

Map proposal: Latino district

Council takes suggestions on border revamp at hearing

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FOR MORE THAN 20 years, Angel Ortiz says, he has been fighting for a true Latino City Council district.

Yesterday, the former at-large councilman brought that campaign to Council once again, during a public hearing on how to redraw the city's 10 local districts.

"This community has been fractured, it has been gerrymandered, and I think it's time to close the circle," said Ortiz, referring to the 7th District, which weaves through Fishtown, Kensington, Frankford, Hunting Park and the lower Northeast.

Ortiz recommended redrawing the 7th — represented by Councilwoman Maria Quinones-Sanchez and about 46 percent Latino — to include more of the city's growing Latino population.

During previous redistricting talks, this issue nearly drove members to blows. This year, legislators are trying to avoid conflict. A small group has been quietly working on a solution and continued to talk privately with members yesterday after the hearing.

Council President Anna Verna said that Council expects to have a plan by its Sept. 8 meeting. If Council members don't get redistricting done by Sept. 9, they go without pay until they're finished — which happened during the

past two redistricting battles.

Council must redraw districts every 10 years, using census data, to make sure that there's roughly 10 percent of the population in each district. After the 2010 census, that's about 152,600 people. Verna said that the job is difficult because the city has experienced massive population gains in the east and losses in the west, forcing major changes to the map.

The rare summer hearing drew 14 of 17 Council members,

with Darrell Clarke, Donna Reed Miller and Frank Rizzo not attending.

Quinones-Sanchez said that she appreciated input from the Latino community, but did not back Ortiz's call for a 60 per-

cent Latino 7th District.

"How do you ensure you create lines that reflect not only shifts but the potential growths?" Quinones-Sanchez said. "I can see a scenario where we do a district that's 53 [percent] but might jump to 58 [percent] because of the natural trajectory of growth."

Other speakers weighed in on the drawing of the map.

Suzanne Biemiller, Mayor Nutter's interim chief of staff, warned against wide population variation between districts, asking that the deviation from the 152,600 goal be under 5 percent.

Several residents asked Coun-

"This community has been fractured, it has been gerrymandered, and I think it's time to close the circle."

— ANGEL ORTIZ

former councilman, on District 7



The \$80,000 statue honoring Harry Kalas at Harry the K's Broadcast Bar & Park, near Harry the K's Broadcast Bar & Park.

Golden voice is memorial

BY BROAD STREET BILLY
as told to DAN GERINGER

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AS BEFITS the late Harry "The K" Kalas' immortal place in Phillies fans' affections, his \$80,000 memorial statue, unveiled before last night's game, was funded by small donations from the diehards who loved him.

Sculptor Lawrence J. Nowlan, whose human touch gives the 7-foot bronze statue much of the warmth that endeared Kalas to fans for 38 years, told Broad Street Billy that he remembers his summers "walking down the beach at the Jersey Shore, hearing Harry's voice on radios, and stopping to ask, 'What's the score?' — especially if there were nice babes lying on those blankets."

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1 ward, 3 districts

WARD LEADERS get pulled in a bunch of directions, but few have it as bad as Elaine Tomlin. Her ward, the 42nd, in Olney and Feltonville, is split among three City Council members — Darrell Clarke, Maria Quinones-Sanchez and Marian Tasco — which she says makes it tough for the community to have a voice.

It wasn't always like this. Before 2001, the last time Council redrew its district boundaries, the 42nd Ward was represented by two Council members, and not carved so haphazardly.

As Council once again redraws its districts, allow Tomlin to serve as a case study of gerrymandering.

Q: How does having three Council members affect voting in your neighborhood?

A: People don't know who is representing them because when we have community meetings, we have to invite all three people from Council. Voters show up to the polling place thinking they want to vote for Tasco, but they live in Sanchez's district.

Q: Are constituent services affected?

A: We have a lot of issues with weeds, L&I, slumlords. Being fractured means that attention is not given to these things like it should be. We're tired of our representatives being unresponsive due to a cracked district. People are so upset that we've been meeting about redistricting in the 42nd Ward for over a year.

Q: How does being in three Council districts affect development issues?

A: We haven't had anything substantial done in 10 years. . . . There's also no activities for children or seniors. There aren't any parks. One councilperson could deal with that better. Now we have councilpersons bumping heads when they want to get something done here. ■

— Holly Otterbein

Holly Otterbein reports for It's Our Money, a joint project of the Daily News and WHYY, funded by the William Penn Foundation. For more, go to www.ourmoneyphilly.com.

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cil to keep wards intact within districts, arguing that splitting wards diminishes a neighborhood's vote.

But some Council members said that splitting wards would likely continue, as it has in the past, and that they would likely go well above 5 percent deviation. Councilwoman Jannie Blackwell said she thought that

a deviation of as much as 9 percent was possible.

"They keep coming up with scenarios," said Blackwell. "They're just trying to get everybody to agree on something."

Two more redistricting hearings are scheduled: Aug. 31, beginning at 5 p.m., at Esperanza Academy Charter High School, 301 W. Hunting Park Ave.; and Sept. 6, 7 to 8:30 p.m., at Albert Einstein Medical Center's Gouley Auditorium. ■