

WRIGHTSVILLE

YORK COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

WRIGHTSVILLE BOROUGH COUNCIL
REGULAR MEETING

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2024

John Wright Restaurant
River Room
234 N. Front Street
Wrightsville, PA

In attendance: President Giandalia, Vice President Lyle, Councilwoman Barrett, Councilwoman Ferrari, Councilman White, Mayor Slenker, Solicitor Hovis (*substituting for Solicitor Ruth*), Engineer McCoy, Treasurer Sahd, Secretary Hoff

On Phone: Councilman Gromling

President Giandalia called the Regular Meeting of the Wrightsville Borough governing body to order at 6:30pm and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mary Ellen Siksa:

Ms. Siksa presented a power point presentation to those in attendance titled: Wrightsville Ward Redistricting Issue: Fact-based Information to Consider.

Ms. Siksa presented a different view to consider when deciding about the consolidation of Wrightsville's 3 wards. She listed 7 sources of relevant information, including the Local Elections Guide to Redistricting, by the US Election Assistance Commission; and the Pennsylvania Department of State, Bureau of Commissions, Elections and Legislation, York County Full Voter Export (source for voter demographics).

Her analysis, based on Census data and York county's voter registration data, shows Wrightsville has 1404 registered voters. Voter turnout is usually around 20-25% conservatively. Wrightsville is 0.66 square miles and has a total population of just over 2,200. The 3 wards are not significantly different considering the characteristics reviewed from the US 2020 Census, such as age, race, and of course, proximity. Ms. Siska noted that the ward system in Wrightsville Borough was adopted in 1994.

Geographic subdivisions for elections, called "wards" in Wrightsville, were initially implemented in 1994. Voting districts are only based on the need to support Administration and Representation aspects of elections. Only Census data is used as input for Representation, which is a key fact that was not understood by the public in attendance. As for administration aspects, computers have alleviated the manual work, that was the reason for having 3 wards in the first place. Now we can easily handle the administration of elections at large due to computer automation. These facts support the consolidation of the wards. Also, having voting at large vs. by ward prevents gerrymandering (drawing boundaries to affect the outcome of the election).

Ms. Siksa went over each of the concerns about the consolidation expressed by the community. Each concern, in her opinion, was not supported by the facts, and Borough Council has to make decisions based on facts. Where possible, Ms. Siksa suggested ways to resolve the concerns, but

the community members present remained convinced their reasoning should rule the decision of the Council. As noted by one voter present, the approximately 60 community members in attendance are 4% of our voters and do not necessarily represent the majority of Wrightsville voters. Ms. Siksa noted that Pennsylvania law does not permit referendums on ballots at the local government level except in certain cases, and this is not one of them.

The presentation included information regarding the complexity of reapportioning the wards (or “redistricting”). Redrawing the boundaries on a map is not a service offered by departments in York County government as they are considered non-political entities -- nor is drawing the boundaries anywhere near all the work required to ensure the new boundaries are accurate and fair. Ms. Siksa noted that it is difficult to find skilled partners to help with the documentation and analysis required and boroughs also must retain a municipal law attorney familiar with redistricting.

Sandra Dosch:

Ms. Dosch voiced her dislike of abolishing the wards to members of council noting that having only 1 voting location in the Borough will not work and wanted an explanation of how it’s going to work. Ms. Dosch said that a town hall meeting should be held.

Cora Rowe:

Ms. Rowe relayed to members of council her dislike of abolishing wards noting that everyone was told that it would cost \$25, 000 to reapportion the wards and noted “that simply is not true and not for everybody”. Ms. Rowe voiced her opinion and said that the elderly population cannot wait in long lines to vote at one polling place. Ms. Rowe noted to those in attendance that Councilwoman Ferrari has been to her home twice, not President Giandalia and thanked Councilwoman Ferrari for visiting with her.

Karen Oster:

Ms. Oster introduced herself to those in attendance and voiced her opinion on the abolishment of the wards in the borough. Ms. Oster noted that the ward system has been in place for many years and just because other York County boroughs have eliminated them does not mean that this should be the first option. No presentation was given other than an arbitrary number of \$25,000. Ms. Oster doesn’t believe that council should make any decision until they do their due diligence and present both options in true comparison, voting to eliminate the wards is doing an injustice to the residents. Ms. Oster also noted that during last month’s meeting a statement was made that the wards are dividing our town. Ms. Oster noted that the statement may be an opinion but is not fact based. Ms. Oster would like council to consider all options and provide a breakdown of all costs, both short-term and long-term to resolve the issue.

