

August 28, 1975

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THE TIMES

DAILY NEWSPAPER WITH COMPLETE SCOTCH PLAINS - FANWOOD NEWS

SCOTCH PLAINS-FANWOOD, N.J. THURSDAY, AUGUST 28, 1975

15 CENTS A COPY

VOLUME 16, NO. 34



Elderly School One, now boarded up and abandoned, will be up for sale next October. Its choice location on Park Avenue in downtown Scotch Plains makes it the subject of considerable speculation regarding future use.

School One Will Go On Block In October

Board Members In Dissent On Sale Plans - Opinions Vary On Future Use Of Site

If owning an old brick schoolhouse is your bag, you might realize a lifetime dream come October, when elderly School One on Park Avenue will be on the block. The Board of Education hasn't been using the school since the new School One opened for business last year. However, the administration and the Board have held off on offering it for sale, awaiting a more favorable real estate market. Apparently, the market is enough improved to justify a public sale. The board motion, approved on a split vote, calls for a determination of a minimum acceptable price prior to the public sale.

Not all board members agree that the building should be sold in this manner. Vincent Shanni, Frank Festa, and Philip Labasi voted against the sale. Shanni wants a specific financial plan for the improvements to be effected with funds realized from the sale. The school is an asset belonging to the taxpayers, Shanni said, and therefore the board should act in a businesslike manner in arranging the sale. "This is a sham with what's gone on in the economy," Shanni said.

Board president Richard Bard reminded the board members that two different votes, by different boards, had been taken to dedicate monies received from the sale of School One toward improvements at Park Junior High. Mrs. Robbie Mason, another board member, indicated she had always understood these improvements would include renovation of the auditorium, new lockers, and other enhancements. Mrs. Mason disagreed with the approach favored by Shanni -- that of setting priorities before sale. She suggested seeing how much is realized from the sale, then setting priorities for spending that amount. "The longer we wait, the longer we run a risk I'd like to see somebody else own that abandoned building," Mrs. Mason said.

The building attracts attention and comment from time to time, for its status as an antiquity and for its location, desirably set in the center of town. From time to time, one hears someone comment that it would make an attractive setting for a group of shops, for a restaurant, a youth center. Most frequently, however, the school site is spoken of as a possible site for future senior citizen housing, located as it is near shopping, churches, bus routes, etc.

Recently, the Scotch Plains Planning Board authorized a study of future zoning in Scotch Plains by professional planner Dean Boorman of Boorman, Dorram, the township planning consultants. The study is to be the basis of Planning Board discussion and study of possible changes to be incorporated in a new township Master Plan. Boorman mentions old School One as a possible site for Senior Citizen housing. Although he does not make a specific zoning proposal for such zoning, he suggests the possibility, including the possible saving of the old school,

"which has historic and architectural value, by remodeling and adding on to it to accommodate Senior Citizens." Any building on the site should be kept to a maximum of four stories, the planner feels, to prevent conflict with existing Park Avenue development.

Last spring, Mayor Robert Griffin appointed an eight-man commission to study the possibilities for Senior Citizen housing in Scotch Plains. The chairman is Thomas DeLuca. Is School One a likely site for future Senior Citizen housing, DeLuca was asked early this week. It's far too early to predict, DeLuca replied.

DeLuca noted that the first charge to the Commission is to determine whether or not there is, in fact, a need for Senior Citizen accommodations. Toward that end, the eight members are now conducting in-depth studies of need. They have contacted churches. They have obtained a list of the 524 citizens (305 female, 219 male) who receive Senior Citizen tax deductions and are talking to these people. The group is being advised by Vivian Carlin, authority on housing for the elderly for the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs. The President of the Golden Age Group, a seniors club in Scotch Plains, is included in the Commission membership. A questionnaire went out with a recent mailing of the township newsletter seeking still further avenues to the township's older people. Nationwide studies of senior citizen need per population have been studied.

By the end of September or early October, DeLuca said he anticipates the group will have a report on need. If it is determined there is a need, the Commission would then be directed

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School Registration Is Down In District

The kids of Scotch Plains-Fanwood are still knee deep in summer of '75, splashing about in pools, driving to the shore, scooping up those last moments of sun and fun. Their days are most definitely numbered, however. In fact, they're down to a single week. The school doors open for business next Wednesday, September 3rd. The senior and junior high schools will have first-day staggered sessions, in accordance with news releases elsewhere in today's issue.

