

Testimony of Elke Maerz

Re: New York State Independent Redistricting Commission  
Public Hearing  
February 16, 2023

Dear New York State Independent Redistricting Commission Members:

My name is Elke Maerz, and I thank you for the opportunity to present my testimony. I have been a resident of Briarwood, New York since 1965, and I am a local civic leader. I have spent countless years working as a community advocate, serving as Treasurer of the Briarwood Community Association and board member of Queens Community Board 8. Previously, I was a board member of Briarwood Family Residence.

During my years partaking in community advocacy and civic leadership, I have spoken with numerous activists, community leaders, and local Briarwood residents for the purpose of helping Briarwood obtain fair access to resources and government funds. Among my proudest duties has been helping organize the Briarwood Community Association's annual block party.

Today, I want to raise the crucial issue of the divided and weakened state of Briarwood's collective civic voice due to redistricting. Geographically, Briarwood is roughly located north of Hillside Avenue, south of Union Turnpike, east of the Van Wyck Expressway, and west of Parsons Boulevard. Unfortunately, Briarwood is currently divided into multiple New York State Assembly districts. Because of this, our public advocacy powers in Albany are disjointed and debilitated. In turn, Briarwood gains fewer resources and opportunities.

I respectfully ask the New York State Independent Redistricting Commission to reunite my hometown community of Briarwood, reshaping it into one cohesive, high-powered district within the borders of New York State Assembly District 25. This change decisively allows us equitable and proper representation.

I kindly thank you for your consideration of my request.

Sincerely,  
Elke Maerz