

THE TIMES

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City Suggests Road Widening Should Be Township Decision

Who should make the decision regarding width of a county road? In the view of the Union County Planning Board, county planners have the say. County environmentalists see it differently, and have recently expressed their views to the planners.

When Scotch Plains recently completed plans for the new Municipal Building in Park Avenue and submitted plans to the county agency for approval, the town fathers were told that while building was in process an accompanying street widening should be initiated. They advised that Park Avenue in the area in front of the new building should be widened by three feet -- the three feet to be added to the roadway on the Municipal Building side of the road. Why? Ultimately, the county planners foresee Park Avenue at a 46-foot width rather than at its existing 40-foot width. To widen the entire length all at once would occasion a public outcry, but to chip away at the project bit by bit would eventually achieve the desired end result.

In addition to their widening goals, the county also eventually propose that Park Avenue would be curbed along its length, and mandated that a property subdivision proposed in Fanwood two years ago be accompanied by curbing. Fanwood appealed the case to the county freeholders and was not required to curb. Scotch Plains has similarly appealed the widening dictate, and to date has not been required to provide a 43-foot roadway.

The Union County Environmental Advisory Committee, whose

membership includes representation from many municipal environmental groups and commissions from the county, has been in the forefront of public concern over the street widening mandates. The county environmentalists have been concerned over destruction of old and beautiful trees which would result in many areas where the curbing and/or the widening would be accomplished. After listening to a representative of the County Planning Board recently, the county environmentalists have taken a position on street widening. In cases where most of the traffic on a county road is of a local nature, then the decision on widening should rest primarily with the citizens of a community.

William Kluckas, head of the newly formed Fanwood Environmental Commission, recently reported to the Borough Council on the advisory from the county environmentalists. Kluckas said studies show that 75 percent of the traffic entering Park-Martine Avenue from Route 22 is dissipated within the two communities. In other words, Kluckas explained, the vast majority of cars entering are not still on the road at its present terminus at Raritan Road.

Fanwood Council Split On Issue Of Uncollected Tax Reserve In Budget

The Fanwood Borough Council re-introduced its annual budget for 1973 last Wednesday, with division of opinion in a single area -- the reserve for uncollected taxes.

The budget had been introduced the previous week, with a public hearing set for March 7. However, the two Democratic members pointed out that, in the absence of Councilman Van Dyke Pollitt, Mayor Theodore Trumpp cast the tie-breaking vote to approve the budget -- a step which was illegal, they said. Therefore the action was repeated last Wednesday, with a March 14 hearing set. Democrats Steven Ritter and John Swindlehurst dissented on the budget. While the two have voiced no objections to appropriations contained therein, they do object to the amount of money set aside in the reserve for uncollected taxes.

The Borough now sets aside a reserve to cover a situation wherein eight percent of the total taxes would go unpaid. In actuality, Ritter and Swindlehurst say, recent history has shown that Fanwood needs less than three percent of the tax total set aside, since the collection record has been very good. They have stated that over five percent more than is required has been

collected and applied to the reserve annually since 1966. They would like to see the reserve percentage cut by three percent, down to a five percent reserve, over a three-year period, and they attempted an amendment which would have cut the reserve this year from eight to seven percent which would have cut taxes by a total of \$40,000.

The Republicans have repeatedly pointed out that, although it is true that less than three percent of the tax bills are in arrears, the money set aside for the reserve is not money collected unnecessarily from property owners. What is left over each year in the reserve is applied toward the next year's budget to reduce the amount to be raised by taxation.

According to Councilman Charles Coronella, the point is that the money being used to finance the borough must come from some place, and if it doesn't come from what is left over from the reserve and later applied to a new budget as surplus, it would have to come

DARE To Be Replaced By Broader Approach To Problems Of Youth

To Study Future Of Present Municipal Bldg.

A committee of Scotch Plains citizens was named on Tuesday to study the future (or lack of future) of the old Scotch Plains Municipal Building. A new building is under construction next door to the existing facility on Park Avenue, and originally the contract for the new building had included a fee for demolition of the old building. However, there have been and continue to be divergent views on the worth of the building in the future and therefore Mayor William Kitsz said the committee had been charged with preparing an in-depth study and recommendations.

The Committee includes Norman Kerr, formerly a local businessman and now chairman of the committee; Edward Anderson, a professional engineer; James Brown, a local realtor; Florence Clark, representing the Junior Women's Club; Ernest DiCullo, an area builder and member of the Building Committee; James Grimstead; Roy Kurre, also a builder; Helen Piasecki; Claire S. Riley; Joseph Scarloss, an engineer; and Lawrence Sprague.

