

New Orleans City Council District C Redistricting Meeting
April 25, 2011

The first of two City Council District C community meetings on Redistricting was held on April 25, 2011 at Holy Angels Church from 6 – 7:30 PM. Data from the 2010 U. S. Census indicates that following Hurricane Katrina, District C's population grew and now exceeds the ideal population count by some 12,565 residents.

What is clear is that we must decrease in size and making those tough decisions will not be easy, said District C Councilmember Kristin Gisleson Palmer. Gisleson Palmer opened her district's meeting thanking residents for attending and encouraging them to share their thoughts on redrawing the lines that will be most beneficial to District C.

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.

Most residents voiced concerns and asked questions about the boundary lines. Some residents wondered if the lines could be drawn so that historic neighborhoods – French Quarter, Treme, CBD/DDD, Marigny, etc. – where they could stay together. Residents who have attended other district meetings questioned the population numbers being provided to the community and suggested that the council increase to 7 districts, which would effectively reduce the population needed for each district. Other residents disagreed with increasing the number of council districts saying the city's population has downsized so there is no need for an increased number of city department heads and some wanted a timeline for when residents can see what is being proposed prior to the August 2011 deadline.

Council Vice President and At-Large Member, Jacquelyn Brechtel Clarkson also attended the meeting and provided insight on the steps that will follow the district community meetings. She stated that there will be committee meetings in the council chambers that will continue the dialogue and further engage community input. She also informed the residents that throughout the process, the council will follow federal guidelines for how the lines are drawn. "Our job is to start rearranging to balance the numbers to get everyone to the benchmark," Clarkson said. Clarkson said she understands the communities desire to have neighborhoods remain intact, but "in some cases, some have to lose and some have to gain."

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