

ANDERSON COUNTY COUNCIL
ANDERSON, SOUTH CAROLINA

Called Meeting - January 12, 2000 - 6:00 p.m.

Linda N. Gilstrap, Clerk to Council

M I N U T E S

All area newspapers, radio stations and television stations were informed of this meeting in compliance with guidelines set forth in the *Freedom of Information Act*.

PRESENT

G. Fred Tolly - District #1
Gracie S. Floyd - District #2
Larry E. Greer - District #3
Vice Chairman Clint Wright - District #4
Chairman J. Mike Holden - District #5
Tom Martin - County Attorney
Linda N. Gilstrap - Clerk to Council

ABSENT

Joey Preston - Administrator

The official meeting of the Anderson County Council convened in the Council Chambers of the Historic Courthouse on Wednesday, January 12, 2000 at 6:00 p.m.

Ms. Gracie Floyd gave the invocation and everyone stood and pledged allegiance to the flag.

Chairman Holden explained that the meeting was called to conduct an additional public hearing to allow citizens another chance to express their views on Ordinance #99-036 (Redistricting).

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Public Hearing - Verbatim

MR. EARL MYERS:

"Mr. Chairman, members of Council, my name is Earl Myers, Mayor of the town of Honea Path. I was here last week, we talked to you, and you heard my comments, uh how we feel about the redistrict, on the seven districts. We know that we've gotta have seven districts, but uh, our town Councilmen have voted unanimously to send a protest to the Justice Department, which will be going out tomorrow, and I wanted y'all to know that. There is also a petition going around in our area for this. We just don't feel like District Two, school district, should be split up like it is. Honea Path, and Belton, and us going all the way up to Williamston. Also, tonight I have some of my Council members that would probably like to speak; R. L. Thorton, and uh, Gary Branyon, and also Dr. Martin, Thomas Martin, and at this time I'd like, if any of those would like to speak on behalf of this ordinance I would like them to speak now."

DR. TOMMY MARTIN:

"Mr. Chairman, members of County Council, uh I'm passing out a handout of some material that I would like to discuss tonight. First of all, thank you for the opportunity to address you. My name is Tommy Martin; I'm from Honea Path. After the last meeting I started looking at the proposed District #7, and I looked at how the boundaries meandered, and that troubled me. So, I started to do a little research, and one of the things that I would like to do first of all is to define a term, the term Gerrymandering. This is defined according to the Webster's Ninth New Collegiate Dictionary: "To divide a territorial unit into election districts to give one political party an electric majority in a large number of districts while concentrating the voting strength of the opposition in as few districts as possible. To divide an area into political units to give specific advantages to one group." The next thing that I did, I went down and received the voting results of the last election, general election, in '98, and the special election in '99, and I then went and looked at the precinct map, and I compared that with the map that is proposed for the new districts. And, what you have before you is a table of

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the districts, the precincts, in District 2 and 3 that had opposition. And these from what I have observed are precincts that will be in the new District 7. If you look down, there are eleven precincts listed here, and all but three were won by the challenger. If you look at District 2, and you take the precincts, of Bowling Green, Hammond School precinct, and the Tony Creek precinct the Councilman received 29.26% of the votes, while the challenger received 70.74% of the total votes in those precincts. If you look at District 3, the Belton precinct, from what I have observed on the map, is split. If you look at the precinct in the new proposal you will find that 75% of that precinct remains in District 3. The Belton precinct is split with about 75% remaining in District 3. If you take the Belton precinct and look at the votes it accounted for 20% of the elected Councilman's total vote. Of the total votes cast at the Belton, precinct the Councilman received 54.88% of the votes, while the challenger received 45.12%. If you look at Honea Path precinct and Chiquola Mills, they accounted for 8.9% of the elected Councilman's vote. Of the total votes cast at the Honea Path and Chiquola Mills precinct, Councilman received 37.66% of the votes, while the challenger received 62.34%. Two questions occur: is it possible that the challenger votes to the incumbent were moved to the new district? Second question, is it possible that prospective challengers residents were taken into question, in fact, singled out? Last week, I asked a question: why separate Belton and Honea Path? The residents of Belton and Honea Path have been commonly joined for many years. Belton Honea Path School District 2 along with the Belton Honea Path Water Authority are two of the many ways in which the two towns have common interests. The separation of Belton and Honea Path dissolves the commonality of the two towns. I would like to challenge County Council tonight, to do the honorable thing, to scrap the proposal that you have before you, roll up your sleeves, go back to work and put the concerns of the citizens and the community of Anderson County first, and come up with a proposal that is a fair district that all of the citizens in Anderson County can be proud of. Thank you."

