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15 CENTS

Recommends Construction Of New Municipal Facility On Slocum Property Site

Undoubtedly, when Mayor Ted Trumpp of Fanwood first named 15 citizens to a committee to consider the potential of the Slocum House as the site of a future municipal building, there were many committee members who envisioned a lovely municipal facility housed within the elderly home at the end of the sweeping driveway at 75 N. Martine Avenue. Apparently, practicality dictated otherwise ... and the majority of the citizens advisory committee voted to recommend construction of new facilities on the Slocum site.

The municipality acquired the Slocum home last summer. It is located on over five acres, and the Council acted quickly in acquiring it, because it represents the last sizeable parcel of vacant land in Fanwood. The Council had determined the need for a municipal facility two years ago. Trumpp, in naming the citizens advisory committee, had anticipated that the group might take up to a year to study the many possibilities. However, structural studies of the building, indicating the need for shoring up of foundations and basic structure, quickly narrowed the possibilities.

The committee report, which was accepted by the Fanwood Borough Council during its regu-

lar monthly meeting Wednesday night, includes two recommendations - a primary suggestion and an alternative. The primary recommendation is:

"Construct new facilities on the site of the Slocum property to house the Borough Administration, Fire Department, Rescue Squad and Police Department and, due to major costly reconstruction, renovation and maintenance needed, abandon any consideration for use of the existing home which should be razed. The majority of the committee feels that the cost of retaining and maintaining the Slocum house

Continued On Page 15

Scotch Plains Will Appeal Restoration Of School Budget Cut

An unexpectedly quiet, one-hour meeting marked the kickoff of a new governing body in Scotch Plains on Tuesday, January 7. With Mayor Robert Griffin at the helm, the governing body passed a unanimous resolution authorizing new Township Attorney Louis Markowitz to file an appeal on behalf of the township, seeking relief from the decision of the New Jersey Commissioner of Education restoring the major portion of the \$969,000 cut from the local school budget by the governing bodies. The resolution seeks to stay the Commissioner's decision until the appeal procedure has been exhausted.

Mayor Robert Griffin said following the meeting that the township is not now collecting taxes to cover the restored funds, nor has the township received any directive to do so from the county Board of Taxation. If the funds restored by the Commissioner were to be passed along to school authorities, the monies could only come from the 1975 budget, Griffin said, and that budget will not be passed until March. Griffin said the township wrote to the county Taxation Board in late December, suggesting that the appeal on the budget might be continued and asking the county to take no action in the interim.

The new administration was questioned concerning some new appointments. In response, it was indicated that Mr. Blacker, named township manager, is not a temporary manager, since no such title exists. However, Mayor Griffin indicated, it is no secret that the township will be searching actively for a township manager. Griffin said 41 applications had already been received.

Former Superintendent of Public Properties Ralph DePaolo has been engaged temporarily as Assistant Engineer at \$14,500. His replacement, Fred Lombardo, will be paid \$16,200. Blacker was asked by Councilman Walter Grote about the status of DePaolo. An investigation

is underway regarding DePaolo's position with Civil Service and the township Engineering Department. DePaolo reportedly once worked for the Engineering Department and had a leave of absence, but records of the leave have not been found locally.

A Board of Adjustment recommendation for approval of a 121-unit condominium in the Lake Avenue tract originally slated for industrial development was received by Council and referred to Council and Attorney. Thomas DeLuca of Jacobs Lane spoke on the subject, stating that the community needs multidwelling housing, but not in an area zoned for industry. Industry would not bring children to add to schools, DeLuca said.

The three new Democratic members of the Council abstained on an ordinance to vacate public rights in Virginia Street in Scotch Plains, stating they had not had enough time to investigate the proposed ordinance. The public hearing is scheduled for January 21.

An ordinance was introduced to amend the ordinance restricting parking in Evergreen Boulevard, Parkview Drive and Beechwood Place. The amendment would change the "no parking" limitation for all of Beechwood, prohibiting parking only on the east and south sides.

Griffin Named Mayor As DEMS Take Over In Scotch Plains

Two Mayors Hit School Budget

On New Year's Day, an outgoing Mayor in Scotch Plains and an incumbent Mayor in Fanwood presented end-of-the-year messages to citizens, and both took up the subject of political actions in connection with school budget controversy. Mayor Ted Trumpp noted that administrators, representatives of the local education association, and Board of Education have claimed that the school budget dispute has been used for political advantage. "If being a politician means that you respect the views of the majority of the residents of the community that elect you to office as their representative, I must plead guilty to being a politician. I would suggest that all people elected to office show as much regard for the views of their constituents and thus become more political," Mayor Trumpp said.

Trumpp called the disagreement over the budget the most distressing event of 1974. He said he will strongly urge the Fanwood Council to appeal the decision of the New Jersey Commissioner to restore most of the \$969,000 cut by the Councils of Scotch Plains and Fanwood. He noted that two professional educational groups reviewed the budget and recommended the \$969,000 reduction as justified.

