

Joint Consolidation/ Shared Services Study Commission of Princeton Borough and Princeton Township

May 11, 2011

Joint Consolidation/ Shared Services Study Commission of Princeton Borough and Princeton Township

**Minutes of the Regular Meeting
Tuesday, May 11, 2011 7 pm
Municipal Complex, Committee Room
400 Witherspoon Street, Princeton, NJ**

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 pm, with Ms. Shabnam Salih reading the Open Public Meetings Act Statement:

The following is an accurate statement concerning the providing of notice of this meeting and said statement shall be entered in the minutes of this meeting.

Notice of this meeting as required by sections 4a, 3d, 13 and 14 of the Open Public Meetings Act has been provided to the public in the form of the written notice attached hereto.

On March 8, 2011 at 2:00 p.m., said notice was posted in the official bulletin board, transmitted to the Princeton Packet, the Trenton Times, the Town Topics, filed with the Township Clerk and posted on the Princeton Borough and Princeton Township websites.

2. ROLL CALL

Present: Golden, Haynes, Goerner, Lilienthal, Lahnston, Trotman, McCarthy, Metro, Miller, Simon, Goldfarb and Small

Absent: None

Additional Attendees: Joe Stefko and John Fry, Bob Bruschi, and Jim Pascale

3. INTRODUCTION

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Chairperson Lahnston introduces himself and begins explaining the evening's agenda as well as objectives. Commission members introduced themselves during Roll Call.

- a. Agenda**
- b. Commission Members**
- c. Objectives**

Lahnston explains the objectives: updating the public, reviewing the work done thus far, and having an opportunity for dialogue with the community.

Please see the PowerPoint presentation used for the May 11th Public Meeting. It is available on www.cgr.org/princeton

**The PowerPoint presentation will show all options available and the recommendations chosen by subcommittees.

4. REVIEW OPTIONS REPORT (CGR)

Stefko begins the presentation with a review of the study process, key dates in the timeline, a summation of the process CGR and the subcommittees took for the options review and then he began presenting the main parts or chapters of the options report.

**Please find the PowerPoint presentation available online on the above mentioned website.

5. PRESENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS (COMMISSION)

Stefko explains the options available for each subcommittee issue and the Chair of each subcommittee then explains the recommendation.

**Please find the PowerPoint presentation available online on the above mentioned website.

6. COMMENTS FROM AUDIENCE

Chairperson Lahnston explains a few guidelines for comments from the audience such as a 2-minute time limit and the request to be additive and not repetitive.

1. Phyllis Teitelbaum. Borough – She thanks the Commission for their hard work. She explains that the Commission and the public are expecting consolidation to greatly reduce property taxes but this assumption is not correct. She is also concerned that all residents will not have equal weight when voting and those

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Borough voters will be disenfranchised. There may also be a potential increase in taxes and explains that recommendations for shared services will have the same tax savings.

Mayor Goerner explains that he did not assume there would be a large savings through consolidation in fact he understands that there will not be significant savings, but they are looking at the issue from a holistic approach and looking for qualitative and quantitative improvements.

Miller adds that he also did not assume there would be a large tax savings and he explains that one person one vote will still hold true in a consolidated municipality.

2. Roger Martindell Borough

He passes a letter out to Commission members explaining his points in further detail. He explains that he is disappointed by the lack of savings and requests that the Commission expand their restructuring efforts. He asks why their goal of restructuring and saving is so limited. He suggests the Commission cut more government spending and in the police especially.

3. Alexi Asthmus, Borough

She explains that the unique role of University students does not seem to be taken into adequate consideration. She also asks for the Commission to share transition costs of the potential merger.

Chairperson Lahnston responds that the Commission will be preparing transition costs and submitting to the state for possible aid.

4. Yina Moore Borough

She asks why there will be a reduction in the police force with an expected population growth.

5. Mark Schneiderman Borough

He states that real reform is needed and that consolidation is not a unification of the Princetons. He argues that the Faulkner Act is the best option.

6. Peter Marks Borough

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He thanks the Commission for the useful financial analysis. He explains that consolidation has little to do with finances and that the savings are not worth the cost of having a larger entity with less representation on the council and losing the small town feel.

7. Dan Preston

He asks everyone to truly challenge the notion that there is a difference in culture between the Township and Borough and he urges the public to see the Princetons as one community.

8. Laura Kahn Township

She is a part of the Princeton Regional Health Commission but speaking as an individual this evening. She explains that the current municipality boundaries make responding to emergencies and health and safety crisis more difficult. She believes the current two government structures are not adequate structures for response.

9. Van Zandt Williams Borough

He suggests that everyone rethinks government structure and that the public move forward with consolidation to deal with the inefficiencies of the current situation.

10. Tony Lund Borough

He states that \$2 out of \$3 of savings can be saved without consolidation. He explains that the additional savings are trivial. He supports the ward system for representation.

11. Scott Sillars Township

He states that the public in Princeton and Commission spend more time negotiating with each other than trying to deal with other larger issues such as NJ Transit and Princeton University. He also explains that speculative savings are important to keep in consideration also.

12. Barbara Talstad

She states that a consolidated community would help individuals save due to increased efficiencies and lessen other human costs.

13. Leticia Ulfur, Borough

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She that she witnessed the time it took to negotiate affordable housing and how destructive it was to the future of affordable housing. He/She sees that people are trying to divide the two communities.

14. Sandra Persichetti

She explains that consolidation will add to human cost savings.

15. Jim Navine, Borough

He suggests the Commission put forward their opinions on consolidation for the voters.

16. Ron Nielson, Borough

He asks if administrators are being cut, why it is acceptable to double the word load of workers in their place. He also fears that in the case of consolidation that Township people would be dominate on issues that concerned the community, especially the downtown area.

17. Ingrid Reed, Borough

She suggests the Commission take seriously the alternatives to consolidation. She also asks for a chart to show how we would manage shared services.

18. Jim Floyd

He explains that he foresees problems in servicing neighborhoods that already have service issues.

19. Kip Cherry

She says that she would like to see consolidation negotiations and wants to understand how complicated shared services are. He adds that the issue of fewer representatives needs a lot more discussion.

20. Dudley Sipprelle, Borough

He asks why consolidation and shared services won't both be on the ballot. He explains that Princeton is missing an opportunity here and that the Borough system is antiquated. He adds that wards were not chosen because of power players in Princeton.

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Simon responds that wards in a consolidated Princeton would be difficult to make fair.

Goldfarb responds that the Commission can recommend consolidation and shard services.

21. Kate Warren

She expresses concern over the timetable and explains that the summer is a bad time for the release of the final report.

22. Barbara Abramson, Borough

I have listened to the comments. I think that the United States spent so much money and blood lthor Iraq trying to get the Shia and the Sunnis together and here we are trying to divide the Township people from the Borough people and it breaks my heart that we can't get above that.

23. Len Newton, Township

He states that earlier consolidation efforts were not well sold to the public and that this time the Commission should make a product that will sell. He adds that this is an opportunity for greater efficiencies.

7. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 10:02 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Shabnam Salih, Study Commission Secretary

Approved: Aug. 17, 2011