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Chair

Mr. Joe Preston

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• (1105)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Joe Preston (Elgin—Middlesex—London, CPC)): I'll call our meeting to order. We're still waiting for one of our witnesses to show up, but I'm sure he can come during the presentation by the others.

We have a very busy meeting this morning. Apparently, we are in public and may or may not have a video recording; we just don't know. So be careful, because you may be on camera.

We are here pursuant to the Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission for Ontario, to look at their report. We have a full panel here today for the Scarborough area of Toronto.

Members, all of you will get five minutes. Watch for my one-minute signal. At the end of that, we'll have questions and answers from the committee.

Madam Sitsabaiesan, would you like to go first for five minutes, please?

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan (Scarborough—Rouge River, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Federal Electoral Boundaries Commission has had a very challenging task, and I sincerely appreciate the work that the commission has done to consider and support the concerns of the constituents of Scarborough—Rouge River and residents across Scarborough.

As a member of Parliament, I believe it is my role to listen to the people I represent and to be the aggregate voice for the community. I did just that by engaging in a public consultation process when it was made available by the commission. Many Scarborough—Rouge River and other Scarborough residents did also, and I'm pleased that the commission heard their concerns as well.

The commission's initial proposal split Malvern and Morningside Heights, two vital communities within the riding of Scarborough—Rouge River. This proposal prompted considerable concern, not only from individuals in those areas, but also from people all across Scarborough.

Malvern and Morningside Heights are two communities of great interest, and they enjoy a mutually beneficial and extremely positive relationship.

When the electoral boundaries commission presented the first map, constituents from across the riding contacted me to share their feedback and ideas. Approximately 25 residents took time off work

to attend the public hearings. Almost 10 more wrote submissions to the commission.

Residents are extremely grateful to the commission for listening to their concerns and for creating this new map that keeps communities of interest intact and provides fair representation for Scarborough.

In the public hearing, the commission heard that Malvern is a vibrant and diverse community of interest. However, it is also a community that experiences challenges with poverty, crime, and gun violence. Sadly, residents were shocked by two shootings just this past weekend.

As a result of the disproportionate concentration of poverty and violence in Malvern, the City of Toronto identified it as one of 13 priority neighbourhoods.

Community activists, youth workers, and local representatives have been working for decades to build a sense of community and continue to fight for funding for community support, services and programs to engage youth and create a safer community. In turn, the excellent work and efforts that residents, community agencies, and service providers have accomplished to build this community would be eroded if it were split in half as per the original proposal.

In Malvern there's a community health centre, a recreation centre, high schools, shopping centres, and a major public library, all accessible to the residents of Morningside Heights directly to its north.

Moreover, many agencies have service centres on both sides of Neilson Road, the previous westerly boundary, which would certainly create confusion among residents as well as creating funding challenges for service providers.

Furthermore, Malvern and the communities south of the 401 do not share many common interests or needs, so it would be nonsensical to combine these communities. Residents of Morningside Heights, a growing and developing community that is predominantly a residential neighbourhood, rely on the community services and support centres in Malvern for their needs, including child care, immigration services, and youth-engagement activities. Therefore it is very important for these communities of interest to be kept together.

Additionally, Mr. Chair, if separated from Malvern, residents of Morningside Heights would have to rely on the City of Markham for service delivery. This is problematic due to the severe transit needs that exist in our neighbourhoods, and it could make many services inaccessible to my residents.

As a resident and representative of this area, I agree with the concerns expressed by the residents and my neighbours in this area. I also believe that dividing Malvern and Morningside Heights between two electoral districts could weaken the abilities of all levels of government and members of Parliament to address the problems associated with poverty and crime and to work with individuals and agencies who are trying to deal with these issues.

Since we agree with the community that it is necessary to keep Malvern and Morningside Heights together, we have developed an alternative proposal that meets the needs of Malvern and Morningside Heights to remain united and that retains six ridings in Scarborough in order to maintain the integrity of the communities.

During the public consultation phase, I approached the member for Scarborough—Guildwood about making suggestions for changes, and he did not have any objections at that time.

Additionally the member for Pickering—Scarborough East attended the public hearing where I made my submission to reunite these communities, and at that time he also had no complaints.

I am therefore confused as to why there is an outcry from these members when we have reached this point in the process.

In closing, Mr. Chair, I would like to once again thank the electoral boundaries commission. I appreciate that their task is difficult, and I agree with the current map they have proposed, as it is fair and takes into account the voices of the residents of Scarborough—Rouge River and Scarborough as a whole. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Mr. Harris, you have five minutes or less.

Mr. Dan Harris (Scarborough Southwest, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you for having us today.

It's a new experience to be on this side responding to rather than asking questions. I'm sure that down the road it will help me in my task when I'm on the other side.

My family has lived in what's now called Scarborough Southwest for over 90 years, ever since it used to be a part of Toronto Danforth. Every decade ridings change, demographics change, population bases change. Under both proposals put forward to date, my riding is the one that would see the least amount of change.

I'm before the commission in order to present the holistic approach required for Scarborough. When you look at changing one riding, you have to look at the ridings next door. We were very pleased at the beginning of the process that the commission looked to have six full ridings in Scarborough instead of five and a half, thus correcting the stopgap measure put in place a decade ago, because we believe that to have six full MPs will bring more effective representation to Scarborough.

The initial proposal raised some concerns, mostly by the member for Scarborough—Rouge River, that we sought to address. Unfortunately, what impacts Rouge River spills over to the rest of Scarborough and, certainly, we want to be able to see Scarborough a safe place for all the residents.

We had several residents in my riding raise concerns about the divisions being recommended in other areas of Scarborough, which is what led me to appear before the commission as well as to make proposed changes to the boundaries. As I said at the beginning, my riding wouldn't change very much one way or another.

However, there is much confusion for residents in the northern chunk, called the Ionview neighbourhood, which has been part of Scarborough Southwest for 10 years now. Up until last November, the local legion, the Dambusters legion, a very famous unit in the Second World War, still believed they were part of Scarborough Centre because they keep flipping back and forth between ridings.

The first proposal would have had them return to Scarborough Centre, leading perhaps to more confusion for residents. This is why we proposed that maintaining the status quo for Scarborough Southwest, where this riding wouldn't change, would also allow changes to happen in a more holistic approach in the rest of Scarborough, to ensure that the best representation and ideas were brought forward.

We had over a dozen residents go before the commission to propose changes and make submissions. I'm very thankful for people taking time out of their busy days to go before the commission, because the boundaries do matter, in terms of the representation that we members of Parliament are able to give our residents.

The commission was certainly tasked with a difficult challenge in trying to redraw the lines for Scarborough. We recognized that no matter how we looked at it, in order to keep the outer boundaries for Scarborough as a whole at Victoria Park, Steeles, the Rouge, and then Lake Ontario, unfortunately, one riding might have to cross the 401, another logical boundary that does exist. Hopefully, 10 years from now, the population will change so that doesn't have to happen any more. But we know that sometimes interim measures need to be taken and that the commission is not tasked with looking at future growth when deciding riding boundary lines.

I'd like to conclude by saying that I certainly agree with the new proposal. I think it provides better ridings and alignment of communities of interest. What is being proposed in the new Scarborough East riding would keep the waterfront and the bluffs together as a community of interest. It would reconnect Malvern and Morningside Heights. It would create the new Scarborough—Wexford riding, which more closely aligns an old Scarborough Ellesmere riding that used to exist with areas where communities of interest already align. As it's a well-established community, I believe that if a riding has to cross the 401, it is the logical place because lots of commerce and travel have taken place across that boundary in that area for over 50 years. A natural alignment exists there. Even the old Scarborough—Agincourt riding, when it was much smaller, used to cross the 401 and go south, so there's certainly an argument to be made that this can happen again.

•(1110)

Certainly, I'm very pleased with the process and with the job the commission has done. They actually responded to the public concerns that were raised at the meetings and then redrew a map based on the submissions that had been made by the public.

Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Harris.

As you can see, Mr. McKay is not here yet. He apparently is speaking in the House and won't be joining us for a while yet.

Mr. Chisu, five minutes, please.

Mr. Corneliu Chisu (Pickering—Scarborough East, CPC): Thank you very much, Mr. Chair.

Esteemed members of the committee, thank you for allowing me to speak today on the report phase of the redistribution of electoral boundaries for Ontario.

I am here today to express my concerns regarding the latest redistribution of the electoral ridings in Scarborough that have been made by the electoral commission for Ontario.

For the record, I am a professional engineer, and I continue to apply engineering principles when a problem needs to be resolved. The principles are simply common sense. Engineers define, analyze, and investigate problems so that solutions can be developed, tested, and verified. These processes apply to all engineering problems. An engineering problem is any challenge you are faced with that makes you apply your knowledge of engineering principles. For example, how do we fix this process? How do we make a better product? How do we design this competency to apply engineering knowledge?

