

DRAFT

Notes From meeting of Municipal Consolidation Subcommittee Meeting of 29 Mar 2011

A meeting of the Municipal Consolidation Subcommittee was held on 29 Mar '11 in Meeting Room A, Princeton Township Hall.

The meeting was attended by David Goldfarb, Chad Goerner, Anton Lahnston, Ryan Lilienthal, Eugene McCarthy, Patrick Simon and Bernie Miller. Marc Pfeiffer and Joe Stefko participated by telephone. No members of the public were present at this meeting.

The following subjects were discussed:

1. Service Districts

In response to enquiries by the SSCC and DCA, Mr McCarthy introduced a letter from the Local Finance Board that stated that the boundaries of any service districts must conform to existing municipal boundaries. Thus, any service districts must conform to the present boundaries of the Borough, the present boundaries of the Township or must include both municipalities. Mr Goerner remarked that State Senator Sweeny is working on a change to the Local Option law that would make possible the creation of new service districts that did not conform to existing municipal boundaries. A draft of the proposed bill has been sent to the Office of Legislative Services for comment. If passed, this bill would give the Commission increased flexibility in the creation of service districts.

A discussion then ensued on the possibility of creating solid waste collection district consisting of the entirety of both the Borough and the Township. It was the consensus of the Subcommittee that a municipal waste service district consisting of the entirety of both municipalities was preferable to a Borough only solid waste collection district. Two methods of charging for solid waste pickup were discussed; either on the basis of ratables or by a flat fee. Mr Goldfarb commented that the Borough now charges on the basis of ratable. In response to a comment that some residents would prefer that their solid waste be collected from their back yard rather than at curbside, Mr McCarthy pointed out that other municipalities (for example, Montclair) provides back yard collection for their residents at an additional charge. Mr McCarthy agreed to put Mr goerner in contact with a couple of solid waste collection companies that could provide an estimate of the cost of extending the present Borough municipal solid waste collection service to include the Township. Mr Goerner will work with Mr McCarthy to provide a comparison of the allocation of the costs of this service on the basis of ratable and by a flat fee.

2. Form of Government – Wards

Several members of the Subcommittee pointed out that some members of the public have advocated employing a form of government for the consolidated municipality that would enable the creation of wards, and that the Borough form of government as currently recommended by the Subcommittee and the Commission does not permit the creation of wards. The individuals advocating the use of wards claim that wards provide an opportunity for greater diversity of representation and would enable the election of individuals representing the interests of a particular neighborhood. A discussion followed concerning who could establish the wards. Mr Pfeiffer pointed out that the wards would be established by the County Board of Elections consisting of an equal number of representatives of each of the two political parties. In the

event of a tie, the County Clerk would cast the deciding vote. It was unclear as to whether the wards would be created before a consolidation referendum, or only after a vote to consolidate. In light of the lack of clarity about this process, Mr Lahnston agreed to arrange a meeting with the County Board of Elections to discuss the process of creating wards.

3. Zoning and Advisory Districts

Mr Pfeiffer pointed out that under existing law the consolidated municipality must have one Zoning Board, but can have Neighborhood Advisory Councils. The role of the Neighborhood Advisory Council was discussed. It appears that under the Neighborhood Advisory Council approach, the Advisory Council would review applications before they come to the Zoning Board, and that the Zoning Board must respond to comments from the Advisory Council. There was some concern that this process that is intended to allow for greater resident participation if the application review process would introduce another step in the Zoning and Planning review process. Mr Pfeiffer agreed to provide guidance to the Subcommittee at our next meeting how the Neighborhood Advisory Councils might work with a consolidated municipality.

The next meeting of the Municipal Consolidation Subcommittee was set for 4:00pm on 13 Apr. '11.

Submitted by: Bernie Miller