

Danielle Gillespie

From: Adriana Le Blan <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, September 7, 2022 4:49 PM
To: Reapportionment Commission
Subject: Comment from Elm St resident in the current 7th ward

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Hi,

I own a house on Elm St between Swan and Dove St and believe the streets between Delaware Ave, Swan St Madison Ave and Park Ave (to Lincoln Park) should be part of the 6th ward and not the 7th ward. The 7th ward is centered around the Delaware Avenue neighbor while i believe that area like the rest of Center Square is centered around Lark St, price shopper and the State Plaza.

Our area is currently cut off from the neighborhoods it's a part of and I think you should use this opportunity to change that.

Thank you,

Adriana Le Blan-Jeffrey

CITY OF ALBANY



NEW YORK

HON. GABRIELLA ROMERO, SIXTH WARD

www.albanyny.gov

Room 202, City Hall
Albany, New York 12207
Telephone (518) 261-0272
Email: gromero@albanyny.gov

City of Albany Reapportionment Commission

Via Email: reapportionmentcommission@albanyny.gov

September 7, 2022

Dear City of Albany Reapportionment Commission,

Thank you for the work you are doing for our City. I appreciate how difficult this task is, especially under tight time constraints. My comments tonight are in response to the recent redistricting map, released yesterday, September 6, 2022.

The 6th Ward is made up of many distinct communities of interest that together, make up this unique and wonderful district. After speaking with affected constituents and leaders of affected neighborhood associations, I am writing to respectfully request that the Redistricting Commission preserve the current four neighborhoods that encompass this Ward: Park South, Washington Park, Center Square, and Hudson/Park. This will keep communities of interest together, bounded and solidified by clear and natural boundaries, and preserves the longstanding historic integrity of this community.

Hudson/Park Neighborhood - Center Square Neighborhood

I respectfully request that the Commission not further divide the Hudson/Park Neighborhood among two wards, and that instead, the Commission propose a map that preserves this neighborhood within the 6th Ward. The Hudson/Park Neighborhood is a community bounded by Park Ave. to the south, Delaware Ave. to the west, and South Swan St. to the east.

Unfortunately, the proposed map cuts even more of this neighborhood out of the 6th Ward. Due to past redistricting processes, the Hudson/Park Neighborhood is currently divided between the 6th and 7th Wards.

The Hudson/Park Neighborhood belongs in the 6th Ward because of its shared history with other neighborhoods, as well as its shared physical and historical resemblance to the rest of the 6th Ward and its surroundings.

- Hudson/Park and Center Square should be seen as companion neighborhoods that should not be divided. In fact, decades ago, the “Center Square/Hudson-Park” area was added to the United State Department of the Interior’s Register of Historic Places.
- Hudson/Park shares many of the same physical features as the rest of the 6th Ward, particularly Center Square. First, the Center Square/Hudson-Park community is more dense and walkable than the surrounding neighborhoods and the city as a whole. Second, the National Register describes Center Square and Hudson Park as being like one another in that these neighborhoods developed at the same time, and feature nineteenth and twentieth-century attached townhouses. Third, this community has a clearly defined border - the plaza to the East, and Lincoln Park to the South. Contrast that with neighborhoods in the heart of the current 7th Ward that are less dense, developed at a different time, and tend to have front yards.

After speaking with affected residents from Elm Street, Irving Street, and Myrtle Street, this neighborhood is one that has a fierce and strong collective identity. Their friends are in the 6th ward, they frequent 6th ward businesses, they share the same residential parking permit zone (zone A), and they share the same appreciation of this Historic District. These are distinct, hyper-local characteristics that require unified representation.

For these reasons, the Hudson/Park and Center Square Neighborhoods are inseparable communities of interest.

Park South Neighborhood

I urge the Commission to keep the current nine-block portion of the Park South Neighborhood within the 6th Ward. Similar to the suggested movements of Hudson/Park to the 7th Ward, this modification creates an isolated portion from the rest of the natural cohesion - the 6th ward.

