

Hearings

From: CATHERINE UNSINO [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, September 25, 2012 1:16 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Speaking at Oct. 4th Hearing on Re-Districting in Manhattan -- For your adoption of the Unity Coalition Recommendations

Dear Re-Districting Commission:

I speak in strong opposition to the re-districting proposed for the upper west side, especially but not exclusively about the plan

- 1) to split in two the historic 7 building complex located between 97th and 100th Streets (n/s) and Central Park West and Columbus Avenue (e/w) known as Park West Village; and
- 2) I also object to re-districting that would remove our effective, dedicated and committed Council Member Melissa Mark Viverito. She must continue to represent us as she has diligently on the upper westside.

1) I moved into Park West Village in 1968 because it was a racially and economically diverse, international, inclusive, progressive community -- a model for how we hoped our country would become. In fact at that time this area of the upper westside was renowned nationally as a unique and exemplary community in which people knew and mattered to each other across lines that elsewhere would categorize and compartmentalize us.

Neighbors within Park West Village have a history of sustained civic engagement on a range of issues of social justice. We have organized fund raisers for progressive causes and are politically active. We have formed self-help directories in each building to organize volunteers to help seniors and others. We developed a listserv for residents of our 7 buildings. We have formed book and film clubs, exercise programs, picnics, flea markets and a range of community activities open to all. To split this vibrant community along east/west lines would be a great injustice and would serve to weaken our voices and effective civic engagement. It would serve no constructive purpose for the people affected. One is moved to ask: what prompts this proposed re-districting at this time? Is it a strategy that would benefit individuals maneuvering for political advantage to the detriment of the best interest of citizens? That should be unequivocally rejected.

We read newspaper articles de-crying rampant income segregation across our country and see first hand how our city caters to the super rich while squeezing low and middle income New Yorkers beyond endurance. The district as it is presently constituted encompasses residents that embody the full spectrum of income levels. We use the same library, relax in the same area of Central Park, swim in its pool in the summer, buy produce at the same Farmers' Market, shop in the same stores. We know and matter to each other. If your proposal were to go through, Park West Village's representation would be split, we would be cut off from the Douglass Houses, from our neighbors at 106th St whom we have come to know and value. Often at our Farmers' Market, I see tourists enjoying the scene, led there by guides who volunteer to accompany them to interesting New York City Sites. They aren't only enjoying the fresh produce. Clearly, they are moved by the joyful diversity of our neighbors shopping together, exchanging international and regional recipes while enjoying the lively beat of our local jazz trio. Why would you tear apart such a beautiful fabric? First, do no harm.

2) Councilmember Melissa Mark Viverito has encompassed well the needs of her upper west side constituents, while also addressing concerns of those in East Harlem and the Bronx. I have met many new friends among residents of East Harlem I would otherwise not have had the opportunity to know. She has participated in our community meetings, has come to our homes, schools and community rooms learning first hand what our issues are, lending her expertise to help us grow grass roots initiatives and advocating for fairness and the people's

interest when those are threatened. Council Member Mark Viverito is an exemplary public official whose district must remain intact so she can continue superior representation. We value her effective, dedicated hard work and would find it destructive to all we value to lose her and her services at this critical time in our community. We urge that you embrace the universally valued admonition: First, do no harm.

CONCLUSION

We want our Council Member Melissa Mark Viverito to continue to represent us.

We urge that you retain our current district configuration and adopt recommendations promulgated by the Unity Coalition.

Respectfully Submitted,

Catherine Unsino, LCSW

[REDACTED]
New York, NY [REDACTED]

City Redistricting Hearing Testimony

October 4, 2012

Daniel Marks Cohen

New York State Democratic Committeeman, 69th A.D.

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My name is Daniel Marks Cohen, and I am the New York State Democratic Committeeman representing the 69th Assembly District of Manhattan's Upper West Side in the New York State Democratic Committee. The Assemblymember for the 69th is Daniel O'Donnell. I am a lifelong resident of the Upper West Side, my parents live in the district, my wife and I live in the district, and we are raising our newborn son – a third generation West Sider – in it as well. The part of the Upper West Side I live in – between 96th Street and 125th Street, is the poorest portion of the 69th Assembly District (<http://zipskinny.com/zipcompare.php>), it is the least served in terms of services and transportation (<http://www.straphangers.org/pokeyaward/10/>), and has more crime (http://www.nyc.gov/html/nypd/html/crime_prevention/crime_statistics.shtml).

