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Greg La Vardera

A Town Divided Talk of merger with Cherry Hill roils Merchantville.

njmonthly.com

On a cold, overcast evening in October, the residents of Merchantville gathered in the gym of the First Presbyterian Church in the center of town. The topic was the proposed merger with Cherry Hill, an issue that had become contentious in little Merchantville.

December 27, 2010 at 1:30pm · [Share](#)

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- [Bob Stocker](#) I'm not sure that things are so contentious. We can all agree to disagree and be civil. We all want what we think is best.
December 30, 2010 at 8:06pm



- [Greg La Vardera](#) Not at all, but we'll have to step up the drama a bit for the mini-series that will follow..
December 30, 2010 at 9:00pm

Michael McLoone Did anything happen with scheduled early-November meetings among the mayors or their reps and the Trenton folks? What is happening now?

November 16, 2010 at 7:21pm



- [Bob Stocker](#) The attorney general's office is reviewing our application to the DCA. Our application was never rejected/ resubmitted. We are confident.
November 17, 2010 at 9:06am · [1 person](#)



- [Greg La Vardera](#) Yes Mike - the two mayors met with the DCA commissioner. Everybody is on the same page now. State AG is reviewing application to ensure there are no problems moving forward.
November 22, 2010 at 4:15pm



- [Anna Marie Barrasso Fiore](#) Can someone post an update as to where we are now that the end of the year is approaching? I looked at the Merchantville blog this a.m. but it's hard to read between the lines of people going back and forth and just too opinionated...And is Haddon Heights a viable option for the schools offering 25 seats per grade? There is no update on the Merchantville site by the mayor. Thanks.
December 12, 2010 at 10:10am



- [Greg La Vardera](#)

The State Attorney General has been very slow to respond, so nothing has happened but waiting.

Don't believe the spin. The process has not stopped. In fact we are closer than ever to moving forward. The state said they don't have money to pay for a study, but this is something we suspected from the start. We will find other sources for funding. **The Borough would be wise to step back and let our group continue the process** - and find funding. If the Borough insists on taking over then the Borough may end up paying for part of it. We would all like to avoid that.

December 12, 2010 at 1:08pm



- [Anna Marie Barrasso Fiore](#) Thank you, being as optimistic as possible! It will take time but something good for Merchantville can come out at the end.

December 12, 2010 at 7:21pm

[Greg La Vardera](#) Remember, Gina Genovese, Executive Director of Courage to Connect NJ, will present information about how municipal consolidation is vital to the future of Merchantville, Cherry Hill, and New Jersey. A question and answer session will follow.



[Public Information Meeting](#)

Location: First Presbyterian Church of Merchantville

Time: 7:00PM Wednesday, October 6th

[October 2, 2010 at 10:16am](#) · [Share](#)

- [Lynn James](#) likes this.



- [Greg La Vardera](#) See you tonight!
October 6, 2010 at 12:47pm · [1 person](#)



- [Greg La Vardera](#) Gina's presentation was great. Our candidates dominated the question and answer session, but that's to be expected!
October 7, 2010 at 7:16am



- [Greg La Vardera](#)
Interesting side story from the meeting. The Fire Marshall showed up while we were setting up chairs. Apparently "somebody" had contacted the Fire Department and suggested there would be a big meeting at the church and the room was too small...See More
October 7, 2010 at 7:37am



- [Anna Marie Barrasso Fiore](#) Obviously, people who are trying to stonewall the effort for the study to consolidate. Seems like a desperate measure. Perhaps the Fire Department will think twice if they get a call like that again and not waste their time...or anyone else's for that matter. Kudos on the coverage in the Courier Post this morning!
October 7, 2010 at 11:43am



- [Greg La Vardera](#) The Fire Dept did the right thing. There was no problem with the room. If the person who called in was really concerned about safety they could have contacted the church, or our group via the church. **Going to FD at the last minute was a pretty obvious attempt to scuttle a public meeting. Let them play dirty, we can take it.**
October 7, 2010 at 12:32pm



- [Anna Marie Barrasso Fiore](#) You are right. The FD had a duty to respond to the call and there was no problem with the room so that put it to rest. Like your "bring 'em on" attitude!
October 7, 2010 at 3:53pm

Bob Stocker <http://www.courierpostonline.com/article/20100724/NEWS01/7240329/Freeholders-may-team-with-mayors-in-Camco>

July 24, 2010 at 11:24am

- [Greg La Vardera](#) likes this.



