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MINUTES

April 13, 2012

Community Room, Gallatin County Courthouse
Bozeman, Montana

Please note: These minutes provide abbreviated information about committee discussion, public testimony, action taken, and other activities. To the left of each section in these minutes is a time designation indicating the approximate amount of time in hours, minutes, and seconds that has elapsed since the start of the meeting. This time designation may be used to locate the referenced discussion on the audio or video recording of this meeting.

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Hard copies of the exhibits for this meeting are available upon request. Legislative Council policy requires a charge of 15 cents a page for copies of the document.

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Jim Regnier, Presiding Officer
Jon Bennion
Joe Lamson
Pat Smith
Linda Vaughey

STAFF PRESENT

Rachel Weiss, Research Analyst
Joe Kolman, Research Analyst
Julianne Burkhardt, Attorney
Dawn Field, Secretary

AGENDA & VISITORS' LIST

Agenda, Attachment #1.
Visitors' list, Attachment #2.

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

00:00:01 Commissioner Regnier called the hearing to order at 7:03 p.m. He reviewed the purpose of the meeting, meeting protocol, and the mandatory and discretionary criteria adopted by the Commission. The Commissioners and staff introduced themselves. The Secretary took roll, all members were present (ATTACHMENT 3).

PUBLIC COMMENT

- 00:11:49 **Shelly Vance, former Gallatin Clerk and Recorder and self**, submitted written testimony into the record (EXHIBIT 1). Ms. Vance discussed the importance of achieving the lowest population deviation possible, using sensible geographic boundaries, and preserving communities of interest. She said that the Gallatin County Commission/Bozeman maps merit consideration by the Commission because they adhere to the adopted criteria. She thanked the Commission for the opportunity to comment and to offer suggestions.
- 00:14:06 **Brady Wiseman, former legislator, Bozeman**, thanked the Commission for meeting in Bozeman. He spoke in support of the Communities Plan, saying that legislators don't go to Helena to represent their county, but their constituents, so it doesn't make sense to focus on county lines. Mr. Wiseman also said that political interests don't stop at city limits so the divisiveness between rural and urban populations are very likely the artifact of the way boundaries are drawn now, and that the Communities Plan boundaries would meliorate those problems. Mr. Wiseman also discussed the strong communities of interest and trade areas between Bozeman, Belgrade, Four Corners, and Livingston. He encouraged the Commission to draw lines that will ensure that all diversities and communities have representation.
- 00:18:24 **Steve White, Chair, Gallatin County Commission**, commented briefly on how each of the five Commission-proposed plans fail to adequately serve Gallatin County. He then discussed the Gallatin County (Clerk and Recorder's Office) Plan #1 and the reasons for using the plan in Gallatin County. Mr. White noted that all three Gallatin County Commissioners support Plan #1 and that the Plan was submitted to Commission staff and is posted on the Districting and Apportionment Commission web page. Commissioner White also provided written comment from the Gallatin County Commission (EXHIBIT 2).
- 00:23:46 **Elizabeth Marum, Belgrade**, spoke in support of the Communities Plan, saying that it best meets Montana's legal and constitutional requirements. She said that it keeps small communities together and urged the Commission to include Big Sky as one community as well. She also commented on the diverse interests and issues facing Belgrade residents because of its melding of rural, suburban, and urban residents; and said that the Communities Plan would be the best fit.
- 00:25:42 **Nancy Robertson, Bozeman**, said that after studying all of the plans online, she supports the plan submitted by Gallatin County Plan #1. She discussed the benefits of the district lines, which she said, keep communities of interest together. She thanked the Commission for the opportunity to comment and urged them to consider the Gallatin County Plan #1 (EXHIBIT 3).

