

GOVERNMENT STUDY COMMISSION NEWSLETTER

BOROUGH OF CARLISLE

January 2014

Issue No. 3

Welcome to the Borough of Carlisle Government Study Commission Newsletter. The commission will use this monthly newsletter to keep citizens informed about the progress of the commission as well as the schedule for key dates and events. More detailed information on the government study commission process can be found [here](#) on the Borough of Carlisle Web Site.

Please e-mail CarlislePaHR@gmail.com to be added to the e-mail distribution list.

Current Status

Following its decision on October 29, 2013 to proceed with drafting a home rule charter, the commission organized itself into committees focused on general areas identified during the commission's research phase to fully examine and consider key issues. The commission will, to the extent possible, make key committee meeting times and locations available to the public on the Borough's web site.

Committees and members are:

Committee	Members	Committee	Members
Charter Development and Compliance	John Sacrison David Sheridan Blake Wilson	Citizen Participation	Bill Berwick Stephen Hughes Blake Wilson
Government Structure	David Sheridan Bob Winston Ken Womack	Tax Collection	Bert Lennon Phil Shevlin Bob Winston
Elections	Stephen Hughes Bert Lennon Phil Shevlin	Miscellaneous	Bill Berwick John Sacrison Ken Womack

On December 17th the Tax Collection Committee presented its report which was included in the previous edition of the newsletter. At its meeting on January 7, 2014, the Citizen Participation Committee provided its report. A summary of that report is provided below. The Government Structure Committee will provide its initial report on January 21st, and the Elections Committee will provide its report on February 4th

Citizen Participation Committee Report

This committee was formed to study an issue that has surfaced repeatedly in the Commission's research, and which the PA Dept. of Community and Economic Development has identified as a "basic charter component": the "provision for citizen participation in the local government and reservation of specific powers to voters."

In accordance with the majority of existing home rule charters (76%), the committee recommends adoption of procedures that enable citizens to initiate new ordinances (initiative) and overturn existing ordinances (referendum). These procedures allow citizens to bring petitions concerning new or existing ordinances before the municipal electorate.

The committee also recommends consideration of other charter provisions to foster citizen participation, which might include required public hearings before adoption of ordinances, publication of annual reports, and establishment of citizen advisory, review, or study committees.

The collective experience of PA municipalities has led to the widespread adoption of certain limitations on the procedures and subjects of citizen petitions. In order to prevent frivolous and too-frequent petitioning, petitions typically require a designated number of signatures. This number is usually

expressed as a percentage of either registered municipal voters (15%-25%), or a percentage of voters participating in the most recent gubernatorial or municipal election (10%-20%). In order to prevent undue disruption of more specialized government operations, it is necessary to define limitations to the kinds of ordinances that can be addressed through citizen petition; for example, salaries of municipal employees, the levying of taxes, budget and capital programs, and any matter the Borough Council itself is prohibited from legislating upon are typically excluded from initiative and referendum procedures.

A final issue concerning citizen petitions is who shall receive and certify the "sufficiency" (official completion) of the petition. Some boroughs require certification to be carried out by the municipal manager (or "secretary"), but the practice of other boroughs that require certification by the county board of elections is preferable since this would minimize any possible conflict of interest.

In keeping with the spirit of our subject, the committee welcomes all public input as it moves towards working out the details of home rule charter provisions concerning citizen participation.

Public Involvement

The government study commission is seeking public input and comments on the government study commission process. Please contact the commission via e-mail at CarlislePaHR@gmail.com with your comments and suggestions. You can also find the commission on Facebook at Carlisle Home Rule Study Commission. The commission strongly encourages the public to attend its meetings.

Commission Member Spotlight: Dave Sheridan

Dave Sheridan has been a resident of Carlisle since 2006. He was born in Lewisburg in 1949 and spent most of his childhood there. He attended the University of Pittsburgh, graduating with a civil engineering degree in 1971, followed by graduate studies and a PhD in environmental engineering from Penn State University. He went to work for Gannett Fleming, a Camp Hill – based consulting engineering firm, opening the company's Baltimore regional office in 1978 and serving in many positions during a 25-year career that took him to the Camp Hill and Long Island NY offices.

In 2003, Dave started a private engineering practice with a specialty in sustainable development and green building. He managed a number of projects in central Pennsylvania that were certified in the US Green Building Council's (USGBC) Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating systems. He also served as the executive director of the central Pennsylvania chapter of the USGBC. In 2012, Dave closed his private practice, and he now works for USGBC from his home on South Pitt Street.

Dave has two children. A son – Dave, Jr – is a special projects manager for Valspar, the paints and coatings manufacturer. His daughter, Laura, is an attorney at Google in New York City. Dave has seven grandchildren.

Dave and his wife, Antonia, have owned their historic red brick house on South Pitt since 2008. They stay busy maintaining the house and participating in Carlisle's many community activities. For recreation, he enjoys riding his bicycle on the area's many country roads and backpacking on the Appalachian Trail.