I followed with interest the work of the commission. I was extremely satisfied with the work done and the proposal made initially with the new riding of Scarborough East, with the right balances in place in terms of representation by population, communities, and surrounding boundaries, both inside Scarborough and the interaction with surrounding municipalities.

That said, I will concentrate on the issues relating to the initial and the latest decision of the commission regarding the riding of Scarborough East.

The initial proposal of the Scarborough East riding, being from the northern boundary of the city of Toronto—Steeles—to Lake Ontario was a careful proposal, taking into consideration same communities of interest and the new vibrant community developments north of Highway 401, very similar to those to the south of Highway 401.

Moreover, it was including the entire part of the newly created urban national park, Rouge Park, which soon will be the pride of Scarborough, the city of Toronto, Ontario, and Canada.

Another notable aspect of the riding was its interface with the Pickering—Uxbridge riding in the east, which is a natural interface taking into consideration major transportation issues that need to be addressed urgently in the eastern part of the GTA.

The only objection I had, as a private citizen living in West Hill, Scarborough, for more than 30 years, and making a submission to

the commission at its meeting on November 14, 2012, was to change the name of the new riding to Scarborough East—Rouge Park in order to emphasize the new jewel and pride of Scarborough, which is unique in the world: Rouge Park.

The latest proposal of the commission surprised me. How did the few submissions at the hearing of November 15, 2012, most of them openly political, influence the decision of the commission so radically as to come up with a totally new version of the map for Scarborough, with no clear line of thought, consideration, or logical process—for example, making a decision that Highway 401 is a boundary between the riding in the east end of Scarborough, while in other parts of Scarborough denying it?

In conclusion, I am asking that the commission maintain its initial proposal for Scarborough East riding, with the suggested name change. I am confident that other minor adjustments to the other ridings in Scarborough can be made to the satisfaction of all stakeholders involved.

Finally, I believe this boundary change will better reflect the characteristics of our community and result in stronger representation based on a united voice of constituents expressing shared needs and interests of the eastern portion of Scarborough. I also believe this boundary change will lead to a stronger interest of people with roots in Scarborough to be involved in the political process.

For the record, I have also the support Raymond Cho and Ron Moeser, two long-time councillors from the east end of Toronto.

•(1115)

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Chisu.

Ms. James, for five minutes, please.

Ms. Roxanne James (Scarborough Centre, CPC): Thank you.

I'm very pleased to participate in today's meeting and to present my objection as the member of Parliament for the electoral district of Scarborough Centre.

As an individual who was born and raised in Scarborough, and who still lives there raising my own family, I am deeply concerned about the negative impact these latest changes will have on the majority of residents, established communities, and natural historical boundaries, not only in my own riding of Scarborough Centre but also to Scarborough as a whole.

Therefore, although I represent Scarborough Centre, I'm here to speak on behalf of all of Scarborough. There are essentially two areas of Scarborough that need to be addressed by redistribution.

The first is Scarborough—Rouge River, which has the largest population, with a quotient deviation of over 27%.

The second area is Pickering—Scarborough East, which is a split municipality riding with different council bylaws and non-connecting transit on both sides of the Rouge Valley.

It is easy to determine that the requirement for boundary review in Scarborough should largely be focused on these two existing ridings, both of which are in the northeast and eastern area of Scarborough. The aim of the commission should be to cause the least disruption in the remaining well-established electoral districts, where little or no change was even necessary.

The first proposal in 2012 did exactly that. It achieved it by separating Pickering—Scarborough East's population so that it remained in a Pickering riding, and it put the Scarborough population solely in a Scarborough riding. It did this by splitting Scarborough—Rouge River to create a new electoral district in the north, called Scarborough—North, to accommodate the growing population.

It did this by combining the remaining portion of Scarborough—Rouge River with Scarborough's east side, which also borders and includes the Rouge River Valley, to form Scarborough—East.

I want to note, for the record, that the unique nature of this natural environmental area, and the prominence of the future national park, adds to the logical creation of the proposed electoral boundaries in the first proposal. In fact, it is the only area of Scarborough in which the creation of a single riding made up of communities both north and south of Highway 401 actually has any merit.

Lastly, it left the four remaining Scarborough ridings, the ones that were farthest away from the areas that needed to be addressed, almost the same or with only minor boundary changes.

This proposal presented in 2012 was overwhelmingly logical. It had the least impact on the greatest number of Scarborough residents, well-established communities, and historical boundaries. In contrast, the new 2013 report stage maps are overwhelmingly illogical and lack any real merit. The reason is that the focus shifts away from the northeast and eastern ridings and completely divides three well-established electoral districts of Scarborough. This is where little or no change should have occurred, as it simply was not necessary. Those are the ridings of Scarborough—Agincourt, Scarborough Centre, and Scarborough—Guildwood.

Scarborough—Guildwood has been completely obliterated and no longer exists. This change moved constituents and communities either east or west into new ridings. Scarborough Centre and Scarborough—Agincourt have been divided, split almost exactly in two, so that the west half of each has been combined to create a brand-new electoral district named Scarborough—Wexford.

The new riding of Scarborough Centre has the highest population growth. I emphasize that this is anticipated because of the continued construction of condos in and around Scarborough Town Centre and the Civic Centre. In a short time, it will be overpopulated.

The new riding of Scarborough—Wexford is both north and south of Highway 401, a major highway that divides both areas. It should be noted that there's no real connection between these two communities north and south of Highway 401, with respect to demographics, issues, or common interests. Whereas in the first proposal, with the creation of the Scarborough—East riding, which ran north and south along the Rouge River Valley and the future national park, there was commonality.

The 2013 revised proposal will result in the most significant changes, which will effect all of Scarborough, with the greatest impact on the majority of Scarborough residents, well-established communities, and historical boundaries, which is the complete opposite of the original proposal in 2012.

Mr. Chair, may I ask how long I have left?

• (1120)

The Chair: One minute.

Ms. Roxanne James: Okay.

In closing, I want to stress how strongly I object to the 2013 report stage boundary redistribution changes. I respectfully put forward the following counter to your proposal, as well as a recommendation to this committee and the commission.

My recommendation is to reinstate the first proposal boundary redistribution map 2012 for Scarborough. I have a few minor revisions that I'd like to present and I'm hoping someone on this committee will ask me to elaborate on those changes.

As I have specified in the documents that all of you have before you, there are two boundary changes. One is to respect the community of Bendale and reunite South Cedarbrae with Guildwood. The other one, I wish to stress, is to keep Scarborough Southwest exactly as it is today, with no boundary changes whatsoever.

I look forward to any questions from the committee.

I also want to thank you, Mr. Chair, for allowing me to appear before the committee today.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you, very much.

Mr. Karygiannis.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis (Scarborough—Agincourt, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

If you can give me a nod when there is one minute remaining, I would appreciate it.

I'm here today to object to the latest federal electoral boundaries that the commission has proposed, which would mean that those parts of the riding of Scarborough—Agincourt south of Finch Avenue and west of the CN tracks, parallel to Midland Avenue, would be removed and assigned to a new riding south of the 401. This is shown on map 2, which we'll be distributing to you.

Over the past weeks I have communicated these changes with my constituents by letter and by automatic voice drop. I also held a town hall meeting in the area most affected. In response I have received over 700 e-mails, 448 voice responses, and 300 questionnaire responses. Approximately 100 people attended the town hall meeting.

Mr. Chair, as a matter of fact, we were communicating some of that to your clerk, and your clerk said, "Enough, we don't want...". However, for the committee, we've brought it along and we'll leave it with you.

The overwhelming response was not in favour of the commission's proposed changes. In fact, Mr. Chair, we received responses from seven people who supported the proposed changes. I have also received letters opposing the significant changes to the riding of Scarborough—Agincourt from the provincial members of Parliament, the City of Toronto councillors, and the school board trustees—all of them—who will be affected by these changes. This proposal has not been received with much enthusiasm in Scarborough—Agincourt. In fact, many have asked me why these radical changes are being made. The proposed changes to the riding boundaries present three major issues:

One, the abandonment of Highway 401 as a boundary between communities of differing interests.

Reference is made in the commission's report to where the highway can or should be breached. The response of many of my constituents is that Highway 401 is a major piece of infrastructure that forms the southern boundary of their community of Agincourt.

Two, the division through the very middle of north Scarborough's oldest community—Agincourt.

The Village of Agincourt was officially founded by John Hill with the establishment of the Agincourt Post Office, which opened in June 1858. Its original location was on Sheppard Avenue. The community also served north Scarborough's agricultural community. Agincourt's electoral voice has always been found in the Scarborough riding north of the 401. However, the commission's proposal aligns part of the Agincourt community with the community of Wexford, which is south of the 401. The links between these two communities are very weak. See map 2.

