



Virginia Redistricting Commission

Citizen Engagement Subcommittee

May 17, 2021, at 2:00 p.m.

Electronic Meeting

<https://redistricting.dls.virginia.gov/>

The Citizen Engagement Subcommittee (the Subcommittee) of the Virginia Redistricting Commission (the Commission) met virtually with Mr. Rick Harrell, co-chair, presiding.¹ The meeting began with opening remarks from Mr. Harrell. Materials presented at the meeting are accessible through the [*Commission's meetings webpage*](#).

Needs and Priorities for the Citizen Engagement Subcommittee

Rick Harrell, Co-chair, Citizen Engagement Subcommittee, Virginia Redistricting Commission

Mr. Harrell led a discussion among the Subcommittee members regarding a proposed work plan to address the needs and goals for citizen engagement. The first discussion item centered on public hearings. The Commission's enabling statute requires the Commission to hold at least three public hearings before drawing the redistricting maps and three public hearings before completed maps are submitted to the General Assembly. In addition, the redistricting maps drawn by the Commission must preserve communities of interest. In order to comply with this requirement, the Subcommittee must necessarily define such communities of interest.

- Mr. James Abrenio asked if there is a preference among the members for in-person or virtual public hearings. Senator Mamie Locke stated that the Subcommittee should determine the regions where the public meetings are to be held before deciding whether public hearings will be in-person or virtual.
- Senator Locke suggested that, if in-person meetings are held, the Commission members with the closest access to a particular public hearing location should attend that location's hearing. Delegate Delores McQuinn agreed with Senator Locke while also reinforcing that the Subcommittee must define Virginia regions. Mr. Amigo Wade noted that the Redistricting Commission Selection Committee used the eight regions of the state designated by the University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service in its process for selecting commissioners.
- Senator Ryan McDougale expressed that public hearings should be attended by an equal mix of legislators and citizen members in the following manner: one Democratic legislator, one Republican legislator, one Democratic citizen commissioner, and one Republican citizen commissioner.
- The Subcommittee agreed the Commission should aim to hold eight in-person and eight virtual public hearings in each of the designated regions of the Commonwealth.

¹ **Subcommittee Members Present:** James Abrenio, co-chair, Rick Harrell, co-chair, Brandon Hutchins, Delegate Les R. Adams, Delegate Delores L. McQuinn, Senator Mamie E. Locke, and Senator Ryan T. McDougale.

Subcommittee Members Absent: Jose Feliciano

Other Commission Members Present: Mackenzie Babichenko and Greta Harris

Mr. Harrell then transitioned the discussion to advertising in relation to the citizen engagement goals.

- Mr. Harrell cited the baseline requirement provided by subsection A of § 30-396 of the Code of Virginia, which reads, "All meetings and hearings held by the Commission shall be adequately advertised..." Mr. Harrell noted the possibility of collaborating with community organizations.
- After additional discussion, the Subcommittee requested that staff research the estimated costs for in-person public hearings, social media advertisements, and print advertisements, to be presented at the next scheduled meeting.

The Subcommittee briefly discussed how the Commission will receive draft maps from the public. Questions posed for further discussion were: (i) how will the Commission process the information received and (ii) how will the Commission communicate questions to the public on draft map submissions? Senator Locke noted that if the Commission is going to receive maps, then serious consideration needs to be given to the method of submission.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Subcommittee is scheduled for May 20, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. The next meeting of the Commission will be held on May 24, 2021, at 10:00 a.m.

For more information, see the [*Commission's website*](#) or contact the Division of Legislative Services staff:

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