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Cc: Aaron King <aaronk@cityofws.org>; Chris Murphy <chrism@cityofws.org>

Subject: [EXTERNAL] G-2. 22-0559: Ward Realignment Public Hearing/City Council Resolution MUST BE POSTPONED Until There is More PUBLIC EDUCATION OF & INPUT FROM the City's Registered Voters/Taxpayers.

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Dear Mayor Joines, Mayor Pro Tem Adams, and Winston-Salem City Council Members:

As community/neighborhood advocates from our respective City Wards, the "Coalition 4 Accountability & Transparency" finds the lackluster attempt at public engagement for the current Ward Realignment process by the City of Winston-Salem to be totally unacceptable. Since the need for Ward Realignment comes around every 10 years based on the results of the latest US Census (2020), the City of Winston-Salem should be outdoing itself in trying to educate and engage its citizens about the "why" and "what" and "methodology" being used to make the current proposed Ward Realignment changes to each of the City's respective Wards. Instead, the City had four anemic Drop-In Sessions at four Recreations Centers in the month of August, when the majority of City residents were on vacation or engaged in other summer pursuits and where its primary means of publicizing these sessions was via online and social media.

From the information we have received, it appears that less than twenty (20) City residents came to these four August Drop-In Sessions, and the Planning Department has received only four written Public Comments, and a few Survey comments (from the Agenda documents). Again, less than 20 people attending four Public Drop-In meetings on Ward Realignment map proposals is unacceptable.

Planning Staff admitted that most of the residents coming to these Drop-In meetings did not have any questions or concerns. We assert that the lack of questions by City residents was due to a lack of understanding by said City residents regarding the process of Ward Realignment, and the fact that if a resident was interested in determining changes to his/her Ward, said resident would find it extremely difficult to look at the color-coded map changes online via a computer device or in the short time-frame of a Drop-In Meeting.

Our "Coalition 4 Accountability & Transparency" is also very concerned about long-term global issues of the seemingly continued gerrymandering of City Wards with too many split precincts (a major voting barrier), the continued packing of black and white residents into certain Wards, and a growing disconnect among some of the Wards where their political re-alignment is becoming out-of-sync geographically with their Area Plans (where Area Plans are concerned with land use, zoning, and future economic development).

Please Note: Our above comments in no way mean that current Planning Staff have not done their job as directed by the City Council regarding the current Ward Realignment maps. What it does mean is that if Wards have had previous issues or previously gerrymandering, then any additional changes in the Ward Realignment process will obviously only increase the original gerrymandering with more split precincts, continued political packing of black and white residents, etc.

As such, our "Coalition 4 Accountability & Transparency" is asking the City Council:

(1) To postpone the G-2. 22-0559 Public Hearing and City Council decision-making on the current Ward Realignment proposals as noted on the 9.19.2022 City Council Agenda until the below requests for increasing the activities of public education and engagement are completed, since said Ward Realignment does not need to be implemented until 2024.

(2) To display over the next six (6) months in each Ward's respective public libraries and recreation centers the proposed Ward Realignment maps along with posters explaining the purpose of Ward Realignment and the changes proposed for each respective Ward. And, during these six months, continue to publicize online and via social media where City residents can find, review, and study their proposed Ward Realignment map changes. Also, include a Ward Realignment Public Education Leaflet in one of the City's Utility Bill mailings during this time frame.

(3) To have the Planning Staff conduct a series of public education meetings in a PowerPoint presentation format for each Ward regarding their proposed Ward Realignment changes, where Planning Staff will explain the purpose and process of Ward Realignment—the "why," "what", and "methodology" used, etc.,--and answer specific questions on each specific Ward Realignment map from City residents attending such

meetings during this 6-month time frame.

(4) To have the Planning Staff and City Council seriously review and consider any proposed changes to the respective Ward Realignment proposals brought to light by the above improved City education and engagement proposal and then make any necessary changes to the Ward Realignment maps.

(5) To have the final Ward Realignment map proposals brought before the City Council for its Public Hearing and final City Council decision-making in late spring/early summer of 2023.

Thank you in advance for your consideration in postponing and improving the education and engagement of city residents regarding the "G-2. 22-0559 Public Hearing and City Council Resolution on Revising the Ward Boundaries of the City of Winston-Salem as the Result of the 2020 Census" currently on the 9.19.2022 City Council Agenda.

Sincerely,

The Coalition 4 Accountability & Transparency:

Eunice Campbell, North Ward

Phillip Carter, East Ward

Carolyn Highsmith, South Ward

Chenita Johnson, Northeast Ward