

THE TIMES

ONLY NEWSPAPER WITH COMPLETE SCOTCH PLAINS - FANWOOD NEWS

VOLUME 1

SCOTCH PLAINS-FANWOOD, N.J.

THURSDAY, APRIL 10, 1975

15 CENTS

Fanwood Residents Hit Trailers

In response to a petition requesting legislation governing parking and housing of trailers in Fanwood, the Borough Council's Building and Zoning Committee last week held an informal public hearing to glean opinion on the issue.

The meeting was attended by approximately two dozen people—some of them trailer owners pressing for no legislation, others signers of the document urging legislation. According to Council members John Swindlehurst, John Coulter and Carol Whittington, who constitute the Council Committee, the attendance indicated that the question is of concern to some residents. The three noted that in addition to the petition bearing approximately 75 names, they had received several individual letters expressing similar thoughts.

Those who favor setting of specifications felt that trailers should be parked away from the fronts of homes. Some suggested that setback standards now applied to auxiliary housing, such as garages, be similarly applied to trailers, while some suggested rear parking and screening from street and neighboring properties.

The residents seeking laws said the parking of trailers in front of private homes detracts from the attractiveness of streets and undermines property values.

In contrast, several owners

of recreational vehicles spoke in favor of being permitted to park them on their private properties. One man challenged the committee and those who seek legislation with pursuing too many laws to govern life. He said those who own trailers should have the freedom to use their private properties as they see fit.

Another trailer owner said the count in Fanwood, now set at about 39, does not constitute enough of a problem to warrant another law on the books. He claimed the problem is one of neighborhood origin, and should be treated as such.

Following the public input session on Thursday, the full Council met in agenda session on Monday of this week, and received a second petition, this one asking that the borough refrain from setting limitations on trailer parking. The new petition was signed by 80 people.

The full Council authorized the Borough Attorney to investigate the zoning laws to determine the position of the laws on the question.

Women On The Rescue Squad? Nope, Not Yet

The bylaws of the Scotch Plains Rescue Squad list specifications for membership: male, 21 years or older, and a resident of Scotch Plains. The exclusion of women from the squad has been a source of community controversy since the Junior Women's Club publicly introduced the issue last year, seeking a change in the by-laws. Since then, the Junior Women have been actively pressing the issue, and have gained extensive community support for their position. Recently, they were joined by the Committee of Concerned Citizens in requesting the Scotch Plains Township Council to withhold its annual \$3,000 contribution until the bylaws are changed to permit women to serve on the volunteer squad.

With the Scotch Plains PBA, Assemblywoman Betty Wilson, the League of Women Voters, and the Newcomers Club already officially on the list favoring changes in the squad laws, and other organizations reportedly about to join the ranks, are changes contemplated? To date, there has been no change in the bylaws, said President Nick Colarusso. How would change come about? Mr. Colarusso outlined the mechanics. A member of the squad would have to introduce a change, it would be read at two consecutive meetings, then voted upon. Has anyone yet initiated such legislation? No, he indicated.

Mrs. Maria Labasi is the Scotch Plains Junior Women's Club member assigned to the question. She claims that conversations she has had with the state Division of Civil Rights indicate that agencies such as Rescue Squads fall under the area of employment on public contracts, and that the squad discriminates. Scotch Plains township receives federal funds in some areas, and even though the federal funds are not necessarily redirected to the Rescue Squad, the township as recipient of federal funds must adhere in its

contributions to antidiscrimination guidelines.

Mrs. Labasi further claims that under the New Jersey Administrative Code, volunteer fire companies and First Aid squads must provide application forms, available through the office of the municipal clerk. There are no application forms for the local Squad, Mr. Colarusso said. Any applicant may write a letter stating his qualifications.

Mrs. Labasi stressed that the purpose of the Scotch Plains Juniors in urging a change in the law is not to achieve the goal of getting one single woman on the squad, but of providing better service through an expanded squad. The squad now numbers 30. "The main purpose, our club felt, was to expand the squad and to open the membership to ALL qualified people," Mrs. Labasi said. Since women are more available during the daytime, they would be appropriate candidates for consideration, she noted. The club also proposes a second ambulance headquarters on the southside, similar to the dual coverage of the fire company, she said, because of the size of

School Board Puts Skids Under Future Muir Renovations

Fanwood Named Bicentennial Community

Fanwood has received its designation as an official Bicentennial Community and the Bicentennial Committee plans to have the presentation of the official flag on Wednesday evening, April 9, 8 p.m. at the Fanwood Borough Hall, preceding the regular monthly council meeting.

Boy Scouts will perform a flag ceremony, children of the community dressed in colonial costume will attend, and the Mayor and Council members will be presented with three-cornered hats to commemorate the occasion.

the township.

