



Commissioner Troxell said he has looked at the census information on line and it would not take much effort or expense to do this work. He feels there is a need to look at the numbers every 10 years to avoid situations like this. President Moyer said his concern is still about breaking up the traditional neighborhoods and the additional cost of \$30,000-\$50,000 to redistrict the entire Township; and the impact on voting precincts and the county impact.

A roll call vote was taken on Commissioner Troxell's motion; the motion failed 4-5 with Commissioners Varner, Spandler, Milakovic, Weikle, and Moyer voting no.

3. Public Comments:

President Moyer opened the floor to public comment. He asked that anyone wishing to comment come to the podium, state name and address, and remember there is a 3 minute time limit, with a 30 second notice of time left, and he would like to limit individuals to coming up to speak to two times..

Bill DiSanto, 240 N. 61st Street-said he is not in favor of an at-large system. He had questions about solving the under-representation in some of the wards by eliminating the representation for four of the wards. President Moyer said this was addressed at the first meeting; it is in the minutes, and can be reviewed later after the public comments.

Nan Cavanaugh, 3790 DawnMar Street-is a longtime resident who is interested in citizen participation in Local government, and a member of the League of Women Voters. She is puzzled by how 5 people representing the Township is better than 9; and a government of checks and balances is a good one. She had questions about changing the methodology of government and how 5 can provide the oversight, citizen review and balance that 9 are not doing.

Commissioner Troxell responded this is a very important issue and this has not been addressed. He says this Board over the years has taken action first, and then tried to clean and address the problem, citing the recent purchase of the Bishop tract and his work on the Expansion Committee. Commissioner Troxell stated this is why we need to slow the process down; why we filed a petition in court--we need to slow down, listen to people, and figure out how are we going to govern. He feels there is no other case law out there to deal with--this is history being made.

Kathleen Bowman, 625 Cornell Court -said she is in favor of voting at-large, she feels reduction in the size of government is very important and should be considered by all present. Right now she can only vote for one Commissioner and feels it's important to be able to vote for all of them to be able to have a larger voice in the democratic process.

Elizabeth Jones, 3878 DawnMar Street-is in favor of 9 wards. She has been speaking to her neighbors and over 30 people have all said they are in favor of the 9 wards.

They want their Commissioner to be in their area; they want to be able to go and voice their opinion and don't feel they will be represented by 5 at-large.

Mark Dantuono, 4406 York Street-said he does not think having less Commissioners is a good thing; small government is not necessarily better because of dividing the workload. He feels at-large creates a situation at the electoral box where there is less representation for those with a minority view. Creating a winner-take-all situation degrades democracy.

Chris Fries, 3800 Brisban Street - thinks 5 at-large makes sense. If this was done at large, we wouldn't be sitting here talking about moving people around again in the future. It's so simple. Like someone else said, I can vote for all my representation in the Township. If you want to talk to your Commissioners, all you have to do is go to the meetings. It's that simple.

Phyllis Bennett, 902 Hamilton Circle - said she is really disappointed that the Commissioners continue to move in this direction; not listening to what the public says. She feels overwhelmingly the people who have spoken at the meetings do not want to go at-large. The people like being able to identify who is responsible for our community. She said the five Commissioners who have banded together in opposition to the community should be ashamed of themselves; they do not have the best interests of the people in this room or in the community at heart. She is appalled at the lack of consideration--the Sunday ad had the wrong date, was that an accident? She asked President Moyer to explain how it is better to have neighborhoods and not break up neighborhoods by going at-large. She thinks the Board is self-serving and should look at the people who are here and the people you are supposedly representing. Why hold the meetings if you don't care what the people have to say--it's disgraceful and you should step down and let someone else have your seat.

Brian Faleshock, 966 Lark Drive - said he is a member of the Central Dauphin School Board, a business owner, has been a fire company president and assistant fire chief, and a resident for over 20 years. He said that the people must hold the Commissioners responsible for their actions, and under the present ward system, we can't. We can only vote for our individual Commissioner; we cannot hold the other 8, 7 or 5 accountable. If our Commissioner has an issue he thinks is best for us, brings it to the other Commissioners, and the other 8 happen to say no, we as the voting public cannot hold those other 8 accountable. With the at-large system, all Commissioners are held responsible for all their votes. We can come together as a community and hold them all responsible. We had sewer in Chambers Hill that should have been done years ago, we've had bridges and roads that needed fixed, but the other Commissioners said no. There will be many decisions that need to be made in the future, many more important than this; and the Commissioners need to

come together and do what is best for the entire community. He hears what everyone is saying about not having a Commissioner to talk to, but you'll actually have them all to talk to. Now you can only hold one responsible for their vote, and that's really not best. He is in favor of holding them all responsible, not just the one in his ward. There was discussion about Commissioners all coming from one area and not representing the whole Township.