I believe at least one reason for its consistent and uneven status is that fact that the 69th is cut up into multiple pieces of nine different districts. This was somewhat improved recently by the passage of federal redistricting legislation which redrew the TWO Congressional districts: the 8th by Representative Jerry Nadler, and the 15th by Representative Charlie Rangel; but it was made worse by the THREE State Senate districts: Tom Duane of the 29th, Bill Perkins of the 30th and Adriano Espaillat of the 31st. The latter, the 31st, is particularly egregious, stretching from 184th to 24th Streets along the west coast of Manhattan island, it looks more like the Latin American country of Chile than a proper State Senate district. But sadly, that it not your purview today, and we are stuck with this absurd district for the next ten years.

The recent proposed draft of the council lines is a modest improvement – the northern part of the area I represent is no longer in the 8th district, currently held by councilmember Melissa Mark-Viverito from East Harlem, who has served us as well as any person could with a district stretching over such a large geographic area with limited resources. But the area is now split between the 7th and the 9th, councilmembers Robert Jackson and Inez Dickens, respectively. The line to divide the two districts deliberately fractures the community in a way I can only assume was to limit the voting power of the residents in the district so as to not have too much sway in either the 7th, largely seen at a “Washington Heights” seat and the 9th, which is viewed as a “West Harlem” seat.

Plainly put: the northern-most district lines proposed are nonsensical. While I am grateful that residents in my community who lived in the 8th district no longer have to go to 116th Street and Lexington Avenue for help from their councilmember, it is absurd and blatantly disrespectful to divide the area between the 7th and 9th districts along such a random line. The easiest solution is to move the border so that everything west of Central Park and Morningside Park is in the 7th. If this causes the 7th to exceed its capacity, move the line of the 6th district north to pick up some additional voters. I propose that the Commission redraw the lines more naturally, to keep Manhattan Valley's representation on the West Side, where it belongs, rather than as an appendage to another district for incumbency or demographic reasons.

Hearings

From: Dean Dacian [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 04, 2012 9:39 AM
To: Hearings
Subject: Keep Park West Village Intact!

To whom it may concern,

As a resident of [REDACTED] for almost 47 years (basically my entire life), I find it ridiculous that some arbitrary redistricting decision would cause our community to be split up.

The powers that be should reconsider.

As a devoted member of the community I think we ought to be aligned in Council District 6, currently under Gale Brewer — as one community, so that Park West Village's needs are properly addressed as a whole Community, not a fractured mess...

Cordially,

Dean Dacian

Hearings

From: D Collier [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 04, 2012 10:02 AM
To: Hearings
Subject: Redistricting 8 and 9th council areas

NYC Districting Commission
Attn: Jonathan Etricks
253 Broadway, 7th Fl.
New York, NY 10007

Mr. Jonathan Etricks:

Unfortunately, I have an engagement this evening I would like to add my voice to meeting and support the redistricting proposals that include the following:

1. The district boundaries of the 9th Council district be Amsterdam and Morningside Avenues to the west, 110 street to the south, 155street and Polo Grounds and Rangel Houses to the North and Lexington and Park Avenue to the East with 115th street being the turning onto Madison avenue continuing to 110th street..
2. La Marqueta (historic cultural Latino legacy)which would be split in the Commission's first proposal would then be restored to District 8.
3. Randall's Island be restored to District 8. District 8 "green spaces" availability would be severely limited by Randall's move to Astoria district - further limiting our East Harlem/Harlem children access to upward mobility athletics and recreation.
4. While it is understood why District 8 was extended into Bronx, such far extension could be challenging for whoever holds that seat - having to balance issues/attention from Bronx/Manhattan. Consideration should be given to Bronx lines being drawn closer to Mott Haven and South East Bronx..

Thank you for taking into consideration my concerns.

Diane Collier
Community Advocate

Hearings

From: Elizabeth Kellner [REDACTED]
Sent: Thursday, October 11, 2012 8:26 AM
To: Hearings
Subject: Testimony in Opposition to Proposed Lines for 7th, 8th and 9th Districts

My name is Elizabeth Kellner, and I have lived for 36 years at [REDACTED] in the Manhattan Valley neighborhood of the Upper West Side. I testified at the hearing on October 4, and I submit these additional comments for your consideration.

