



**Borough of Merchantville
New Jersey**

December 1, 2010

Lori Grifa, Commissioner

State of New Jersey
Department of Community Affairs
101 South Broad Street
P.O. Box 803
Trenton, NJ 08625-0803

Re: Merchantville – Cherry Hill Consolidation Study

Dear Commissioner Grifa,

First and foremost, I wish to thank you and those that were in attendance at the November 4, 2010 meeting regarding the above subject matter. I am sure that the residents from both Merchantville and Cherry Hill are appreciative that we were finally able to set aside time to discuss the steps needed to further pursue the feasibility of a merger study between our two wonderful communities.

Being in a small Borough, preparation for the recent primary election, provided me with the opportunity to knock on doors, meet residents face to face, and more importantly listen to their concerns. The possible merger and how it would affect our citizens was the hot topic of discussion!

I explained to those with concerns that before anything could take place, there would be a comprehensive study performed. After which, public meetings would be held outlining such things as public safety, police and fire departments, emergency medical service, possible property values/revaluation and State, County, School and local property taxes, to name a few. It was stressed that they would have the opportunity at the voting machine to make the decision for or against this action.

Borough Council and I have accomplished the following with regard to pursuing this subject:

- Since early spring 2010, there have been discussions at our council meetings with both the petitioners interested in merging with Cherry Hill and those residents wishing to remain an individual municipality.
- Both sides have voiced that a feasibility study should be conducted - after which a referendum put on the ballot for the residents of Merchantville and Cherry Hill to make their voices heard.
- I have on two occasions communicated with Merchantville residents, via letters and the borough's website, advising of status and dispelling hearsay and innuendo on the subject of a merger.
- September 27, 2010, Merchantville's Council passed Resolution R10-103, enabling council to form a Municipal Consolidation Study Commission with Cherry Hill Township, pursuant to N.J.S.A. 40A:65-1 ET SEQ.
- With the advice and consent of Borough Council the following non-partisan commission was established:
 - **G. Burton German, R** Former Mayor (1969 -1974)
Presently a member of the Merchantville-Pennsauken Water Commission – Woodbine Swim Club's Swim Coach
 - **John F. Morrissey, R** Former Mayor (1977 -1994)
Prior member of the Merchantville-Pennsauken Water Commission – Executive Officer (Mayor Emeritus Advisory Council) Board of NJ Conference of Mayors
 - **Patrick J. Brennan, D** Former Mayor (1995 – 2006)
Presently a member of the Merchantville-Pennsauken Water Commission – Planning-Zoning Board Chairman
 - **William Walker, R** Former Councilman and Chairman
Planning Zoning Board – Prior Chairperson Town Center East Project and Master Plan
 - **Edward Bohn, D** Merchantville School Board V.P. Chair of Personnel, Committee member of Education, Merchantville Moving Forward Committee and Chairperson for Alternative Funding
 - **Richard James, D** Alternate– Member of the Petition Committee

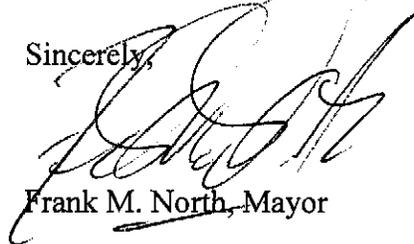
Upon receipt of notification from Cherry Hill's governing body that a commission has been appointed, we will move forward and arrange a joint application to the DCA to be completed.

It is my understanding that the DCA is unable to fund the study due to budget deficits, but would be willing to seek support from Rutgers University and other possible sources to help with this task.

It is to be stressed to all that this study must be unbiased and non political. The results of the findings will be presented to the residents of both communities, at which time their approval or disapproval will be evident based upon the results of the referendum.

Thank you once again for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Frank M. North', written over a horizontal line.

Frank M. North, Mayor

cc. Marc Pfeiffer, DCA
Rochelle Hendricks, DOE
Senator James Beach, 6th District
Mayor Bernie Platt, Cherry Hill
G. Burton German
Patrick J. Brennan
John F. Morrissey
William Walker
Edward Bohn
Richard James