Parks redistricting plan draws bipartisan support

By MAX JOHNSON
AFRO Political Analyst

Of the councilmanic redistricting plans for Baltimore, now before the all - Democratic City Council, the revolutionary proposal introduced by Councilman Henry G. Parks Jr. (4th D.) is the only one endorsed by city Republicans.

Thus, bi - partisan favor for this Ordinance 1320 could result in its being petitioned to referendum, with necessary signatures of its supporters, should the Council reject it.

At the moment, however, nobody knows what the Council will eventually do by way of either redistricting or reapportionment.

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BASICALLY, the Parks plan would divide the city into 20 councilmanic districts of nearly as equal population as possible.

A variance of less than 3,000 would prevail in the population of the 20 districts, with a high in one district of 48,374 and a low in another of 45,394.

There would be one councilman elected from each district, and a president elected at large, to maintain a 21 - member Council as at present.

This is reminiscent of the system in use from the late 1890's through 1921, when Baltimore's councilmen were elected by wards.

Eight colored councilmen saw service at various times during that period, as a result of election bids in smaller compact election districts.

* * *

IN 1922, the Council, in a gerrymandering move, discarded the ward election system and installed the far more embracing councilmanic districts instead.

Colored citizens had no further representation in the Council until the election of Walter T. Dixon (4th D.) in 1959.

The minority Republican Party also lost its representation in the Council in the 1940's, and has yet to regain it.

Hence, the appeal of the Parks plan to both minorities, colored citizens and the city Republicans.

Colored citizens, who form 39.3 percent of the city's population and now 40 percent of its registered voters, want more than two of their race in the Council.

The Republicans just want somebody there to make it a two - party body.

* * *

THE PARKS plan, though presented by the councilman, is the work of Frank J. Ellis and Archie D. Williams, attorney, whose successful court suits are responsible for the order to the Council to reapportion itself before next year's elections.

Mr. Ellis, in presenting the favorable features of Ordinance 1320 to the Council Monday evening, listed these five advantages, cited here in abbreviated substance.

"1. It would eliminate the multi - member district delegation, and thus a single councilman would vote the consensus of his constituents.

"The single member district representation affords the citizen the satisfaction of knowing at all times who represents him.

"2. The plan meets the court mandate requiring that each vote be weighed as nearly the same as all other votes. The population of Baltimore as of the 1960 census was 939,024.

* * *

"SO THAT with 20 districts, the median would be 46,952. The smallest district proposed in this plan has a population of 45,394, while the largest would have 48,374.

"This means a population differential of 2,980 between the largest and smallest districts, a percentage variation of .07.

"The difference between the smallest district and the median is about .04 ½ percent, and between the largest district and the median about the same.

"3. This plan creates a more representative City Council, by establishing smaller districts which politicizes submerged populations.

"This plan will permit segments of the population which have not had ample opportunities to effectively participate in municipal government the real possibility of sharing in the political process.

"4. This plan would facilitate the candidacy of average citizens for public office, by cutting the expense of campaigning.

"5. The plan will insure against at - large elections which can be a very unhealthy proposition."

* * *

THE REDISTRICTING plan, as presented in the Parks Ordinance 1320, would set these councilmanic district boundaries:

1st — Wards 1, 2, 3; and precincts 10-13, 16 and 17 of Ward 26. Population 46,229.

2nd — Wards 6 and 7. Population 45,394.

3rd —Precincts 1-9, 14, 15, 18-24A of Ward 26, and precincts 9-11 of Ward 24. Population 46,799.

4th — Precincts 25 - 45 of Ward 26; precincts 1, 2, 6, 8, 9, 12, 13 of Ward 27. Population 47,935.

5th — Ward 8. Population 47,610.

6th — Ward 9; precincts 40, 41 of Ward 27.

7th — Wards 4, 5, 10, 11; precincts 9 and 10 of Ward 12. Population 48,144.

8th — Precincts 1-8, 11-24 of Ward 12; precincts 75-80 of Ward 27; precincts 1, 2, 19-22 of Ward 13. Population 47,149.

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9TH — PRECINCTS 3 - 5, 7, 10, 11, 14-39, 46 of Ward 27. Population 47,936.

