

To the Editor:

I would like to share a couple of points about the consolidation issue in Princeton which I believe deserve more attention.

First, nobody seems to be saying that our current governmental structure has led to poor decision-making and for good reason. Somehow our current Borough/Township governmental structure has produced a series of good decisions, including but not limited to the downtown location of the Library, that have helped make Princeton a truly special place to live. Process matters and, for all the extra discussion it can cause, the overall Borough/Township dichotomy seems to work. This first reason may boil down to the old adage, if it ain't broke, don't fix it. Neither Borough nor Township residents seem to be complaining about the quality of their respective governments, perhaps in part because each government can focus on concerns of particular importance to their constituencies.

Second, there is real value, I believe, in having two sets of heads looking independently at the kinds of important issues that require joint decision-making. One Borough Councilperson is quoted as saying that the recent experience with the pool complex is a reason for voting for consolidation. My reaction is exactly the opposite. While the process was not an easy one for anybody, I believe that the public and the pool community benefited both fiscally and from a design standpoint from the changes that resulted from the necessity of satisfying sets of thoughtful people. Checks and balances are particularly important when one party tends to dominate in the local election results.

I suppose my position boils down to this: the most important question is whether our governmental structure works, and I believe it both works and provides needed balance and input. The major reasons advanced for consolidation, possible modest tax savings (though this assertion is contested) and perhaps a gain in efficiency (again contested), do not seem weighty enough to make such an important change.

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