This year, the total number of scholars in the Scotch Plains-Fanwood district will be down by about 190 from 1974-75. The losses will be felt primarily at the elementary level, however. The high school will enroll the largest class in its history -- with the total high school enrollment up by 50 students.

With a budget trimmed by \$820,000 from that originally proposed by the administration, and trimmed once again by about \$275,000 less in anticipated state aid, the district will operate at a "status quo" level, with no new programs initiated this year. In fact, about 30 courses have been dropped from the high school curriculum, due to lack of interest and/or enrollees.

The only real change will be a modification at the high school level for incoming sophomores,

permitting a choice of four or five days a week of math and English.

There have been 21 new teachers hired to fill teaching slots this year. Philip Geiger, Assistant to the Superintendent, and Director of Personnel, thought he had all the vacancies filled. However, he returned Monday from a week's vacation to find three resignations on his desk. Geiger said there will be no problem filling these three additional slots, since he had conducted extensive interviews for the positions which had existed and had found a proliferation of candidates with excellent credentials. He will be able to draw from his files to fill the three new vacancies.

On this basis for this year, who had been engaged late in the 1974-75 school year.

In addition to the 22 teachers hired new, there were also five people hired on a permanent

The number of new teachers is down considerably from last year, Geiger noted. Last year, 51 new teachers began the school year in September. The reduction is due to the dearth of teaching positions, which encourages experienced teachers to remain where they are rather than to attempt to find new jobs elsewhere.

The only new teaching slot will be one Special Education class, authorized by the Board of Education last week.

Geiger said it is likely he'll have to hire about 15 to 20 more teachers in the course of the school year. There have been almost as many resignations as in years past, Geiger noted, but not as many replacements and/or new teachers. He cited the fact that there had already been eight elementary teachers eliminated before the budget vote, due to declining enrollments. About 12 or 13 other positions at the secondary level haven't been filled, Geiger said, indicating elimination of these slots.

The district is making a concerted effort to retain the teachers who are good. There is also effort underway to employ as many minority teachers as possible. Geiger said four of the 22 new teachers are minority candidates. This represents close to 25 percent of the new teaching staff. Heretofore, there had been only 12 black teachers within the entire district, so the new policies represent great strides forward in this area, Geiger said.

Staff orientation meetings were slated for yesterday, Wednesday, August 27. Over the Labor Day weekend, Superintendent Reigh Carpenter plans to tour the schools with the Board of Education members.

All building cleaning and maintenance work has been completed. It has been a routine summer as far as building maintenance goes, Geiger said, since there has not been any construction underway over the summer months.

In Today's TIMES
FALL FASHIONS
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Multi County Committee Studies Flood Problems

Formation of a committee representing public bodies including the Park Commission, in Union, Somerset and Middlesex Counties having an interest in the Green Brook sub-basin flood problem, and the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, has been requested by The Union County Park Commission, which urged the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders to take the action.

The purpose, according to a resolution adopted by the Park Commission, is to coordinate and expedite studies of an acceptable plan of flood control in the Green Brook sub-basin.

The Park Commission noted that it is the body politic whose premises, the Watchung Reservation, are affected by proposed flood water detention facilities. The Commission also noted that it has already expedited the project purpose by obtaining the first phase of a comprehensive hydrologic and environmental engineering study by Metcalf & Eddy, Inc., engineers and planners, to evaluate the consequences of possible use of areas of the Watchung Reservation for flood water detention. The Com-

mission has offered to make available the information, data and findings of the Metcalf & Eddy study to all public bodies concerned with the Green Brook problem.

The Park Commission on December 17, 1974 gave its preliminary approval to the basic concept of the flood water detention facilities as presented by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers.

An engineering report to the Commission on August 18th indicated that construction of bridges and dams in Echo Lake Park should be substantially completed by the Labor Day weekend.

SCHOOL OPENS
Next Wednesday



EARLY CLOSING
For
Next Week's Issue
Because of the Labor Day holiday on Monday all advertising and news copy must be in our office by noon Friday August 29, 1975.