Flyers, Legislative Report, etc.). While interns were helpful in providing some support, having a full-time experienced resource would allow the process to be smoother and more time efficient. This full-time position should be budgeted for and hired early as they could be helpful beginning with the coordination in the selection of the Commissioners.
- As the Commission is essentially a new "department", having someone available to the Commission as a resource who understands the process and procedures of conducting business in Albany County government and who can escalate when needed is critical to progressing the work on a timely basis.
- The Commission and Subcommittee will require assistance with County **contracting processes in conducting searches for counsel and mapping consultants**. The 2020 Commission and Subcommittee received assistance from the counsel to the majority. Some more formal arrangement may be appropriate.

**Technical support from the County (Executive Branch?)** as well as administrative support from the Clerk of the Legislature are critical and contacts should be made early.

- Hours were spent communicating with staff of other County offices about updates to our website, paying bills and other administrative tasks. Newspaper advertising and other outreach materials had to be created and paid for.
- While we are grateful for the assistance of County staff in offices ranging from the Clerk of the Legislature to Information Services, and from the County Attorney's office to Purchasing, the hours spent on phone calls and emails with them were hours not spent on meeting our primary goal.
- We know of no other County board or commission whose members are expected to perform all the administrative and clerical support functions necessary to that group's mission.
- The Commission and the Subcommittee require **staff assistance** and that will also require assistance with County hiring practices and should be undertaken early in the tenure. At least part time staff will be needed to assist the volunteers on the Commission and Subcommittee. Each of them had part-time interns which were essential to carrying out our duties. Thought should also be given early on to who will be responsible for managing staff.
- When the next election for County Legislators is to be held in the year immediately following a national census, it is especially important to have the solicitation of candidates for appointment take place early in the year of the census, with initial appointments made by March of that year, so that the full Commission and MMD are constituted and ready to begin work by July. The County budget for that Census year should include personnel line-items for a full-time Director and a confidential secretary, along with a temporary help line, to be funded for the second half of said year and at least three months into the following year. Contractual account funding for counsel and for mapping services must also be appropriated. Office space and necessary equipment for said

employees should be made available prior to their July 1 starting date. Can we add a timeline graph or picture specifically emphasizing how critical it is that the MMD has to complete their maps before the final ACRC map can be drawn

- Should determine very early in the process what subgroups/ working groups need to be formed and who should be on them. (THIS WAS DONE ALREADY, AND IS A NECESSARY INTUITIVE PART OF THE PROCESS - NOT NECESSARY TO ADD THIS HERE)
- With discussion taking place in the subgroup with recommendations back to the full commission the process is more efficient. (DITTO -THIS WAS DONE ALREADY, AND IS A NECESSARY INTUITIVE PART OF THE PROCESS - NOT NECESSARY TO ADD THIS HERE) groups early on would help with balancing the responsibilities for the work ~~the~~ needed to be accomplished among the commissioners and better define ownership.

(THIS PART MAY BE DELETED, AS PROFESSOR WICE'S POINTS SEEM TO MAKE SOME OF THIS MOOT).

The next Albany County Legislature redistricting will follow the 2030 US Census, and will have a major disadvantage compared to the current redistricting. The election for the new Albany County Legislature will occur in 2031, not 2033. Redistricting will only be possible if the process begins at least a year early, in 2029. In 2029, the County Legislature should request that the County Executive include funds in the proposed 2030 County budget to enable the entire process of redistricting to be completed during calendar year 2030. This compressed time frame will make it essential that the Commission and Subcommittee each have at least one full-time professional staff position plus a temporary help line item for 2030, in addition to a contractual account

comparable after adjustment for inflation to the \$400,000 appropriated for the current redistricting.

The all-volunteer nature of the present Commission and Subcommittee has required members of both groups to spend considerable time arranging meetings and hearings; learning how to use the County's computer systems to communicate with various County offices; and performing clerical tasks. While the language of Local Law 8, Section E, states that solicitation of volunteers to serve on both bodies should begin "in the year of the census," we recommend that this solicitation begin no later than the summer of 2029, and that the four initial appointments to the Commission be approved in January of 2030. This would allow the selection of the remaining 5 members, and then the appointment of the initial 3 members of the Subcommittee, by February 2030. The full Commission would then proceed to hire staff and initiate the RFP process to select counsel and a mapping contractor. Even when expedited, we learned from experience that the County's contracting procedures require at least 3 months of work from the initial drafting of an RFP to the signing of contracts.

The census itself will be taken in April 2030, with census block populations expected to be released in early September. The Commission and Subcommittee will have very little time to draw revised districts, hold multiple public hearings and decide which plan is best – to say nothing of the time required for the County Legislature to hold its own hearing and adopt a Local Law – all presumably before the end of 2030.