The commission's proposed boundary along the CN tracks divides present-day Agincourt's community institutions: the Agincourt Mall, the Agincourt library, and the Agincourt GO station, which are assigned to Scarborough—Wexford.

Three, the isolation of some 7,500 residents outside the riding's proposed eastern boundary in neighbouring Scarborough—Rouge.

The commission's proposed changes to the northeastern Scarborough—Agincourt boundary include McCowan Road, McNicoll Avenue, and Middlefield Road. By using McCowan Road in particular, the approximately 7,500 residents, who live east of Woodside Square, would be electorally isolated and situated with 95,000 constituents in communities far to the east on the other side of the CP marshalling yards in the proposed Scarborough—Rouge riding. See map 4.

The suggested boundary also severs school catchment zones, commercial areas, and residential communities. The effect of this new eastern boundary is to isolate voters. Isolation gives way to marginalization, and to be marginalized is to be less than engaged. The commission has heard no call in support of these changes from the residents east of Woodside Square and no call that they will be isolated from their immediate neighbours in the community.

Now to conclude, the effects of the commission's proposed changes are at odds with the lay of the land and communities of interest. It has been my intention to put on the record today the

clearly negative community impacts that arise from the suggested new riding boundaries.

Thank you, Mr. Chair.

• (1125)

The Chair: You're under four minutes, Mr. Karygiannis. That's great.

We will go to questions by members.

When Mr. McKay comes, I feel we should probably give him his five minutes. He will be walking in blind to what's happened.

We're going to go to a seven-minute round to begin with. Members at the end of the table, please keep your answers as short and succinct as you can. It will be up to the members asking the questions who they are asking the questions of.

Mr. Lukiwski, you have seven minutes.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski (Regina—Lumsden—Lake Centre, CPC): I think I'm going to cede the first question to Mr. Reid.

The Chair: I'm sorry. I'm afraid I didn't look down.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: No, that's fine.

Mr. Scott Reid (Lanark—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington, CPC): Sorry. We did have a change here.

I'm going to take Ms. James up on her invitation to give us a further explanation of the details. I know you have a written presentation that includes, among other things, an actual list of riding populations and your suggestions.

If you could guide us through that, I would be grateful.

Ms. Roxanne James: Yes, thank you very much. I appreciate having the opportunity to elaborate on that.

As I mentioned in my opening remarks, the first proposal made sense for all of Scarborough, specifically for the western side, where it should not be divided in the manner that it was in the second proposal. My suggestion was to reinstate the first boundary maps with minor changes. The minor changes, if you look at the attachments that I have presented to you, have to do with the most eastern side of the border of Scarborough Centre and Scarborough—Guildwood.

In the first set of boundary maps presented in 2012, McCowan Road to Bellamy and Lawrence up to Highway 401 were part of a community called Bendale. It's one of the most historic areas in Scarborough and includes a very famous area called the "Ben Jungle". In the attachments that I have presented, I have a letter from the City of Toronto historic museum indicating the historic reference and nature of that, as well as the surrounding area, which is the Bendale Thomson park, so there is certainly backing to my argument.

The boundary revision that I am presenting in this counter proposal is to keep that section of Bendale within Scarborough Centre. In order to take something away from Guildwood, I need to return something back to Guildwood, and that's the very corner of my riding currently, which is called South Cedarbrae.

South Cedarbrae is bordered on the north by McCowan Park, a green space with part of a river or stream flowing through it, and it's a natural boundary right now with regard to Elections Canada polls. South Cedarbrae as a whole exists currently in Scarborough—Guildwood. It's also closer to Guildwood proper. South Cedarbrae has a Cedarbrae Mall, the Cedarbrae Collegiate, and so on, so it makes sense to actually reunite that bottom portion with Guildwood. That boundary change has been discussed with the member from Guildwood proper.

The other change that I'm proposing is the boundary change with my south border on Eglinton Avenue with that of Scarborough Southwest. To sum it up in a nutshell, Scarborough Southwest is the furthest riding away from the area that needs to be addressed on the northeast and eastern edge. Scarborough Southwest, which is the riding of my colleague a few seats over, I believe should stay exactly as it is today. Therefore, I propose that the boundaries be reinstated as they currently are.

Those are the two significant changes—well, minor changes—with regard to boundaries.

There is a third proposal that I'm putting forward in that counter proposal that has to do with the naming of the Scarborough East riding.

May I continue?

Mr. Scott Reid: If you don't mind, I'd just like to go back and get the details.

Ms. Roxanne James: Sure, absolutely.

Mr. Scott Reid: When you talk about minor changes, you're talking about minor changes from the proposed map? That was the first map that came out last August?

• (1130)

Ms. Roxanne James: It was the first proposal in 2012.

Mr. Scott Reid: Okay.

Ms. Roxanne James: It's a very slight boundary change to respect the historic Bendale community, a vibrant community with several community associations—

Mr. Scott Reid: Okay. Now I want to get you to actually lay that out for the benefit of people like me.

For the Bendale area, you are proposing moving the boundary from.... I'm using the August map. They would have had the boundary between Scarborough Centre and Scarborough—Guildwood, north of Lawrence Avenue, running along McCowan Road, and that splits the Bendale neighbourhood. You're suggesting that it be moved to Bellamy Road?

Ms. Roxanne James: Which is the current boundary as it exists today.

Mr. Scott Reid: Okay. I've got it.

Ms. Roxanne James: Instead of moving the boundary there at Bendale, I'm suggesting the very bottom corner, which is the southeast corner of Scarborough Centre. It's an area known as South Cedarbrae. It goes a bit on a jagged edge over to Danforth. I'm suggesting that be moved back into Guildwood, where it actually belongs.

Mr. Scott Reid: Effectively, then, with respect to the boundary they're showing south of Lawrence Avenue, they're showing the boundary between Scarborough—Guildwood and Scarborough Centre as being Bellamy, and you were suggesting that it move further west and it become McCowan?

Ms. Roxanne James: For South Cedarbrae, it actually follows the green space, the park at McCowan Road.

Mr. Scott Reid: I see. Okay. On your map, I see there's a—

Ms. Roxanne James: There's actually an attachment I, which is labelled in the package that I provided the committee, and it clearly shows the new boundaries that I'm proposing. You can clearly see Southwest—

Mr. Scott Reid: Yes, I do see that. On your other map, map B, when I look very closely—I didn't bring my reading glasses—I see a very faint grey shaded area, so effectively it's through the middle of the park, and there are no roads. So it's a natural break.

Ms. Roxanne James: It's a break, and currently all of the polls, with regard to the last election, are divided in that manner as well. There's no poll number that actually transcends either side of that natural divider.

Mr. Scott Reid: Okay. Now I get all of that.

There's a last thing I want to ask you. When I take a look at the boundary between you and Scarborough Southwest in the status quo, what you have right now, and in the report, the Scarborough Southwest riding has the same northern boundary it currently has.

In the proposal from the commission from last August, that boundary was changed in part, and a triangle that was bounded on the south of Eglinton Avenue, on the north by a transmission line, and on the east by a railroad line, I guess—

An hon. member: RT tracks.

Mr. Scott Reid: Oh, thank you. It was moved, so is that the part you're talking about changing there?

Ms. Roxanne James: Yes. It would actually stay exactly as the current boundaries are today.

My colleague from Scarborough Southwest actually talked about the area known as Ionview, and that's part of the community that I am suggesting in my counter proposal stay in Scarborough Southwest.

As I said, again, the concentration for the direction of this should be in the northeast corner and northeast area of Scarborough—and certainly in the riding that's farthest away, without an issue with population, the boundaries should stay exactly as they are today.

Mr. Scott Reid: Forgive me, I actually don't know the answer to this question, but is the transmission line a meaningful barrier or is it not?

Ms. Roxanne James: That transmission line is actually the LRT. Oh, were you talking about the hydro line?

Mr. Scott Reid: Just the transmission line.

Ms. Roxanne James: That's the current boundary right now, and I propose that boundary stay the same.

Mr. Scott Reid: Yes, but what I'm asking you is about the transmission line there. Sometimes a transmission line is a significant boundary to cross, sometimes it's not. In this case is it, in your opinion?

Ms. Roxanne James: Yes, it is.

Mr. Scott Reid: It is, okay.

How much time do I have left, Mr. Chair?

The Chair: Thirty seconds.

Mr. Scott Reid: All right. I've probably asked all I need to ask.

Thank you very much.

Actually, tell me about the name, your request for the new name.

Ms. Roxanne James: Yes, growing up in Scarborough, I used to bike there with my brother when I was little. I grew up in Scarborough—Agincourt. I know the area well. I live in Scarborough Centre. Having the name Scarborough—Rouge for that particular riding, instead of Scarborough East, makes sense. It depicts the area. It gives prominence to the Rouge Valley, the Rouge River, and the future national park. I think that in future years that area will become one of the most prestigious areas of Scarborough, and I think that the particular name should be Scarborough—Rouge to reflect that area.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Scott, for seven minutes, please.