- 00:26:57 **Rep. Ted Washburn, HD 69**, said that Gallatin County is the fastest growing county in the state and that HD 69 is the fastest growing district. He said that the maps being considered will disenfranchise voters because they all tear Gallatin County apart. He said the plans will prevent candidates from running for certain offices because of the crossover of county lines. Rep. Washburn said that he supports the Gallatin County Plan #1 because it keeps districts in Gallatin County and has less than a 1% deviation. He urged the Commission to consider the plan submitted by the Gallatin County Clerk and Recorder.
- 00:30:02 **Bethany Letiecq, Vice Chair, Gallatin County Democrats, Gallatin Valley Human Rights Task Force**, spoke in support of the Communities Plan because of its strong protection of minority voting rights. She said that it creates districts that are fair, competitive, and meet legal and constitutional requirements.
- 00:31:19 **Dorothy Eck, Democrat, Bozeman**, discussed her participation in the 1972 Constitutional Convention which created Montana's current districting and apportionment system. She said that she has kept informed of the issues and process over the years and in looking over all of the proposed maps, she has no hesitation in supporting the Communities Plan because it best meets the criteria. Ms. Eck said that it also considers Gallatin County's communities of interest and the needs of urban and rural voters. She said it did concern her that Three Forks was lopped off but that being included in Madison County was appropriate, considering that many Three Forks residents are employed at the talc mine. She wished the Commission good luck in its work.
- 00:37:43 **Sen. Bob Hawks, Bozeman, SD 33**, commented on the Bozeman community and its communities of interest. He said that the downtown area is the core of Bozeman and that districts need to have to have some connection to the city. Sen. Hawks elaborated on his previously submitted public comment (March 8) opposing the Gallatin County Plan #1 and discussed the attributes of the Communities Plan. He said the Communities Plan would better protect the diverse interests of the area's nine house districts.
- 00:41:45 **Michael Houghton, Manhattan**, spoke in support of the Gallatin County Plan #1 and in opposition to the Communities Plan. He said the Communities Plan would separate the small communities in Gallatin County and would do a disservice to them by breaking the strong connection between them.
- 00:42:48 **Julia Page, Gardiner, Chair, Park County Democrats**, said that she supports the Communities Plan because it meets constitutionally required and discretionary criteria. She said she particularly likes that it works off existing boundaries and responded to population changes, and that it keeps Park County intact. Ms. Page stated that her overwhelming concern is that the Commission create fair and competitive districts because that promotes democracy and participation in the process. She thanked the Commissioners for their service.
- 00:45:42 **Beth Kaeding** thanked the Commissioners for their service. She spoke in support of the Communities Plan, saying that after looking at all of the plans, her overwhelming concern is achieving a fair balance and to elect legislators who are

willing to work with a diverse group of constituents and to find a way to compromise. She said that the Communities Plan will create a fair balance in communities.

- 00:47:36 **Bob Raney, Livingston, former legislator**, said that Livingston has had its own representative since the 1972 Constitutional Convention and that he would like it to remain that way. He said that Livingston is tied closely to Park County and that he would like the current lines district lines, which include part of Sweet Grass County, to be preserved. He said that the Communities Plan is the only plan that would maintain strong communities of interest and preserve what Park County has now.
- 00:49:25 **Billy McWilliams, Chair, Gallatin County Democrat Central Committee**, spoke in support of the Communities Plan, saying it would provide a fair balance and ensure competitive seats. He said that the proposed Commission plans and the Gallatin County Plan #1 would "pack" districts and allow party domination, as has happened in the past. He said it is better for Montana's political system to have diversity.
- 00:50:49 **April Buonamici** said she would support the Communities Plan or any plan that would keep Gallatin County united. She said that Gallatin County is a community that shares infrastructure, services, and governments. She would prefer having districts that don't cross county lines. Ms. Buonamici said that she is running for the HD 70 seat, which extends from Four Corners to West Yellowstone. She discussed the importance of keeping those communities in Gallatin County. She said she would support adding the part of Big Sky that falls in Madison County to Gallatin County.
- 00:53:04 **Carol Stahl** said that Gallatin County is the fastest growing county in the state and one of the top fastest growing counties in the nation, which is why it needs another representative in Helena. She said that she supports the Communities Plan or any plan that will provide good representation for Gallatin County.
- 00:54:28 **Loren Acton** thanked the Commissioners for their work and service. He said that districting is fundamental to operating a democracy. He discussed "safe" districts and how they disenfranchise minority voters. He said that he believes that government is best when it can represent points of view from all over the state and that competitive districts provide the best representation. Mr. Acton said that he supports the Communities Plan.
- 00:56:31 **Elaine Collins** said that she has studied all of the plans and supports the Communities Plan because it encompasses the growth in Gallatin County and balances the community. She thanked the Commissioners for their service and passed out homemade cookies.
- 00:57:58 **Pat Simmons** said that she supports the Communities Plan because it is fair and balanced, follows mandatory criteria, and doesn't split small towns. She said that she supports having nine house seats for Gallatin County.

