

Commissioners mislead public on Harrisburg incinerator worth

Lancaster County officials are obviously feeling the heat for the Lancaster County Solid Waste Management Authority's (LCSWMA) decision to purchase the long-troubled Harrisburg incinerator for somewhere between \$125 to \$150 million.

In recent days, *lancasteronline.com* has published not one, but two articles defending the decision.

According to a report in the *Intelligencer Journal New Era*, Lancaster County Commissioners Chair Scott Martin stated: *"The authority, he said, is paying the market value for that facility and for their hauling system up there."*

"It's a good deal for our authority, for the citizens of Lancaster and for the citizens of Dauphin County," county commissioner Dennis Stuckey told the newspaper on Wednesday.

But simple facts don't bear this out. Harrisburg incinerator is only worth a fraction of what LCSWMA is paying for it.

This acknowledgement comes from no less than Jim Warner, CEO of LCSWMA.

On July 22, 2011, Warner told his own board that he and his team had valued the incinerator at no more than \$45 million, but that the original \$45

million sale price of the incinerator had swollen to \$124 at the behest of Dauphin County commissioners, who needed to bail out themselves and bond insurer AGM.

"The next step is to enter into acquisition negotiations with the Harrisburg Authority," LCSWMA minutes record Warner saying. *"This was already done with (Dauphin) County and that is how the \$124 million offer was determined."*

Need more convincing that this is a raw deal, with funny numbers?

At Monday's hearing, Harrisburg receiver office lawyer Steve Goldfield told Harrisburg city council, "There's no way you can call the incinerator an asset. It's only worth \$30 to \$40 million tops."

If the long trouble plagued and environmentally challenged Incinerator goes the way of the Convention Center Project, tipping fees in Lancaster County will also need to be greatly increased.

Are Martin and Stuckey embracing the deal because they believe it is good for Lancaster or are they doing so out of political allegiance to Tom Corbett? The Governor is pulling out all stops to prevent bond investors from suffering big losses should Harrisburg's debt be adjudicated by a federal bankruptcy court.

Have the editors no sense of decency?

...The Lancaster District Attorney, Craig Stedman, has determined that no felony charge should be placed against a teenage high school student due to

the concealment of the death of a presumed still born child.

In the past, newspapers likely would have withheld the name of the youth. Today the *Intelligencer Journal New Era* runs provides her name and her picture on the front page...

Kids make mistakes. The job of adults is to take them by the hand and try to help them find a proper path for life, not to shame them before their community.

We wonder how many times this happens in our suburban schools from year to year but goes unreported.

We presume the editors conclude that exploiting a friendless child recently arrived from Haiti doesn't risk losing subscribers or advertisers.

LANCASTER SUNDAY NEWS

Columnist Gil Smart concludes in *“War fever is finally subsiding”*:

“But it has become glaringly obvious, even to many who have supported these wars, that this can't continue. We don't have the money. Too many lives already have been lost and disrupted. Are we really any safer? And why must we continue kicking hornets' nests, just because we can?”

“Twelve years of constant war will change a people. And if even conservatives now believe staying out is wiser than charging in, we've evolved completely.”

“It's about time.”

WATCHDOG: Just as it was a mistake to allow 'W' / Cheney to utilize popular sentiment as an excuse to invade Iraq and to indulge in “nation building” in Afghanistan, it would be a mistake to allow current revulsion due to their follies to cause us to withdraw from the Middle East picture.

'Isolationism' can be as dangerous as 'war mongering'. Let's avoid both.

LETTER: Will CRIZ authority be allowed real choice?

“I wonder if those same powerful forces will be expecting (demanding) that the newly appointed City Reinvestment and Improvement Zone (CRIZ) authority board will pursue major dollars for the (already existing) convention center/hotel refurbishing/debt reduction rather than investing

those dollars in the targeted blighted and underutilized properties within city limits?

“Will the public be allowed any input into possible projects??”

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