Sharon Young:

Mrs. Young asked members of council to approve a community-wide yard sale on September 28, 2024. President Giandalia noted that the agenda would be amended later in the meeting to discuss this event.

Mrs. Young noted that the utility pole outside of her home is still not fixed, awaiting work to be completed by Comcast.

Mrs. Young relayed to those in attendance that her husband showed her an article in Lancaster newspaper discussing the Veteran's Memorial Bridge closure and pointed out that the Lancaster Mayor was interviewed for Lancaster but not our mayor. Why? Why was it Eric and not Mayor Slenker.

Mrs. Young asked, "What is the mayor's responsibility when complaints are turned in"? Mrs. Young voiced that Mayor Slenker should be able to do her job to clean up the town and she should not have to be on a committee to do so.

Nadine Downey:

Ms. Downey relayed to those in attendance that she liked the presentation from Mary Ellen Siksa and learned beneficial information from her presentation. Ms. Downey asked Councilwoman Barrett what she feels is the benefit to keeping the ward system in the borough. Councilwoman Barrett replied by noting that the residents she has spoken to and continues to speak with want (1) Hyper local representation and (2) I want someone who lives nearby who can represent me.

Kristi Barry:

Ms. Barry voiced the following comments/questions to members of council concerning the abolishment of the wards: (1) What are the benefits, (2) What is best for the borough and (3) timing is bizarre- why now? Seems strange and one sided with not enough facts presented.

Pastor Jesse North:

Pastor North introduced himself to those in attendance. Pastor North noted that the Fall Fest held last year at Wrightsville Presbyterian Church located at 205 N. 2nd Street was great and invites all to attend the event this year to be held on November 9, 2024.

Mel McDonald:

Mrs. McDonald asked why the one-page letter about the wards wasn't included with the newsletter and said that it was sent to scare everyone to not come to the meeting. Mrs. McDonald noted that all the people she spoke with in the last two weeks not one was in favor of abolishing the wards.

Mrs. McDonald stated that no one answers the phone at the office.

Christina Runkle:

Ms. Runkle voiced her concern over elimination of wards and disagrees with the comment that some say the borough is too small to have wards. Ms. Runkle also asked why this is being pushed through so fast.

Abby Duncan:

Ms. Duncan relayed to those in attendance that she is in favor of keeping the ward system in the borough. She also noted to the audience – (1) Thank you for showing up, (2) Thank you for listening and (3) Thanked Councilwoman Barrett for being the only council member who has ever shown up to her home in the last 17 years she has lived in the borough and noted that Councilwoman Barrett will always have her support.

Crystal Bolton:

Mrs. Bolton expressed her dislike for allowing Ms. Siksa thirty minutes to present a biased presentation. Mrs. Bolton relayed to those in attendance: (1) In 2021, \$396 was spent on abolishment of wards, (2) Why did only certain individuals receive the letter sent from Council President, (3) Council members receive \$600 per year, noting it is a waste of tax payer dollars for some, (4) She has heard the term gerrymandering as the reason for some council members to not be in favor of abolishing the wards and stated that that is simply a slap in the face noting that gerrymandering is not an issue in the borough. Ms. Bolton noted that having to vote on whether to put council email addresses on the website is ridiculous since it should be public information and made available to anyone. Ms. Bolton concluded her comment on this matter by saying if you don't want to be contacted, don't sit in the seat.

Pastor Ian Barnhart:

Mr. Barnhart relayed to members of council that he is not in favor of abolishing the current ward system noting that he likes that his neighbor should be the one representing him.

Darvin Shelly:

Mr. Shelly relayed to those in attendance that he came to the meeting to listen and didn't intend to speak but after listening, Mr. Shelly noted that Ms. Siksa's presentation stated some untruths pointing out that should the wards be abolished, York County Elections office will not provide additional voting machines, and the borough will have one voting location for all voters. If anyone has any questions, ask Hellam Township voters what lines are like on Election Day.