- 00:58:35 **Alex Russell** said that he supports the Communities Plan because it reflects travel routes. He discussed communities of interest and the population residing outside of Bozeman who trade in Bozeman, go to Bozeman schools, and use Bozeman services. He said that the other proposed plans divide these small communities, which the Communities Plan does not.
- 00:59:21 **Andy Scott, Livingston**, said that as a concerned citizen, he has researched all of the plans and has formed strong opinions. He discussed reasons why he opposes the Urban Rural Plan, the Deviation Plan, and the Subdivision Plan, saying that they all divide Livingston and Park County in one detrimental way or another, and would diminish the town and county's ability to have effective representation in Helena. Mr. Scott said that Livingston is a friendly, welcoming, and cohesive community with certain needs and he encouraged the Commissioners to visit. He said that he supports the Communities Plan because it best mitigates existing problems.
- 01:03:01 **Bob Ebinger, Livingston, and former legislator**, said that as a former legislator, he knows the Livingston area legislative districts well and doesn't think they should be changed. He said the Communities Plan is the best plan for Livingston because it keeps communities of interest together, respects common interests, keeps small towns together, and keeps districts highly competitive, all of which mean a legislator has to be effective in order to keep the seat. He said that he found the Subdivision Plan to be especially offensive to Livingston because it splits the town in half.
- 01:05:14 Commissioner Regnier recessed the hearing for a 10-minute break.
BREAK
- 01:17:28 Commissioner Regnier called the hearing back to order at 8:20 p.m. He said that he wished to respond to several comments made in the course of the hearing:
- The questions about the origins of the plans: Commissioner Regier said that four plan themes were suggested by one or more of the Commission members and drawn by Legislative Division Services staff. Commissioners Lamson and Smith requested the Communities Plan.
 - The request to have a show of hands to show who supports which plan: Commissioner Regnier said that would not be done simply to shorten or expedite the process. He said that it is important that the Commissioners know the identity of the person commenting, which plan is supported, and why.
- 01:19:22 **Richard Parks, Gardiner, Chair, Montana League of Rural Voters**, said that the League's membership is concentrated in the larger Yellowstone Valley but have members all over state. He said the League supports the Communities Plan because it does least damage to rural areas. Mr. Parks said that he understands why urban areas have to be divided but that it doesn't make sense to divide rural communities. He said that more detailed written comment would be submitted later.
- 01:21:18 **Kirk Wagoner, Jefferson County**, said that he opposes the Communities Plan and the Existing Plan. He said that while each has positive attributes, they ignore

certain mandatory criteria, such as compact districts. Mr. Wagoner discussed how certain rural areas in Jefferson County with little or no road access would be split under the Communities Plan and also how communities of interest are not maintained under the Plan. Mr. Wagoner noted that at a previous public hearing, the Republican Party said that it did not intend to submit any plans.

