

Minutes of the Community Engagement Subcommittee Meeting -
December 16, 2010 at 5 p.m. in Community Room A, Township
Hall

Present: Carol Golden, Chair
Valerie Haynes
Anton Lahnston
Ryan Lilienthal
Alice Small
Pat Simon
Joe Stefko (on the phone)

Agenda:

1. Issues for discussion with Superintendent Judy Wilson and Board of
Education representatives- Dec. 22nd at 3:15.

Tax implications of Consolidation - Charter School(s)?

PTO's as proxies for neighborhood gatherings

Implications for governance (Board of Ed.) if communities consolidate

Others

2. Issues for discussion with representatives of Princeton University
(TBD - possibly Dec 20, 21, or 22)

What are the hopes/concerns of the various Princeton University
constituencies - who would be affected by consolidation and how?

How does the Arts neighborhood/dinky issue intersect with
consolidation?

How can/should the University be involved with the work of the
Consolidation/Shared Services Commission?

As a long term constituent of both municipalities, what does the
University see as the major distinctions between the two.

Others?

3. Princeton Future - We are on agenda for March 26, 2011 meeting

4. Other constituent groups:

Neighborhood Meetings via PTO's

Seniors

Merchants

Witherspoon neighborhood

Condo associations

5. Others groups?

6. January 26th-Publicizing and Preparing for:

The Consolidation and Shared Services Commission
Public Forum to Discuss its Analysis of
"Who does What and What it Costs!"
A dialogue with the Princeton community about
Current governance and services in the two Princetons

1. Meeting with Princeton Superintendent - it was determined that the first item to be discussed in the meeting on December 22nd with Princeton School Superintendent Judy Wilson, Alan Hegedus, and Anton Lahnston and Carol Golden would be the use of the PTO's to facilitate neighborhood-wide meetings with Commission members for an outreach effort. The subcommittee members will also ask Ms. Wilson what suggestions she would have for reaching this difficult to reach because of heavy time commitments group of very important stakeholders, either instead of or in addition to the PTOs.
The second topic of discussion will be the implications, if any, of consolidation on the issue of Charter Schools in Princeton.

Stacy Pibbl, the PTO coordinator, sent out an email soliciting volunteers from the PTO community to host neighborhood meetings in their homes but Alice, who was listed as the contact, has received no response. She will follow up after the first of the new year.

2. Meeting with Princeton University - Anton, Carol and Pat will be meeting with Kristen Appleget and Bob Durkee at 11:15 a.m. on December 21st. The questions to be discussed in the hour that we will have will be as follows:

- 1) What are the hopes/concerns of the various Princeton University constituencies - who would be affected by consolidation/shared services and how?

- 2) How does the Arts neighborhood/dinky issue intersect with consolidation/shared services?

- 3) What role did the University play in the 1996 study?

- 4) How can/should the University be involved with the work of the Consolidation/Shared Services Commission?

- 5) From your involvement with the survey pretest, what is your view of it?

- 6) As a long term resident/constituent of both municipalities, what do you see as the major distinctions between the two?

7)What are the specific hopes and concerns of your constituents that would be affected by consolidation or additional shared services?

8)Is there anything else that you think we should hear concerning the study?

3. Meeting with Princeton Future - In keeping with our plan to use existing structures, Anton spoke with Sheldon Sturges. As one of the co-chairs of Princeton Future, Ryan will not represent either group to the other or coordinate meetings. We are on the group's agenda for Saturday, March 26th at 9 a.m. and ending at 11:30 in the Community Room of the Library. By that time, CGR may have some options that we can present to the group for their thoughts and feedback. Tentatively scheduled to attend are Anton, Valerie and Alice.

4. Other Groups -

1)Seniors - Alice has set up a meeting with seniors scheduled at the Suzanne Patterson Senior Center at 10:30 on Wednesday, January 26th. It will be announced in the Center's newsletter, Mature Princeton. It is the same day as the public meeting at John Witherspoon to present the findings of the Baseline Report on Services and Costs. Alice, Carol, Valerie and Anton will work on the presentation.

Alice will reach out to the Community without Walls group, a group that helps people to age in place, to perhaps schedule a meeting and put a notice in their newsletter.