Washington Park Neighborhood

I'm confused by the movement of a single block of State Street into the 11th Ward. The block including Sprague Place, State Street, and Western Ave, unfortunately, removes a block from State Street that is inexplicably linked with the Washington Park Neighborhood, the 6th Ward as a whole, and the park itself. This recommended change will create enormous confusion for voters, non-voting members of the public, and elected representatives. This change will make it more difficult for the State Street community and the Washington Park Neighborhood to advocate for solutions to quality of life challenges they face, and effectively advocate on behalf of their community of interest.

Affected residents have completed the Community Interests Survey and submitted letters for your review - I urge you to read these comments and heed the additional commentary from the presidents of four of the Neighborhood Associations in the 6th Ward.

To summarize, I request that the commission consider restoring the Hudson/Park Neighborhood to the 6th Ward, as well as the sections of the Park South Neighborhood and State Street that were removed. I trust that the commission will be able to find parts of the 6th Ward to remove that will not break up communities of interest and will satisfy the 5% deviancy requirement. The cohesive unity of the four neighborhoods within the 6th Ward has empowered this area to be the bastion of LGBTQ+ advocacy, and progressive policies for the past 40 years. Again, thank you for your time and consideration.

Hon. Gabriella A. Romero
6th Ward Councilmember
490 Madison Ave., Albany, 12208

PUBLIC HEARING
City of Albany Redistricting Commission
September 7, 2022

Statement of Richard Conti

My name is Richard Conti. I currently reside at 151 Chestnut Street in the City of Albany. I am also a previous member of the Albany Common Council representing the 6th Ward. My comments tonight focus on the 8/31 and 9/6 draft redistricting maps and how they impact the 6th Ward.

I was initially prepared to submit comments based on the 8/31 draft map, but today I discovered there is now a 9/6 draft map which differs from the 8/31 draft. Not sure where this came from, there are no meetings posted online where revisions were discussed. This 9/6 map contains several variations from the 8/31 map which was understood to be the subject of this hearing. It's difficult to comment on what appears to be last minute changes.

I understand that redistricting is a difficult process with the need to balance population numbers while at the same time maintaining neighborhood and community of interest boundaries. The redistricting plan that was adopted following the 2010 Census included three significant adjustments the 6th Ward boundaries:

- 1) The area west of Thurlow Terrace, bounded by Western Avenue and S. Lake Avenue was moved to the 10th Ward (this included the Thurlow Terrace Apts and the Mayflower Apts);
- 2) The Washington Park neighborhood west of Lark Street which included State Street north of Washington Park, Spring Street, areas south of Townsend Park and a portion of Washington Square were moved from the 11th Ward to the 6th Ward; and
- 3) A portion of the Hudson/Park neighborhood on the southside of Elm Street including Irving Street and the northside of Myrtle Avenue between Dove and S. Swan Streets was moved to the 7th Ward.

In the case of the Washington Park neighborhood, residents in that area had long desired to be moved to the 6th Ward where they shared a commonality of interests with those neighborhoods. In addition, the portion of the Washington Park neighborhood bordering Willett Street was already in the 6th Ward, so this plan united the neighborhood.

In the Case of Hudson/Park, the moving of those blocks to the 7th Ward was opposed by the residents who shared a clear community of interest and association with the portion of Hudson/Park that remained in the 6th Ward. Ideally, those blocks should have remained and still belong in the 6th Ward.

Regarding the proposed 8/31 and 9/6 draft maps; I'm concerned with the proposed movement of a portion of the Washington Park neighborhood to the 11th Ward. The triangle block west of Sprague Place bounded by State Street and Western Avenue is a substantial part of the

Washington Park neighborhood and has a strong identity with Washington Park itself which this block borders. This triangular block clearly belongs in the 6th Ward where it would remain united with the remaining part of the Washington Park neighborhood.