- 01:24:32 **Marty Malone, Park County Commissioner**, said on behalf of the Park County Clerk and Recorder and the Park County GIS, he supports the Communities Plan. He said the Commission likes that Livingston is kept in a single district and not split. He made several suggestions on how to tweak the plan, such as including parts of either Gallatin or northern Sweet Grass County.
- 01:25:31 **James Bennett, Livingston**, said that he supports either the Existing or Urban Rural Plan because of the small population deviations.
- 01:26:39 **Leonard Wortman, Chair, Jefferson County Commission**, said that because Jefferson County is centrally located between three large urban counties, there is concern that it could lose its identity by being broken up into several parts, as is proposed under the Communities Plan. He said that option is totally unacceptable to Jefferson County residents. Commissioner Wortman referred to an email exchange with Commission members regarding the voting record for Jefferson County representatives on HB 198, and said that the senator who did vote for that bill will likely never be elected to office again. He said that none of the proposed plans work well for Jefferson County, that the Jefferson County Commissioners submitted their own plan at previous hearings (*posted on the Districting website*), and that the residents want to keep the County as whole as possible. Commissioner Wortman submitted comments from Jefferson County residents who support the Jefferson County Commission Plan (*also posted on the website*).
- 01:29:36 **Jean Souvigny, Livingston**, said that she has reviewed the proposed plans and that the Subdivision Plan is most offensive because it splits Livingston down the middle. She said that a better focus would be how to get Livingston and the surrounding area into one district. Ms. Souvigny discussed problems with the other proposed plans and said the only plan that is good for Livingston is the Communities Plan. She said that it would be good to draw the districts east and west because of shared values with other communities along the Yellowstone River.
- 01:31:41 **Sen. Ron Arthun, SD 31 encompassing Sweet Grass and Park Counties**, said that he personally favors the Urban Rural Plan because it keeps boundaries intact for most part. Sen. Arthun discussed other benefits of the Urban Rural Plan and how it is beneficial to agriculture, the Stillwater Mine, and school districts. He said he could also support the Existing Plan and urged the Commission to reject partisan politics and to work for the common good of all Montanans.
- 01:33:33 **Dave Ponte** commented on how the proposed plans would affect Gallatin County. He asked the Commissioners to seriously consider the Gallatin County Plan #1, noting that all three Gallatin County Commissioners support the plan.

He said that it is obvious that the Communities Plan is partisan and is an example of gerrymandering to the utmost. He said that he is a candidate for HD 66 and if elected, he would not vote to support the Communities Plan.

- 01:34:53 **Henry Kriegel** thanked Chairman Regnier for clarifying the origin of all of the proposed plans. He said that he agrees with Mr. Ponte's comments regarding partisan nature of the Communities Plan. He said that he finds it ironic that the Communities Plan is called that because it splits up Big Timber, and that the simplest and most straight-forward plan is Gallatin County Plan #1. He said that he supports that plan because both individuals from political parties worked collaboratively to create it and for reasons previously stated by others.
- 01:36:28 **Lisa Adams** said that she supports the Urban Rural Plan for HD 61 and HD 62. She said that she has family and friends all over the area and married into a family that has spans five generations in the area. She said she supports the Urban Rural Plan because of the low population deviation and because it doesn't split Big Timber, as it is in the Communities Plan.
- 01:38:04 **Rep. Kelly Flynn, HD 68, northeastern Gallatin County and southern Broadwater County**, said that his district is the "ugly stepchild district" because no one wanted Broadwater County. He said that the Communities Plan splits Broadwater County and Townsend again. He discussed the shared interests and economies of Three Forks, Townsend, and White Sulphur; and said that the Subdivision Plan would best fit the needs of those communities and corresponding county.
- 01:40:00 **Don Hart** said that he thought the Gallatin County Plan #1 is very good sample of what should happen all across the state. He said that he knew the Commissioners have worked hard but have missed a couple of key points, such as taking care of the voters. He discussed the old concept of having senators and representatives from each county. He said that voters are disenfranchised by having to cross over county lines and that is a failure of the current system. Mr. Hart said the influence of special interest groups have been detrimental as well and that the people need to be put back in control in order to put back in place the checks and balances that are lacking under the new Constitution.
- 01:42:25 **Garret Linderman** said that he opposes the Communities Plan because it is not a result of a bipartisan effort and doesn't rectify the wrongs of the past Commission. He said that for example, a suburban tract housing development in what was HD 63 in Missoula was split into four districts in the last districting process. He said that district was the only long-standing Republican District in the area and that if the goal of the Communities Plan truly was truly a communities plan, it would bring that district back. Mr. Linderman said that it was not the Commission's job to create competitive districts, but to create districts that represent the people who live in a district.
- 01:44:34 **Tom Tuck** thanked the Commissioners and the citizens for coming to the hearing. He said that the process is not about Republicans or Democrats, but about the people of the State of Montana. He said the purpose of the process is

to serve the citizens of the state and to protect their rights and interests. Mr. Tuck said with that in mind, he strongly opposes the Communities Plan because of its partisan base and gerrymandering effect. He said that he likes the Gallatin County Plan #1.