2)Princeton Merchants' Association - Ryan has arranged for us to have 10 minutes at the merchants' meeting on January 18th at 8 a.m. at the Nassau Inn. Mark Cencits, the owner of CoolVines, is the chair of this group. We will plan to simply introduce the fact of the study and have a projection of the website to show at the meeting and explain how to interact and communicate thoughts or concerns, especially what exists now and how it might improve life for the towns' merchants. We will think in terms of another, more substantive meeting later. There are also other business groups, e.g. the Princeton Shopping Center, Palmer Square (David Newton) and Hometown Princeton (Nick Hilton). At the Merchants' Association

Meeting, subcommittee members will try to identify representatives of these other organizations for contact in the future.

Ryan and Carol will attend.

3) Witherspoon Jackson Neighborhood - Valerie Haynes spoke with Jim Floyd and Ben Colbert, a member of the Witherspoon Presbyterian Church. Both feel that it's important to reach out to this group and that the neighborhood churches are the best way to accomplish this. They suggested a Saturday daytime meeting would be more successful, especially during winter weather.. If we decide to do a second meeting later in the year, we might aim for an evening meeting. We determined that a meeting with this neighborhood would be planned for early February. Jim Floyd has agreed to help us set up the meeting and will act as liaison. February 5th is the first Saturday in February after the public meeting. Jim suggested using the neighborhood list he has compiled for the revaluation meetings and also perhaps the voter registration lists to contact this group of stakeholders. Valerie will continue to be in contact with Jim Floyd and will aim for February 5th.

4) Condo Associations - Valerie has to follow up on this.

5) Other Groups - Betty Wolfe, a resident of Walnut Lane, offered to host a neighborhood meeting. The subcommittee discussed whether, as a practical matter, we have the time and energy to reach out to all groups and also whether meeting with such small groups will achieve our goals. The question, a legitimate one, is where do we stop. The consensus was that although there are limits, we have not yet reached them and will look at priorities at a later date. We want to do what we can to reach as many people as possible. Anton commented that we should seek as many contacts with people who we can identify as "thought leaders" in their communities as a guide to who we should be contacting.

Carol will contact 55+, a group that meets at the Jewish Center.

Other groups include churches, a group we had previously discussed but put aside because there are so many and also many reach beyond Princeton in their constituencies. Valerie volunteered to contact the clergy association to

see if there is interest from the various congregations in meeting with representatives of the Commission. Other groups mentioned were the political parties. We will contact them in the February, March timeframe. Also discussed were contacting the Seminary, the Institute and Rider (Westminster Choir College) This is something we should discuss and assign responsibilities at our next meeting.

Ryan agreed to engage the hospital by contacting Pam Hersh.

5. Publicity for the January 26th meeting - it was agreed that Joe would draft and circulate a press release for the meeting which he did today (December 17th). The idea is that we will be ready to hand it out at the meeting of the Commission next week, if it's requested but it will be circulated in the second week of January. Valerie will draft a letter to the editors of the local newspapers for publication after the first. Pat Simon will be in charge of sending out an email notice to all the elected officials, to the email lists used by the boro and township and Valerie, Carol and Alice who sent out personal emails about the October meeting will give all that information to Pat to add those addresses to his list.

6. Survey- Pat and Anton spoke to Ed Freeland at the University who conducted a pretest on the issue. The University has volunteered to conduct a statistically valid sample (rather than a complete census) survey without cost to the Commission. The subcommittee also discussed the idea of having two surveys, one early that would be more open ended, asking people about their concerns, and also a later one when the options are publicly available for discussions. In this scenario, the University would suggest a panel survey, involving polling the same people. Others feel that the two surveys should be conducted with different groups, to broaden representation. There is also an issue with respect to whether the University would agree to fund two surveys and also the issue of the advisability of having the University conduct the survey if its own interests are directly implicated by any of the actual consolidation/ shared service options.

Thus there appear to be 3 options with respect to the survey, 1) do an early after the baseline report, that

would be open-ended. 2) a more focused survey later, after the options are available or 3) do more than one survey

Pat will try to contact the University to get more specific details about what the University will agree to fund in the way of a survey.

At next week's meeting, we can go the full commission suggesting that we go ahead with our exploration of the issue (with perhaps more complete information from the University) and raise and discuss with them the timing issues.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.