Mr. Craig Scott (Toronto—Danforth, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

If I could, I'd like to begin with Mr. Karygiannis.

Mr. Karygiannis, in view of the objections you have to the commission's final or penultimate map, are you aware that the chair of the commission is Justice George Valin, who has been on the Superior Court of Justice since 1990, and who had been director of the Ontario Superior Court Judges' Association for 10 years?

Are you aware of that fact?

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: What does that have to do with the—

Mr. Craig Scott: Are you aware of that fact?

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Excuse me, what does that have to do with the price of apples?

Mr. Craig Scott: Are you aware of that fact, Mr. Karygiannis?

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: These people are appointed by Elections Canada and I don't see the relevance to what they drew.

Mr. Craig Scott: Thank you.

The relevance might be, Mr. Karygiannis, that you accused this commission of gerrymandering. I'm just wondering if you know what the word "gerrymander" means, and whether you stick by that accusation.

• (1135)

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: We're here today to discuss changes. The commission proposed originally that it wanted to go from Midland

onwards, and the changes they proposed later on, unfortunately, were not the original ones.

Mr. Craig Scott: Thank you.

So before us today you're not repeating your charges that the commission engaged in gerrymandering, yes or no, please?

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Sir, I have in front of me—

Mr. Craig Scott: Yes or no, please, Mr. Karygiannis.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Chair, am I being hostile? Is the member hostile?

Allow me to answer. You asked a question, and I'll answer your question.

The commission originally proposed that the northwest part of Scarborough be kept together. For whatever reason changes were made. My constituents were not consulted. The consultation is right in front of you. Over a thousand people wrote. At the end of the day, these people's submissions have to be taken seriously.

The other thing is that if the commission looked at it precisely, at the eastern part, which you can see on the map, going from McCowan straight down to where the marshalling yards are, they would have looked at that and said 7,500 residents would be left orphaned. And they should have included them somewhere, or taken it around.

Certainly, the final job that they submitted, dividing Scarborough—Agincourt into two, and giving parts north of the 401 and south of the 401, is not what they started out with.

Mr. Craig Scott: Thank you.

For the record, Mr. Karygiannis, you are reported by a local newspaper as having said, quote, "Gerrymandering was done in order to provide NDP MP Sitsabaiesan with her base vote". I just want to give you one final chance to tell us whether or not, for whatever reasons the change was made, you now disavow that statement.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Sir, that was a newspaper article, and what I'm trying to tell you here today is that Scarborough—Agincourt is cut in half. The residents of Scarborough—Agincourt were not consulted. As a matter of fact, a lot of them, especially a lot of seniors and people who have been there for many years, going back 50 to 60 years in this community, felt insulted that this was done to them.

Mr. Craig Scott: Okay.

I appreciate the substance you're bringing at the moment, but you've not answered the question. I'd like that to be known. Most people know that the word "gerrymander" means to manipulate the boundaries of electoral constituencies so as to favour one party or class, and you have not disavowed your accusation published in that newspaper. You have not claimed that the newspaper is in error.

I thought it was pretty bad that in Saskatchewan we had at least four MPs making very strong claims against the commission. Thank goodness we had a number of Conservative MPs who stood down and said that was inappropriate. Frankly, it's offensive to this committee and to the commission—

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Mr. Chair—

Mr. Craig Scott: —for you to have made those comments—

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Mr. Chair—

Mr. Craig Scott: —and now to avoid any responsibility for those remarks.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Mr. Chair, I think the member is certainly not looking at the wishes of my constituents. He represents constituents, although he hasn't been here for a long time, but the wishes of the constituents are paramount.

When thousands of people say that this is certainly not what they wanted, clearly the commission did not listen to those people, clearly the commission did not reach out to my communities, and clearly the commission did not hear from my constituents.

Here are the results, and I'm sure the member knows that listening to constituents is very important. I am sure that, after he gains some experience, he will know that the results of listening to your constituents are, by a far cry, more important than political gamesmanship, and especially across party lines. Certainly coming across party lines is not what I came here with.

Now, I'm sure the member can continue to be that; he's a vocal proponent of his party, and for that he's appreciated, but here are the results. These are people, irrespective of the party line, who came across and said, "We disagree with this". The only people who agreed with it were seven people. Both the municipal and the provincial people and the school trustees are against this. So if all these people are against it, certainly the commission did not do a good job to reach out.

The Chair: You have a minute and a half left.

Mr. Craig Scott: Thank you, Mr. Karygiannis.

As I said, I appreciate the substance you're bringing to this, and I'm sure the commission will take into account the stack of papers that's under your left arm. I do hope that after 20-odd years in Parliament, I never end up in the position of accusing an electoral boundaries commission of gerrymandering.

I'd also like it to be noted that this appeared on March 21, well over a month ago. This is the kind of remark that can influence the way people respond to inquiries, in terms of whether or not they're upset.

• (1140)

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Mr. Chair, I beg to differ.

Mr. Craig Scott: So I simply put that on record.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: I really beg to differ. I think the people of this country are very knowledgeable, and people are very smart when they respond.

Mr. Craig Scott: I'd like now to ask a question of Rathika.

The Chair: Go ahead, Mr. Scott.

Mr. Craig Scott: Thank you.

Ms. Sitsabaiesan, you indicated that you had spoken to Mr. McKay beforehand. Mr. McKay is not here, and obviously he could clarify this himself, but Mr. McKay's recent letter said that the

changes that were in the report before the current one were "assented to". I'm just wondering. Is that consistent with the conversation you had with Mr. McKay or your understanding of the representations made to the commission by members of the community?

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Thank you for the question.

Absolutely not; at no point did I ever assent to the original proposal that was put forward, the 2012 proposal made by the commission. I had actually spoken with the member for Scarborough—Guildwood during the public consultation phase and suggested some of the changes that I was going to propose, from hearing the concerns from my residents, and at that time the member from Scarborough—Guildwood had no complaints or objections to the suggested proposal that I was going to take to the commission on behalf of my residents.

The Chair: Thank you.

That's our seven minutes there.

If I have the committee's permission, since Mr. McKay has now joined us, I'd love for him to get his five minutes in.

Mr. McKay, do you have a presentation for us? We'd love you to give it here. I know you missed out on some of the other questions, but at least we'll try to be as fair as we can and let you make your presentation now.

Hon. John McKay (Scarborough—Guildwood, Lib.): Mr. Chair, I'll try to be brief and not repetitive, because you've probably heard a lot of what went on.

Certainly, when the initial proposals came out there was no basis for any objection on the part of me or anyone else in the riding of Scarborough—Guildwood. I published them fairly widely and got virtually no response whatsoever. Frankly, it never crossed my mind that the changes being requested by the NDP were actually going to have any real impact. If you look at Scarborough—Guildwood, you'll see it is below the 401. It's an entirely different, separate, and stable community in and of itself.

Our initial response to what we consider to be benign proposals was that we made no representations to the commission. We did have people there, we did monitor the commission, but under no understanding of the perceived facts did we see it as having an impact on the boundaries of Scarborough—Guildwood.

Subsequently, the commission made a second proposal, the effect of which was to disappear Scarborough—Guildwood. That's a pretty big impact. That's way past gerrymandering, let me tell you. Needless to say, constituents were more than mildly upset.

I was pleasantly surprised when I called a meeting shortly thereafter, and on a wet, cold, lousy, rainy evening, 60-70 people showed up to voice their objections to the disappearance of Scarborough—Guildwood.

The effect of the commission's decision was to give no notice to the people of Scarborough—Guildwood. This comes out of the blue and destroys their riding as they've known it for the last ten years. It's not as if this is a community of disparate little bits and pieces, or a relatively new creation; this is a fairly coherent community, and the previous boundaries reflected this coherence.

As you can appreciate, my surprise was matched by that of my colleagues on both sides of me. We had all talked and thought there were adjustments to be made here and there. We agreed that Scarborough was growing, and that they might have to make it six ridings instead of five and a half. The suggested changes were relatively benign, relatively agreeable to my colleagues from Scarborough Centre and my colleague from Pickering—Scarborough East. On that understanding we raised no objections.

The commission, in my judgment, with their second ruling, in effect, threw the cat in with the pigeons, and when all the feathers had settled, we were plucked clean.

Thanks very much.

• (1145)

The Chair: You're very welcome. Thank you, Mr. McKay. We're happy you could attend.

Mr. Dion.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Stéphane Dion (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville, Lib.): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

[*English*]

Since he came a bit late for valid reasons, maybe I will ask Mr. McKay to comment more about the rationale of the commission. This committee needs to understand that rationale and your answer on that.