- [Greg La Vardera](#) **How come a County Freeholder knows that our Council already promised to form a committee to study merger, but our own Council has forgotten?**

Cut the subterfuge, and lets get on with looking at this.

July 24, 2010 at 11:39pm



- [Greg La Vardera](#) and that same comment above deleted on the Merchantville NJ page.
July 25, 2010 at 12:53pm



- [Gail E. Ford](#)
The July 24th Courier article referring to County Freeholder Ed McDonnell's comments did NOT say that Mr. McDonnell knew our Council had already promised to form a committee to study a merger with Cherry Hill. That statement is attributed ...See More
July 25, 2010 at 7:29pm



- [Russell Loue](#)

I still firmly believe that Council did vote to look into a consolidation way back in March with a "blue ribbon committee". Whether the official record says it or not. The mayor admitted it to me at the town birthday well before he and c...See More

July 25, 2010 at 11:10pm



- [Greg La Vardera](#) Yes Gail - you are correct. It was stated by the reporter and not quoted from the Freeholder. My statement was largely rhetorical but I'll correct it in future restatements.
July 26, 2010 at 12:14am



- [Greg La Vardera](#) How come the Courier Post knows that our Council already promised to form a committee to study merger, but our own Council has forgotten?

Cut the subterfuge, and lets get on with looking at this.

July 26, 2010 at 12:16am

[Russell Loue](#) Russell Loue A recent study (Opinions based on beliefs, U Michigan) concluded that facts do not sway those on the far right and far left when showing their point of view is in direct conflict with facts. I am starting to hear comments by people in town that make me think of that study. How do we combat those who do not...

See More

[July 13, 2010 at 11:16am](#)



- [Greg La Vardera](#)
One older gentleman who got up and spoke with some data he had collected finished by saying that since the numbers did not make sense he suspected there was some political motivation for merging the towns.

Then the meeting proceeded and it b...See More

July 13, 2010 at 12:56pm



- [Neil Samuels](#)
Since when is it required that all council members have to have a unanimous vote to get things done. People (even council members) are entitled to an opinion. He did not state that he was against it. That was implied by others who would not...See More
July 13, 2010 at 7:51pm



- [Greg La Vardera](#)
Of course everybody is not obligated to agree. Obviously. And as you say I think he tried to choose his words carefully. And yes I think its quite obvious that he's against it.

As far as Council following the petition, no - they don't have to follow it. In fact if you review the law I linked to earlier you will see that the citizens can by-pass council and bring this to referendum without Council's agreement. It takes far fewer signatures than have already been

collected. If Council does not mind loosing control of this process it can easily proceed that way.
July 13, 2010 at 10:50pm



- [Neil Samuels](#) Bring what to a referendum? That we must merge with Cherry Hill? That we will spend dollars on a study? We have ask them to investigate the possible impact of a merger. They are trying to get that started. You can not ask people if they want to merge until you: 1. get Cherry Hill to agree to a merger and 2. define what you are merging. Give them a chance to do what we are asking before you go around them.
July 14, 2010 at 11:54am



- [Greg La Vardera](#)
The initial referendum is to begin studying the process. The same thing that is before them now, yes.

Neil, we are giving them a chance. This is where they are taking that chance right now:
- Waiting for somebody else to find the money for t...See More
July 14, 2010 at 1:10pm