

# THE TIMES

ONLY NEWSPAPER WITH COMPLETE SCOTCH PLAINS-FANWOOD NEWS

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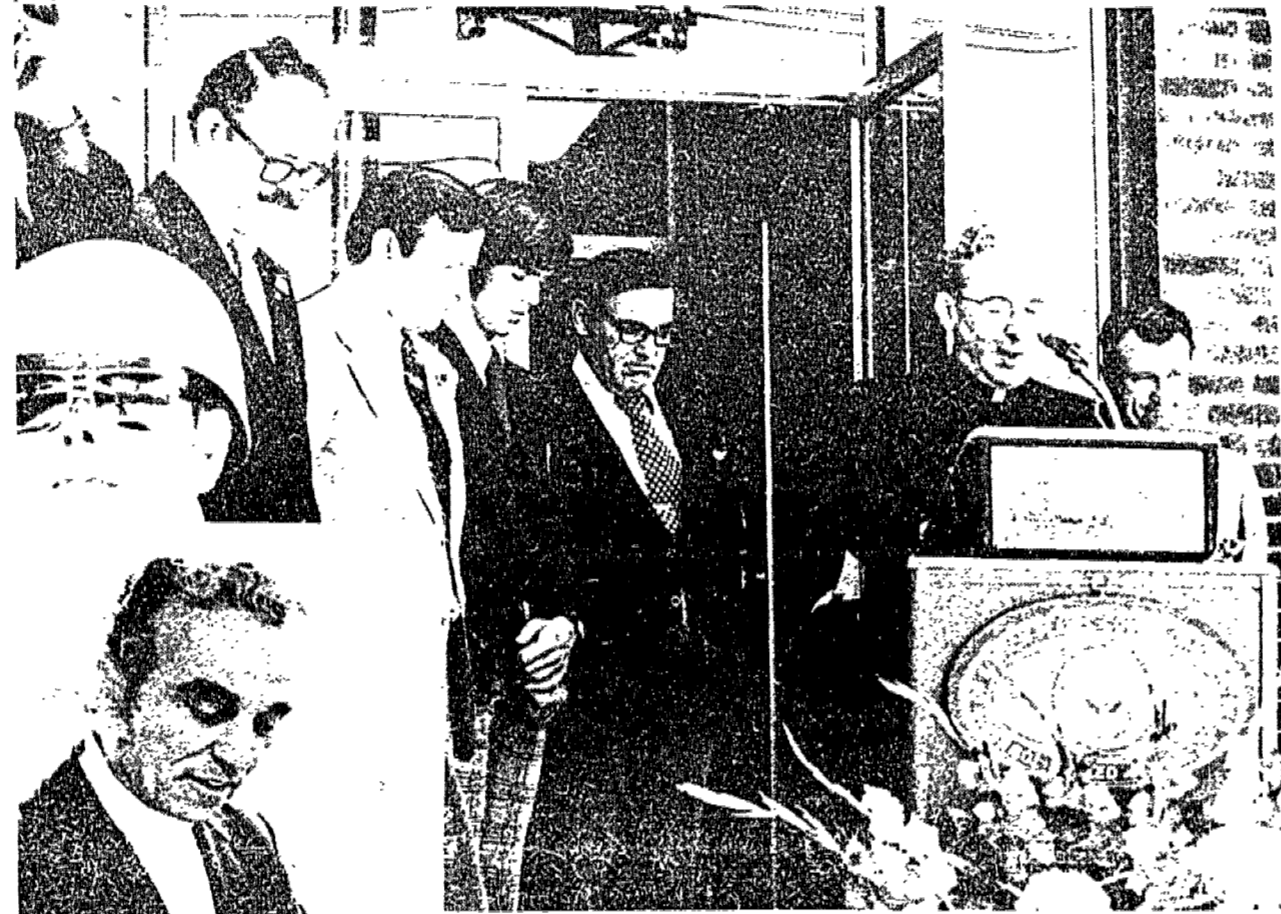
SCOTCH PLAINS-FANWOOD, N.J.