In a study conducted in surrounding communities, Mrs. Labasi said she found that there were five squares in 25 which did not include women. Of those five, two specifically discriminate in their by-laws, one of them being Scotch Plains, she said. Plainfield is considered a private club, and takes no public assistance or public donations.

Mrs. Labasi said her club has sought a round-table discussion seeking explanations from the Squad for their position, but several invitations to such events have not yet yielded a guest. In contrast, Colarusso felt the juniors might have come to discuss the issue with the full Squad before all the public furor.

Why does Scotch Plains not include women? Because there is no need to do so, Mr. Colarusso said. At the present time, the Scotch Plains squad is fully able to provide daytime coverage. In fact, it is the sole squad in the entire area providing transportation service during the day. In other communities, Rescue Squads do transportation calls (moving patients from place to place) but only provide this service after 6 p.m. In Scotch Plains, the Squad answers 100 calls per month, of which 40

Continued On Page 27

Board Agenda Session At Muir Tonight

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education will hold its monthly agenda setting session tonight at the Board of Education headquarters, Muir School, Plainfield Avenue, Scotch Plains, beginning at 8 p.m. Recently, it had been incorrectly reported that agenda meetings would be held at Park Junior High School. Park is the official meeting place of the board for this year, but Muir is the site for the monthly agenda sessions, which are open to the public.

\$138,828 Committed To Date, Additional \$16,379 Is Planned

During the recent Board of Education campaign, and since that time, the renovation project which will create administrative offices for the Board of Education in the building which once served as Muir School has brought forth many challenges, allegations, and financial figures. To provide a full picture of what has happened to date and to gather information for the future, the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education held a special work session on the issue last week. The public was invited to observe, but not to participate.

To date, a total of \$138,828 has been committed to renovations at Muir. That includes work already completed and work in process. The Board will further expend approximately \$16,379 for further work, principally in areas of heating and air conditioning. According to Board President, Richard Bard, another \$5,000 could be spent to round out and complete work already begun.

After this expenditure, which is labeled Phase I of the total package, and was to have been the first of three annual outlays, further expenditures will be discontinued until the new Board of Education has taken a long look at the total Muir School project. It was noted by several Board members that the Muir School renovation should be studied deeply in light of recent budget cuts.

The Board of Education received a 20-page report from administration outlining cost estimates and expenditures on the Muir School project. Original architectural plans for renovations had a price tag of over \$900,000. However, it was noted that the district at no time planned to put that much into the school. More reasonable plans were outlined.

Once the architectural plans had been approved at the state level, a deadline of July, 1974 was set for occupancy, and in June of 1974, legal notices for bids on heating, demolition, electrical service, ventilating, etc. were placed. Bids received were rejected by the Board as too high, except in the area of electrical work. After a second set of plans were submitted and bids again were felt to be too high in September, the district became its own general contractor.

In November, 1974, bids were received for materials and supplies, and heating and air conditioning and other work was begun under district supervision.

The last Board of Education was presented with plans for Phase II, which had been scheduled for completion during the 1975-76 school year, and with Phase III, slated for the 1976-77 year.

The concept of moving the administrative offices to Muir occasioned some discussion. Board President Bard responded to questions regarding the necessity of moving from rented quarters on Second Street by indicating that Second Street had been overcrowded and there had not been

room there for moving Office of Pupil Services and Library Processing center there, to free Muir School for sales purposes. Bard conceded that it might have been possible at the time to find space in a school for administrative and/or the Office of Pupil Services, but he recalled that at the time these decisions were being made, most schools were in the throes of construction or additions.

Board member Vincent Shanni was critical of the 20-page report. When administrators indicated it had cost \$1,400 to prepare, Shanni expressed dissatisfaction, stating that it had not included any figure for management time where the district acted as its own subcontractor. Time for administering these funds, for making decisions, and overseeing the project was not included.

Shanni felt a general contractor earns some part of the total in a construction job, and he felt a figure should have been included.

Thomas Fallon agreed that the cost of administrative work and time should be added in. He estimated this could total \$65,000 to \$85,000 more.

Mrs. Mason disagreed. A contractor is in business for profit, she said, and the motive in

Continued On Page 27

Board Seeks Input On Budget Cuts

In line with a promise to involve the public in decisions affecting the school district for next year, Board of Education President Richard M. Bard has issued a call for public registration of suggestions for ways to reduce the 1975-76 school budget. That budget will be \$820,000 less than proposed by the school board of last year. It was overwhelmingly defeated, and the current Board agreed with the governing bodies of Scotch Plains and Fanwood to live with an \$820,000 cut.

The new Board has said administration, staff, parents and general public will have an opportunity for input of ideas on where to trim.

Mr. Bard said he would like to receive suggestions and ideas no later than April 21, in writing. Letters should be sent to the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education, Plainfield Avenue, Scotch Plains.