I think the commission came with four arguments, to which other colleagues may also react.

The first one is to have better balance between populations of different ridings in the Scarborough area. Secondly, the commission has heard that Morningside Heights and Malvern should not be split. It seems that this was something the commission wanted to avoid.

The third reason is that the commission heard a lot of objections about creating an electoral district east of the region that crossed highway 401. Many presentations argued for a “more natural north-south orientation for electoral districts in this region”. I'm quoting the commission.

And finally, the commission was advised that, “if the boundaries of an electoral district had to cross highway 401, it was preferable that this occur in the more mature and developed western portion of Scarborough area”.

What are your reactions to this rationale?

Hon. John McKay: Let me deal with the question of balance.

The population growth has generated the entitlement, if you will, to six ridings as opposed to five and a half. Something had to be done; there's no disagreement there. The question was how you moved it so that you stayed within 100,000 to 110,000 constituents.

I thought the first proposal actually did that quite well, and I thought it kept, I'd say, five out of the six of us relatively within the concept of what we would understand to be balance. Dan is on the sidelines here because his hasn't actually changed all that much

Second of all, with respect to the communities that might be affected by the previous proposal, I know those communities. I'm not prepared to argue whether they're a split or they're not a split. All I do know is that in order to keep those communities together, in effect, you affect a whole bunch of stable communities, older communities, communities that have a history in Scarborough. In order to accommodate these communities, you've disrupted... If you're accommodating two communities, you are disrupting ten, twelve, or fourteen communities. I can go through and name them.

The third and fourth points are actually the same, regarding whether you do the two and a half, or three and a half east or west. If you do the two and a half, if you in effect make the half riding north and south of the 401 on the west side, you actually disrupt a far larger or more dense population by doing that. If you do it on the east side, you actually have a little bit more coherence. The reason you have a little bit more coherence is that the eastern boundary between Scarborough and Pickering, and between Scarborough and Durham is the Rouge River, now a national park. They are distinct communities. The people in Pickering are represented by a distinct municipal government, so it makes some sense.

My final point is that I actually represented that area, lo these many years ago. It was actually a fairly coherent riding. It was Scarborough East. It was both north and south of the 401. There was actually a lot of intercourse between the north and the south by virtue of the location of community centres, by virtue of the park, by virtue of the interests people have in the park, and by virtue of the traffic flows as well.

I actually think they made the wrong choice. Stay with the east and try not to disrupt ten, twelve, or fourteen communities in order to satisfy what are the perceived needs of two.

• (1150)

Hon. Stéphane Dion: How long do I have?

The Chair: You have two minutes left.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Two minutes.

The Chair: You have other members who wanted to answer. It's your call.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: I just want to congratulate Madame James for coming with a proposal. My concern is that if everybody complains, albeit there is no alternative, I don't think the commission will move. You came with an alternative—thank you very much for that.

If I have time I will ask Karygiannis, did Madame James address part of your problems? Is there a compromise somewhere, an alternative solution that could make sense?

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Thank you.

I guess the compromise would be that we go back to the original proposal, with the changes Mrs. James proposed.

When you look at the map of Scarborough—Agincourt plus Scarborough—Wexford, you see that originally when the city was being planned, it was going from west to east, and building was going along that way. First of all, they reached the 401, which was built. In the 1960s they built up to Finch. Then in the 1980s they built north.

Dividing a community, which is solely intact, and taking three major names—Agincourt Mall, Agincourt GO Station, Agincourt library—and saying you're now part of Scarborough—Wexford... The people south of the 401 and the people north of the 401 are in two distinct communities. These are communities that have been around for a long time.

Originally the riding of Scarborough—Agincourt was going south to Ellesmere. In the last go-round, the electoral commission decided we're going to keep Scarborough—Agincourt together north of the 401. It made the right choice, supported by a lot of people. Now, unfortunately, it's going back.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Excuse me. I just wanted to be sure that the four of you are proposing the commission's former proposal, and you two, the last one. Is this the situation that we're facing?

Hon. John McKay: That's basically it. There will be minor modifications we would suggest to the second proposal, but still, you've got it.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Mr. Davis is not affected at all, so he's neutral.

Hon. John McKay: Mr. Davis?

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Sorry, I meant Mr. Dion.

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Mr. Dion, to answer your question, yes, I do support the commission's 2013 proposal, as they have listened to the concerns raised by—

Hon. Stéphane Dion: And your four colleagues are proposing the first one? That's roughly it. Otherwise, we'll be all over the map. We as a committee will have difficulty understanding.

Mr. Dan Harris: Just for clarity, I have a question for Ms. James. You were proposing changing the northern section, but what about the eastern section, which was initially going to change in the original proposal? Do you maintain that Scarborough Southwest should remain as status quo?

Ms. Roxanne James: Sorry, Mr. Chair. Can I answer that question, because it came from another witness?

The Chair: Sure. We all have free time. Go ahead.

Ms. Roxanne James: I'm proposing that Scarborough Southwest, which is your riding, stay exactly as it is today. The boundaries between you and Scarborough Centre and you and Scarborough—Guildwood would be as they are today, which I believe you're happy with. If there's an objection there, I'd like to hear what the basis of that would be.

Thank you.

The Chair: All right. Let's move on to the next round of questioning.

Mr. Lukiwski, go ahead for four minutes, please.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: I'm glad Monsieur Dion clarified the position here so well. We have one of the witnesses who is favour of the second map, the 2013 map, and four of the witnesses who are in favour of the initial map. I've heard many of the witnesses who are in favour of the first map call the second map a radical change, illogical, a dramatic change.

Clearly the commissioners are learned men. They put some time into the first map. They would have considered population variance, communities of interest, communities of identity. They came up with the first map that was completely changed on the second go-round. I'm just curious as to why. I'd like an opinion as to why

Mr. Karygiannis, despite the fact that Mr. Scott is trying to use the term “gerrymandering”, I'm not trying to question whether you did or didn't. I'm not here to try to question you on that. But I'd like to try to get some idea about the mindset of the commissioners as to why they would make such a radical change between the first and second maps. Is it because none of you made presentations to them after the first map, or is there some other reason?

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Thank you.

Usually if the proposal goes up, you see it. If you're satisfied with the proposal, you figure that's the way things are going to go. You monitor the submissions that are coming forward. Under no circumstances did a lot of people go to speak on the proposed changes that we see in the final map. A colleague from Scarborough—Rouge River says 25 people did. If only 25 people speak to a change, you wouldn't see such radical, drastic changes. People get moved to do things when their whereabouts are certainly changed.

If this is an indication as to people disagreeing with the three commissioners, I don't know what could be clearer. Seven people said the changes are good. The rest of the people said no. Political people who have been there for years said these changes were no good. The honorary mayor of Agincourt, Mr. Ron Watson, who has been a city councillor for years, came out to the meeting and told us that he had proof going back to Diefenbaker about when they were starting to change things around. He said that this is ludicrous.

So after hearing what they heard, did the commission gerrymander? If you look at the way this was done and if you look at gerrymandering and how it goes the salamander, well guess what, it's clear right here. They butchered ridings completely. My riding is completely cut in half.

• (1155)

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Chair, I know we have only a couple of moments left. I was just trying to get an idea of why the change might have occurred. I know Madam Sitsabaiesan was frantically waving her hand and trying to give some response, so I'd like to hear her response.

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Thank you, Mr. Lukiwski.

There's a difference between people who don't have access to good public transit booking time off work, spending two hours to travel downtown, spending the day to make a submission to the commission, and people simply sending an email. There's a difference in the effort that's made.

I only went to the commission one day and I know that on that day at least 25 people booked time off work to be able to make a presentation at the commission. That goes to show the passion and the effect it was having on people's lives and the communities at stake. That is why I greatly thank the commission for listening to the voices of the constituents who actually took the time to make a presentation.

I again want to thank Mr. Dion, who presented the rationale that the commissioners provided, and also make a point about.... I think it's Mr. Chisu and Mr. Karygiannis who are saying that they have other elected officials supporting their proposals or submissions. Actually, I'd say there's a little bit of political gamesmanship going on, because they have the Liberal MPP of my riding, who did not mention any concerns to his own member of parliament, but wrote to the Liberal MP and the Liberal MPP. Then Mr. Chisu said he has a city councillor, Raymond Cho, who was also a Conservative candidate in the Ontario elections, who apparently didn't write to his own MP—me—but to the Conservative MP down the street. So I see political gaming, whereas I heard that at the commission we had residents, resident associations, the school board trustee who represents the riding of Scarborough—Rouge River, as well as many community agencies, young people, old people, all presenting at the commission.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. Chair, I'm sorry to interrupt and I know I interrupted Mr. Karygiannis as well, but the only point I would make, and I don't know if we'll have more time—

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: The trustee for Scarborough—Rouge River did not support the change. You've got a letter that clearly did not support the change.