10th — Precincts 42, 43,

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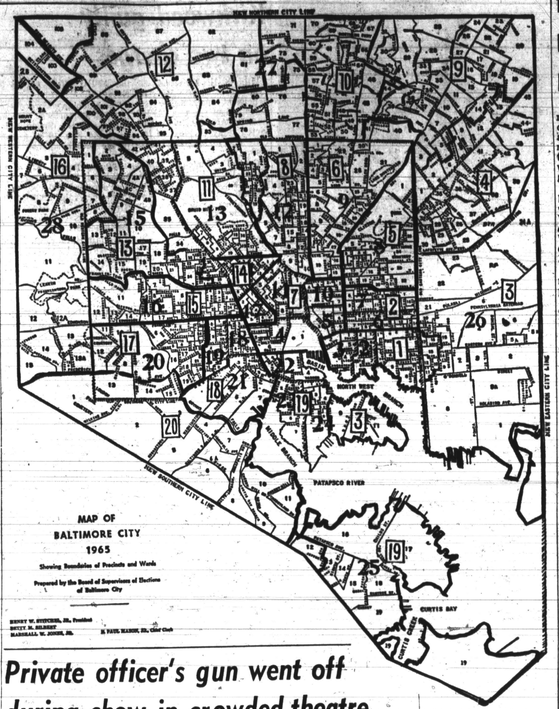


NUMBERS within blocks indicate location of councilmanic districts under proposal made by Henry G. Parks.

Board accepts new method of naming schools

The School Board scotched requests to change the names of two high schools Thursday afternoon, as it approved a new policy which insures that all schools in the future will be named after geographical areas.

The requests before the board were to rename Northwestern High School after World War II hero Sgt. Isadore Jachman and to rename Walbrook High School after civil rights pioneer Mrs. Mary Churchill Terrell.

However, the new policy recommended by School Superintendent Laurence G. Paquin does leave room open to honor outstanding persons by naming particular facilities within schools such as athletic fields or auditoriums—after them.

Previously, board policy had been to name schools when possible after streets, sections of the city or neighborhoods, but in special instances schools could be named after persons.

The proposal for Mary Church Terrell—who, as Board President Eli Frank Jr. noted, "did a great deal to liberalize attitudes on integration of schools" — was submitted by the Maryland League of Women's Clubs, the Oberlin Alumni Club of Maryland and other groups.

Although the School Department's file was quite large on these requests, submitted more than a year ago, they were overlooked in the administrative shuffle after departure of Dr. George Brain as superintendent.

The request to rename Northwestern after Sgt. Jachman, post-humously recipient of the Congressional Medal of Honor, was advocated by the City Council, the Jewish War Veterans and other veteran groups.

Convening as trustees of Baltimore Junior College, the board also gave approval to an outline of the college's fiscal year budget, presented by President Harry Bard.

The budget, to be made up of nearly equal receipts from the State, city and tuition, calls for expenditures of $1,979,904.

Sister, friend took mother's welfare check

Things are tough enough, but when somebody steals your welfare check, that is just too much to bear.

That is what Mrs. Virginia Brooks, 100 block E. Barre St., the mother of three children, thought and that is why she had her sister, who lives next door to her arrested for larceny of her check for $171.

Mrs. Brooks told Southern District police that when her check had not arrived by Feb. 14, she called the Welfare Department and learned that the check had been mailed Feb. 11.

She later learned that the check had been intercepted from the mailman, by her sister, Mrs. Thelma Williams, 29, and cashed by the sister along with Charles Richardson, 35, also of the same block.

* * *

HEARING THAT her sister and Richardson had drunk up the money, Mrs. Brooks —with no support for her three children —had the pair arrested.

Police said the check was cashed at a grocery store in the 600 block of S. Hanover St. The pair was arrested Feb. 14 and charged with larceny of the check.

Tuesday both pleaded guilty before Judge John A. McGuire in Southern Municipal Court. Richardson was sentenced to six months in the House of Correction, and Mrs. Williams was released on her own recognizance, pending a postponed trial on March 29. She was ordered to see a doctor.

The dispairing mother of three, Mrs. Brooks, meanwhile received a check from the Welfare Department to help tide her over the lean

Mayor gets names of CAC nominees

The Community Action Commission Tuesday approved the recommendation of five residents of East Baltimore to Mayor McKeldin to compose the list from which the mayor will pick two new members of the Commission.

Making up the list are: Gardie Williamson, 1048 N. Central Ave.; Mrs. Josephine Smith, 1225 N. Gay St.; Leander Douglas, 1149 Orleans St.; Mrs. Beatrice Reid, 931 Rutland Ave.; and Mrs. Catherine Johnson, 823 N. Castle St.

The nominees were selected by block clubs and neighborhood committees in their areas.

* * *

THE MAYOR signed a bill late last month providing for four new members from poverty areas to be appointed to the Commission — two from East Baltimore and two from West Baltimore.

