

Perfect solution

Bucks County Courier Times

Duh! Why didn't we think of that?

If the county commissioners aren't asking themselves that question, they should.

We refer to a petition filed with the county board of elections Monday that, if accepted, would ensure that hundreds of new Americans will get to vote on Election Day. That wasn't the case last year, when many citizens living at the Creekside Apartments in Bensalem were unable to get to their assigned polling place — a private hall about a mile from Creekside.

For more than 30 years, that polling place was at Creekside. The site was moved last year after two letter writers, citing crime at the sprawling complex, expressed safety and parking concerns.

As a result, many Creekside voters stayed home on Election Day. This was a shameful development, because most Creekside residents are naturalized Americans who worked hard to become citizens and cherish the right to vote.

But because many of these new citizens are elderly or disabled and don't drive or own cars, they couldn't get to the new polling site. That's why residents asked the board of elections last week to move the polling place back to Creekside. The board refused.

Before trying to understand that decision, you should understand this: The county commissioners are the board of elections. And while two of the three commissioners are Republicans, most of the voters at Creekside are Democrats.

Remember those letter writers? Both of them are Republicans, too. In fact, according to Democratic Commissioner Diane Marseglia, they are or were GOP committee members.

Of course, the decision by Republican Commissioners Jim Cawley and Charley Martin might have nothing to do with politics and everything to do with crime and safety. If so, the folks at Creekside have a solution — a darn near perfect solution as far as we're concerned:

Make Creekside its own voting district.

This could be accomplished by moving all non-Creekside residents, who currently share a district with Creekside, into the neighboring district. This makes sense because Creekside has nearly a thousand registered voters, which is many times the size of a lot of voting districts. In fact, Creekside voters comprise three-quarters of the current district.

As the residents' petition points out, "This solution would remedy any claimed concern about safety and parking at Creekside for non-residents." Also, it would not require creating or moving any polling places — just returning the polling place Creekside had for more than three decades. Perfect.

We implore Commissioners Cawley and Martin to accept this reasoned compromise, which addresses the needs of people on both sides of the issue. It gives the commissioners a rare opportunity to make everybody happy. They ought to jump on it.