In Scotch Plains, Walter Grote similarly pointed out that the budget decision was not "political," but a unanimous action of bipartisan Councilmen in both towns. He and Trumpp pushed for better voter turnout in 1975.

Taxes are an especially painful subject this year, Trumpp said. The extremes of inflation will have a definite impact upon the Fanwood municipal budget, since over half the cost of borough operations is for salaries, Trumpp said. Borough operations may cost as much as ten percent more this year. Assuming that county and school costs will also approach a ten percent increase, the present tax rate of \$4.06 would be in the area of \$4.40 to \$4.45. However, if the borough is required to collect the \$744,000 restored to the school budget by the state commissioner of education, the local taxes would jump by another \$15. "Therefore the possibility of \$4.60 tax rate is a real threat to all of us," Trumpp warned.

Trumpp cited a notable increase in citizen participation in volunteer activities within the borough. The Public Safety Committee and the Mayor's Advisory Committee on the Slocum Property are new groups, as is the Board of Ethics. He singled out the Environmental Commission 1974 effort in creation of the nature center, and he commended the job being done by borough employees.

Blacker Is New Township Manager — Markowitz Replaces Walsh In Attorney's Post

Numerous job switches accompanied Democratic takeover of the reins of Scotch Plains government on New Year's Day. Robert Griffin, who had served a full term as a Councilman once before, became the new Mayor, as had been anticipated, replacing Republican Walter Grote, who remains on the Council. He was elected from amidst the five-man Council, receiving votes from new Democratic Councilwoman Ann Wodjenski and Noel Musial. Grote nominated the remaining Republican, Lawrence Newcomb, to the mayoralty but the two Republicans failed to carry a majority.

Division of opinion was immediate, and marked the length of the meeting, as the Democrats named new people to many of the key Scotch Plains municipal posts. First they accepted the resignation of Mrs. Shirley Capone from the post of Township Manager. Mrs. Capone had been serving in the job since the November 29 resignation of Scotch Plains' first municipal manager. She is ordinarily Executive Secretary for the township. It had been assumed Mrs. Capone was not in line for permanent appointment to the managerial job, but was filling in until a search could be conducted. Grote claimed Mrs. Capone's resignation was submitted by her to avoid creation of a political situation.

The Democrats next appointed Michael Blacker to the manager's position. Mr. Blacker will serve at the pleasure of the Council, at an annual rate of \$25,000. Upon questioning from Grote, Griffin said Blacker had not served as Griffin's campaign manager, but as treasurer of the campaign for the Democratic slate. Grote called Blacker's appointment a real political move, claiming Blacker has no experience whatsoever in municipal government to qualify him for the \$25,000 - which is \$1,000 more than Allan had received. Griffin emphasized his wish to have professional people at the helm. He expressed appreciation of Mrs. Capone's efforts, but said professional direction is needed. Blacker is an attorney, with a law practice on Park Avenue in Scotch Plains.

In another job switch, James Walsh was replaced as township attorney by Louis M. Markowitz, with Markowitz to make \$10,100. Although not objecting to Markowitz, Grote registered negative views on his salary, claiming Walsh had only been paid a salary that high after ten years of experience. Newcomb said Griffin had promised to tighten the belt fiscally, yet was paying the same salary to an inexperienced man, Griffin expressed appreciation that Markowitz would work for the \$10,100, stating Walsh would have received more this year.

Fred Lombardo was named supervisor of Public Properties, replacing Ralph DiPaolo. Mr. Lombardo will resign from his

job in private industry to assume the position. He has been a foreman for Trans National Fabricators in Linden.

The Civil Defense Director position was assigned to Nicholas Migliaccio, who is a fireman. The Supervisor of Public Properties, Civil Defense Director, Deputy Township Clerk, Local Assistance Board, Auditor, Special Police, School Guards and Firemen are managerial appointments. The appointment of Migliaccio drew particularly wrathful comment from the Republicans.

Grote charged that Blacker's appointments are "bringing political funk into the township," and the townspeople should be "up in arms." Grote said Blacker must have failed to check the background of Mrs. Messmer, who has received commendations for her Civil Defense efforts on many occasions. The Democrats have named political people to professional jobs, and failed to give those losing jobs the courtesy of letting them know.

The single appointment which drew positive comment from the GOP was that of John Appezatto. Long active with the Dem-

Continued On Page 15

Historical Book Is Available

It wasn't really Santa and his elves, scrambling around dropping off treats in those final days before Christmas. In actuality, it was members of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Historical Society and the Scotch Plains American Revolution Bicentennial Committee, distributing the soft-cover copies of "Under the Blue Hills."

"Under the Blue Hills" is a major bicentennial effort locally - a printing of a history of the Scotch Plains area, authored by a renowned historical writer, Marion N. Rawson. The hard cover editions are expected to be out within the next week or so. In soft-cover form, over 650 copies were delivered throughout the area before the holiday with the assistance of George Kundrat and the Knights of Columbus plus Historical Society and Bicentennial members. The books are available at local book stores.