



Office of the Mayor

The City of Morgantown

389 Spruce Street
Morgantown, West Virginia 26505

City Commission Discusses Considerations for Morgantown Ward Boundaries

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Morgantown, W.Va., July 19, 2012 – As voters research state and national candidates in preparation for going to the polls to cast their ballots in the November 2012 general election, the City of Morgantown Ward Boundary Commission is already working to prepare Morgantown for the April 2013 municipal election.

The Commission met Monday, July 16, to discuss preliminary considerations for setting ward boundaries. Alan Donaldson, Ward Boundary Chair, in a written statement said, “the Commission considers deviation from the ward average of registered voters as a criterion for changing ward boundaries.” According to Donaldson, municipal wards exceeding a 15-percent deviation in the number of voters is considered “undesirable and in need of remedies to correct imbalance.”

In accordance with the City Charter, the Ward Boundary Commission is expected to submit a report to the City Clerk – between November 15 and November 30 of this year – containing a recommended plan and a map for the adjustment of ward boundaries to comply with specifications outlined in City Charter Section 7.05.

Specifications include wards formed from contiguous territory following precinct lines and center lines of streets wherever practicable, and as nearly as practicable the same number of qualified voters as determined from the last statewide general election in 2010. Mayor Jim Manilla said, “it’s important to remember the City Charter states specifications are not to be construed to require the adjustment precinct boundaries or to sacrifice compactness of wards for the sake of achieving equality in numbers of registered voters among the seven wards of the City.”

Following the official submission of the report of the Ward Boundary Commission, City Council may take action to approve the report as recommended and introduce a proposed ordinance providing for the ward boundaries in accordance with the specifications contained in the report. Otherwise, if City Council doesn’t approve the report, the reasons will be stated for the record and City Council will introduce an ordinance adjusting ward boundaries consistent with the City Charter, unless a finding of fact is made that no ward boundary adjustments are necessary.

“Ward boundaries are the basis for representative government in our City,” said Manilla, adding that “over time, as population changes so must ward boundaries so as to not disenfranchise citizens.” Manilla mused, “I can remember when second ward school was actually in second ward. Today, the former second ward school is located in what is now sixth ward.”

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