

WRIGHTSVILLE BOROUGH COUNCIL
PLANNING MEETING
February 17, 2025
Magee Room
108 Hellam Street
Wrightsville, PA 17368

The Planning Meeting of the Borough of Wrightsville governing body convened at 6:30 pm on Monday, February 17, 2025. Council President Giandalia called the meeting to order and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

In attendance: Council President Giandalia, Vice President Lyle (arrived at 7:25pm), Councilwoman Barrett, Councilwoman Ferrari, Councilman Gromling, Councilman White, Mayor Slenker, Solicitor Ruth, Secretary Hoff.

Absent: Treasurer Sahd, Engineer McCoy

Council President Giandalia commenced the meeting and read the following statement to those in attendance:

This board agreed to conduct the survey. Many of you here and some of the board members were questioning the validity of the survey.

It was conveyed over social media and in email messages to my borough account that there was distrust that the survey process as designed could or would reflect the will of the voters.

I've talked to many people in this town who agree with abolishing the wards. There are many residents who for whatever reason, did not complete and return the survey.

The residents elect the board who makes decisions on their behalf. I've put considerable thought into this and I cannot go against the will of this board with not ONE but TWO 4 to 2 votes.

We realize that we cannot →

make all of the people happy
all of the time.

It is our responsibility to make
the best decisions on behalf of
not a group of people but
for the whole of the
great citizens of this ~~area~~ borough.

J. Giandalia
2/17/05

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Mayor Slenker:

Mayor Slenker relayed the following to those in attendance:

“ I wish Council would understand what the people want”

Mayor Slenker asked President Giandalia why is not honoring his word that he would do what the residents want after the results of the survey were received stating that it is not fair and reminded him, “you serve the people”.

Mayor Slenker said “if they (residents) cared, they would have turned in the survey”. Mayor Slenker noted that those individuals that do care came to the meetings to tell council that they want to keep the wards.

Several individuals in attendance were shouting over each other with various comments being made at the same time. Solicitor Ruth advised those in attendance that the public comment period of the meeting needs to be done in an orderly manner with no shouting.

Cora Rowe:

Ms. Rowe asked what percentage of the survey respondents want to abolish the wards.

Councilwoman Ferrari responded that 66% of the responses received want to abolish the wards and noted that in previous surveys there was only reported to be an 11% resident response rate compared with the current survey response rate of 29%.

Ms. Rowe relayed to those in attendance that she thinks it was fair and mentioned that the rules are changing because the survey results (66% in favor of maintaining the wards vs. 34% in favor of abolishment), referring to the 4 council members who voted to abolish the wards.

Mel McDonald:

Mrs. McDonald relayed the following to those in attendance: (1) Think the survey was a waste time and a waste of taxpayer dollars noting that people are struggling and their money was taken from them, (2) Where are the people who want to keep the wards mentioning that not one person that she spoke to wants to abolish the wards, (3) Listen to the people, leave it alone and stop wasting tax dollars and (4) no one wants Councilman White on council noting that “he is an idiot”.

Mrs. McDonald asked council why the Wrightsville Borough fire truck was in Marietta Borough noting that she received a call from someone who asked her that question. Mrs. McDonald also asked if the borough is being sued for making someone sick while the truck was parked in front of someone's home. Solicitor Ruth replied that the Borough is not being sued, and no further discussion will be held about this matter at this time. Mayor Slenker noted that the fire department truck should not be in Marietta Borough.

Faye Raffensberger:

Ms. Raffensberger relayed to members of council and those in attendance that she feels that the survey was a waste of money, and the residents don't want to abolish the wards. Ms. Raffensberger noted that a special election should have been held to "put Eric on council".

Fred Smith:

Mr. Smith questioned the December planning meeting not being readvertised after being cancelled at the December 2nd regular meeting. He felt this meant the mayor's veto would have needed to be presented at the January 6th meeting not the December 16th meeting. Mr. Smith stated that he wanted it to be on record, if this matter goes to litigation, he will do all he can to keep the wards from being abolished.

