

To the Editor:

Having recommended consolidation, the Consolidation Commission is now engaged in a marketing blitz. The Commission doesn't like the word "marketing" yet they discussed the possibility of hiring a marketing expert to help them sell the recommendation. They have planned a large number of meetings to "inform the public" but the public will be 'informed' with a biased view of what a municipal merger will mean to the residents of the Princetons. There will be little or no discussion of the disadvantages of consolidation.

The case against consolidation in fact is very strong. With consolidation, Borough residents lose guaranteed representation on the Borough Council, the School Board, the Planning Board, the Recreation Board, and all advisory boards. In addition, Borough homeowners will lose 2/3 of the property tax benefit that they would otherwise receive from the Hulfish North development and from future building on the hospital site. Borough taxpayers will pay 1/3 of the cost for new curbs and new sidewalks and maintenance of an extensive Township road network (103 miles) and let's not forget the 1.7M plus estimated transition costs.

Moreover, the projected property tax savings is negligible - \$201 for the average Borough property owner and \$240 for the average Township property owner – even though property tax reform is the prime motivation behind Governor Christie's push for municipal consolidation. With respect to the "Secondary Impacts" that depend on future State and County equalization ratios, much of those promised savings will disappear in short order as the State and County equalization ratios readjust every year.

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