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## Virginia Redistricting Commission

April 26, 2021, at 10:00 a.m.

Electronic Meeting

<https://redistricting.dls.virginia.gov/>

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The Virginia Redistricting Commission (the Commission) met virtually with Greta Harris and Mackenzie Babichenko, co-chairs, presiding.<sup>1</sup> The meeting began with opening remarks from Ms. Harris and approval of the meeting's agenda by the Commission. Materials presented at the meeting and video of the meeting are accessible through the [Commission's meetings webpage](#).

### Redistricting 101 Training; Question and Answer

*Meg Lamb, Senior Attorney, Division of Legislative Services*

Prior to the meeting, members viewed a publicly available training session in which Ms. Lamb presented an overview of the basic principles of redistricting, the census and how it relates to redistricting, legal standards and criteria, and preparations for the 2021 redistricting cycle. Members discussed the training as follows.

- Mr. Sean Kumar commented on the many directions the Commission might take when deciding the best criteria to use in determining the right path for making map decisions and the need to determine the best strategy and next steps before the census data is delivered. Senator George L. Barker agreed with Mr. Kumar's point while also emphasizing the importance of first utilizing constitutional law and the Code of Virginia (the Code), and then addressing other issues that are not specified in the Constitution or the Code. Senator Barker noted a criteria bill was passed last year that holds specified requirements for the Commission to follow. Delegate Marcus B. Simon echoed Mr. Kumar and Senator Barker's concerns while suggesting the possibility of soliciting information from different caucuses or organizations, or holding a contest where university students can submit draft maps to the Commission. Ms. Lamb encouraged the Commission to determine how it will approach the work and receive public input while stressing that it is up to the Commission to have these conversations as time gets closer to receiving the census data.
- Ms. Harris re-emphasized the goal of inclusivity in the redistricting process to ensure all Virginians agree with the Commission's work. Mr. Kumar suggested if the Commission can reach a consensus on the decisions that will need to be addressed before the census data is delivered, the purity of the redistricting process will be protected. Ms. Harris agreed with Mr. Kumar's statements by adding if the Commission is in agreement on its process, then it will depoliticize the redistricting process while making the end result purer.

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<sup>1</sup> **Members Present:** Mackenzie Babichenko, co-chair, Greta Harris, co-chair, James Abrenio, Jose Feliciano, Marvin Gilliam, Rick Harrell, Brandon Hutchins, Sean Kumar, Delegate Les R. Adams, Delegate Delores L. McQuinn, Delegate Margaret B. Ransone, Delegate Marcus B. Simon, Senator George L. Barker, Senator Mamie E. Locke, Senator Ryan T. McDougle, and Senator Stephen D. Newman.

**Members Absent:** None

## Subcommittee Proposal

*Greta Harris, Co-Chair, Virginia Redistricting Commission*

Ms. Harris detailed a proposal to create two subcommittees of the Commission in order to dive deeper and divide the critical work that needs to be completed by the Commission. The subcommittees will work in their areas of focus and then present their findings to the full Commission for review and approval. Each subcommittee will consist of eight voting members, including four legislators equally representing the House and Senate majority and minority parties and four citizen members equally representing the majority and minority leadership appointees. The subcommittee meetings will be open to the public; however, there will be no verbal public comment at the subcommittee level. The public are welcome to give verbal public comment at full Commission meetings regarding topics discussed in the subcommittee meetings. All Commission members are free to attend meetings of either subcommittee to ensure everyone can provide feedback.

### *Budget and Finance Subcommittee*

The Budget and Finance Subcommittee will develop and recommend a Commission budget and a procurement process for the necessary consultants, including legal counsel.

The recommendation for the subcommittee's membership includes:

- **Co-Chairs:** Mr. Marvin Gilliam, Jr., and Mr. Sean Kumar
- **Members:** Ms. Mackenzie Babichenko, Senator George L. Barker, Ms. Greta Harris, Senator Stephen D. Newman, Delegate Margaret B. Ransone, and Delegate Marcus B. Simon

### *Citizen Engagement Subcommittee*

The Citizen Engagement Subcommittee will develop and recommend an advertising plan for the meetings and public hearings while also coordinating a public hearing schedule.

The recommendation for the subcommittee's membership includes:

- **Co-Chairs:** Mr. James Abrenio and Mr. Richard Harrell
- **Members:** Delegate Les R. Adams, Mr. Jose Feliciano, Mr. Brandon Hutchins, Senator Mamie E. Locke, Senator Ryan T. McDougle, and Delegate Delores L. McQuinn

### *Discussion*

Delegate Delores L. McQuinn asked if there was a procedure in place for voting purposes in subcommittee meetings. There was discussion around the best way to conduct subcommittee meetings. The Commission decided each subcommittee would follow § 30-392 (A) of the Code which defines a quorum as a majority of legislative commissioners and a majority of citizen commissioners in a redistricting meeting. A quorum will consist of three legislative commissioners and three citizen commissioners in subcommittee meetings.

The Commission agreed to the establishment of the subcommittees. The co-chairs for each of the subcommittees will work with staff to establish meeting schedules and coordinate next steps.

## Public Comment

Prior to commencing the meeting's public comment period, Ms. Harris announced nine



individuals signed up to provide public comment. Public comments were limited to two minutes each for all public commenters. The public comments covered the following topics: a presentation of a redistricting strategy, accessibility of meetings, the importance of including communities of interests, and an invitation from the League of Women Voters to attend their event.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Commission will be held May 10, 2021, at 10:00 a.m.

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For more information, see the [Commission's website](#) or contact the Division of Legislative Services staff:

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