- 01:46:16 **John Watts** said that he opposes the Communities Plan and supports the Gallatin County Plan #1, and agrees with comments made by Steve White and Dave Ponte.
- 01:46:34 **Karin Pfaehler**, said that she supports the Gallatin County Plan #1 because it keeps Gallatin County together, and that opposes the Communities Plan and the Existing Plan. She referred to comments made earlier by Brady Wiseman attributing the level of animosity in the legislature to how the districts were drawn in the last districting cycle and asked why the Commission should adopt a plan drawn by the same individual responsible for the last plan.
- 01:47:09 **Scott Sales, former legislator**, asked to be on the record as opposing the Communities Plan. He said that one thing that hasn't been discussed is the effects of "weighting" districts, particularly in districts that are experiencing a great deal of growth, as is happening in the Gallatin Valley and surrounding areas. He said that to mitigate the effects of growth, rural and suburb districts should be underweighted and urban districts should be overweighted, which would create more balance.
- 01:48:48 **Mikala Truthspeaker, representing Kurt Bushnell, Republican candidate for SD 34**, said that Mr. Bushnell fully supports the Gallatin County Plan #1.
- 01:49:28 **Marilyn Hendry** stated that she is diametrically opposed to the Communities Plan for reasons as stated by Henry Kriegel, Scott Sales, and Steve White.
- 01:49:53 **Kristen Walser, Bozeman**, said that the Commissioner's job is huge because it is statewide process and that it must draft the maps to encompass the needs of all citizens. She said that many people have discussed using county lines as boundaries, which has merit, but in looking at all of the plans, it appears that Gallatin County will be a multi-district county no matter what. Ms. Walser discussed the importance of planning for growth and said that Bozeman has tried to take into account the principals of good planning, and has tried to keep growth in certain areas in order to minimize infrastructure and transportation issues. She said that she supports the Communities Plan for a number of reasons, including that it plans for growth, follows school district lines, and maintains communities of interest. Ms. Walser said that it is well-thought out, based on good principals of development, and will keep people together for good representation.
- 01:54:29 **Rick Gillis, Bozeman**, said that he is raising his family in Bozeman and has learned the importance of having a local community and knowing his neighbors. He said that he appreciates the time and energy that Gallatin County put into its plan and appreciates how it aligns with the precinct concept, which keeps voters informed of local issues. Mr. Gillis strongly recommended that the Commission consider Gallatin County Plan #1.

- 01:55:47 **Billy Orr, Kelly Canyon**, spoke in support of the Gallatin County Plan #1. She said that she is precinct committeewoman and that the Gallatin County Plan #1 was put together with precincts in mind. She said that the Plan keeps the county intact and has the lowest deviation of all proposed plans. She said that she wants to be on record as opposing the Communities Plan and that it is a classic textbook example of gerrymandering
- 01:56:55 **Rep. Dan Skattum, HD 62, Livingston**, submitted letters opposing the Communities Plan and said that he wants to be on record as opposing the Communities Plan. He said that he is a fifth-generation Park County resident and he urged the Commission to keep Livingston and Park County as solid units as possible. He said that the Park County Clerk and Recorder will support any plan that keeps Livingston and Park County as solid units. He said that he also supports the comments made by Steve White, Dave Ponte, and Scott Sales.
- 01:58:02 **Nick Landeros** said that he strongly opposes the Communities Plan and strongly supports the Gallatin County Plan #1. He said that the Communities Plan is a Democrat plan designed to give the Democrats the advantage in Gallatin and other counties. Mr. Landeros said that the Communities Plan is neither fair nor just, as is being claimed, and that the Gallatin County Plan #1 very fairly addresses the issue of diverse communities. He said, in reference to a previous comment about minorities feeling disenfranchised, that as a member of a racial minority he could state that he does not feel disenfranchised and thinks that certain minorities receive special treatment under the Communities Plan. He said he would encourage the Commission to apply the principles of the Gallatin County Plan #1 to the rest of the state and to reject the notion of partisan politics.
- 02:00:14 **Alan Cartwright** said that the Communities Plan does several very important things such as following the mandatory criteria, provides population equality, provides compact and contiguous districts, and protects minority voting rights. Mr. Cartwright said that the Community Plan also provides nine house seats, which is needed due to the growth rates in the County. He said that the Community Plan falls close to the Gallatin County Plan #1 in terms of standard deviation and dividing the population equally, it supports transportation corridors, and doesn't split communities.
- 02:02:04 **Rep. Kathleen Williams, Bozeman, HD 65**, said that she was addressing the Commission as a voter, former nonpartisan legislative staff, and as a current state representative. She encouraged the Commission to look at the objectives of Gallatin County Plan #1, which was to minimize multi-county districts, and said that the Communities Plan has the least number of multi-county districts. Rep. Williams said that she feels strongly that urban voters should not be isolated from rural voters, that every effort should be made to craft diverse districts in order to balance those interests against one another, and that working to heal the urban rural divide is a good objective. She agreed with Commissioner White that nine house districts are needed in the area. She discussed the shortcomings of several of the proposed plans and how they would impact the existing communities of interest in HD 65, particularly the university district. Regarding references to fairness and accusations of partisanship and gerrymandering, Rep.

