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Board Weighs "Lunch In School" Policy

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education is currently weighing the many pros and cons of the school lunch situation in the elementary schools.

In an effort to obtain every possible sampling of public opinion on the controversial topic, the Board of Education has extended an invitation to the public to voice opinions tonight at the regular monthly meeting of the Board and also at a special hearing on school lunch, to be held on Tuesday, August 14, at 8 p.m. Both meetings are scheduled for Terrill Junior High auditorium.

According to a Board of Education press release on the subject, the Board feels a need to study the lunch situation at the present time because there has been a marked increase in the number of children remaining in school for lunch over the past school year.

The Board expects to render a final decision on lunch in school

at the regular August meeting of the Board, on Thursday, August 16, at 8 p.m. The decision is expected to be effective for the opening of school in September. It has been pointed out that the invitation to express opinion on this matter is an effort by the Board to involve the public in the development of a Board decision.

In recent years, children have been remaining in the classroom for lunch when families so desired. However, there have been evidences of increasing concern over safety and supervision during the lunch period in the classroom and the recreational period on playgrounds after lunch. Provision of teacher aides for supervision during these times has aroused some question of cost.

Law And Order From A Shoebox- Fanwood Police Headquarters

When a Fanwood police officer decides to check the files on an item which dates beyond 1965, he has to do some very extensive digging, for the records are stored either at Borough Hall in the Police Headquarters area, in Borough Hall upstairs, or over in the Borough Garage on North Avenue.

When a Fanwood police officer wants to interrogate a young child (who, incidentally, may well be innocent), he usually has to do so within full view of any private citizen who decides to come wandering through.

These are but two of the ill effects of "law and order from a

shoebox," which is really what police operations in Fanwood are. Quarters are so extremely limited that the crowding and storage problems would challenge the ingenuity of an efficiency expert. At the present time, the entire police operation of Fanwood features 20 people attempt-

Fanwooders Urged - Use Park Facilities

But Attorney Notes That "Mere Gathering Cannot Be Regulated By Any Government Body"

Citizens of Fanwood were advised to use LaGrande Park constantly and not to be hesitant about going there because of the presence of a group of young people who have occasioned considerable notoriety recently. Police Commissioner Van Dyke J. Pollitt told citizens in attendance at last week's Borough Council meeting that the Council has explored and is exploring the "highest police authorities" to insure that the park program not be interfered with because of the group, most of whom gather at the park nightly. Pollitt further urged that residents who use the park and find the youthful group breaking any borough laws invoke the law themselves and contact police immediately.

However, Pollitt, when questioned, admitted that it appears that the group has had an impact upon the recreational program. He cited the report of Councilman Tony McCall, liaison to the Recreation Commission, noting a drop in attendance at the park for the daytime park program. For the first time in borough history, attendance at Forest Road Park has topped LaGrande's enrollment.

Some residents were dubious about their role in enforcing the law, and it was pointed out by Councilman Stephen Ritter that people can't "just pick up a phone and expect an arrest." While residents are free to report offenses in the park, the police can only make arrests when the residents are willing to assume responsibility and sign complaints. "You can't throw them out only because of long hair and dress," Ritter said. "That's not to say there isn't wrong being done, but it must be detected," he concluded.

Former Councilman Charles Smith and his wife attended the meeting, and Smith pointed out that decisive Council action is needed in dealing with the LaGrande group. Smith said he is at a "loss for words" in attempting to explain the matter to his nine-year old son, who can no longer go to the park to use swings and rides in the early evening because he is afraid to. Even when nobody is doing anything to his son, Smith said the presence of the young adults in such a crowd creates an atmosphere which is not one in which young children enjoy themselves.

Robert Rothrock of Helen Street said Fanwood lost something last week, when a local police officer was assaulted. He abhorred low fines and toleration of such actions. Dorris Terry of Paterson Road expressed her distress at beer drinking at the Wednesday night movie. If police had been in the crowd, they'd have to see the beer, she said. "I don't think we have to live this way. I know lots of kids in patchy pants and long hair and they're great kids," Mrs. Terry said, but she didn't favor the group now relaxing at LaGrande.

Former Councilman Jerry Boryea sought more police surveillance nightly, while another resident asked for auxiliary po-

lice, with specific duty in the park every night.

John Philips of Belvidere Avenue asked about details of a meeting held two weeks ago between the Council and representatives of the young group. Mayor Theodore Trumpp said the five representatives of the group had been selected by the group and the meeting was called specifically to explain to the teenagers exactly what the borough park laws and the "peace and good order" ordinance specify. "Was this the first meeting? The problem is over a year old," Philips said. He was told that there was also a meeting last year, when teenagers were informed of and endorsed the ordinance. "I hope we don't have to renegotiate with this gang annually," Philips said. Ritter pointed out that although a meeting was held, the Council did not "negotiate."

Borough Attorney Edward Beglin pointed out that "all must realize that the mere gathering cannot be regulated by any governmental body." The borough ordinance sets standards for conduct, and when violations are observed, they must be reported to police or law enforcement officials, who then tell offenders to move on. If a group fails to obey the order to move, the arrest may be made for failure to obey a police order.

Some residents asked for an increase in police patrols in the LaGrande Park vicinity.

Philips asked if the group gathering there is the "same group which has been run out of two other towns," and was told that borough officials do not know the answer to that, but that the majority reside outside the borough.

The Borough Council officially accepted the feasibility study of borough facilities, which was completed by the architectural firm of Moore and Hutchins of New York. The study includes three proposals for eventual expansion of facilities, but the Council has not reached any decisions as yet. Councilman Van Dyke Pollitt urged that all citizens involve themselves in the discussion of whether or not to expand borough facilities and the various approaches, so that the eventual solution will be a "community of thought." Copies of the feasibility study may be viewed

Attention Fanwood Residents

The Fanwood Shade Tree Commission reminds residents not to cut, remove, or nail objects to trees along Borough streets. These trees are under the care and jurisdiction of the Shade Tree Commission.

It is also a violation of the law for any property owner to remove trees without the approval of the Shade Tree Commission on a lot where he does not actually reside.

THE FANWOOD SHADE TREE COMMISSION

ing to function from 683 feet of space. The headquarters consists of a small chief's office, a smaller locker room, two jail cells, and a hallway which is the police desk - detective bureau. The department includes a chief, three lieutenants, three sergeants, twelve patrolmen and one clerk.

To the average citizen the need for improved police space may not seem so drastic, for

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Cluttered? You bet! It's really not poor housekeeping, but desperate space limitations which have created the overcrowding shown. Above, the illustrations show two different views of the very small quarters of the Fanwood Police Department.

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