



CITY OF BELLE ISLE, FLORIDA CITY COUNCIL AGENDA ITEM COVER SHEET

Meeting Date: November 16, 2021

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council Members

From: B. Francis, City Manager

Subject: Ordinance 21-14 Amending Commissioner Districts

Background: Section 6.06 of the City Charter requires that by the first day of the month following official certification of the decennial census of the state, the city council shall appoint eight (8) city electors, determined from the registration for the last statewide general election, who shall comprise the districting commission. Also, the equal protection clause of the United States Constitution requires that where electoral districts are used, they must be substantially equal in population so that each person's vote counts about the same.

Section 6.06 also provides a timeframe for a decision on redistricting. Within one hundred twenty (120) days of appointment, the districting commission shall file with the official designated by the council, a report containing a recommended plan for adjustment of the council district boundaries. The council shall adopt a redistricting ordinance at least ninety (90) days before the next regular city election. If the council fails to do so by such date, the report of the districting commission shall go into effect and have the effect of an ordinance. The next City election is scheduled for March 8, 2022.

Belle Isle uses election districts and therefore we are legally required to consider redistricting every 10 years following the U.S. decennial census to maintain a population balance among electoral districts. The resulting council district boundaries must be balanced in population in accordance with state and federal rules governing the redistricting process.

Since the 2010 Census, areas such as Brighton Park and Royal Palm Condominiums, and some of Belle Vista have been added to the City of Belle Isle as well as some areas being removed; therefore, it was necessary to adjust the District boundaries.

It is important to note that the City Council does NOT get involved in this process and the City Manager and City Staff only provide the support necessary to the Redistricting Commission. The Commission alone has the responsibility to keep or redraw the Districts.

The Commission was made up of the following Belle Isle Residents: David Evertsen, Chair, Emily DeLozier, Vice-Chair, Brandon Shaw, Secretary, Jackie Hoevenour, Carolyn Holihan, Meg Sharf, Alexa Dowlin, and Charlotte Brown. This group of citizens worked tirelessly on this project and did an outstanding job in researching and coming up with District counts.

The results of the district counts of residences at the beginning of the process by each member of the Committee were as follows:

- District 1 - 336
- District 2 - 366
- District 3 - 366
- District 4 - 631
- District 5 - 360
- District 6 - 389
- District 7 - 347

These counts were consistent with the counts that were done using the Orange County Property Appraiser website. Based on these counts, the Committee determined that the districts needed to be revised to get the numbers in each District as close to equal as possible.

The new residential counts for each appointed district were the following.

- District 1 - 386
- District 2 - 399
- District 3 - 396
- District 4 - 403
- District 5 - 390
- District 6 - 399
- District 7 - 405

The district boundaries were drawn without regard for advantage or disadvantage to incumbents or challengers, and they were drawn without regard for advantage or disadvantage to any political party.

Once completed, the districting commission filed with the official designated by the council (City Manager), a report containing a recommended plan for adjustment of the council district boundaries to comply with these specifications:

(1) Each district shall be formed of compact, contiguous territory, and its boundary lines shall follow the centerlines of streets whenever possible.

(2) The districts shall be based upon the principle of equal and effective representation as required by the United States Constitution and as represented in the mathematical preciseness reached in the legislative apportionment of the state.

The report shall include a map and description of the districts recommended and shall be drafted as a proposed ordinance. Once filed with the designated official, the report shall be treated as an ordinance introduced by a commissioner.

Many thanks to the Redistricting Commission for their outstanding work.

So the question arises: What is the effect on Current Elected Officials? The Charter allows that no change in the boundary of any district shall exclude any Commissioner from office before the expiration of the term for which the incumbent was elected or appointed.

Staff Recommendation: Adopt Ordinance 21-14. The staff will then start the process of notification if adopted.

Suggested Motion: I move we adopt Ordinance 21-14

Alternatives: None

Fiscal Impact: None

Attachments: Ordinance 21-14