Abby Duncan:

Ms. Duncan asked President Giandalia how many times he is on the record for wanting to abolish the wards. President Giandalia replied, one. Ms. Duncan said now you are on record saying that you are not going to abolish the wards.

Joe Moore:

Mr. Moore relayed to members of council and those in attendance that all the planning meetings for 2024 were cancelled and then at the last minutes a December planning meeting was held. Mr. Moore said that it seems out of sort to have a meeting at the last minute. Mr. Moore expressed that President Giandalia never intended to abide by the survey results and asked how council can be trusted.

Sharon Young:

Mrs. Young relayed to those in attendance that when she was on council the planning meetings were not decision-making meetings.

Vicki Ness:

Ms. Ness relayed to those in attendance she believes that if the residents wanted to abolish the wards, they would have attended the meetings.

Mary Ellen Siksa:

Ms. Siksa relayed to those in attendance the following: In a presentation I did at a previous council meeting, I explained the local, county and state laws and the rules we have to follow to provide the proper documentation to support the validity of the redistricted wards, based on the validity of the existing wards. We do not have anything except what is referred to as the "crayon map" from 1993 when the wards were adopted. Drawing the map is a trivial part of what is required per the Local Election Official's Guide to Redistricting provided by the U.S. Election Assistance Commission. This document was recommended to me by the York County Board of Elections. Ms. Barrett is under the impression that we do not have to provide additional documentation as outlined in the Redistricting guide. Her position on this supports her claim

that "it can be done at no cost". I disagree. For one thing, moving people from one ward to another has to be done by the census block not by the individual as her analysis indicated. Mrs. Young asked Councilwoman Barrett to briefly share what it would cost to redistrict the wards. Councilwoman Barrett replied that she had contacted the York County Board of Elections, York County Planning Commission and Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs and the cost to redistrict the wards can be done at no cost or very little cost. Councilwoman Barrett relayed to those in attendance that all information shared at previous meetings are all facts and nothing is being made up. Councilwoman Ferrari voiced that the argument of a voter imbalance in the wards is not a valid argument. Councilwoman Ferrari said she was elected to represent the people of the town and listen to what they want. Councilwoman Ferrari noted "I think that it is pitiful and shameful to go against the survey results and the "silent majority" is still silent.

Attorney Sheilla O'Rourke (Attorney for Mayor Slenker):

Attorney O'Rourke presented her opinion regarding the subject of when the next scheduled meeting was after the December 2, 2024 regular meeting. She stated that it was not the December 16, 2024 planning meeting because it was cancelled on December 2, 2024 and although it was rescheduled on December 13, 2024, she was not made aware of the change and it was not readvertised. It was debated whether it needed to be readvertised since it was advertised at the beginning of 2024.

She stated that the Ordinance to abolish the wards signed December 2, 2024 was not properly served to the Mayor because it needed to be hand delivered or mailed certified mail to the Mayor's residence. She also stated that the mayor cares what the residents of the Borough want and asked that Council listen to the people of the Borough and not abolish the wards. Attorney O'Rourke noted that the survey participation was larger than expected and to not abide by the results of the survey would be hypocritical and disrespectful.

Mayor Slenker noted that President Giandalia is going against the will of the residents.

ACTION ITEMS:

No action items were discussed at the meeting.

BOROUGH COUNCIL COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Administration & Finance:

No report.

Public Works:

No report

Public Safety:

No report.

Community & Economic Development:

No report.

Parks & Recreation:

No report.

Personnel:

No report

Complaint Committee:

No report.

ADDITIONAL BUSINESS:

No additional business.

ADJOURNMENT:

President Giandalia adjourned the meeting at 7:31pm due to the outbursts from various meeting participants. Remaining agenda items were not addressed and will be transferred to the agenda for March 3, 2025 monthly council meeting.

Respectfully submitted,
Tammie Hoff, Borough Secretary