

## **Projected Fate of Borough Post Consolidation Dooms Zoning Board, Borough Hall, Police**

To The Editor:

Over two centuries ago, our forefathers fought a revolutionary war in order to have a say in how they were governed. Many others have fought and died to achieve the same end: a vote that would matter. Since then, we have enjoyed the benefit of their sacrifices. But now we are being asked to approve consolidation of the two Princetons, an act that would reduce the ability of Borough voters to influence local government and would deprive us of the total Borough representation in our elected Council we now enjoy.

We in the Borough would still have the vote but it would be a hollowed-out version of our current one. Township voters outnumber Borough voters by about two to one. Under our system of one man one vote, this means that no matter how the elections are held, by ward or at large, the majority or all elected officials after consolidation will come from the prior Township. And we can expect the Township taxpayers to reward their current officials for such a coup as annexing the cash-generating Borough by continuing their tenure in office indefinitely.

These officials will be able to impose various burdens upon the Borough residents, from subsidizing Township trash collection to locating unwanted activities in the Borough. To achieve these ends, they will eliminate the Borough Zoning Board, which has kept the Borough from becoming just another city of bleak high rise buildings. The Planning Board will also have all Borough elected officials purged. In the aftermath of consolidation, we can also expect that the current Borough Hall will be demolished, so that there can be no physical reversion to a pre-consolidation condition.

The Consolidation Commission appears aware of the adverse consequences of consolidation to Borough residents. However, as their chairman has publicly stated, these are “concerns” that will, according to him, be negotiated after the voters approve consolidation. Really? Can you really expect the winners to renegotiate a deal after it was agreed to?

But wait. Suppose the chairman’s statement was made in recognition of the likelihood that ANY pre-consolidation agreements could be ignored post-consolidation, because the new government of a consolidated Princeton may not be legally obligated to honor agreements it has not made. Why should the Commission then waste time on such items? This lack of enforceability would also apply to other agreements. Instead of merging police departments and reducing their size by layoffs or attrition, the entire Borough force could be disbanded. Such a solution would immediately improve finances and appeal to the ruling Democrats who cannot bring themselves to take any action against existing unions (Borough police will not be around to strike). But it would leave the Borough with a reduced and less locally-experienced police presence.

To avoid losing the power of your Borough vote and all the consequences that loss will bring, use it to vote NO on consolidation on November 8, while you still can.