First, I urge the Commission not to divide the Manhattan Valley neighborhood between two City Council districts as is currently proposed, and second, I urge you to include the neighborhood in the Upper West Side Council district where it properly belongs. This has nothing to do with preferring one Councilperson over another as I support and respect all the possible options. The legally mandated objective of the all important redistricting exercise is to ensure fair, adequate and equal representation for communities of interest, especially for historically disenfranchised and under served population groups. It is most emphatically not to accommodate jockeying among candidates for an advantage in seeking future political office, especially when that advantage would be won at the expense of preserving established communities of interest.

I know Manhattan Valley extremely well. Over the 36 years I have lived here our family has been involved with many community groups and active on many issues -- tenants rights, abandonment, zoning and land use, historic preservation, neighborhood schools, block associations and public safety campaigns, to name a few. Manhattan Valley is economically and ethnically diverse. We have a significant number of public housing and subsidized units but also luxury condos and condominiums with everything in between, hostels and hotels, landmarks, historic districts and new construction, a nursing home, senior assisted living facilities, several pre-schools and a head start program, youth programs, a business improvement district, chain stores and mom and pop shops. I could go on and on. We all live, work, play, pray and volunteer side by side, and it works. What the Commission has proposed would slice the community down the middle threatening to undermine those ties that have bound us together. A significant portion of the more affluent and white areas of Manhattan Valley would be peeled off to join the Central Harlem district, while the lower income and predominantly Latino as well as public housing blocks would be sent to the West Harlem/Washington Heights district -- in both cases Manhattan Valley would be a very tiny "tail" the would most certainly not wag the dog. The voices of our diverse and well defined community in city government would be diluted and undermined by the current proposal.

As to my second point, Manhattan Valley is unquestionably part of the Upper West Side historically and geographically - we are 100% within the boundaries of the West Side's CB #7, the 24th Pct and Community School District #3. We are served by the West Side's transportation infrastructure, social service programs, parks and youth athletic leagues. No one, from the real estate developers to the US Postal Service thinks we are anything but part of the Upper West Side.

While I appreciate the challenges facing the Commission and the many constituencies to whom you are accountable, I firmly believe that there is no rational or justifiable basis to support the destructive division of the Manhattan Valley neighborhood. Please keep us in tact. If we cannot join our natural neighbors in the Upper West Side District, please keep us with East Harlem in the 8th district -- we have been joined with that district for several decades now going back to the time when Carolyn Maloney was our City Council representative. We have a successful legacy of representation by the elected officials from that community, including Manhattan Valley's own late, great Phil Reed. I implore you to keep us together as we have been keeping it together. In July 1981 New York Magazine ran a cover story about Manhattan Valley -- it was called Fighting to Save a Neighborhood. We thought we had saved our neighborhood through our joint efforts, so please do not divide us now.

Elizabeth Kellner

Hearings

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, October 10, 2012 11:23 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: Manhattan Valley and the Proposed City Council Districts

Dear Redistricting Commission Members:

I am Glory Ann Hussey Kerstein, founder and current President of DEBNA, the Duke Ellington Boulevard (West 106 St.) Neighborhood Association, which was founded in September 1991 to fight the scourge of crack in Manhattan Valley. I have proudly lived in the Valley for 30 years.

The proposed redistricting is a disservice to Manhattan Valley, a vibrant neighborhood that has served for decades as a stepping stone for low-income and minority groups including my grandmother who came from County Longford, Ireland, in 1911 and was living at 67 West 106 St. when my mother was born ten years later. Later the Valley was majorly Puerto Rican and now Dominican.

Manhattan Valley starts from Broadway to Central Park West, and from West 110 St. south to West 100th or West 96th St.

But no matter what the southern boundary, slicing the Valley up along Amsterdam Ave. and West 104th St. ignores the years of struggle for minority groups seeking to better themselves by establishing small enterprises that transcended the proposed boundaries.

It also ignores the more recent struggle to rid Manhattan Valley of crack where block associations and housing groups from both sides of Amsterdam Ave. and below and above West 104th St. (including the projects, Frederick Douglass Houses) combined forces to clear Manhattan Valley of drugs and close down a mecca for the drug trade, the Castle Hotel on Duke Ellington Blvd. (it is now a youth hostel!).

Manhattan Valley's interests and needs are strengthened by having ONE City Council Member to represent us, not three. Council Member Melissa Mark-Viverito well understands the Valley issues of retaining the last vestiges of affordable housing and resisting over-development and spurring employment for youth. She has also proven visionary in initiating a citizens' participatory budgeting process for the dispersal of Council discretionary funds in her district, one of only a handful of Council Members to do so.