Kitsz also named Dr. Frank Besson to the Recreation Commission, Dr. Vincent Lindner to the Committee for Preservation of Historic Sites; and Charles Detwiller to the Union County Heritage Commission.

from taxation anyway. Coronella has repeatedly cited the excellent credit rating of the borough as substantial proof of the effectiveness of current fiscal policies.

Ritter and Swindlehurst have challenged whether the excellent bond rating can be attributed wholly to the reserve fund or to other contributing factors. The dollars being collected for the reserve increase each year, as the school budget goes up, and a corresponding eight percent of higher and higher school budgets is set aside, Ritter said. He stated that each year a little more tax money comes out of borough pockets than is needed.

To cut the reserve would be particularly unwise in the current period, in the view of Councilman Van Dyke Pollitt, since no one is certain of the future of school funding.

Swindlehurst introduced three ordinances, all amending the existing zoning ordinances, and all concerned with property line setbacks for swimming pools. Swindlehurst said an opinion rendered by the Borough Attorney had indicated that the

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New Effort Will Also Deal With Non Drug Related Matters

"DARE" was the name of the operation at 1834 Front Street, Scotch Plains over the past year. "DARE" center was a drop-in center intended solely for drug abuse prevention education. It operated here, as it has in other communities, under a one-year contract arranged by the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Drug Abuse Committee. Did "DARE" work? Yes and no. After a full year of operation, the contract has not been renewed . . . but the center will still operate under a new and different program.

Why the change? Primarily because the local Drug Abuse Committee, which originally formed to study and attempt to deal with drug use among local youth, has now found that young people have dozens of problems, habits, and needs which aren't necessarily associated with or leading to use of drugs. Therefore, the youth of Scotch Plains-Fanwood need a source of help which can provide them with more than education in the prevention of drug abuse.

Young people have been involved, for example, in vandalism and disorderly conduct, malicious mischief and larceny, assaults and violation of liquor and drug laws. If the child's problem isn't drug-associated, where does he go for help? Where is a free source of the all important counseling which might prevent the first offender from becoming a court case in the future? Local police and educators have pointed out that more

than "DARE" is needed here. Hopefully, the new operation will provide the much needed help.

At present, while final plans are being made for the new approach, the center is only open daily from 3 to 5 p.m. However, the transition to a full schedule will be made as soon as funding and plans are complete. A 24-hour Crisis telephone time is available full time, at 273-3900.

What will the local youth find available in the future at 1834 Front Street? Consider first the difference in staff. "DARE" operated with a staff of one -- a person sent by the "DARE" headquarters, usually a person who had experienced drug problems and been cured at the "DARE" residency in Newark -- a facility for the seriously drug oriented. The staff members did not necessarily have degrees and/or

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Programs For New Drop-In Center

1. Testing and evaluation of juveniles to determine their abilities and interests. This is to be done by staff and trained volunteers that will aim to: a. eliminate destructive activity, b. facilitate positive activity.

2. Training to meet the needs of the individual either in the Center or by referral to schools, technical schools, manpower or industry.

3. Referral to other agencies for medical and psychiatric treatment.

4. Youth group rap sessions to learn about themselves and help solve their problems. To be given by staff and when necessary "outside people" brought in on specifics.

5. Tutoring service to achieve equivalency diplomas. Ex-Teachers (volunteers) to perform this service with school approval.

6. Group counseling in schools with direct referral to Center.

7. Training and equipping older youth to work with younger youth. Training to be done by Plainfield Area Chapter American Red Cross thru courses designed for this purpose. Taught by qualified instructors.

8. Constant contact with Judges and Police. To be done by Director of Center.

9. Twenty-four hour crisis intervention. We plan to establish and seek to relate it with the on-going "Care Ring" established by Churches in Scotch Plains.

10. Prison Programs, visiting and getting to know juveniles who could use the Center upon release. Staff and chosen volunteers will establish this program.

11. Provide public prevention program and encourage people to make use of this facility. To be implemented by Plainfield Area Chapter, American Red Cross, Public Relations Committee.

12. To seek out the "lost youth" in our communities. Working with police, churches and citizenry and referrals from schools, police and courts.

13. Big Brother or Sister Program: One to one, Using trained Volunteers.

14. Most important and to be done by Staff and Trained Volunteers. Daily check with youth's family or school or employer. These evaluations will become less frequent as there is evidence of a positive change in behavior pattern.