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MR. SAM JOHNSON:

"My name is Sam Johnson, and I'm from an area in the County that's called 'no man's land.' And, Mr. Holden, you are our representative. Now as far as getting respect and advantages given to our district where I live, you have given us none. I don't see why under any circumstances that this proposal that you have now of the district 7, are splitting up into the district 7, is any good at all. You should take all your split four and cut it in half, cut five in half, and go right down so where we in people of Townville area, Fairplay area could get some kind of progress. We have nothing out there; you try to give nothing out there. I talked to our... Mr. Ricketson, I said when will your proposal be for sewage in our area? He said "Oh, maybe ten years." So, what does this give us out there to look forward to? Nothing. Why don't you represent the whole area, not just one specific area of Hwy. 24, not even Hwy. 24, Clemson Blvd. That's where all the industry is going to. Why? Because they have sewage. We have nothing out there. Why don't you try to put sewage into our area, shopping centers? It takes me fourteen miles any direction of our drive from where I live to go to a major shopping center. Why? Why is this? Why don't you bring something into our neighborhood, rather than to concentrate into one particular neighborhood? My question is why? That's all I ask. Thank you."

MR. MIKE HOLDEN:

"There has been a whole lot of money spent on other side and double bridges, on the park we built up there. You need to check around on some of these ball fields, things that we have done. There are not sewer lines but that area has not been ignored. Thank you for your comments."

MR. ALLAN ASHLEY:

"Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen of the Council, my name is Allan Ashley. I'm from the Craytonville precinct in Honea Path. Uh, y'all that don't personally know me, I, my name has been used for several things tonight, but, I'm not here for that part. What I am up here for is I think Council needs to not divide these precincts. It's hard enough for us to get people to work

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the polls and, I don't want us to have all these troubles throwed out splitting precincts. When you split precincts and when you're just coming across the road that's like a high point and two or three of them up there. Leave those precincts together. I mean it might be a disadvantage to me. It might be an advantage to me. I'll tell you yes, I'm not going to be a backslider. I told them the day after the election I will be running in the 2000 election. But, I don't think we should divide the area up, just to split precincts, and like it is, go all the way to Pierce Town from Honea Path, dividing it from the Belton. Belton and Honea Path has been a football rivalry from the beginning. We have got one high school at the present time. We've got unity; we've got the Water Authority, and all this. We do not need to split the two districts. I mean the two towns. Because they are one unity, our school system is all one unit. Yea, I've heard the statements and the Abbeville County would love to have us. But at times Honea Path would be better off in Abbeville County. We got our own water down there; we got our own sewage going into Ware Shoals. Mr. Bannister worked hard. Mr. Greer has helped us. We appreciate everything we're getting down there, but Honea Path, the Town of Honea Path, Mr. Thorne, Mr. Branyon, Dr. Hill, Mayor Myers, all of them have worked hard. And, we haven't even gotten four lanes coming into Honea Path. We need a four lane down there. But, if they brought a proposal up and brought it that wasn't in Honea Path it was going around coming out Pine Top Road way up in the other section. We need someone, divide it up so we'll be together, so we can do it. You can put the city of Anderson, say y'all want two Councilmen for the city of Anderson, put them in there and then divide it up by the other five. If we would of put this proposal before the people of Anderson County, when we voted on the seven council members, y'all probably be lucky to get a 20% much less a 70%. That there, I made the statement sitting over there, the other night it was in the paper, "you couldn't take a pocket-knife and carve it this much," I believe that's the truth, I don't believe they'll do it, and I think y'all need to sit down and take into consideration of the County. Not you're own political future. But, the County into consideration what is best for Anderson County, not best for what Mike wants, Mr. Tolly wants, Clint wants, Ms. Floyd, and Larry. I don't think we should do it. We should think what's best for Anderson County. Anderson County is our main concern. Gentlemen, and

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ladies, please go back. Larry's worked hard getting this changed. I sat here and watched him the other night, and I appreciate him doing it, because it helps the people of Anderson County. But, listen, really throw this in the ditch. I know it's a late time, but we need something to get unity in the County and don't split Anderson County up where it was forty years ago. Let's get it to where it's in the 21st Century, not in the Century we was in the 19th early 19th century. Thank y'all for your time. I appreciate you listening. Have a good night."