The 9/6 map includes a new proposal to move a portion of the Park South neighborhood west of Lark Street and bounded by Myrtle Avenue, Knox Street and Morris Street to the 7th Ward. The current 9-block portion of the Park South neighborhood within the 6th Ward is coterminous with the Park South Urban Renewal District. This proposal would take a portion of the neighborhood within the PSURD that shares a community of interest and move it entirely to the 7th Ward where it would actually be geographically separated by virtue of Hackett Middle School and the VA Campus from the nearest 7th Ward neighborhood ... it would exist as an island. This block clearly is part of a community of interest that belongs in the 6th Ward and additional parts of Park South. If you need to look at adjustments that involve the Park South neighborhood, I'd suggest you look at the blocks west of New Scotland Avenue which encompass the Tri-City Apartments complex. Those two-blocks have significantly changed the neighborhood they're located in as a result of that development and do not reflect the same community of interest as the remaining 6th Ward blocks of Park South.

Finally, the blocks of Hudson/Park that were moved to the 7th Ward in the last redistricting clearly belong in the 6th Ward. To the extent possible, these blocks should be reunited with the 6th Ward where they share a clear community of interest. I'd also note as a positive revision the movement of Elm St adjacent to Price Chopper back to the 6th Ward as a result of the 9/6 map.

In conclusion, as stated in my earlier testimony of August 24, for a variety of reasons I believe the 6th Ward should be maintained as currently exists to the extent possible understanding that variations in population will require adjustments. The four core neighborhoods of the 6th Ward represent a clear community of interest with a long-standing shared working relationships and have benefited from a single unit of representation on the Common Council. These four neighborhoods are also the home of a significant LGBTQ+ voting population which also constitutes a clear community of interest whose voting strength should not be diluted.

Finally, due to a quirk in the calendar, this redistricting process and deadlines is occurring well in advance of the next Common Council election in 2025, and not even one full year into the terms of the current elected Council. It would not be inappropriate for the Commission to look at the schedule in the current City Charter and make a possible recommendation for change. Possibly looking at a time frame that starts with the first election after a new census is released and working backwards to have a plan in place at a point prior to that election. Just a thought.

Thank you for the work you're doing and your civic participation in city government.

Danielle Gillespie

From: Reapportionment Commission
Sent: Wednesday, September 7, 2022 2:53 PM
To: blacknursescoalition@gmail.com; ch73williams@gmail.com; daacjw@aol.com; dalegetto@gmail.com; Danielle Gillespie; emlough107@gmail.com; John-Raphael Pichardo; mazzaj@nycap.rr.com; Reapportionment Commission; shawnmorris85@gmail.com; spaman400@yahoo.com; shawnmorris7@aol.com; Paul Webster
Subject: FW: Latest 6th Ward Boundries

From: Andrew Harvey [mailto:aach598@gmail.com]
Sent: Wednesday, September 7, 2022 2:25 PM
To: Reapportionment Commission <reapportionmentcommission@albanyny.gov>
Subject: Latest 6th Ward Boundries

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My name is Andrew Harvey. For the last 28 years I have been President of the Park South NA. I bought my home on Myrtle Avenue in 1985. During this time, I have been active in the 6th Ward. Now, in contrast to the Aug 31 Redistricting map, I see that my block of Myrtle along with the south side of Morris St between Lark & Knox Streets, has been placed in the 7th Ward. This is not appropriate and needs to be remedied. Hackett Middle School and Lincoln Park separate this area from the 7th Ward axis.

The 6th Ward has experienced a significant increase in population since 2010. This is primarily due to the 288 unit Park South Apartments that opened after 2010. At the present time, the Park South Apartments are split partly in the 6th Ward and partly in the 9th Ward. That community of interest should be kept in tact and placed in its entirety in the 9th Ward. Then the area of the 6th Ward I live in could remain in the 6th Ward.

And for good reason. This area shares a community of interest, as it borders the south end of the Lark St corridor.

Please remedy these boundaries as has been recommended herein.

Thank you.

Respectfully submitted,
Andrew Harvey
271 Myrtle Avenue