Fred Smith:

Mr. Smith relayed to those in attendance that he too came to listen and didn't intend to speak however after listening Mr. Smith relayed to those in attendance that we're very fortunate to have wards and why would we take them away from ourselves. Mr. Smith also noted the closer you are to the people; the better government works.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS:

Fire:

Report was provided with meeting materials. Chief Livelsberger relayed report highlights to those in attendance noting 97 calls were received for service in August. Chief Livelsberger also reported that a total of 600 calls for service have been received year-to-date.

Police:

No report was provided with meeting materials.

Emergency Management Coordinator:

Report was provided with meeting materials.

Ambulance:

No report was provided with meeting materials.

Zoning:

A complaint report was provided with meeting materials.

Streets & Parks:

Report was provided with monthly meeting materials.

Engineer:

Report was provided with the monthly meeting materials. Engineer McCoy relayed report highlights to those in attendance, noting he had no action items that required approval.

Treasurer:

Report was provided with the monthly meeting materials. Treasurer Sahd relayed report highlights to those in attendance.

Councilwoman Barrett made a motion to approve the August check register presented with meeting materials. Councilman White seconded the motion. All in favor. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Councilwoman Barrett made a motion to approve the August financial report presented with meeting materials. Councilman White seconded the motion. All in favor. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Mayor:

Mayor Slenker thanked everyone for coming to the meeting, voicing their opinion and hopes that more people start coming to the meetings in the future.

Solicitor:

No report.

ACTION ITEMS:

President Giandalia noted a correction to be made and read into meeting minutes - An entertainment permit application was approved and should have been reflected in the April 1, 2024, Regular Meeting minutes as Wrightsville Merchants Association and not Downtown Merchants Association.

Councilwoman Barrett made a motion to approve Trick-or-Treat in Wrightsville Borough to be held on October 31, 2024, from 6pm-8pm. Councilwoman Ferrari seconded the motion. All in favor. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Councilman White made a motion to add all Borough Council email addresses to the Borough website. Councilwoman Barrett seconded the motion. All in favor. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Councilman White made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-20, a Resolution of Wrightsville, York County, Pennsylvania, regarding participating with Pennsylvania Local Government

Investment Trust (PLGIT). Councilwoman Ferrari seconded the motion. All in favor. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Councilman White made a motion to approve Resolution 2024-21, a Resolution of Wrightsville Borough, York County, Pennsylvania, regarding formal record of action authorizing Borough Treasurer to open account at Univest Bank and Trust Co. and designate individuals to exercise signatory over all accounts at Univest Bank and Trust Co. Vice President Lyle seconded the motion. All in favor. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

A brief discussion was held about the Christmas decorations. Councilwoman Ferrari noted that fund raising efforts to purchase additional decorations will begin in the next few months and noted a target date of October 15th to place an order for more decorations. President Giandalia stated that some of the decorations “didn’t even make it one year and need repaired”. Councilwoman Ferrari disagreed. Councilwoman Ferrari noted last year a lot of late nights and work was spent working on the decorations pointing out that there was a learning curve with some of the light fixtures. Councilwoman Ferrari noted that all decorations are commercial grade and volunteers had limited time and finances to work with when purchasing decorations. Councilwomen Ferrari and Barrett announced that Christmas decoration account has over a \$3,000 balance from last year to move forward with purchased this year. Councilwoman Ferrari relayed to those in attendance that if anyone has questions, she would be happy to discuss those questions with them.

Councilman White made a motion to approve no parking signs be posted on S. 2nd Street from Hellam Street to Garden Avenue and east side of triangle parking area in front of the American Legion Post 469 on Saturday, September 21, 2024 from 12pm-4pm for a charity event. Vice President Lyle seconded the motion. All in favor. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Councilwoman Ferrari made a motion to approve a quote for \$5105.00 from Signal Service for a controller replacement at 6th and Hellam Streets. Vice President Lyle seconded the motion. All in favor. The motion carried with unanimous vote.

Councilman White made a motion to approve installation of handicap parking markers at 315 Walnut Street. Councilwoman Barrett seconded the motion. All in favor. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Councilwoman Ferrari made a motion to approve the Recreation/Entertainment Permit Application and Street Closure Request for Wrightsville Presbyterian Church Fall Fest on Saturday, November 9, 2024 from 9am-4pm. Councilwoman Barrett seconded the motion. All in favor. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Approved Street Closure: N. 2nd Street (200 block) from Locust Street to Centre Alley.

