

To the editor:

Princeton Township seems to have a history of not doing all its homework when it comes to planning. When we moved to the township twenty-seven years ago we learned that, because of a lack of careful research, the township was about to zone far larger areas for high-density housing than required by the predecessor of the Council on Affordable Housing.

Developing Griggs Farm eventually cost the Township millions of tax dollars because the market-value housing could not cover the cost of the affordable housing while excessive building costs required the “market-value” housing to be sold below cost. A new municipal building was built because we were told that it was not feasible to renovate the Valley Road building; now discussions are ongoing as to uses for the Valley Road building. This is only a partial list of how inadequate planning has added to the tax burden of the Township.

We are now being told that since the Council on Affordable Housing no longer exists, there is no reason to consider the effect that consolidation would have on a future requirement to zone for high-density housing. It is naive to assume that groups who fought to override local control of planning and sustainable growth will not continue to press for new legislation. Since abolishing the Council, Governor Christie has had to veto an attempt by the Legislature to supersede local planning. We cannot be assured that a future governor will do the same.

The Princetons are at particular risk for anti-zoning lawsuits because of new jobs created by the growth of the University and the enormous profit potential for builders of high-density housing. While the Borough has little space for new housing and would not be subject to “builder’s remedy” lawsuits, the Township still has large tracts of available land. High-density housing results in a need for increased school capacity and other services, leading to increased taxes and a loss of open space.

How would the new Princeton fare should lobbying result in a new form of the Council on Affordable Housing? Apparently the supporters of consolidation prefer to ignore potential problems rather than placing all the issues on the table.

Given the miniscule savings in taxes projected by the proponents of consolidation and the unknown potential impact on our future taxes and quality of life, we urge you to vote against consolidation.

Sheila Sideman, Jerry Palin

Princeton