

Upper Township committeeman says he never resigned, but lawyer disagrees

The Press of Atlantic City, October 28, 2020

[Link to story on *The Press* website](#)

UPPER TOWNSHIP — Hobart “Hobie” Young received a chilly reception Monday when he showed up for the virtual meeting of the Upper Township Committee, a governing body from which he had supposedly just resigned.

Before the meeting started, Young and an attorney for the township clashed over whether he had really quit.

“I did not send in a signed letter to say I was going to resign,” Young said. “I sent an email to Barbara (municipal clerk Barbara Young, who is no relation to Hobie Young) to tell her that I was going to resign.” He claimed the position of his “legal team” was the law required a signed letter or signed email.

Nonetheless, Young’s seat on the committee ought to be considered vacant, said Frank Corrado, whom the township mayor identified as an outside counsel.

Corrado said Young had submitted a written resignation on Oct. 19. The claimed resignation followed outrage over Young’s posting to his Facebook account of digitally manipulated images that showed vice presidential candidate Kamala Harris in sexually suggestive poses.

The committee deferred to its lawyer’s judgment, and, anticipating litigation, said it would not comment on Young.

“I’ll see you in court,” Young said, before leaving the video conferencing platform.

A moment earlier, he had alleged being “bullied by people outside the town, and bullied by people inside,” during the fallout over his social media posts.

The joust between Young and Corrado was the prelude of a long and often heated meeting that about 160 people watched online. During roughly two hours of public comment, many township residents decried Young’s social media postings, which some said were part of a pattern of misogyny.

“He has shown his true colors on more than one occasion, and he has to be held accountable,” said Carl Mason.

An hour into public discussion, Strathmere resident David Cummings urged the Township Committee to “walk the talk” in fostering ethical behavior among local officials.

“You need to make sure that you listen to your constituents, but also you as leaders need to effect change,” Cummings continued. “You can’t just wring your hands and say you’re sorry about this.”

Some residents, however, spoke kindly of Young, citing long service to township recreation projects.

“It is well known that Hobie has given decades and decades of service to this community,” said Charlotte O’Brien, of Seaville. She claimed responses to Young’s social media memes have been motivated by Democratic political gain.

Also in the firing line was Committeeman Curtis Corson, who is up for reelection against Democratic challenger John Amenhauser. Corson was criticized for participating, along with Hobie Young, in a recent pro-Trump parade and rally, where there were reports of ugly words and gestures between participants and onlookers, and most notably, a Confederate flag. Corson and the other members of the Township Committee, and Young, are all Republicans.

Although Corson expressed regret over some aspects of the parade, he said the event was in good faith.”

“I didn’t see the (Confederate) flag,” Corson said. “I honestly didn’t see it. I don’t fly the Confederate flag. I fly the American flag in my yard. I’m an American. I don’t agree with what happened.”

“There were good people on both sides and there was hostility on both sides,” Corson said of the parade and rally.

He made this assessment in response to township resident Janet Yunghans, who had asked committee members to indicate whether they had participated in the parade. Corson answered that he had participated.

“I don’t feel very safe knowing that there are people in our city government who are involved in an act that could be seen as aggressive,” Yunghans said.

“It was not meant to be aggressive,” replied Corson. “It was meant to be a political parade, a rally. It happens all over the country.

“I can tell you that there were people who jumped in and out of the parade,” he continued. “There was hostilities on both sides.”

“I’ve heard that term before, ‘There were good people on both sides,’” said Yunghans.

She said disturbing political developments in town, including support for the Second Amendment, has made people like herself more attuned to local events.

“We are watching, we are observing, and if you see more of us becoming involved, as this meeting is an example, it’s because we’re very dismayed,” Yunghans said.

Upper Township municipal leader Lenora Boninfante Kodytek suggested a resolution condemning the Confederate flag. Mayor Richard Palombo indicated his support. The attorney, Corrado, endorsed the idea, but cautioned against its being done “at the spur of the moment.” Palombo said the township would begin crafting such a resolution.

The mayor also engaged in a freedom of speech debate with township resident Frank Sannino, who urged people who didn’t like the Confederate flag to “just look away.”

“Just because you have a Confederate flag does not mean you’re a racist,” said Sannino. To him, the flag symbolized states rights.

The mayor countered, “I have to disagree with you. That particular symbol hurts a lot of people.

The public comments stretched until almost 10:30 p.m., when the Township Committee went into closed session. The state Open Public Meetings Act allows confidential discussion of certain matters, including litigation. Before withdrawing with the rest of the committee, Palombo made one of the meeting’s least controversial remarks:

“This has been a difficult evening for everyone,” he said.

Upper Township committeeman says he never resigned, but lawyer disagrees

Upper Township committeeman says he never resigned, but lawyer disagrees

[Link to story in The Press of Atlantic City, October 28, 2020](#)