The Commission also approved a plan for nominating 10 West Baltimore residents to form the list to be submitted to the mayor if the Community Action Agency's activities are extended there.

A bill to expand the poverty program to West Baltimore is in the hands of the City Council Judiciary Committee, which is expected to report it out favorably, according to the Rev. Robert Newbold, acting chairman of the Commission.

The West Baltimore nominating plan calls for all clubs and community organizations in the area to submit names of likely candidates. The clubs will then each vote for ten of these candidates, and the ten receiving most votes will be submitted to the mayor.

* * *

IN OTHER ACTION the Commission:

—Appointed Mrs. Catherine Johnson, 823 N. Castle, and Oscar Ross, 1422 N. Broadway, as consultants to the Program Committee of the Commission, subject to the acceptance of the two appointees.

—Heard the first draft of committee proposal to provide a new format for future Commission meetings which would make possible greater participating of poor people from poverty action areas.

The new format would include one more Commission meeting a month in addition to the two regular meetings, to be held in the action area and attended by three or four commission members. Advance notice of the meeting and agenda would be given to area residents.

—RESOLVED to support two ordinances designed to abolish horse drawn vehicles from Baltimore. One, sponsored by the Commission, would ban horse stables from residential areas and the other, sponsored by Councilman William D. Schaefer, would ban horse drawn vehicles from the streets.

Parren Mitchell, executive director of the Community Action Agency, said the Commission was backing these ordinances because community residents had complained about the "odor, filth and stench" coming out of horse stables on Castle St.

He said the Commission would feel a special responsibility to see that those forced out of work if the ordinances were passed would be re - trained and hired for different jobs.

Private officer's gun went off during show in crowded theatre

A Baltimore City policeman testified Tuesday in Western Muncipal Court that he was forced to drop to the floor in the lobby of the Royal Theatre to avoid being shot by special police officers.

Western District plainclothes patrolman Howard Corbin told Judge Howard A. Aaron that he had been at the Royal Theatre on Feb. 10 to see a stage show when he heard a female voice yell, "Watch out," and saw a commotion at the front of the theatre.

Officer Corbin, who was off duty at the time, said he went up to the front of the theatre but on his way noticed that special officer Thomas B. Stevenson, 31, of the 1400 block Madison Ave., had a man in custody and was going toward the front entrance.

Stevenson was charged with assault and shooting Robert B. Williams, 24, 1300 Block Presstman St. and with discharging a firearm within the city. Williams was charged with assault by pointing a .25 calibre automatic at Stevenson, assault by striking special officer Lt. Charles Austin and with making a false report.

The officer said that the people in the front of the theatre began to run for the exit so he went out to the lobby.

"As I was standing there, the defendant Williams ran past me. There was blood all over his face," he said.

* * *

OFFICER CORBIN stated that as Williams passed him he saw special officer Stevens in pursuit. Stevenson had his gun in hand and leveled it at Williams as "he were going to shoot, "so I fell to the floor to avoid being hit myself."

The officer stated that as he was lying on the floor, another special officer, Lt. Charles L. Austin, 41, of the 1100 block of N. Dukeland St., of the Imperial Detective Agency, came out of the theatre with his night stick in his hand.

"I yelled, 'police,' so that I would not be confused with anyone else and be struck on the head myself."

Officer Corbin said that he then joined the special officers who were chasing Williams down the street and told them to return to the theatre because he said he felt that the special police were out of their jurisdiction and it was his duty now to apprehend the suspect.

Williams escaped but was later arrested at Provident Hospital, while being treated for a gunshot wound of the right arm, and a laceration of the forehead.

WILLIAMS TESTIFIED that he had been seated in the Royal Theatre when special officer Stevenson came down the aisle yelling, "Remove your so and so hats."

Williams said the defendant said the officer was using profane language and that knowing the reputation of the theatre special police force, he decided to leave, although he has seen only one act of the stage show.

Williams said, "I was just about to stand up when this officer struck me on the head with his stick. Then he pulled me up and started pushing me toward the door."

Williams, who appeared in court with his arm still in a sling, said he managed to break away from the officer and ran from the theatre.

SPECIAL OFFICER Stevenson testified that he had reprimanded Williams for dancing in the aisle and for wearing the hat and then an argument ensued during which Williams pulled a revolver on him.

He said that he tussled with Williams and another unidentified man and during the fuss he took his gun out of the holster and it accidentally fired. He said everyone in the front of the theatre then jumped and ran for doors.