Commissioner Troxell said that his ward is important, but when we come up here, we think about the entire Township. That's a maturity you should expect from your elected officials--to look out for you as well as to govern within a body. We should all be looking to work together as well as we can.

Bryan Beistline, 545 Yale Street - reiterated his feelings that the Commissioners are not listening to the public, especially those that are coming to the public meetings and being very vocal. He asked about a scenario where what if all 5 Commissioners are from Oberlin and there's an issue in Rutherford--they're not going to care about Rutherford. He is hearing a lot more negative feedback on the at-large as he is out in the community. Remember these are the people who are going to vote for all 5 if you go at-large.

Mary Klaus, 447 Pritchard Court - said she was the tenth person speaking tonight and the seventh in favor of keeping the 9 ward system. She agreed with Mrs. Bennett that the reason for the public hearings is to guide you in making up your minds, but that 5 have already made up your minds before the second meeting was held. That's not listening to the public. In her 30 years of experience attending municipal meetings with both at-large and ward systems, she has observed much more of a connection to the citizens when you have your own representative like we do now. She knows the maps and the numbers need tweaking to achieve equal representation, but she speaks in favor of keeping the 9 ward system.

Allen Kennedy-Shaffer, 252 Verbeke Street - stated that this morning 4 members of Board of Commissioners filed in Dauphin County Court of Common Pleas a petition to ask the County Court to take over the reapportionment process under Section 904 of the Municipal Reapportionment Act. He called this a courageous action by the Commissioners in an effort to enforce State law. He said Swatara Township is in violation of State law Section 903 of the Municipal Reapportionment Act and Article 9, Section 11 of the Constitution of Pennsylvania. The wards are excessively disproportionate; and the solution is Section 904--providing for the County Court to appoint a three-member body to study reapportionment and provide a plan to the County Court. The Court of Common Pleas would approve a reapportionment for the Township that would provide equal representation under the law. The four Commissioners--Commissioner Connolly, Commissioner Chiavetta, Commissioner Troxell, and Commissioner Boudier--went to court this

morning to do this. In response to a question about who is paying for this, Mr. Kennedy-Shaffer replied he is doing this pro bono; he believes strongly as an attorney and a citizen that State law matters, and that equal representation and listening to the community matters.

Commissioner Weikle asked about his affiliation with the Democratic Committee; Mr. Kennedy-Shaffer replied he is a member of the Democratic State Committee. He said this is a bi-partisan group of Commissioners who filed the petition--three Republicans and one Democrat, who are in agreement with keeping the 9 ward system. Commissioner Weikle asked if 5 at-large is a legal option for this Board; Mr. Kennedy-Shaffer declined to answer saying the Board has adequate legal advice from its Solicitor.

Mike Farling, 620 Rutland Drive - had questions about Commissioner Milakovic's employer Herbert Rowland & Grubic and campaign contributions from them and their connection to Better Government for Pa. He asked how Commissioners Varner, Moyer, Spandler, and Milakovic enjoyed a recent hockey game in the HRG suite, stating politics makes strange bedfellows. He thinks it looks bad and the public doesn't want its politicians being the good old politicians we've dealt with in big government. He feels that the people who have been attending these meetings are overwhelmingly saying keep my ward. The people want someone to do a good job. They don't want Republicans and Democrats up there fighting; they want folks to get along and try to get things right.

Kevin Sidella, 2317 Scarsboro Drive-said he knows what it's like to be a Commissioner on this Board having been elected to two terms before moving out of the Township. During those years he thought going at-large would be a better system just from the perspective of finding a better caliber of candidate. There were times we couldn't find people to fill these seats. He served with Democrats and Republicans and some he got along with and some he didn't regardless of party. They weren't there for the right reasons. He thinks if you go at-large you have a better chance of better people coming forward to run. The most ridiculous argument--the people who are arguing for better diversity on the Board and democratic representation think the current system is serving them; but this isn't diverse--these are nine folks that look just like me. The current system isn't giving you what you want; if you went at large you'd have a better chance of bulleting your votes behind one candidate, and getting someone else up here. He told the five Commissioners who are for the at-large system they are doing the right thing. He thinks they should stay the course and call the vote.

Mark Dantuono, 4406 York Street-said he has only been in the Township for 13 years and doesn't have the historical knowledge. He thanked all for their public service; it's a wonderful thing. He thinks an at-large system creates a situation

where those who can muster the most financial resources, wherever that comes from, are the ones who prevail; and that's not diversity. He disagrees that it brings a better pool of candidates; he thinks you end up with a few at the top who are able to muster a large concentration of financial resources.

