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Borough Mayoral Candidates Debate

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At Tuesday evening's mayoral debate between Democratic candidate Yina Moore and Republican candidate Jill Jachera, the two women answered questions on pressing local issues like consolidation, movement of the Dinky, Hurricane Irene, and town relationships with Princeton University.

With regards to the University's development of the Arts and Transit Neighborhood, which would require moving the Dinky terminus, Moore stated that she did not think moving the Dinky "is the right thing to do.

"I've been in the transportation industry for many years," said Moore, a 10-year member of the Regional Planning Board. "One of the things we try to do is move transit services closer to the population, not farther away.

Moore believes that moving the Dinky will increase the number of drivers in Princeton, exacerbating traffic and parking issues as well as hurting the environment.

Jachera responded that the University holds the ultimate legal right to move the Dinky, and even though she agrees it would be undesirable.

"The worst case scenario here is that they move it," Jachera explained, "and that we don't approve the zoning that allows them to put the Arts Center in, and we lose that art center and nonetheless, they move the Dinky, and we will

be left with nothing."

Jachera also noted that, in the process of battling over the Dinky, the Borough will have "sufficiently annoyed" the University, which might affect the University's willingness to pay its voluntary contributions.

Moore, a Princeton graduate herself, had a different perspective on the tax situation with the University. She emphasized the University's billion-dollar endowment, versus the town's 25 million dollar budget, and said the wealthy school was obliged to give back to the community in some way, by paying more money in lieu of taxes.

Yet the most salient topic at the debate was around the issue of consolidating the Township and the Borough.

Moore's stance was skeptical of the financial claims that consolidation will save costs, fearing that consolidation will compromise the unique interests of the Borough.

The Consolidation Commission failed to answer many of her most fundamental questions, said Moore, including "Are the savings significant enough?" to offset potential unknowns and losses.

Jachera, on the other hand, said she "liked the idea of consolidating" to increase efficiency. However, she thinks the budget needs "to start from scratch. We don't just take the budgets and lump them together and hope for the best."

"I have spoken to several commission members," said Jachera, "and I have tried to seek assurances that if consolidation is passed, that we will use a zero-base budgeting process," meaning a creation of a brand new budget.

On the issue of the recent hurricane, both Jachera and Moore agreed that the Borough's response and website communication was lacking. They mentioned that better online coverage of road closures and updates would have made the community less anxious.

The candidates in their closing statements also explained why people should consider each of them for mayor. Moore emphasized her family history in the town of Princeton, while Jachera, a last-minute write-in candidate during the primaries, stressed her desire for locals to vote for "Princeton before party."

Election date for the mayoral candidates is November 8.

[2011 Princeton Borough Mayoral Debate](#) from [Princeton Community Television](#) on [Vimeo](#).

About the Author »

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Vivienne Chen is a student at Princeton University majoring in English. She recently moved to Princeton from Pleasanton, California.

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