Officer Stevenson was asked by Williams' attorney, Richard J. Guth "Officer Stevenson, doesn't the theatre and your agency forbid you to carry a loaded revolver when on duty?"

Stevenson admitted that he had violated the rule of both the company and the theatre, stating:

"Yes, my gun was loaded and I admit I am wrong but if you worked down there like I do, you would carry a gun, too."

Officer Stevenson also admitted that in addition to firing the gun accidentally in the crowded theatre, while in pursuit of Williams on the outside, he fired two warning shots in the air then directly at Williams, who was running south on Pennsylvania Ave.

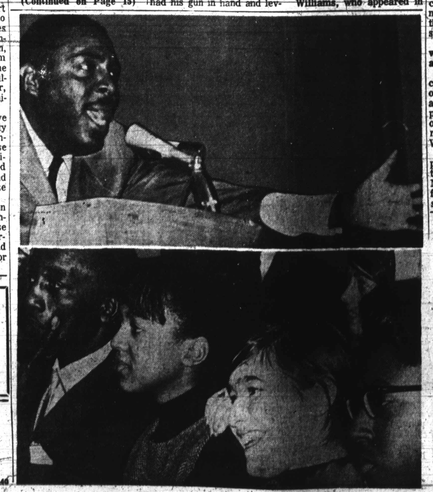
JUDGE AARON dismissed charges against Stevenson, but strongly reprimanded him warning, "If this ever happens again, you are going to be in a lot of trouble."

Judge Aaron said, "I have noticed that many of the special officers of the city are not careful in the use of both their pistols and of their night sticks."

He further said, "These weapons should be used with a lot of discretion."

He also dismissed two charges against Williams, one of assaulting Lt. Austin and assault by pointing a pistol. In the latter charge, officer Corbin testified that no weapon had been found on Williams or in the theatre.

Judge Aaron gave Williams probation before verdict on the charge he had given to Northern District police a false report concerning the shooting.



COMIC RELIEF is the method Dick Gregory (upper panel) uses as he discusses the War in Vietnam, burning draft cards and the Watts, Calif. riots. The mood of the crowd (lower panel) was alternately hushed then broken with laughter during the benefit performance Sunday for the Baltimore Chapter of CORE at the Prince Hall Masonic Temple. James Griffin and the executive committee for CORE sponsored the show to raise funds for 1966 activities. Gregory and his wife were arrested this week in a fishin on behalf of Indians barred from certain types of fishing in Washington waters. (AFRO photos by Sterling Paige)

Union ends 3-day Baltimore confab

SEE PHOTO ON PAGE 14

Some 60 delegates from five states attended the 22nd District Six, United Packinghouse, Food and Allied Workers (AFL-CIO) held in Baltimore last week.

The delegates, representing some 2300 members of the district, came from locals in Massachusetts, Connecticut, New York, New Jersey and Maryland.

During the 3-day sessions UPWA passed numerous resolutions calling for more active roles in the fight for full freedom and human dignity.

The union has been termed one of the foremost in asserting policies of human justice and complete integration within the framework of its locals.

* * *

UPWA HAS been recognized by leading Maryland civil rights groups for its work in organizing and raising the standards of the impoverished workers of the Kent Narrows area.

Local 1176, with some 300 members in Kent Narrows, is headed by Leon Anderson. The local backed by the parent union, is now seeking public housing for employes of the oyster and clam industry who now occupy shacks owned by the company.

According to UPWA officials many workers in Kent Narrows have been existing on incomes of $800 per year, often with six and more in the family.

Conditions there became a heated issue and caused civil rights groups to become active in helping the union to organize the workers to assist them achieve better living conditions.

AT THE Thursday night banquet, members cited Mrs. Ruth Haynes, field representative of UPWA, for her service to the union and to the people of Maryland.

Mrs. Haynes, a Baltimoran of the 3200 block Sequoia Ave., went into Kent Narrows during the height of the controversy.

* * *

"She left her comfortable home and moved into that horrible place to stay until conditions got better," said Mrs. Mary Dockins, who headed a committee to do honors to Mrs. Haynes.

"She has a real interest in people and their uplifting," Mrs. Dockins went on. "She has gone into many areas and helped to get wage raises for many of our women who made so much less than $1 per hour."

Further mentioned was Mrs. Haynes' success in breaking down racial barriers in a Baltimore plant that had separate cafeteria and rest room facilities for its workers of different races.

The plant is now completely integrated and all barriers have been removed.

* * *

IN THE Friday closing

(Continued on Page 27)

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