

STAFF REPORT REGULAR MEETING

AGENDA DATE: April 18, 2023

DEPARTMENT: City Attorney

TITLE:

Ordinance No. 05-2023 – Second Reading - Adopting a Single-Member Election Redistricting Map; Repealing Article II “Territorial Boundaries; Election Precincts,” Section 2 “Election Districts” of the Charter and Adopting a new Article II “Territorial Boundaries; Election Precincts,” Section 2 “Single-Member Election Districts” to reflect the Redistricting Map and its Boundaries

SUMMARY:

An ordinance adopting Alternative Districts: Option 5 redistricting map proposed by FAU and amending the City’s election districts to reflect the redistricting map boundaries.

BACKGROUND AND JUSTIFICATION:

On March 8, 2022, the qualified voters of the City approved, by referendum, an amendment to the City’s Charter changing the at-large voting system to a single-member district voting system (Ordinance No. 2021-22). To implement the single-member districts and to comply with the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and the Equal Protection Clause of the United States Constitution (14th Amendment), the City Commission began the process of evaluating the City’s four (4) at-large election districts based on apportionment data from the US Census Bureau. The City contracted with Florida Atlantic University (FAU) to conduct an analysis of the current at-large election districts to determine if the City needed to amend the district boundaries due to changes in population. According to FAU’s “Final Consultant Report: Redistricting Alternatives for the City of Lake Worth Beach” dated December 19, 2022, “Based on 2020 data, the election districts have a total deviation of 133.31% and a spread between the largest and smallest districts of 72.10%. Based on the 2020 Census Block data, the current districts are well above the 10% deviation (spread) threshold used to evaluate election districts for population equity.”

Alternative maps were presented by FAU and considered by the City Commission at the City Commission meetings on October 6, 2022, November 1, 2022, January 3, 2023, and February 7, 2023; and the maps were also presented at separate public meetings held on October 13, 2022, October 15, 2022, and February 4, 2023. To increase public access to the redistricting process, the City also created a webpage to disseminate the redistricting map alternatives, reports, and public comments. The City Commission voted to adopt “City of Lake Worth Beach Alternative Districts: Option 5” (“Map 5”) at its February 7, 2023, meeting. The adoption of the ordinance and the establishment of single-member districts is made necessary based upon (1) the City’s electors’ approval of single-member district voting in Ordinance No. 2021-22 (referendum) and (2) FAU’s findings that the current at-large election districts are well above the 10% deviation allowed under the Voting Rights Act (and the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution). The single-member districts set forth in Map 5, if adopted by the Commission, will be in effect for the next City Municipal Election scheduled in March 2024 and will continue in effect until redistricting occurs.

The ordinance was approved unanimously at the April 4, 2023 city commission meeting.

MOTION:

Move to approve/disapprove Ordinance No. 05-2023 adopting a Single-Member Election Redistricting Map; Repealing Article II “Territorial Boundaries; Election Precincts,” Section 2 “Election Districts” of the Charter and Adopting a new Article II “Territorial Boundaries; Election Precincts,” Section 2 “Single-Member Election Districts” to reflect the Redistricting Map and its Boundaries.

ATTACHMENT(S):

Fiscal Impact Analysis – N/A

Ordinance 05-2023

Alternative Districts – Option 5 (Redistricting Map)