Phyllis Bennett, 902 Hamilton Circle - said she lives in the 7<sup>th</sup> Ward and was gerrymandered out of the 106<sup>th</sup> Legislative District into the 104<sup>th</sup> District. She commented on how there are 203 State Representatives and that out of the three that represent our area we can only vote for one. She wants to know if going to 5 Commissioners is going to make it diverse, who will you support. She stressed again that she can't vote for all 203 State Representatives; she can only vote for one and pray that that one will vote my concerns. She promised that if the Board does take that vote, she and many others will work to make sure you are not one of the 5.

Chris Fries, 3800 Brisban Street - asked Commissioner Chiavetta exactly what the lawyer is going to do--in plain English. Commissioner Chiavetta said in plain English we're doing what Tony Spagnolo wanted to do--make the wards align. Commissioner Troxell said basically what we did with the petition was throw a monkey wrench in the process. The petition was to stop--because this was happening so swiftly. Mr. Fries said he's been hearing about it at Township meetings for the past two years. Commissioner Troxell said maybe you have, but apparently the rest of the public hasn't. Mr. Fries said apparently they're not interested in what's happening in the Township because they don't go to posted public meetings. Commissioner Troxell said what the petition does is slow the process down, let the courts decide. If it's a valid perspective, the judge will weigh in and instruct us. We need someone to look from the outside because apparently we were unable to do that at this point. And to look at the legal end, we were in violation of the Municipal Reapportionment Act which was actually created to preserve one person, one vote; so for 34 years we were in violation of the law.

4. Commissioners Comments:

Commissioner Connolly thanked everyone for coming out in the winter weather; it shows that you care, no matter which side of the issue you're on. He said that over the 34 years, the neighborhoods have changed and the population has changed. The people on the Board did nothing over those years to even out the numbers to make sure that every person in this Township was represented fairly in local government. He cited figures to show the imbalance and said this is not a Democrat or Republican issue; it's a fairness issue. Previous boards didn't do anything because of a comfort level with the way things were. Commissioner Connolly doesn't want to be one of the people who didn't do anything but wants to do the right thing and the

fair thing. He wants to see the wards in balance so that everyone is represented equally. He said that right after the November 2014 election where Tom Wolf won 7 of the 9 wards in Swatara Township, the next day is the first time this Board brought up the topic of reapportionment. He felt there was pressure put on to vote for a 5 at-large system at that meeting. Commissioner Connolly feels it is better to slow it down, get it right, and have the population fairly dispersed across the 9 wards and say with the 9 ward system.

Commissioner Chiavetta - said he signed the petition for those who want to stay with the ward system and he feels that most want that. He's talked to people all through the Township and that's why he signed it. The way it stands it's a 5-4 vote and the only people who can help us out now are the courts.

Commissioner Milakovic - thanked everyone for coming out. He said the majority of First-Class Townships in the State are at-large and they seem to work very well. He thinks it gives the voters a better representation throughout the Township because they have a chance to vote for more than just one person.

Commissioner Spandler - thanked everyone for coming to these three long meetings. Commissioner Spandler said he is for at-large. He has traveled across the state and seen it work. A couple of times tonight someone said the men here--that's what he wants to see fixed. He doesn't think a woman could run in a single ward and get elected. But if the women could pool their vote together across the entire Township, that could happen. If this goes through at-large, we're actually voting to have two Commissioners on this Board not be here anymore. He thinks this gives everybody a far shake at being a Commissioner on this Board. Commissioner Spandler said he is in his tenth year and thinks it is the most rewarding job. He would like to see others have that experience--for the right reasons--to make this Township better.

Commissioner Troxell said democracy is messy; it takes a lot of give and take. He said people need to feel free to express their opinions, to feel that they're respected and valued; and this process unwinding does not demonstrate that. Unfortunately there is no case law in the history of the Commonwealth that addresses a circumstance like this; that's big. What this community could be known as, he doesn't want to think about, because of this process of ramrodding things through. He thinks the people have spoken clearly at these three meetings that they want to remain with a ward system which provides equal representation. Now let's look at governance--this Board and this body over time has made awkward decisions, has made steps in a direction not truly thought out. They meant well, but the knowledge wasn't there. He feels 9 people are needed for that representation. How

are we going to govern with our committees should be go to 5 at-large--does that mean more administrative work, more personnel, hiring more professional people. He said this is just too fast, it's moving along; we did enter the petition to slow the process down and to have an outside party look at things. Commissioner Troxell thanked everyone for coming out and looks forward to retaining the ward system.

