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Attorney et With State Off To Study School Budget

On Monday, May 13, Edward Beglin, Borough Attorney for Fanwood; James Walsh, Township Attorney for Scotch Plains; and Jeremiah O'Dwyer, attorney for the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education met with a hearing officer appointed by the New Jersey Department of Education. At issue was a decision regarding the schedules for presentation of information by both parties regarding the defeated 1974-75 school budget. Joseph F. Zach, Deputy Assistant Commissioner of Education, provided rulings and dates affecting both the Councils, who have mandated a cut of \$969,000 from the defeated budget, and the Board of Education, which has voted to appeal the cut at the state level.

According to Beglin, the two municipal attorneys went to Trenton seeking a ruling that the Board furnish extensive data dating back to 1970 and 1971, before the two Councils would provide the rationale they had formulated for their decision on the cut. Beglin said that the two Councils had been provided with some information regarding the budget by the Board of Education before the Councils made their decision on the cut. Subsequently, the two Councils had requested much more extensive information, including audits, all budgets, actual expenditures, full staff analysis of teachers and administrators, use of every classroom, etc. dating back to the 1970-71 budget and school year.

The Board attorney sought to

have the Councils release their line-by-line analysis of the reduction.

Zach ruled that the Board of Education must furnish the requested material to the Councils by tomorrow, May 17. Following the exchange of information, the two Councils have until May 24 to furnish their line-item analysis. If the Councils should find they need more time, Zach indicated he would hear the need for an extension until May 29.

From the time the two Councils provide that rationale, the Board of Education then has ten days to respond to the Council rationale, with the Board providing a written evaluation stating why it is not possible to operate the schools within the terms

Fanwood Boro Council Adopts Ethics Code

In Today's
TIMES
A SPECIAL
COMMORATIVE
SECTION

Noting The Formal
Dedication Of
The New
Municipal Building

and areas of cut specified by the Councils.

Beglin said Zach indicated the Board has the burden of showing why it cannot operate the school system without the cuts.

In response to a question regarding information for the public, Beglin said he would expect that once the Councils formally approved the rationale, he'd expect it would be made public, just as he would also anticipate that the Board would ultimately make public its defense of its position on rejecting the cut.

ter throngs will congregate. Last Saturday, at several points in the day, a double-file line wound from the park lot out Forest Road and around into Woodland Avenue, and at the time of finale, at 2:15 p.m., the exhausted volunteer forces had to ask cooperative people to come to another inspection.

As cards are being filed on each bicycle inspected, a check will be made against descriptions of stolen bicycles in hopes of unearthing a few of the two-wheeled vehicles which have been stolen of late. The deterrent to theft is but one of the intents behind the recently adopted bicycle ordinance, which calls for the inspection and licensing of every bicycle in Fanwood by the end of June. Safety for riders is another purpose.

Citizens Voice Criticisms Of Proposed New Zoning Ordinance

The Fanwood Borough Council has scheduled a June 12 public hearing on a new ordinance which provides the Council with a code of ethics. Earlier this year, Councilwoman Carol Whittington had suggested her own version of a similar code to the Council. That version required legal consideration and study, which eventually led to the code now under consideration.

Only Councilman John Coulter voted in the negative. Coulter opposes the code because he feels it would deprive him of a vote whenever the Council might act upon a defeated school budget. Coulter, who seeks election to another three-year term this November, is married to a teacher in the Scotch Plains-Fanwood school district.

The new code prohibits officers or employees from having any financial or personal interest in business or transactions with or for the borough without first making written full public disclosure. The ordinance further specifies that an officer or employee must publicly disclose the nature and extent of any financial or personal interest upon which he may be required to deliberate and vote. Engaging in private employment, accepting gifts in any form, and disclosure of confidential information, are among further prohibitions of the ordinance.