The Chair: Excuse me, Mr. Karygiannis—

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: My only point was that it appears that many other witnesses wanted to respond to my question. I hope we have time later on to hear their testimony.

The Chair: Some of the other very good questioners we have on this committee will bring up some of those points.

I did go five minutes with you, Mr. Lukiwski, so we'll do that for all.

I have Mr. Cullen next, for five minutes.

Mr. Nathan Cullen (Skeena—Bulkley Valley, NDP): Thank you, Chair. Thank you to the witnesses.

This stirs passions because it matters. There was a question put.

Mr. Chisu, in your testimony, I think in response to a question, you used the term “openly political” process. Can you clarify that for me?

Mr. Corneliu Chisu: I will clarify it for you. When I was there at the commission, people came to the microphone saying they were from the EDA, from the NDP and so on. So they stated their political affiliations.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Was this all of the folks who came forward to testify in front of the commission?

Mr. Corneliu Chisu: Most of them.

When I was there, I came as a private citizen because I didn't have any objection, only to change the wording to reflect Rouge Park. That was my only interest in the hearings in Scarborough because Rouge Park will be important in the future to our city, to Scarborough, and to everybody.

• (1200)

Mr. Nathan Cullen: In previous scenarios, when MPs have come forward to ask to dramatically change the commission's final report,

there's been something comprehensive that we have seen as a committee, because there are always domino effects when you change one boundary to another. It's going to be a struggle for the committee because we don't have that. As Mr. Dion pointed out, Ms. James came forward with something, but we don't have a “new look” Scarborough from the four witnesses who are suggesting that this should be changed.

My question is for Mr. Karygiannis. I'm a bit confused. You seemed very reluctant to use the word “gerrymandering” when my colleague Mr. Scott was asking you about it, but then in a reply to Mr. Lukiwski you insinuated that gerrymandering had gone on with the maps that you saw. You said that the ridings were butchered. I have a quote from you here in the *Scarborough Mirror* saying this was gerrymandering. It's a simple question.

We've had the accusation levelled before—

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Let me give you a simple answer. Your colleague from Scarborough—Rouge River said that she had the support of Shaun Chen. I have a letter here from Shaun Chen disagreeing—

Mr. Nathan Cullen: That's not the question.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: I'm wondering, where does—

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Let me try again.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: The politician of Scarborough—Rouge River, Shaun Chen, said that as far as the new Scarborough—Agincourt riding was concerned—

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Yes, that's fine.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: —he'd heard from residents who had expressed deep concerns about the boundaries of the new Scarborough—Agincourt and Scarborough—Wexford ridings.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Let's try this again, Mr. Karygiannis.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: You've asked the question, sir. Let me finish.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: I asked a very simple question

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Let me finish.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: You said you would give me a simple answer.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: I'm going to give you a simple answer. I want to read this letter on record because your colleague from the NDP said that she has the support of the Scarborough trustee. Let's put it on the record.

The Chair: Mr. Karygiannis, please allow Mr. Cullen—

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Thank you.

The Chair: Allow him to finish.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: It seems very straightforward. We asked you simply and straightforwardly, do you defend the comment you made to the local newspaper in Scarborough that the commissioners gerrymandered the ridings? You refused to answer in the first round. When Mr. Lukiwski asked a question unrelated to that, in your response you said that essentially it looked like gerrymandering to you. Do you understand that “gerrymandering” is a very volatile term?

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: You heard that from two of us at this table. I also understand that your colleague simply stated on the record that she has the support of the trustee.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Which colleague?

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Your colleague.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: You said, “Two of us at this table”.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Mr. McKay.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: He also suggested gerrymandering? I'm not sure that he did. I think it's you alone.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: The simple fact is, your colleague stated that she had the support of the local trustee, which she doesn't. So I'd like to put a question to her. Does she or doesn't she have the support of the local trustee? Let's be perfectly clear on the record.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Fascinating. Through you, Mr. Chair—

The Chair: Mr. Cullen has the questions right now.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Thank you.

Do you understand that to make an accusation of gerrymandering by an independent commission—as has been done before by other colleagues who, I think, then retracted or regretted that statement—is a serious allegation to make towards an arms-length, independent commission established under a federal act of Parliament. Yes or no?

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Mr. Cullen, I will go back to you again and say that my riding was butchered right down in half. If the commissioner heard from my constituents, they would have heard right here. Do you understand that over a thousand people—

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Sure.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: —clearly stated their disagreement? They were public meetings.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Sure.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: These people certainly were dissatisfied with what happened. There were seniors—

Mr. Nathan Cullen: I'm sure there were.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: —who were certainly dissatisfied. There were people who when they looked at the final map—

The Chair: Thank you both. We've passed the five minutes on that round.

Mr. Lukiwski.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: I'll go back to the question I posed originally. I know there were a number of members as witnesses who wanted to answer. I still don't understand. I don't know how germane it is to the conversation, frankly, but I cannot understand how the commission, which is made up of some very learned people, could bring forward an initial map based on all of the information they had before them and then dramatically change it for the second map. I'm trying to get a sense of why that happened. We've heard from two of the witnesses. I'll ask Mr. McKay, and I'd like to see if we can get all of the witnesses to respond.

The Chair: We could make this happen.

● (1205)

Hon. John McKay: The short answer is, “I don't know”.

The Chair: Keep it short.

Hon. John McKay: There were witnesses who advocated for a particular set of changes. But, going into the hearing, happy, happy, happy, happy, happy, as happy as he can be, and then unhappy. Coming out of the hearing, it is unhappy, unhappy, unhappy, awkward position, and unhappy. It's not that much more complicated.

The second question put by Mr. Dion was whether there's a plan going forward. You asked that as well. Essentially, the plan is what the commission proposed originally. That's probably the least disruptive and hits all of the balance buttons and all of the rest of the stuff, minimal disruption to various communities. There will be tweaks that we would like to propose. But you can't get to there until you deal with the secondary....

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Can we hear from Ms. James and Mr. Chisu in whatever time we have left?

Ms. Roxanne James: Yes, thank you.

I agree with my colleague. I can't answer that question either. It's a good question. Who knows?

I have to tell you, when I saw the first boundary maps that came out, it was almost what I expected. It made sense. The areas that needed to be addressed were in the northeast, Scarborough—Rouge River and Pickering—Scarborough East. Those two had to be addressed. The other ridings are stable, historic, well-established communities. In most cases most of them shouldn't even have been touched.

I just want to indicate that my counter proposal, with the slight boundary changes, actually puts the population deviations or the populations even closer in line, so it's even better than the original proposal. It makes Scarborough Southwest happy, and the rest of the ridings happy.

I have to say, though, I was a bit concerned when I read the 2000 report-stage conclusions by the commission. I'm just going to read this. It states:

Finally, the Commission was advised that, if the boundaries of an electoral district had to cross Highway 401, it was preferable that this occur in the more mature and developed western portion of the Scarborough area.

That raises a big question—the most mature and well-established areas.... You would think that established communities with natural historical boundaries, communities that have been bound together for years, and sometimes decades, are the ones that should be left alone. Without population changes, growth spurts, and so on, why touch them? It makes absolutely no sense.

In areas where you have the population growing and newer development and so on, those are the areas that need to be changed. In the northeast and the eastern area of Scarborough, the first distribution maps made perfect sense.

Through you, Mr. Chair, to the committee member, I have to tell you that it raises a big question.

I just want to say that the member for Scarborough—Rouge River said there were 25 residents who appeared before the commission, and 10 who sent letters—35 residents out of 625,698 constituents in Scarborough Centre. And that's changed our boundary maps? What's going on here?

Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Lukiwski, you still have a minute and a half.

Mr. Tom Lukiwski: Mr. Chisu, and then Mr. Harris.

Mr. Corneliu Chisu: Thank you very much, Mr. Lukiwski.

I will just tell you that I am puzzled about why the radical changes were made, because the east end of Scarborough, north and south of Highway 401, was developed at the same time. So these communities were growing and getting integrated into the east side of the city.

My constituents only concern is that they don't want to have a riding split between Scarborough and Pickering. When the first division was made, creating the new Scarborough East, it was a logical one, incorporating communities with the same interest, growing up together.

Highway 401 is not a division in Pickering or Ajax or somewhere else, so then it is not a division in the very east end of Scarborough, where the national urban park is just being created. Now, through this latest, you are basically splitting the riding. The south portion of the Rouge Park will have a different interest from the northern part when you would like to combine, to resolve transportation issues and to enjoy the city.

The Chair: Thank you.

You're out of time, but I'm going to let Mr. Harris have a very short answer.

Mr. Dan Harris: Thank you very much.

