

From: Rebecca Gruber <rgruber@alumni.upenn.edu>
To: Stephen DeCoursey <SDeCoursey@town.arlington.ma.us>, ldiggins@town.arlington.ma.us, Eric Helmuth <EHelmuth@town.arlington.ma.us>, JHurd@town.arlington.ma.us, DMahon@town.arlington.ma.us
Cc: lcosta@town.arlington.ma.us, Juli Brazile <JBrazile@town.arlington.ma.us>, Greg Dennis <gdennis@alum.mit.edu>, Don Seltzer <timoneer@gmail.com>
Date: Wed, 18 Aug 2021 18:24:20 -0400
Subject: Concerns about re-precincting

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Dear Sirs and Madam,

With the release of the census data, I am writing once again to share my thoughts regarding re-precincting. (I sent you all an email on July 20th, and I spoke during public forum at the August 9th Select Board meeting.)

I believe that any re-precincting decisions should ensure to the maximum extent possible that:

1. Voter engagement and participation in Arlington be maximized. Historically local elections have had a very low turnout; any decisions about re-precincting should consider the potential impact on voter engagement and participation.
2. A culture of outreach and resident connection by Town Meeting Members be facilitated and encouraged. I feel as do some of you that the role of Town Meeting Members can be evolved to serve as a mechanism for the Town's outreach to its residents. Presently, there are 252 potential Town ambassadors in its precinct-elected Town Meeting Members.

The above two goals can best be met by keeping the number of precincts at the current twenty-one and by impacting as few precincts as possible when re-precincting. From the new census data, I gather five of our current precincts are either under or over being within +/- 5% of the target precinct population. In conversation with other concerned Arlington residents, one of them, Don Seltzer, has done some initial modeling that suggests it might be possible to impact as few as eight precincts in order to bring all twenty-one precincts into the target population range.

From the presentation Ms. Brazile made at your July 19th meeting, I understand that the Town has software to "game out" multiple scenarios for re-drawing the precincts. I also understand that Arlington's re-precincting cannot be done in a vacuum, and that there are potentially state and federal constraints to re-precincting. I am asking the Select Board to seriously consider solutions requiring the fewest number of changes to the current twenty-one precincts, potential solutions like Mr. Seltzer's that impact less than half of our precincts.

I recognize that the Town Clerk is recommending that we reduce our number of precincts down to fifteen. I presume that is more palatable if the census results require all or almost all our precincts to be re-precincting. I urge the Select Board to not be swayed by that argument, and to please give strong consideration to re-precincting options that impact as few precincts as possible.

Thank you for your attention to this matter, and your service to Arlington.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Gruber
215 Pleasant Street

From: "Stephen DeCoursey" <SDeCoursey@town.arlington.ma.us>
To: "Ashley Maher" <AMaher@town.arlington.ma.us>
Date: 09/09/2021 09:50 AM
Subject: Fwd: Communicating to the public as part of outreach regarding re-precincting

From: Rebecca Gruber <rgruber@alumni.upenn.edu>
To: Stephen DeCoursey <SDeCoursey@town.arlington.ma.us>, ldiggins@town.arlington.ma.us, Eric Helmuth <EHelmuth@town.arlington.ma.us>, JHurd@town.arlington.ma.us, DMahon@town.arlington.ma.us
Cc: lcosta@town.arlington.ma.us, Juli Brazile <JBrazile@town.arlington.ma.us>, achapdelaine@town.arlington.ma.us, Jillian Harvey <jharvey@town.arlington.ma.us>
Date: Sat, 4 Sep 2021 16:20:03 -0400
Subject: Communicating to the public as part of outreach regarding re-precincting

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Dear Sirs and Madam,

I very much appreciate your efforts to provide an opportunity for Town residents to weigh-in regarding re-precincting

I do have a concern though regarding accurate representation of the information about the need for re-precincting.

I believe we need to make very clear to the public the following points:

- Only precincts whose population is outside the +/- 5% of the average precinct population must be re-drawn, recognizing that other precincts may be impacted in that re-distribution of population between precincts. Also that there may be state or federal constraints to re-precincting, e.g., we would not want to have a precinct divided in its state representation. And finally, that the re-drawing of precincts should not disenfranchise any minority population. These requirements may or **may not** impact all 21 of the current precincts.
- That **only in re-drawn precincts** would all Town Meeting Member positions be up for election. In those precincts, no matter the length of the term they have served, any incumbent Town Meeting member wanting to continue to be a Town Meeting Member would have to run for re-election.
- The specific, detailed cost-savings that might entail if we reduce the number of precincts from 21 to 16. From the data presented at the last Election Modernization Committee meeting, it appears that the cost per registered voter and the cost per likely voter (obviously, a different and smaller number than the number of registered voters) is relatively nominal. Recognizing that current State bills to increase early voting and no excuses absentee voting may increase Arlington's cost of elections **potentially independently of the number of Arlington's precincts.**

I believe that it is essential that the the public has an accurate, complete understanding about the need for and the actual costs and benefits of re-drawing any specific precinct boundaries and / or reducing the number of precincts in order for them to weigh-in effectively.

Thank you for taking the time to (once again) read an email from me about re-precincting.

Sincerely,
Rebecca Gruber
215 Pleasant Street