



Regionalization not partisan

Democrats and Republicans must work together to make Metro-York a success.

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Nov 15, 2007 — Assorted thoughts on assorted subjects:

No partisanship: Cheers to officials in York city and adjacent boroughs for starting to talk about regional cooperation almost immediately after last week's election.

York City Councilwoman Toni Smith said she was encouraged that Democrats will soon hold majorities in West York and North York.

"Maybe this will be the beginning of regionalization," she said, suggesting that the Democrat-controlled city council might find it easier to work with fellow Democrats in the borough.

Maybe - but she already might have made a tactical blunder in saying so.

Regional cooperation is not and cannot be a partisan thing.

In fact, if anything is likely to scuttle efforts to

bring about true municipal cooperation across the city and nearby suburban governments, it's partisanship.

We need to put aside these party labels and do what's best for our region as a whole.

Thursday, the Metro-York committee of YorkCounts plans to unveil an ambitious blueprint to foster municipal cooperation. We eagerly await the suggestions. And we urge everyone in a position to help make regional cooperation a reality to set aside - at least temporarily - partisan allegiances.

Rising from the ashes: It seems like American Ash Recycling and York County Solid Waste Authority are on to something with an idea to appeal a permit rejection by the state.

The Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection recently rejected renewal of a permit for AAR to continue processing ash from the county's trash incinerator. The company removes metal from the burned material, treats the ash and markets it as fill for construction sites.

But there are problems with the treated ash as a construction material. The state says contractors have used it improperly. And some environmentalists say the material, which contains toxic chemicals, could present environmental problems in the future. They say the ash should be put in a properly designed landfill with impermeable liners to protect groundwater supplies.

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And that's exactly what AAR and the authority are now thinking about doing.

It would be a shame to shut down the metal recycling process. That's valuable material that ought to be removed from the waste stream rather than simply buried.

But what do you do with the rest of the ash?

Put it in Modern Landfill as a layer of cover over each day's dumping of trash. Currently, soil is put over each layer. But why not use the ash for that purpose?

It seems like that might be a win-win-win scenario.

Valuable metals are recycled. Decent jobs at AAR are saved. And the worrisome ash is not buried around the community at unlined, unmonitored construction sites.

Maybe they could even go for another win: Move all of AAR's operations from West Manchester Township, near a populated area of York city where there have been many public complaints, to a site near the landfill. That would make logistical sense: Why move the ash these appreciable distances twice?

The state DEP should give this proposal the thoughtful, open-minded consideration it clearly deserves.

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