

New Orleans City Council District A Redistricting Meeting
May 12, 2011

The second of two City Council District A community meetings on Redistricting was held on May 12, 2011 at First Baptist Church, from 6 – 7:30 PM. Data from the 2010 U. S. Census indicates that following Hurricane Katrina, District A’s population has increased and needs to be reduced by some 8,401 residents.

Susan Guidry, District A Councilmember, discussed the importance of racial balance; keeping neighborhoods together; as well as acknowledged letters from Carrollton, Faubourg-St. John, and Lakeview neighborhood associations all requesting that their neighborhoods stay together.

Councilmember-at-Large Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson provided information on the purpose of the meeting as well as census numbers for each district. Clarkson stated that she was committed to keeping neighborhoods together and indicated that all information to the Department of Justice would be submitted in August.

Redistricting LLC provided a timeline for the public input process, as well as information on redrawing the lines. Their presentation also included information on the legal requirements the Council must fulfill, as well as the traditional redistricting principles and timeline for adopting the redistricting plan.

Residents expressed the importance of keeping neighborhoods together, with specific references to Lakeview and Faubourg-St. John. Other residents expressed concern that there was not enough time to give valuable input into the process and indicated that they would like to have the opportunity to provide feedback once a proposed redistricting plan is presented to the Council.

Another resident commented that the process should be “people driven” and not “Department of Justice” driven. with further comment that New Orleans is made up of neighborhoods – black and white – and that white neighborhoods need to be grouped together as much as possible.

Others expressed a concern about making Mid-City a part of District D, combining Lakeview and Uptown into one district, as well as gerrymandering perceived to be going on in the City of New Orleans. Another resident commented that the “finger” in District C should be incorporated into District A.

Councilmembers Guidry and Clarkson reminded residents that there will be a follow-up meeting to further review the redistricting plans. They also indicated that all maps will be sent to the Justice Department and that they will try their best to try to keep neighborhoods together.

The council deadline for adopting a Redistricting plan is targeted for August 2011.