I just want to state that it should probably be noted that when the boundary commission came up with their initial proposal, the commission had actually asked for an extension on the Ontario boundaries because the commission felt they did not have enough time to properly look at the boundaries for all of Ontario in order to redraw them. There was a lot of thought and consideration put into the initial ones; the commission itself had asked for more time.

For Toronto as a whole, and its the 22 ridings, there were two days of public hearings. So there was a very limited amount of time to speak. And still, I know that just between our two ridings, we had over 40 verbal presentations during just those two days of submissions.

• (1210)

The Chair: We have one more round.

Mr. Menegakis, four minutes, please.

Mr. Costas Menegakis (Richmond Hill, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I don't know if I'll need the full four minutes, but I'll be as quick as I can.

I'd just like to get some clarification, actually. Is it fair to say that when the first set of maps came out in 2012, with the exception of Ms. Sitsabaiesan, the rest of the MPs in Scarborough were relatively pleased with the maps that came out from the commission?

Now, I understand that there is no dispute. All six of you are in agreement with Mr. Harris' riding. Nobody is debating what's happened to the boundaries of Mr. Harris' riding.

Hon. John McKay: He's a happy camper.

Mr. Costas Menegakis: I'm asking that question now to the members who are here and did not agree with the first set of maps. It was a public consultation. In a public consultation, one would think you wouldn't show up and say, "We like the maps, thank you for doing them", and then leave. That's why you didn't show up there.

The second set of maps that came out in 2013—seen for the first time in this committee—are drastically changed from the first set of maps. It's the biggest change we've seen. This is why you're here today.

The second part of my question is this. Are all four of you in agreement with the changes that are being proposed by all of you? Is there consensus for what you'd like to see?

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Mr. Chair, if I may, my colleague said that 40 people who went to speak. Scarborough, itself, has close to a million people. Forty people do not represent Scarborough. However

Mr. Costas Menegakis: Well, 650,000 is a far cry from—

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: Mr. Chair, I thought I had the floor.

The Chair: Thank you, Mr. Menegakis.

Mr. Karygiannis has the floor.

Hon. Jim Karygiannis: The point is that all of us, when we saw the original proposal, four plus one, we were very happy. The final proposal came out of the blue, totally out of the blue. If you went to the commission's maps, you would have a hard time finding the maps, a very hard time, even a very hard time trying to figure out where it is and where it isn't.

In terms of the original proposal, everybody is happy with it, except my colleague from Scarborough—Rouge River. And I'll tell you, it took everybody else by surprise. Forty people do not change 650,000 people's wishes.

The Chair: Mr. McKay.

Hon. John McKay: I don't want to put the cart before the horse here, but the committee has to, in effect, go back to the first proposal in order to respond to your question.

I would suggest that if we do go back to the first proposal, the riding boundary changes between Roxanne and me are relatively easy to negotiate, shall we say, or discuss. I don't think Scarborough East has any real...I don't think we have any objections. I'm just covering off both sides of my community—minor changes with Roxanne, no changes with Corneliu, and no changes with Dan—if we take Roxanne's proposal.

The Chair: Ms. James.

Ms. Roxanne James: The consensus reached between my three colleagues closest to me and me was in regard to the counter proposal I put forward to reinstate the first boundary maps with a small or minor boundary revision in order to respect the historic and vibrant community of Bendale, which is historic in nature in Scarborough, and also to reunite South Cedarbrae in Guildwood, where it actually belongs.

Again, the other boundary is between me, Southwest, and Southwest and Guildwood, which is enabling the Southwest riding to stay exactly as it is today. So there really isn't any argument that would speak otherwise to that. Between us and those boundary changes I proposed, there is some consensus. It actually makes the most sense for Scarborough.

Again, I just want to stress that it puts the populations closer in line.

The Chair: Madame Latendresse, four minutes, please.

[Translation]

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse (Louis-Saint-Laurent, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

My question is quite general. When you asked to come here to testify, you all received a letter from the clerk, together with a list of questions that you were going to be asked. Once again, Ms. James has just talked about consensus. But one of the questions went like this:

• (1215)

[English]

“Finally, have you talked to your colleagues about these proposed changes, and if so, did they agree?”

[Translation]

From what I understand, no one here consulted Ms. Sitsabaiesan about the changes you are proposing. You did not consult her, but you say that you are in agreement. If everyone affected by these changes is not in agreement, we clearly cannot talk about a consensus.

The role of this committee is to report what was said at the commission in order to determine what can be done to improve the situation as much as possible. If there has been no consultation or agreement between everyone concerned with the changes, it is basically very difficult for us to make any decisions, because it is clear that there is no consensus.

I would like Ms. Sitsabaiesan to tell us again why she was opposed to the first version of the map and why she proposed changes to her new riding, which she supports.

I would like to know which communities of interest would be affected and why you proposed this new map.

[English]

Ms. Rathika Sitsabaiesan: Thank you for the question.

The originally proposed maps of 2012 saw a community called Malvern cut in half. Malvern has been identified by the City of Toronto as one of the priority neighbourhoods to ensure that it builds as a community. There is a lot of investment into that community by

the city itself to make sure that a sense of community is built for larger Malvern.

Secondly, the community of Morningside Heights, directly north of Malvern, was also cut in half. Morningside Heights is a relatively newer community, a younger community that hasn't had the opportunity to establish strong roots and its own identity. The community of Morningside Heights today is reliant on Malvern for all of its community services. It's a neighbourhood of houses and some schools. There's even a brand new school that's being built in Morningside Heights today, as we speak, which is set to open later in the fall. So this community hasn't even had a chance to create its identity. It's not fair to a young, thriving community, where we are seeing the most change in population development. Population growth in Scarborough is actually in the north part of Scarborough, in Rouge River, in the Morningside Heights area, and it doesn't make sense to divide these communities in half.

Both Malvern and Morningside Heights need to be kept together because Morningside Heights is dependent on Malvern for all of its service delivery, that is, immigration, health care, child and youth programs. Everything that Morningside Heights depends on is in Malvern.

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse: It's fair to say that

[Translation]

the argument presented by the people who participated in the commission's public hearings. The members of the commission saw the logic that underlay that proposal. Having people attend hearings and propose changes is the normal process. That is what the hearings are for.

My impression is that saying that the commission was involved in

[English]

gerrymandering, or political interference,

[Translation]

adversely affects the commission's reputation and the work it has tried to do here.

I have difficulty stating that there is consensus on the way this has happened and on what the new ridings should be. I feel that the commission really is doing its best. It is very difficult, as we have been able to see. The situation is similar in a number of places in the sense that the first map is quite different from the second one. The process requires members to come to us now to show us why these changes are necessary. But there must be consensus. You have to consult and you have to agree on the changes proposed.

[English]

The Chair: We are past our four minutes. Thank you very much.

That finishes that round, and we will suspend for a moment while we change our panels.

Thank you all very much for attending today and sharing with us your thoughts on your ridings.

• (1220) _____ (Pause) _____

• (1220)

The Chair: Let's call the meeting to order, please. Thank you.

We're still here looking at different pieces of Ontario.

Mr. Woodworth, you're here all by yourself today.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC): I am.

The Chair: I hope that means we can be prompt and efficient and get this finished.

We will give you five minutes to make your presentation, and then the members will ask you very hard questions.

Perhaps you would like to go ahead for five minutes.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: I shall, and as you know, five minutes is barely enough for me to clear my throat, but I'll do my best.

The Chair: I did share that with the clerk.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: The proposal, first of all, is outlined on the photograph. The current suggestion is that the south part of the current Kitchener Centre riding, everything south of Fairway Road North, would be placed into the Kitchener South riding, with property across the river in Cambridge.

The Chair: Maybe you could point it out on our big maps with the laser pointer.

• (1225)

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: It will be a little difficult, but we're talking about a line that currently runs approximately east-west—my hand is too shaky from this distance—but approximately east-west like this. All of this was currently in Kitchener Centre. The commission's proposal would put everything south of that line into the new riding of Kitchener South.

When I looked at the development patterns I realized that the east side of Kitchener in here has been totally undeveloped—it is slated for development—whereas the west side of that line consists of established neighbourhoods.

In keeping with the principles of the adjustment act, that communities of interest, or communities of identity, or historical patterns should be maintained if possible, it seemed to me that a very minor adjustment to what the commission did would be possible, placing the undeveloped portions of that area into Kitchener South, and leaving the developed, established neighbourhoods, which already have a community of interest and of identity with Kitchener Centre, in the Kitchener Centre riding. It's a very minor adjustment.

The demographics that I've been able to discern are that this would take about 2,500 to 2,800 people out of the Kitchener South riding and keep them in the Kitchener Centre riding. The result of this would be that whereas the commission's proposal would leave Kitchener Centre with 3.56% less than the median quotient, under the proposal I'm making, Kitchener Centre would be 1.18% less than the median quotient. Under the commission's proposal, Kitchener South would be 8.04% less than the median quotient for Ontario, and under the proposal I've made, it would be 10.71% less than the median quotient—and still well within the 25%.