MR. ROBERT WILES:

"Mr. Chairman, members of Council, I'm Robert Wiles. I've been in favor of seven council districts for quite a while. I thought that five wasn't enough to adequately represent our County, and I was happy that we went for seven districts. When I look at the map though, there are two or three observations and some of them have already been mentioned. But, one stands out in my mind; this community split up where we need more community spirit, communityism, in our land today. But this map tends to split it up too much. And then another observation is population balance. As I understand it, you have about 10% variation, a leeway of about 10% variation, I'm not sure if that's right but, it's something like that. When you observe the map some of the districts with larger area have the larger population. So it would seem to me that we could reduce the size of the districts, and reduce the population, and increase the size of smaller districts and increase the population and give a better balance of all the districts, in the County. Then the other observation is to split precincts. I understand that there is about twenty-three split precincts, and we've always, for several years tried to reduce these split precincts. That creates a burden on poll managers and people living there knowing which area they vote in. So, it would be behoove us to uh not split up precincts anymore than is necessary. And then the only other thing is uh, it would seem that a small town in our county could warrant a Council district around the town without drawing the lines directly through a small town. Which really adds to the splitting of communities, not only communities, but municipalities. So I would, with all of these views in mind, I would respectfully request that you would table the

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ordinance until you do some more work on it and then come back with a more feasible plan. I'm finished. "

MR. BUD RAINEY:

"Chairman, and members of County Council, I'm Bud Rainey, and I'm from Honea Path. I'm sort of new at this type of thing. I've not been to too many County Council meetings. As a matter of fact, last week was my first one, and I left here a little bit confused, a little bit disoriented, and not really knowing what to think. Uh, I guess the problem I've got, and the questions I've got is why you're splitting up communities. I see that you've got Williamston split right down the middle. I don't understand why a city would be split. One part of the city in one district, and the other part in the other. Why we've got Belton pulled out. But now that Dr. Martin has given his information, ya know, I sort of know why, that was pretty obvious from the beginning. Uh, and last week I heard a lot of things about the Planning Board, did a lot of planning, they did a lot of this. But, the final say so is with you. I mean the Planning Board can draw it up, they can do what they are required to do, but the final vote, the final decision, lies with you five members of County Council. And, last week I asked Mr. Greer, ya know, why was it drawn up like this, and his comment to me was that this was "This only way that this could be drawn up." You know, I'm not to say the brightest guy in the world. I know it could be drawn up differently, I'm not you know, totally ignorant to that fact. I guess what I say, and what I'm trying to say is that I see political motivation here, and that bothers me. When we put political objectives and political aspirations above what's best for the people of Anderson County. That's a problem; that bothers me. Uh, I would think that you would, the first interest and the first concern would be the people of Anderson County, not for your own political interest. Uh, you know, so that's pretty much all I have to say. I appreciate your time, and you know, and I just uh, you know, hope, respectfully request this as Mr. Wiles said that you would scrap this and get back to work and draw up a fairer plan, a fairer plan for the people of Anderson County. Thank you."

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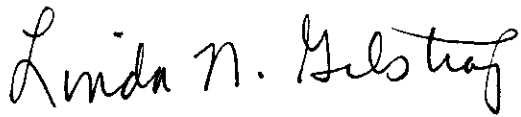
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MR. MIKE HOLDEN:

"Any other comments from the public? Anybody? Hearing none, the public hearing is closed."

There being no further business, Council adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Linda N. Gilstrap".

Linda N. Gilstrap, Clerk
ANDERSON COUNTY COUNCIL