I recognize the enormous task that the 15 members of the Redistricting Commission face. Such a small number cannot have first-hand knowledge of all of the communities in the five boroughs.

The message I wish to bring to the Commission from Manhattan Valley is this: if it's not broken, don't fix it. Keep Manhattan Valley intact, and allow us to vote again for a Council Member who has so ably represented us.

Thank you.

Glory Ann
[REDACTED]

NYC 10025

917-[REDACTED]

Hearings

From: judith baldwin [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, October 03, 2012 8:07 PM
To: Hearings
Subject: PWV

Park West Village (PWV) should remain *intact*. We are a community. Keep it that way.

**TESTIMONY OF NICK PRIGO
ELECTRONICALLY DELIVERED TO THE
NEW YORK CITY DISTRICTING COMMISSION**

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 4TH - 5:30PM - 9:00PM
SCHOMBURG CENTER FOR RESEARCH IN BLACK CULTURE
515 MALCOLM X BOULEVARD
NEW YORK, NY 10037

Thank you for taking the time to consider this testimony. My name is Nick Prigo and I am the Male Democratic District Leader for the 69th Assembly District, Part B and the Housing Committee Co-Chair of Manhattan's Community Board 7.

I commend the effort made by the commission thus far in the production of its draft map and want to recommend to you a couple of simple, yet critical, changes that would improve upon it. My home area, the northern reaches of the Upper West Side and Morningside Heights, has been unnecessarily divided into multiple council districts. I urge the commission to correct this mistake and unify these neighborhoods into a single district.

Highlighting the most egregious result of this separation is the division of the Park West Village complex at the southern end of the draft map's CD7 and CD9. Park West Village is a seven building complex comprising two super-blocks, with an active tenant association, and a 60-year history of unified community activism. It is critical that this complex, bounded by Columbus Ave, Central Park West, West 97th Street and West 100th Street, stays unified.

The unification of this territory would be best served by moving the southern border of the draft CD9 up to West 110th Street and snaking the western border along Morningside Park up through Columbia University. Furthermore, there may be opportunities to move the northern boundary of CD6 north a few blocks to help accommodate this unification.

Rosia M. Remy

[REDACTED]
New York, [REDACTED]

October 5, 2012

To the New York City Districting Commission:

Though I registered to give testimony at the public hearing held on October 4, 2012, events were such that I was unable to be present. I am therefore taking the opportunity to write to you and point out why I believe the proposed redistricting is WRONG for our community, the Manhattan Valley.

Manhattan Valley is foremost a community that has always been distinct, though existing as part of the Upper West Side. The current proposal for redistricting has two major faults:

1. The proposed zoning redistricting as is being proposed is unacceptable and not in compliance with the laws that say "established communities shall be kept intact". The proposed redistricting as it stands will destroy a community, MANHATTAN VALLEY", that has long existed as an integral part of the Upper West Side and has flourish under the present Community Board District over the last 25 years. Manhattan Valley fought and struggled for recognition for a long time as a community. Now just when we are able to enjoy the fruit of this community's labor, the commission's plan would not only destroy this neighborhood and community by integrating into a different community (zoning into Harlem) whose needs are so different that the only thing that can happen is that this community of ours, MANHATTAN VALLEY, would lose its voice on important matters.
2. If this total disregard to the MANHATTAN VALLEY Community was not enough, the proposed redistricting actually SPLIT the Community; with one part of it being zoned into the Upper West Side and another part zoned into Harlem. MANHATTAN VALLEY has been a flourishing community for a very long time. Its residents has struggled hard create and build onto this COMMUNITY for the last quarter of a century. So this redistricting makes absolutely no sense. A whole Community build on the common interest of its residents cannot be eradicated and fractioned in this matter. MANHATTAN VALLEY needs to stay intact.

I do not believe that it was the intent of the Redistricting Commission to completely ignore a thriving community that has always has a very strong foundation on the Upper West Side and very well represented by the Community Board. This would be in complete disregard to the New York City Charter as far as neighborhoods and communities are defined. I, therefore request that the Redistricting Commission revisit the drawing board to take into account that our community needs to stay intact. Our residents and Associations have worked hard and struggled over the years to establish our community in the Manhattan Valley. The voices of the residents and Associations of

the MANHATTAN VALLEY needs to be heard and are best represented under the current Community Board where the Community's identity is well established and recognized.

Sincerely,

/s/Rosia Remy

Rosia Remy
Manhattan Valley Resident
Since 1992