Williams said that while she fully respects nonpartisan legislative staff, they serve all legislators of both parties, and that it should not be assumed that because nonpartisan staff drafted a plan that it is apolitical. She also said that she finds the assertion of gerrymandering to be odd because if the Communities Plan goal is to create the most competitive plan possible in which candidates have to work very hard to win a seat, that is the opposite of gerrymandering. She said that she supports the Communities Plan.

- 02:07:33 **Jed Hinkle** discussed the odd shape and vast differences between the east end and west end of HD 66 and how the Communities Plan would perpetuate the west end residents' feelings of being under-represented and left out. He said the east end has a much higher population than the west end, which isn't fair and that he believes that those who support the Communities Plan understand that and is why they want to leave it that way. Mr. Hinkle strongly urged the Commission to consider the Gallatin County Plan #1.
- 02:10:49 **Kris Mara** spoke in support of the Communities Plan, saying that it has a lower average deviation plan than the Subdivision and Urban Rural Plans. He added that the Communities Plan splits the fewest small towns, including those in Jefferson County.
- 02:11:41 **Sen. Art Wittich, SD 35**, said that while there is a broad political spectrum on the Commission, he hopes the Commissioners share the common objective to ensure that all Montanans have a voice in how the state governs. He said it is obvious that the current system was gerrymandered and said his hope is that the goal of the districting process is democracy. Sen. Wittich discussed his objections to several of the proposed plans and how they will exacerbate existing problems. He said that the Deviation Plan and the Gallatin County Plan #1 would work best for Bozeman because the citizens residing in the core of Bozeman have different interests than people in the rural parts of Gallatin County. He said that the Communities Plan is not just gerrymandering, but is "gerrymandering on steroids" and said that having five plans in the core of Bozeman is not a good idea. He said the Communities Plan is pure partisan politics and for partisan power. He said that the chairman of the Commission, as in years past, will shoulder a heavy load in this process and that he hopes the legacy of the decisions made will be that of an honest democracy.
- 02:17:20 **Rep. Michael More, HD 70**, thanked the Commission, staff, and public for attending the hearing. He spoke in support of the Gallatin County Plan #1 and said if it must be deviated from, to look at West Yellowstone as a possible target because of the shared trade area and communities of interest. Rep. More also asked that the Commission remove all political bias from its deliberations. He said the process is a great burden but is imperative to Montana's well-being and strength of the Legislative Branch. Rep. More said that as a two-time member of the State Legislature, the Legislative Branch, in his opinion, is the weakest branch of government and is in an inferior position to advance what the people want. He said that if the Commission wants a citizen legislature to represent its citizens in the best manner possible, it is essential to keep partisan politics out of the districting process.

