

To the editor:

Devoted readers of the *Times Chronicle* Opinion page will be familiar with the ongoing struggle by the Cheltenham Chamber of Citizens and others to block SEPTA's misguided efforts to construct a massive parking garage on the site of the historic Jenkintown-Wyncote train station. Hundreds of alarmed citizens have attended meetings with SEPTA in recent months to express their firm opposition on the basis of many well-grounded concerns.

The SEPTA policy to increase parking rather than provide shuttles to stations, promote carpooling, and improve service up and down the lines is a continuation of an unsustainable culture of energy waste based on cars. The proposed garage is designed to attract riders from outer suburbs, making them bypass their local stations (which history suggests could even be slated for closure). The nearly \$53 million project is designed to add only 236 parking spaces. Imagine how much good that much money could do if it were spent to bring the transit authority into the twenty-first century.

Our meetings have been attended by at least 400 citizens, our detailed presentations well received. For summaries, please visit CheltenhamChamberOfCitizens.com. But one group of residents has been conspicuously absent from the debate: the Cheltenham Township Board of Commissioners. Of these seven men, a few have attended community meetings with SEPTA, but to a man they have refused to state a position.

Although it might be premature for the Commissioners to take a formal stance as a group, since when has a politician been afraid to express an opinion on an important issue as it is being debated? An excellent letter opposing the garage appeared in the April 22 *Times Chronicle* from Charles Clark of the Jenkintown Borough Council, who is chair of their Public Works Committee. And SEPTA and regional politicians have just received a letter of unequivocal opposition to the garage from State Senator LeAnna Washington.

But when Cheltenham's commissioners were asked to state their opinions at their February meeting, the only reply was that they couldn't respond on the spur of the moment, even though the garage project has been a matter of live debate since at least last September. Over two months later, not one man has indicated his position in public.

When can we expect some support, or at least a statement of what they see as the pros and cons of the SEPTA proposal? With primary elections coming up on May 19th, the two men up for re-election and their challengers must state their views for voters to consider in choosing between them. This is the most heated and important local concern for Cheltenham Township in many years, and it is not right for our elected representatives to leave us guessing about their positions.

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unless the TC requires actual names, in which case:
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