

Democracy in action!

Columbia news, views & reviews reader reports on West York Borough council meeting

"When fascism come to America, it will be wrapped in the flag and carrying a cross." - Sinclair Lewis, 1930s

When I learned of the reprehensible racist comments West York Mayor Charles Wasco had made on Facebook, I became very concerned. How could a public servant write such things that were shared potentially to millions all over the world? How could he have been elected, given what he had shared with us? What he had done was to copy cat U.S. presidential candidate Donal Trump. Since Mr. Trump has largely been allowed to say similar things as a candidate for the highest office in the land, perhaps Mayor Wasco thought he, too, could get away with publicly making heinous comments.

I soon learned the West York Borough Council would devote the majority of the meeting on Monday, October 3, 2016, to this issue. I thought that wild horses couldn't keep me from attending.

When I arrived at the meeting, there were over one hundred people there, with attendees spilling out onto the sidewalk at the entrance. Police cars blocked two streets in an attempt to control traffic. Inside TV cameras from channels 43 and 21 were set up, and reporters from many branches of local and national media were gathered. I saw many friends and associ-

ates in the crowd. I soon learned that the object of our discontent, Mayor Wasco was not there.

Immediately after calling the meeting to order, the Council President told the audience that those who wished to make comments could come to the microphone one at a time. Some 30 people spoke their concerns over the next two hours, all but one were opposed to the comments the mayor had made. The Council President then called a 5 minute recess that turned into at least 15 minutes.

After the meeting resumed, the Council unanimously voted to censor Mayor Charles Wasco. They then unanimously voted to have the solicitor attempt to find ways to remove Wasco from office, if he refused to resign. I was surprised that the Council couldn't fir the mayor.

Although I did not speak, I was impressed with the many who did. It was good to see democracy in action. The Council was wise to allow the people to speak. May this continue in our country, otherwise the above Sinclair Lewis quote from the 1930s might someday become a reality.

Another important problem that is happening locally and nationally is that too many public offices are not contested. Witness the fact that Mayor Wasco won election unopposed. I hope citizens will take author Alice Walker's words to heart: "Activism is my rent for living on the planet."