THURSDAY, MAY 23, 1974

15 CENTS A COPY

## Municipal Building Officially Dedicated

A display of nostalgic press clippings highlighted a weekend Open House and dedication, marking the official sendoff of Scotch Plains' new \$1.35 million municipal building. The vestiges of a time long gone came from the cornerstone of the old municipal building, which was demolished to make way for the new building. The contents of the cornerstone had been placed there at the time of construction of the old building in 1927.



Rev. Francis A. Reinbold offers the invocation at dedication ceremonies. Looking on, left to right, Councilman Larry Newcomb, Councilman Alan Augustine, DECA President George Hammond, Mayor Walter Grote, and Councilman Albert Theurer.

Enzio Stuarti, well-known TV and "Show-biz" personality, signs his name in the guest book at dedication ceremonies.

Rep. Matthew J. Rinaldo (R-12th District) and Mayor Walter Grote were the featured speakers at official dedication ceremonies at 1 p.m. on Saturday. Mayor Grote pointed out that, appropriately, the township had invited its newest clergyman, Rev. Francis A. Reinbold, pastor of St. Bartholomew the Apostle Church in Scotch Plains, to give the invocation at the newest public building. Rev. Kelmo Porter of St. John the Baptist Church gave the benediction.

In conjunction with the dedication ceremonies, the Township Council unveiled a new municipal flag, featuring a Scottish thistle and a cannon in gold on a field of blue. Mayor Grote has announced that the flag, designed by former Scotch Plains Mayor George Johnston, has been offered for loan for parades to the Veterans of Foreign Wars, the American Legion and the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Marching Band.

Life in Scotch Plains in 1927 was a far cry from life here today, if the slightly waterlogged clippings are any indication. For example, the community ran its schools for an annual tally of \$63,255, in contrast to the recently defeated \$13 million school budget. Whereas the township then cost more than the schools, \$148,298 per year, the annual

township budget now represents a rather small percentage of the total tax dollar.

Mortgages cost 5-1/2 percent back then, and a six-course chicken and steak dinner went for \$1.75. Scotch Plains had a single full-time policeman. He made \$2,050 per year. The Fire Department was comprised of call men who received \$25 annually.

In 1927, Alexander Muir was mayor, Howard B. Brunner was high school principal, and William Kitz, now serving on the Council, was listed in the Cradle

Roll of the First Methodist Episcopal Church.

Grote has recently praised the new building, which came under a bit of fire locally when it was first completed. Landscaping will add the final touch to set the building off well, he said. However, a bit later in the week, as the Township Council prepared to take a vote on reducing the performance bond of the contractor on Tuesday night, he expressed his exasperation with the air conditioning system in the Council Chambers.

## School Board Meeting Is Study In Contrasts

Once again, the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education monthly meeting was a beleaguered scene of angry people criticizing the board on one score or another. The atmosphere has been the same over the past few meetings. The areas of complaint ranged from the football coach to the budget and from the choice of cheerleaders to the principal of Park Junior High. However, a few voices were raised in support of the board efforts in contrast to the manv of criticism.

On the issue of gym teacher-football coach Harold Mercer, who was denied tenure recently (a move which brought forth many angered football and sports supporters), Board president Charles Ferguson said the Board had met privately with a group representing Mercer's interests and had also heard an hour and a half of discussion from the community during the April monthly Board meeting. In addition, the Board has met in executive session to discuss the matter. It has been unanimously decided not to take any further action, Ferguson said. If Mercer feels any prejudicial action has been taken, he has the right to take his case

to the N.J. Commissioner of Education, Ferguson noted, and a hearing would be scheduled at which the Board and Mercer would present their positions.

Earlier, at the time of vote on Mercer's tenure question, board members Robert Carlson and Philip Labasi had been in opposition to the denial.