- 02:19:53 **Claus Klaastuiningh, self and grandchildren**, said that he moved to the Gallatin Valley in 1964 and has been an involved citizen ever since, including the political process from time to time. He said that he is definitely opposed to the Communities Plan and favors the Gallatin County Plan #1 because it is fair and balanced.
- 02:21:33 **Jim Rollick, Four Corners, business owner**, said that he supports the Gallatin County Plan #1 because it came from the people who live in the area and know the needs of their community.
- 02:22:19 **Bill Spanring, Livingston City Commissioner but representing self**, said that the Existing Plan would be best for Livingston and that the Communities Plan, in his view, destroys the vote west of Livingston. He said that rural people think differently, have different needs, and depend on different resources. He apologized for not having any cake or candy for the Commissioners.
- 02:23:36 **Charlotte Mills, Gallatin County Clerk and Recorder**, said that she wanted the Commission to know that it is the county clerks and recorders who have to help the public adjust to their new district boundaries. She said that the Commissioners will consider all natural and geographical boundaries when drawing district lines.
- 02:24:35 **Eric Semerad, Gallatin County Clerk and Recorder's Office**, said that he prepared the Gallatin County plans submitted by Ms. Mills. He said that he was not commenting in support or opposition to any plan, but to discuss the design process used. He said that Mr. Kolman met with them which presented a unique opportunity to get involved in the process much earlier than in past districting processes. He said the Gallatin County plans were intended to be used as input for legislative staff and that he was surprised that Plan #1 ended up becoming a stand alone plan and posted on the Commission's website. He said that the Commissioners needed to know that he worked only with the Gallatin County boundaries and did not make changes to districts outside the county boundaries. Mr. Semerad also discussed other goals of the Gallatin County Plan, including achieving the lowest possible deviation and keeping precincts fit and geographically compatible with voter access.
- 02:27:23 **Rick Vaught, Gallatin Valley**, said that he supports the Gallatin County Plan #1 because it fits the mandatory requirements very nicely. Mr. Vaught said that he adamantly opposes Communities Plan because it is heavily weighted and is "more of the same" from the architect of the last districting plan. Mr. Vaught said the founding principal of American freedom was to produce the greatest prosperity and the greatest freedom for the most people and the foundation of that is to protect the minority from the tyranny of the majority. He said that in the Communities Plan, urban interests far outweigh rural interests, which is totally contrary to the American experience of freedom. He said that it is clearly a partisan plan and that his earnest plea is that the Commission keep the founding principals of American freedom in mind when considering district boundaries.

- 02:29:59 **Keith Stengel, small business owner**, said that as a business man with 35 employees, he has a high stake Bozeman's success and wants the community to thrive. He said that he thinks the Communities Plan is ridiculous and would not benefit Bozeman. He said that he supports the Gallatin County Plan #1 and that it would far better serve the economic stability of Bozeman.
- 02:30:50 **Karen Marshall** said that she supports the Communities Plan for all of the reasons already stated.

COMMISSIONER COMMENT AND QUESTIONS

- 02:31:23 Commissioner Vaughey thanked the meeting attendees for their time and comments. She encouraged them to follow up with additional comments and ideas until the August 1 deadline.
- 02:32:44 Commissioner Smith gave kudos to the Bozeman community for such a large attendance on a Friday night. He asked the attendees to keep comments coming and to encourage others to comment as well. He said that a great deal of information is on the Districting web page, including specific information on each district, and urged the citizens to review it.
- 02:34:04 Commissioner Bennion thanked everyone for coming and said it was encouraging to see such good participation. He said that none of the maps will be "rubber stamped" but used as starting points to incorporate the public comments submitted. He said the public comment is very useful and will give the Commission good guidance in the final drafting process.
- 02:35:03 Commissioner Lamson thanked everyone for attending the hearing and for the comments. He said he would like to especially thank Dorothy Eck for her leadership and service at the 1972 Constitutional Convention, which corrected many problems in Montana's districting process.
- 02:35:56 Commissioner Regnier said that the delegates to the 1972 Constitutional Convention adopted the process of an independent districting and apportionment commission to create plans. He said that while the plan is required to be submitted to the Legislature, which can made recommendations or suggestions, the Commission makes the final decisions and approves the plan. He said it is also important to remember that there are many things that the Commission does not control, such as census numbers or population shifts, which can change drastically over a ten-year period. He also discussed the impact of moving just one line in a district, which has a ripple effect on the entire statewide map. He said the process will be very challenging. He thanked everyone for attending the hearing and urged them to continue to submit their comments and ideas.

ADJOURNMENT

- 02:39:19 With no further business before the Commission, Commissioner Regnier adjourned the hearing at 9:40 p.m. The Districting and Apportionment Commission will meet next on April 18, 2012, in Great Falls, Montana.