

TOWN OF EAST GREENWICH, RHODE ISLAND

**A RESOLUTION TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY AND THE SPECIAL
COMMISSION ON REAPPORTIONMENT IN OPPOSITION TO ANY PLAN
DIVIDING THE TOWN OF EAST GREENWICH INTO SEPARATE HOUSE
DISTRICTS**

WHEREAS, Article VII, Section 1, and Article VIII, Section 1, of the Rhode Island Constitution requires the General Assembly to reapportion districts for the Senate and the House of Representatives every ten years in light of new census data; and

WHEREAS, these provisions of the Rhode Island Constitution require the resulting districts to be “as compact in territory as possible,” which the Rhode Island Supreme Court has held expresses “an intention to provide an electorate with effective representation.” Opinion to the Governor, 221 A.2d 799, 802 (R.I. 1966); and

WHEREAS, our Supreme Court has noted that the General Assembly fulfills this redistricting duty when it is “careful in preserving municipal boundaries as closely as possible.” Holmes v. Farmer, 475 A.2d 976, 986 (R.I. 1984); and

WHEREAS, on July 6, 2021, the Governor signed into law House Bill 6222 sub A, which created the Special Commission on Reapportionment (SCR) to recommend a redistricting plan to the General Assembly on or before January 15, 2022; and

WHEREAS, Section 2 of House Bill 6222 sub A sets forth the redistricting standards and subsection (d) of these standards charges the SCR with the afore-mentioned redistricting duty and it reads as follows:

“Congressional and state legislative districts shall be as compact in territory as possible and, to the extent practicable, shall reflect natural, historical, geographical, municipal and other political lines and communities of interest, as well as the right of all Rhode Islanders to fair representation and equal access to the political process.”; and

WHEREAS, The SCR currently has three proposed maps for districts in the House of Representatives referred to as “House Plan A”, “House Plan B” and “House Plan C”; and

WHEREAS, House Plans B and C place most of the Town of East Greenwich into proposed House District 30 along with a portion of West Greenwich, but places a small portion of East Greenwich that is located in proximity to the harbor into proposed House District 24,

WHEREAS, under Plans B and C House District 24 would almost entirely represent the City of Warwick, with only a small portion constituting the East Greenwich harbor area not located in the City of Warwick; and

WHEREAS, House Plans B and C would divide the historic Hill & Harbor neighborhood of East Greenwich, which has roots stretching back beyond the founding of the State and our Country; and

WHEREAS, House Plans B and C would split the waterfront recreational, restaurant and business district that is the jewel of East Greenwich from both Main Street and the rest of the business community in East Greenwich; and

WHEREAS, the East Greenwich harbor area does not share a community of interest with the remainder of proposed district 24 in House Plans B and C, as said harbor area residents' government services including education services, public safety services, traffic and road maintenance, will be provided by the Town of East Greenwich and the overwhelming majority of proposed district 24 in House Plans B and C will be receiving all of those services from the City of Warwick; and

WHEREAS, the East Greenwich harbor neighborhood's interests with State regulatory agencies, including RIDEM, RIDOT, CRMC, State Planning Council, *etc.*, are best served by a House Representative who represents the Town of East Greenwich, as the harbor neighborhood is beyond question intertwined with the Town of East Greenwich; and

WHEREAS, the residents of the harbor neighborhood would comprise only a small component of the proposed District 24 if split from the Hill and Harbor neighborhood, resulting in these residents being underrepresented in a District that does not share a common interest; and

WHEREAS, The East Greenwich Town Council and the Town of East Greenwich firmly believe that the whole of the Town of East Greenwich is best served by being located within a single House District and that natural and historic communities of interest should remain linked when and where they exist; and

WHEREAS, preserving East Greenwich as a single House District is achievable, while also serving the other important redistricting goals of the SCR; and

WHEREAS, dividing the House representation of East Greenwich in this manner would violate State (and possibly Federal) law, including Section 2 of House Bill 6222 sub A that sets forth the redistricting standards, including subsection (d) of these standards that charge the SCR with the afore-mentioned redistricting duty and reads as follows:

“Congressional and state legislative districts shall be as compact in territory as possible and, to the extent practicable, shall reflect natural, historical, geographical, municipal and other political lines and communities of interest, as well as the right of all Rhode Islanders to fair representation and equal access to the political process.”

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. The East Greenwich Town Council hereby respectfully requests that the SCR recommend to the General Assembly and that the General Assembly adopt as its redistricting plan a plan that keeps East Greenwich whole as a House District.
2. This resolution shall take effect upon passage.

ATTEST:



Mark Schwager,
East Greenwich Town Council President

By the unanimous approval of the East Greenwich Town Council at the December 13, 2021, meeting; voting in favor:

Mark Schwager, President

Michael Donegan, Vice President

Caryn Corenthal

Renu Englehart

Michael Zarrella