



TALKING TRASH

On behalf of the Coventry Board of Trustees, we would like to thank each and every one of the people who have taken time from their schedules to voice their thoughts and concerns on the matter of improving the trash collection model in Coventry Township. We have already heard and continue to hear a lot of good input - both pro and con, and this can be used to provide valuable future guidance on this issue.

First, a clarification and apology is in order for improperly portraying a picture that the Akron trash plan that was being studied was the concluded only way to go. The option of teaming up with Akron was made available to us during a series of discussions with the Akron Public Services Department while we were working to get water service extended to some residents who desperately needed it. Suffice to say, we have heard plenty of reasons as to why adopting the Akron plan may not be our best solution. Unfortunately, as a result of this action, people got polarized on what they found personally objectionable with particular elements of Akron's model rather than keeping a broader perspective of how we can make improvements here in Coventry. There are still clear ways to effect improvements, even if they are much more limited in scope than a mass changeover to Akron's service. Plenty of still-viable ideas do not unnecessarily alter that which people may hold dearest about their current trash service. Our exploration should and will continue on those concepts that can offer improvement without causing any definitive harm.

There exists some level of disagreement with the rhetorically voiced argument of, "If it's not broken, then don't fix it". The current trash collection model may not appear broken to those looking no farther than the end of their driveway. Putting it another way, if your hauler just takes away everything that you can drag out to the street on trash day, then it is understandable that there may be no perceived need for further concern on your part. However, most people have never visited a waste transfer station, a landfill, or a recycling center to gain more perspective on the serious waste management issues that already exist and more that lie ahead for us. Nor are most people well-versed on the ongoing impacts of House Bill 592 and other EPA mandates that will continue to cause bigger and bigger ripple effects to consumers for years to come. It is a clear fact that we are not acting responsibly from either an economic or environmentally-conscious perspective if we just stay the present course on our trash collection model. Money and resources are both being squandered.

The better question is should we really wait until something is completely broken to fix it or before we try to make it better? The day that you have raw sewage floating in your basement from a failed septic system is not the time to search out options for getting sewer service extended to your street. The day the doctor tells you that you have lung cancer is not the time to decide to cut back on smoking. Similarly, we should not stick our heads in the sand and naively pretend that the space in the existing landfills is not disappearing at an alarming rate. It is not prudent to wait until forces over which we have no control finally dictate our actions in crisis mode. People voice a lot of concern over having choice, but it is when we find ourselves in the midst of a crisis that we truly see we will have NO CHOICE. Those who fail to plan are usually planning to fail.

We remain open-minded and convinced that there are still avenues to improve the efficiency of our trash service model and in so doing, we hope to lower pricing while also encouraging (but not demanding) more environmentally responsible solid waste policies within our Township. As promised at our November meeting, we will resume exploration and discussion of those concepts after the first of the year.