Vice President Lyle made a motion to amend the agenda to add emergency services payment to fire department and Borough-wide community yard sale permit application. Councilwoman Barrett seconded the motion. All in favor. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Councilwoman White made a motion to approve a \$5,000 payment from the emergency services fund be issued to the Wrightsville Fire Department for fire company training for personnel. Vice President Lyle seconded the motion. All in favor. The motion carried with unanimous vote.

Councilwoman Barrett made motion, pending yard sale permit application is submitted to office, to approve Borough-wide community yard sale to be held on Saturday, September 28, 2024 from 8am-1pm. Councilwoman Ferrari seconded the motion. All in favor. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Councilman White made a motion to approve Ordinance 2024-4, an Ordinance of the Borough of Wrightsville, York County, Pennsylvania, abolishing all wards within the Borough in accordance with Section 601(A)(6) of the Pennsylvania Borough Code. Vice President Lyle seconded the motion. President Giandalia called for a Roll Call Vote:

Roll Call Vote recorded as follows:

Councilman Gromling – yea

Councilman White – yea

Vice President Lyle – yea

President Giandalia – yea

Councilwoman Barrett- nay

Councilwoman Ferrari- nay

Solicitor Hovis relayed to those in attendance that the motion did pass with a 4-2; however, the mayor can either approve or veto the ordinance. Solicitor Hovis noted the following as per the Borough Code:

- *If the mayor approves the ordinance, the mayor shall sign it.*
- *If the mayor does not approve the ordinance, the mayor shall return it with objections, which shall be entered upon the minutes, to the council at its next scheduled meeting occurring at least ten days after the meeting at which the ordinance was enacted by council.*
- *Council shall reconsider the ordinance either at the meeting at which the vetoed ordinance was returned or not later than ten days after the meeting at any other scheduled meeting. If, after reconsideration, a majority of all elected council members plus one votes to override the mayor's veto, the ordinance shall have full force and effect as if it had received the approval of the mayor. The vote shall be determined by yeas and nays, and the names and votes of the members shall be entered upon the minutes.*
- *If an ordinance is not returned by the mayor at council's next scheduled meeting occurring at least ten days after its presentation to the mayor, the ordinance shall have full force and effect as if it had been approved by the mayor.*

Mayor Slenker relayed the following to those in attendance, “I plan to veto the ordinance. I feel the majority of the voters have shown that they do not want to abolish the wards. There was a second option to reapportion the wards, but the abolishment was pushed and I feel it’s not fair to the residents.”

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES:

Motion to approve the August Regular Meeting minutes was tabled until the October 7, 2024 meeting. Councilwoman Barrett would like some corrections/additions to be noted in the minutes before approved.

No August Planning Meeting was held. No minutes to approve.

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

ADMINISTRATION & FINANCE:

No report.

PUBLIC WORKS:

No report.

PUBLIC SAFETY:

No report.

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

No report.

PARKS & RECREATION:

COMPLAINT:

No report.

PERSONNEL:

No report.

OUTREACH:

Councilwoman Ferrari relayed to those in attendance “I am thrilled to have our email addresses on the website, please reach out with any questions”. Councilwoman Ferrari invited all to participate in the upcoming Borough-wide Community Yard Sale on September 28, 2024 and to visit the upcoming Fall Fest at Wrightsville Presbyterian Church on November 9, 2024.

ADDITIONAL BUSINESS:

President Giandalia announced that no September Planning Meeting will be held. Borough Council will reconvene on Monday, October 7, 2024.

Vice President Lyle asked Councilwoman Ferrari if the adults have child clearances for any events being held at Riverfront Park in which the child(ren’s) parent is not present. VP Lyle mentioned the most recent Pottery in the Park event. Both Councilwomen Ferrari and Barrett noted that this event is an event in which the parents participate, noting it is not a drop and go event. Councilwoman Ferrari noted that all adult individuals who assisted in the Summer Lunch Program had their child clearances.

ADJOURNEMENT:

Vice President Lyle made a motion to adjourn the Regular Meeting at 8:45pm. Councilman White seconded the motion. All in favor. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted,
Tammie Hoff
Borough Secretary