I have spoken with the other members of Parliament whose ridings adjoin Kitchener Centre, they being Peter Braid and Dr. Harold Albrecht, and both of them are satisfied that this proposal is acceptable. I also spoke with the mayor of Kitchener.

I have one minute left? Thank you.

Sorry, I thought you were telling me to stop.

The Chair: No.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: The City of Kitchener's concerns are that there remain three urban ridings within the City of Kitchener and five ridings within the region of Waterloo. The mayor was not concerned with the fine-tuning of that, which is what my proposal in effect represents.

I think that is it. I would just say that I'm relying on the rather minor nature of this and that the intent is to keep existing communities that already identify with Kitchener Centre in Kitchener Centre, and leave the new and growing communities that have no such identification with the new riding of Kitchener South, which will need the growth.

The Chair: Thank you very much, Mr. Woodworth.

We'll go to Mr. Reid for five minutes. Let's see if we can do one round.

Mr. Scott Reid: I noticed you reduced our time. I guess you're anticipating more consensus from this panel than from the last one.

The Chair: I'll always add time as needed.

Mr. Scott Reid: All right.

Kitchener South is actually a new creation, is that correct?

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Yes, it is.

Mr. Scott Reid: You mentioned that the new riding is about 8% or 8.5% below the provincial median, and your change would lower it to 10 point something lower than the provincial median.

That raises a question. The boundaries commission knowingly made it smaller than the median by a reasonable amount. Are they doing that in anticipation of substantial population growth? Is that where the population growth is happening in Kitchener?

• (1230)

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: That is partly the answer, yes. There is significant population growth in that area, specifically, as you can see from the aerial photograph, in the area that I'm proposing to leave entirely to Kitchener South.

However, some of it would be south of the commission's boundary lines and some of it north. They were in effect dividing that population growth between Kitchener South and Kitchener Centre, and by keeping the established neighbourhoods in Kitchener Centre, I'm saying that we're quite close to the median. We won't need that population growth. Put it all in Kitchener South and let it bloom into the full riding.

Mr. Scott Reid: Okay. The area that you're proposing changing, as I understand it, is the area that's centred on Chicopee park. I'm looking at the map—and you'd know this better than I would—and it looks to me as though the river is a natural divider. They've moved away from that for a road, but maybe you confirm whether I'm right or wrong. All I'm doing is looking at the map, and it looks as though the river is a pretty substantial divider, whereas the road, which is Fairway Road, I think...?

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Yes, it's Fairway Road North, and—

Mr. Scott Reid: I don't know if Fairway Road is a major divider or not. Are there multiple lanes, limited access, and the usual things that make a highway into a substantial divider?

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: No, it isn't a limited access highway by any stretch. It's a regular city street, albeit well travelled, probably with four lanes, two in either direction, as I recall.

You are correct in that the river is a much more natural boundary. Actually, the previous proposals of the commission didn't take any account of the river, even going up the east side of Kitchener, so I was pleased that they went down the river as far as they did. The real problem, however, is that the existing Cambridge riding is so large that when you look at the overall population of the Waterloo region, it would be difficult not to cross the river a little bit.

I'm not trying to suggest that we could avoid crossing the river altogether. I'm just saying let's put the undeveloped land, which is being developed, into Kitchener South, because it's new and without previous historical identification.

Mr. Scott Reid: Thank you very much, Mr. Woodworth.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: You're welcome.

The Chair: Thank you.

Madam Latendresse.

[Translation]

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse: Thank you for your presentation, Mr. Woodworth. I feel that your proposals are quite clear.

But I am not sure I understood one thing. Does this affect Mr. Braid's riding and Mr. Albrecht's?

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: No. It does not affect their ridings, but I consulted them because—

[English]

I had better stick with English. I apologize.

Voices: Oh, oh!

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse: No problem.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: They do adjoin my riding, and the material from the committee suggested that I should check with adjoining riding people, but really, it won't affect them in any way whatsoever.

The northern boundary and the western boundaries that would adjoin them are not going to change under the proposal that I've made, only that southern boundary, which affects only the new riding and which of course has no member of Parliament at this time.

[Translation]

Ms. Alexandrine Latendresse: Fine.

You said earlier that the proposed change would create a difference of about 10%. In a lot of cases, the commission is trying to keep the difference under 10%, but the legislation allows that figure to be exceeded. But I think that the argument you are presenting to us is a strong one. In that case, given that it is very close to 10%, I really see little problem in trying to go a bit further in order to create ridings that tie in better with the communities of interest and that make some sense.

Thank you for your presentation. It was very interesting.

• (1235)

[English]

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: If I may, I'll just add quickly that the southern riding will grow by reason of the undeveloped nature of the pieces that I'm proposing go to them.

[Translation]

Thank you very much.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Cullen, did you want to use some of the time?

Mr. Nathan Cullen: I have a very small comment on the anticipation of, and the effects on, population variance of this new riding. The southern riding is the new riding?

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Yes.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Because we have no one to speak to the interest of that here at this committee process, we want to make sure we don't create something that will quickly go outside of the variance the commission tries to set. Can you assure us of that?

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Well, it certainly won't get any smaller...

Mr. Nathan Cullen: That's what I mean, in terms of the jump up.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Yes, on the southern riding, I'm going by the best information I could come up with, based on the populations of the existing polling stations within the riding. So I'm pretty confident of that.

I can't tell you for certain how much the population will grow in the new and newly developed areas, but I expect it will grow, without a doubt, and then the riding of Kitchener South will become more populated and approach the median—

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Approach the median, but—

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Kitchener Centre may have some further population growth due to brownfield work and infilling in the centre. But, again, that's rather difficult to predict.

Mr. Nathan Cullen: Just as a general comment, I join my colleague in saying thank you. It's a very straightforward and good presentation, without any accusations of bias and whatnot. Thank you, I appreciate it.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Thank you.

The Chair: We'd like it if you could argue with yourself for just for a minute.

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: I'm quite capable of doing that.

The Chair: I'm just kidding.

Monsieur Dion, go ahead, for five minutes.

[*Translation*]

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, Mr. Woodworth.

[*English*]

To make it crystal clear: can you repeat how many people would be affected by the change?

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Yes, the numbers I've been able to discern would be between 2,500 and 2,800. In the case of Kitchener Centre, the variance from the provincial target, under the commission's proposal, would go from 3.56% less than the target, to 1.18% less under my proposal. For Kitchener South, the percentage variance would change from the commission's proposal of 8.04% less than the target to 10.71% less than target.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Can you also repeat that these are the only two ridings affected by your change?

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Yes, the only two ridings affected are Kitchener Centre and Kitchener South. If it were a more significant change, if I were proposing to take more out of Kitchener South, one would wonder if you'd want to try to snatch some more of Cambridge on the other side. This is a sufficiently minor change that I think there ought not to be any concern about it.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Can you react to the rationale the commission gave and ensure that it will understand why you prefer your proposal to theirs? I don't know if it's exactly relevant to the change you've proposed, but the commission also learned of a community of interest between the southern portion of the City of Kitchener and the part of the City of Cambridge lying north of Highway 401, formerly the town of Hespeler.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: It isn't directly relevant to the minor shift I'm proposing. As I understand it, the difficulty the commission

had is that the Cambridge riding was so large and was projected to get so much larger that it would be difficult to maintain it in a single riding. The political history of the City of Cambridge is that of a union of three previously separate cities, so the idea of taking any part of that city away and putting it in a different riding was somewhat problematic. In my opinion, the commission came up with the best solution by using Highway 401, a limited access highway, and saying that if we have to subdivide the City of Cambridge, surely that is the best demarcation.

I'm generally pleased with the commission's approach. It's only in this one small particular where I felt community of interest and identity would be better served in the manner that I've proposed.

• (1240)

Hon. Stéphane Dion: Okay, so there's no other argument that you would like to raise at this committee in the way we report your views to the commission?

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: I suppose I would only say that I regret a little bit that the final hearings of the commission were given on very short notice and, quite frankly, it's my fault that perhaps I didn't spot this improvement in time to be able to appear and make that pitch to the commission directly.

I mean no disregard for the commission in that. It was my own fault that I wasn't quite quick enough—but now I am starting to argue against myself, so I'll stop there.

Hon. Stéphane Dion: No, no—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh!

Hon. Stéphane Dion: It's never too late to work for our communities.

The Chair: I think we'll stop there.

Thank you very much, Mr. Woodworth, for appearing today and giving us your views on Kitchener Centre and Kitchener South.

I would like to suspend for just a minute while we go in camera. We have a bit of committee business to do, and if the committee is willing, we'll even talk about a report or two.

[*Proceedings continue in camera*]

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