Commissioner Varner said the fact it's been brought up that this politically motivated at all is absolutely insulting. The fact that the President won all nine wards the year before Tom Wolf's election, shows if anything, that an at-large system Township-wide would help and create more opportunities for that party. He doesn't understand that argument. He also said honestly every decision he has made up here has been what he thinks is the best one and best for the Township. For the Commissioners, even though we may disagree on this overall, we work together and try to do what is best for the Township. It is frustrating for anyone to try to make it sound like the case would be anything different. He is also frustrated with the notion this has been ramrodded, because this has been discussed for years. For Commissioners to take office and be in office for a year and say they don't know or aren't sure of what reapportionment is or what it does or what the options are, especially when they sit back in the backroom. Clearly the workload isn't a problem because some of them aren't doing the work or the homework that needed to be done to make these decisions as it is. To Mr. Farling, with the at-large system if you're not happy with the Board that's up here, you can vote all of us out.

Commissioner Weikle - said he's sat here through three meetings and been told he should be ashamed of himself because he has a different opinion; and he doesn't think that's a fair assessment--everyone has a right to their own opinion. Getting to know us--he's heard repeatedly that if we go to 5 at-large I won't know my Commissioners--if you talk to the four gentlemen in the back corner and a few of the firefighters, they're the only ones at every meeting. They're here because they care and they want to know what's going on; and that's how you get to know your Commissioners, we're all very approachable. He said it's your own fault if you don't know your Township Commissioner or you don't know all nine of us, because we all make decisions on your entire life. The other thing that disturbs him very badly is the phrase "nine white men"; he can't tell you how many times that's been said throughout the three meetings. You know who put the nine white men up here--the voters. We don't make the decision; we decide to run, but the voters are the ones who put us in here. We get one vote in our precinct just like you do. So if you don't like the makeup of this Board then you should run for Township Commissioner, it's a thankless job. Commissioner Weikle said the reason he is behind 5 at-large is because he believes there's enough diversity in this Township that anybody can get elected, no matter what race you are, no matter what gender you are. There is diversity throughout this Township; there's not one section of the

Township any different from the next section. Commissioner Weikle said it drives him crazy to hear that this is political, that this is racial--it's nothing like that. Continuing on, Commissioner Weikle said at the three elections that he was not running, he stood at the polls and handed out his Township business card to every voter, saying I'm just your Commissioner, I want to give you my contact information in case you have any problems or concerns you know how to get a hold of me. This issue seems to be very hot with the Patriot-News, seems to be very hot with the Democratic party--the bottom line is Commissioner Weikle has not received one phone call from any of his constituents supporting 5 at-large or supporting 9-wards or supporting 7-wards--not one call. He gets calls for potholes, my leaves aren't picked up, and the street sweeper hasn't gone by my house, and all kinds of calls. His concern is he's seen a lot of the same faces at these meetings, but he has not gotten one call from a constituent and he handed out all those cards. Commissioner Weikle said he thinks we need a bigger pool of candidates to run--we need some business people, people that are organizers, people that have different points of view. What happens is that with the incumbent, odds are very good of winning. He thinks the 5 at-large gives anybody a chance to run even against a long-held seat by getting a whole group of people in the Township to vote for them. The other concern continually heard is that all Commissioners will be elected from one part of the Township. But who puts those 5 Commissioners in--the voters. So if the voters in the Township vote for those 5 people in Chambers Hill, shame on you. He noted the continuing rumors about his moving and said he doesn't pay much attention to what PennLive says. Commissioner Weikle said if you really want to know what's going on, you need to come to the meetings and participate in your local government. You want representation; you probably should participate a little bit as well.

Commissioner Boudier - thanked Commissioner Connolly for his work in trying to get some equality in the 9 wards. He is in favor of the ward system and has repeatedly stated he feels very strongly that government closest to the people is the most effective and the most efficient. He feels the ward system does just that. He feels the rush to go into this at-large system has taken place for all the wrong reasons. He feels very strongly it was done for political reasons; and that's wrong. He feels the public meetings have been for naught; that some on this Board have not been listening to the people and their feelings. He hopes the people will let the Board hear them on Election Day.

President Moyer - thanked all for coming out tonight. He said a lot of you feel we have not listened to you, but the opposite has occurred--we have addressed some of the items you've said to us. We've asked questions back; such as how is the system

that you're saying isn't working for you going to serve you. He said there is not a right or a wrong answer--it's a best answer--what is the best answer for Swatara Township. We've seen a lot of you here over all three meetings; we've also heard from people who have not attended these meetings. We represent over 24,000 people, so a 7 out of 10 ratio is not a fair representation of the whole Township. And sometimes people's comments and inaction leads us to believe what they really care about. The pros and cons are listed on our webpage at Swataratwp.com; these items were addressed at the first meeting.

5. Adjournment: Commissioner Weikle moved to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Chiavetta and carried unanimously. The Special Meeting was adjourned at 8:38 PM.



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Dolores M. Rubinic, Township Secretary