The Board has received numerous letters praising the efforts of Richard Kaye, principal of Park Junior High, who resigned last month after a year and a half in the district. Mrs. Jan Linke, president of the Park Junior High PTA, presented the Board with a letter supporting

## Scotch Plains Flood Victims Unhappy With Flood Plain Ordinance

### Citizen Groups Call It A Minimal Approach To The Problem — Too Weak To Be Effective

The Scotch Plains Township Council gave final approval to an ordinance establishing minimum land use and control measures for the flood plain areas of the town on Tuesday, over the objections of members of Concerned Citizens. The Concerned Citizens is a group which formed following last August's severe floods in Scotch Plains. The Concerned Citizens expressed strong dissatisfaction with the ordinance because it is too weak, and strictly a minimum approach in contrast to stronger ordinance enacted in other flood-prone communities, they feel.

The Council members passed the ordinance after a short caucus, but they emphasized that they were doing so because such legislation must be approved before June 14 in order to continue local eligibility for federal flood insurance. The legislation fully meets the requirements for flood insurance. Several councilmen strongly assured Hugo Diaz, head of Concerned Citizens, that they too see the need for stronger legislation and would press for strengthening and reinforcing measures in the future.

Diaz called the ordinance a "joke" in contrast to those in other communities. He said Concerned Citizens were scheduled to meet last night (Wednesday) and he suggested the group might come to the conclusion that the ordinance was irresponsible, negligent and failing to provide proper protection. Diaz raised the possibility of a lawsuit.

Diaz later said he wants to see flood plain legislation that would control building to the point of providing water detention on each building lot. One area ordinance provides that a builder must allow for a 2.5-inch rainfall accumulation on the property for two hours.

If the township failed to pass the ordinance, it would be more open to the possibility of a suit for failure to act, Councilman Larry Newcomb said.

Charles Boynton of Haven Avenue praised the Council for the efforts they've made in behalf of citizens since the August flood, as did Diaz, but Diaz suggested that action had not been fast enough.

The Council accepted the resignation of Alex Molten as chair-

man of the Recreation Commission, due to a move to St. Louis. Molten was praised for his dedication and hard work.

In other actions, the Council approved an ordinance which permits 100 non-residents to join Scotch Hills Municipal Golf Course for a single year. Another approved ordinance sets rules and regulations on subdivision of land in Scotch Plains. Another piece of legislation to money originally budgeted for expansion of the main building of the Department of Public Properties. The extra money covers a sprinkler system and paved areas. The rear 40 feet of lots 19 and 20, Block 41 (corner of Second St. and Flannery Avenue) will be designated Commercial under terms of another ordinance approved.

The Board of Education will now be in a position to sell Board of Education land on Essex Road, since the Township Council approved a change in zoning designation from P-public to R-1 residential. The Council has postponed action on the redesignation last month, questioning whether state permission was necessary to sell off school lands. Council members said they had been assured such action was not necessary.

The Council tabled a resolution which would have approved a Board of Adjustment recommendation for a free standing sign at 2510 Route 22, at the site of the proposed Burger King restaurant. The Council should take another look at objections from a resident, James Bell, who wrote to the Council at length.

Kaye, signed by 651 families of the 800 Park students. The letter asked the Board to seek a reconsideration of his resignation by Kaye. Mrs. Linke said after the meeting that 662 families had been contacted - with only 11 of them refusing to sign. The Board intends to respect Mr. Kaye's wishes in resignation, Ferguson said.

Mr. Joseph Nagy of 80 Oakwood Court, Fanwood spoke at length on the many controversies which have faced the board this year. Nagy said he hoped to give some balance to all the negative comment and to give heart to all the board members. Nagy charged that the blue ribbon committee to study the effectiveness of board and administration, as

requested by some citizen groups, was probably illegal and certainly capricious. Boards of Education, past and present, are comprised of unselfish, community-oriented people, Nagy said, and citizens should restrain themselves from criticisms of board members individually, and should attempt to take a

Continued On Page 20

### DEADLINE CHANGE

Because of the Memorial Day Holiday on Monday advertising and news copy must be in our office by Friday P.M., May 24th.