The ordinance further provides for establishment of an Advisory Committee to provide a written advisory opinion on conduct of officials with regard to the code of ethics. The opinions of the committee would be filed with the Borough Clerk once they are made, and if the Committee deems it desirable, names may be deleted. The Advisory Committee would include five residents who hold no other office, position or employment in the borough. They would be appointed by the Mayor with consent of Council, and would serve two-year terms. However, two appointees to the initial committee would serve for only a single year. The members would elect a chairman from their midst.

With cause, the Advisory Committee would be empowered to conduct a private hearing, then furnish written findings to the Borough Council, which would then make a determination. The ordinance provides the enabling legislation for the Council to censure, suspend, demote, etc. an offending employee or official.

The Borough Council heard once again from the citizens on a proposed new zoning ordinance pending before the Council. Another hearing on the ordinance, which reflects the Master Plan revision of last year, is slated for May 30. At previous hearings and again last Wednesday night, the only neighborhood solidarity opposing the zoning provisions came from First Street, where residents oppose continuing the commercial area further east on South Avenue as far as LaGrande School. The residents feel this represents the signal for problems in First

Street, which remains zoned residential.

Mrs. I.A. Riccardi of 3 Old South Avenue also opposed any further commercial zoning in Fanwood. Mrs. Riccardi argued that the borough now has sufficient commercial establishments to serve just about any needs of the citizens. She cited two drugstores, a supermarket, gas stations, banks, etc. In a mile-square town, she felt the borough must guard against overdevelopment of the commercial area.

Mrs. Riccardi wanted to know when all the added commercial areas would have a positive impact on her tax bill, since she said there is now existing within the area already zoned commercial.

Continued On Page 37

Board Of Ed Meets Tonight

Tonight's Board of Education monthly meeting will feature a staff report assessment of the sixth grade program which has been in force over the past year at Coles School. Under Community Relations, next year's schedule of meeting sites at different schools in the district will be announced. It is anticipated that the Board will rescind approximately 15 existing policies, in line with a charge from Board President Charles Ferguson for a review of all policies to determine which are unnecessary or covered elsewhere under state law and/or contract provisions.

The Board will announce receipt of a petition from Mrs. Mary Alice Hancock for access to all student records. Correspondence in support of football coach Harold Mercer and expressions of regret over the resignation of Park Junior Principal Richard Kaye will be announced. The Board will also announce that it has received communications regarding the school budget situation.

Superintendent of Schools Fred Laberge expects to recommend sabbatical leaves for two staff members.

A status report on the Title I application will be furnished. Under personnel, a recommendation for an appointment of Assistant to the Superintendent of Schools, to replace Howard Clickenger who will assume the principalship of Terrill Junior High, is expected.

Under business functions, awarding of bids and consideration of plans for renovation of Muir School and Park athletic field are anticipated.

Fanwood Police Inspect And Register 351 Bikes

Sergeant Anthony Parenti, Safety Officer for the Fanwood Police Department, reported that members of his department, ably assisted by a 21-man force of volunteers, had inspected and registered 531 bicycles owned by Fanwood residents. The first of several inspection programs scheduled for spring Saturdays, the initial inspection was held at Forest Road park parking lot last Saturday from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m.

Parenti had the highest praise for the many public-spirited citizens who lent a hand. They included seven members of the Fanwood Optimist Club, who led bike owners through a test course, tightened handlebars and spokes, and advised people of proper bike operation. There were a number of PTA Safety Council volunteers on hand, including, to Parenti's amazement, three residents of Scotch Plains whose dedication to child safety led to their involvement in the Fanwood project. Several neighbors from the Forest Road area also volunteered their services,

including Mr. Walter Drake, a bicycle mechanic. He had the sole set of metric tools, and with them he made scores of minor repairs on bikes of foreign manufacture.

The unique aspect of this inspection, Parenti noted, is that it incorporates a follow-up. Children whose bikes had irreparable defects have been registered and obtained licenses, but their parents will be notified by letter of exactly what is unsafe about their child's bike.

Next week, the inspection moves to LaGrande Park, where it is anticipated that even greater



The lineup! Cyclists 351 strong await licensing and inspection last Saturday at Forest Road Park. Next Saturday, LaGrande Park's the place for bike owners.