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VBH BOT FYI Administration

5 messages

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Cc: Sarah Kenney <skenney@barringtonhills-il.gov>

Mon, Apr 18, 2011 at 7:26 AM

A user's guide to reshaping districts
By KEVIN P. CRAVER - kcraver@nwherald.com
NW Herald
Monday, April 18, 2011 5:30 a.m. CDT

With new census figures comes state and county governments' once-in-a-decade responsibility to redraw their legislative districts.

The McHenry County Board has a far easier go of it than Springfield, which never has been able to reach consensus on new maps. Since 1981, the decision on who represents us in the General Assembly and the U.S. House of Representatives has been decided by drawing a name out of a stovepipe hat.

But this isn't to say that the 24-member County Board doesn't have some big decisions to make, the first being whether 24 members are too many. They also must decide whether to keep their present setup of six districts of four members each.

And if the board keeps the six-district setup it has had for almost two decades, county staff still have work to do to redraw the boundaries to accommodate the 18.7 percent population increase since the last census.

The following is a guide to the redistricting decisions the County Board has to make that could affect how you are represented at the county level over the next decade.

Why is this happening? State law requires that county boards with districts adjust those districts after every decennial U.S. Census to ensure that each contains an equal number of people to within 10 percent. A similar process is going on at the state level to redraw General Assembly and Congressional districts.

What are the rules germane to McHenry County? Districts must be compact and contiguous, and can only cut across municipal and township boundaries as necessary to ensure that they meet the requirements of having equal numbers of people.

County boards during the redistricting process can reduce their size and alter the number of board districts, or decide to be elected from the county at large. They also have the power to decide if the board chairman should be elected by the people, and can set members' compensation starting with the next term.

Although the board's Management Services Committee has discussed the issue of allowing the public to elect the chairman rather than the

board members themselves, they have never made a recommendation.

Do county boards have a deadline to meet? Counties have until July 1 to redraw boundaries and file the map with the county clerk, who must have copies available free to any voter requesting one. If the deadline is not met, redistricting falls to a commission of the county clerk, state's attorney, Attorney General and the county chairmen of the Republican and Democratic central committees.

How does our County Board measure up to the other collar counties? McHenry County is similar in terms of numbers: Kane County has 26 board members, Lake County has 23, and Will County has 27. DuPage County is locked at 18 members under state law, which limits county boards other than Cook with 800,000 or more residents.

Kane and Lake counties have single-member districts. DuPage County has six districts of three each, and Will County has three nine-member districts.

Twenty-six of the state's 102 counties have no districts to redraw because they elect their board members at large. Such counties are typically small – the largest of them has a population one-fifth the size of McHenry County.

How have districts changed over the years? The County Board has had 24 members since its creation in 1972, when the new Illinois Constitution abolished county boards of supervisors ruled by township officials.

The County Board consisted of three districts of eight members each until 1992, when it went to its present six-district structure. A proposal at that time to shrink the board's size to 18 members did not have enough votes.

Are neighboring counties contemplating changing their structures? Yes. Kane County is contemplating cutting its board from 26 to 24 or fewer members, partly in preparation for one day reaching the 18-member cap when the county reaches 800,000 residents.

Lake County is considering scaling back its board from 23 to 21 members. DeKalb County is considering going to 18 single-member districts, rather than 12 districts of two members each.

How will this affect the next primary and election? All County Board seats will be up for election in 2012. Winners will draw by lot so that half of them get two-year terms expiring in 2014 to ensure staggered elections.

What's next

The McHenry County Board is holding a special Committee of the Whole meeting to discuss redistricting and give county staff direction.

The meeting starts at 6 p.m. Tuesday [4/19], one hour before the board's regular 7 p.m. night meeting, at the county Administration Building, 667 Ware Road, Woodstock.

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Mon, Apr 18, 2011 at 8:40 AM

Reply-To: skenney@barringtonhills-il.gov
To: Bob Kosin <rkosin@barringtonhills-il.gov>

Its oak tree judging today with BACT 9 to noon
Sent via BlackBerry by AT&T

[Quoted text hidden]

Robert Kosin <rkosin@barringtonhills-il.gov>
To: skenney@barringtonhills-il.gov

Mon, Apr 18, 2011 at 8:45 AM

Where ?

[Quoted text hidden]

skenney@barringtonhills-il.gov <skenney@barringtonhills-il.gov>
Reply-To: skenney@barringtonhills-il.gov
To: Bob Kosin <rkosin@barringtonhills-il.gov>

Mon, Apr 18, 2011 at 8:54 AM

17 oakdene
Sent via BlackBerry by AT&T

-----Original Message-----

From: Robert Kosin <rkosin@barringtonhills-il.gov>

[Quoted text hidden]

Robert Kosin <rkosin@barringtonhills-il.gov>
To: skenney@barringtonhills-il.gov
Cc: Dolores Trandel <clerk@barringtonhills-il.gov>

Mon, Apr 18, 2011 at 9:02 AM

Brrr 34°

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