

To: Scott Benson, Chair, IGR Committee
IGR Committee Members

From: Susanne Griffin
Director, Elections. *Shg*

Date: February 9, 2004

RE: Redistricting timelines

Your committee has asked me to provide information about the timing of redistricting. Specifically you asked me to look at a scenario where, with a legislative change, Minneapolis would be allowed to redistrict before the state, and whether there would be enough time to conduct redistricting and conduct an election in the year ending in one after the Census.

In researching the timing of the 2000 Census and the subsequent redistricting process I have determined that the following time line occurred:

December 31, 2000 - Certification of Census results
March, 2001 - State received Census data
May 23, 2001 - City received data with detail necessary to conduct redistricting
December, 2001 - Charter Commission begins process for selection Redistricting Commission
March 19, 2002 - Received state plan (created by State Redistricting Court Panel)
February 12 - April 18, 2002 - City Redistricting process occurs (10 weeks)
April 26, 2002 - Precincts adopted

Based on the timing of the most recent redistricting process, it would not be possible to conduct the redistricting process in time for a fall election in the year ending in one. In the 2002 case, once the Census data was received in May, redistricting of wards and creating precinct boundaries took approximately 10 weeks, which included time for at least two required public hearings. The Elections Office needs approximately four to six weeks to identify and secure polling places after precincts are established, and to notify the public of the changes. Pursuant to Charter, polling place and precinct changes need to be published 90 days before the primary (assuming there is one). Polling places were approved in June and within legal requirements. Obviously if the City were to obtain the data in May and is required to approve polling places in early June (90 days before the election) there would not be enough time to conduct the redistricting process.

The Planning Department states that the Census Bureau released the data incrementally, but that the City received the detailed report (which was needed for redistricting) on May 23, 2001. I understand that the State received the data needed to conduct redistricting (population, race, age, etc.) from the Census in mid to late March of 2001.

If the City were allowed to redistrict before the state and assuming we could get the data in March, or earlier, the timeframe to conduct the redistricting process in time for a fall election would be possible, but very tight.

However, it would not be without challenges:

- This schedule does not allow for litigation. I am not aware of any City redistricting within the past three decades that did not result in litigation. The City Attorney's office could provide more details on some of the potential scenarios and how it might impact any ward plan that would be enacted under these circumstances.
- In 1982, state statute allowed the city to redistrict wards before the state boundaries and they did so. However, after the state completed its redistricting process, they left five places in the City where precinct boundaries were split in one to three block areas. The City was forced to seek a Court Order to allow us to rectify that situation or we would have been forced to create precincts for those one to three block areas.

In conclusion, while it may be technically possible to conduct redistricting and an election in the year ending in one after the Census, it is not advisable from a practical standpoint.

Another option would be to create legislation that requires the state and congressional redistricting to occur in the year ending in 01 in time for cities and counties to conduct redistricting. I have had a conversation with Joe Mansky, Director of Elections for Ramsey County and former Elections Director for the Secretary of State under Joan Growe. He believes that the redistricting process could be completed more quickly from the state level on down. He has drafted legislative language that would allow for a more aggressive schedule which could potentially allow cities to complete their redistricting process in years ending in one. I am willing to pursue that avenue with our IGR folks if this committee so directs, however, that scenario does not allow for litigation either.