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Citizens Meet Town Manager Flood Problems

It was raining hard last Wednesday night. In fact, it had already been raining for a good part of three days, as several Scotch Plains residents gathered in the Scotch Plains Library for a meeting of the Committee of Concerned Citizens, with new Township Manager James Hauser slated to speak to the assembly on flooding. As of Wednesday, there were already situations in parts of Scotch Plains which kept residents from attending the meeting, in fear that homes and basements might flood in their absence. Ironically, few knew the horrors which were just around the corner, as rains continued through Thursday and Friday, developing into the extremely wet conditions which created havoc for much of the Eastern seaboard for much of last week.

Undoubtedly, Hauser did not provide the listeners with what they'd like to have heard, for he informed them that in some cases solutions are outrageously expensive, far beyond the capacity of Scotch Plains alone, and in other cases on the south side of Scotch Plains, it is not all that easy to even define the solutions to begin with.

Hauser started off by telling committee members that there is no one single solution to solve all of Scotch Plains' flood problems. The locations of flooding change from storm to storm and much depends upon direction and location of each storm. Rainfall pattern: have been varied in recent years, and in some of these rainfalls there are no solutions, he said.

The Green Brook, which runs through the Union County Park across Route 22, thence along the northern side of Scotch Plains, usually washes across Route 22 and into Park Avenue in heavy storms. It often creates problems for the northwest quadrant of Scotch Plains, in areas close to Front Street, Mountain Avenue, and Route 22. There is,

in fact, a solution to the Green Brook. The ultimate solution will cost \$100 million to \$130 million, Hauser said. "Who pays for something like that?" He answered the question himself. The governmental agency that receives the most benefit from the people of this area is the federal government, which takes in income tax and other forms of income from our population. This is the agency which should have the responsibility for solving the problem, he said, not a community of 7,000 taxpayers. The answer lies with Green Brook Flood Commission, which requires agreement and cooperation from the several member communities. Even then, Hauser estimated, the solution would not be completed until somewhere between 1982 and 1987. It is the role of a citizen group to work to get that time pattern compressed into a shorter period, he advised.

He went on to the Cedar Brook. Originating in the area of Scotch Plains-Fanwood High, the Cedar Brook meanders from the high school toward the Plainfield border at Terrill Road, along the

Policy Committee Says "Philosophy" Emphasizes Basics

edges of Park Jr. High and School One properties, bordering Fanwood and Scotch Plains. During peak flood times, it plays havoc with homes in Cecilia Place, Farley Avenue, and other flood-prone residential streets, again in the northwest quadrant. That brook is now under consideration at the county level, where a study of a detention basin is being made. A detention basin could be built, Hauser said, and it would cost \$650,000 "just to put the hole in the ground, with some dike work," and it would have some favorable impact. There is more needed, however, the manager indicated. The township needs the storm sewers and the catch basins to bring the water efficiently into the detention basin, and a total for all necessary work might be set at \$2 million. The federal government might provide half, but even so, the township would have to furnish the other half. He noted that he and the business manager have been hard at work with officials from the bond market in

Board Member Labasi Says Teachers' Campaign Misinterprets

A new philosophy of education for the Scotch Plains-Fanwood school district, introduced for public consideration last week, continues to draw strong reactions from public and from teaching staff. The new philosophy, designed to replace one drawn up here in 1970, will be subjected to considerable public input and to change where necessary, according to Board of Education Policy Committee Chairman Philip Labasi. It will not be voted upon by the board for a month or two. The revised philosophy emphasizes the "basics," which are receiving considerable attention nationwide this year. It urges development of "reading, writing and mathematical skills."

Labasi said early this week that it has become necessary to clarify an increasingly muddled situation regarding the proposed policy.

"On observation, it is clear that the leaders of the teachers' association and some members of the administration have embarked on a propaganda campaign aimed at swaying public opinion against the proposal. This campaign is characterized by misinterpretation of parts of the policy, misleading and inaccurate press releases, and discussions by teachers with students at the secondary level," Labasi said.

Of particular concern, apparently, has been a sentence in the new philosophy which states "We believe, therefore, that our public schools must not undertake programs which intrude into the affective domain, specifically the teaching of values and attitude formation."

Labasi feels that the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Education Association has made inaccurate statements concerning the proposed philosophy, in claiming: 1. that the policy would restrict the teaching of good values, and 2. that the policy would eliminate all courses except reading, writing and mathematics.

Labasi said: "Concerning the first allegation, the proposed policy in no way excludes the demonstration of good values, such as patriotism, love of parents and country, or concern for those less fortunate. It does say that a public school system has no business creating programs or courses which attempt to format attitudes specifically or create courses solely to put over a particular philosophy of political thought."

"The second allegation is totally incorrect and purposely misleading. The board proposes that its main concern is to assure that our children will read, write and compute with comprehension. How could anyone disagree with that? This does not exclude the teaching of other courses and disciplines required by law or determined by the community, through its board, to be desirable or necessary."

"The proposed policy on philosophy deals with five directions: 1. to lay a solid basic understanding in the areas of math, reading and writing skills; 2. to frankly report to the public

how efficient our educational effort is in preparing our children; 3. to avoid intrusion into areas reserved for parents, i.e. we will not 'program' our children's minds; 4. an intention to disclose everything possible about the school system to the public; 5. to use tax funds wisely and to stress awareness that these funds come from persons of all economic levels and must therefore be used with care.

"Perhaps the teachers' association, in attacking this policy so viciously, may have other thoughts in mind beyond the alleged concerns they have expressed. Coincidentally, Frederick Hipp, president of the New Jersey Education Association (state teachers' union) has publicly stated (9/28/75) issue of the Newark Star Ledger) that teachers this year will attempt to gain powers traditionally vested in boards of education; specifically the writing of educational philosophy and policy."

The Board is anxious to receive community opinions based on reading of the policy rather than inflammatory statements designed to cloud the issue."

Board of Education President Richard Bard also spoke this week concerning the new philosophy. Bard addressed himself specifically to the potentially controversial section on teaching of values. The key word is being overlooked by teachers and by public, Bard said. That keyword is programs. Bard said that of course teachers would still teach

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Teaching Staffs React To "Philosophy Of Education"

The major issues that school districts throughout the state are faced with today are the economy crunch, strikes, job action, budget cuts, state withdrawal of funds and others. However, the communities of Scotch Plains and Fanwood are "up-in-arms" with regard to another issue, one which at times becomes obscured by other factors; that issue is kids. The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Education Association was one of the first to react to a new philosophy which was hastily prepared and more hastily presented at the Sept. 18 Board of Education meeting for first reading.

Public reaction to the sudden introduction of a new "Philosophy of Education" is a source of gratification to the teaching staff. Michael Lauten, President of the SFEEA, stated: "It is difficult to remember the last time that the community has been unified on a single issue affecting our schools. The reaction probably relates to the fact that the public remembers the campaign promises of the new majority on the Board of Education, and when it comes to an educational issue that directly relates to what kids learn and how they learn, the community insists that Board members live up to their commitment to be open and seek involvement of staff and citizens."

Presently, there are active curriculum planning groups within the school structure that include citizen and teaching staff input for the very purpose of understanding professional and community needs and desires. In spite of this, the Board of Education chose to ignore this kind of input when they intro-

duced the very foundation of all curriculum planning, the "Philosophy of Education." Mr. Lauten commented further: "I hope staff's desire to be involved and the many time-consuming hours willingly put forth in curriculum planning is not an exercise in futility. In the case of the statement of philosophy and other curriculum related matters considered by the Board recently, I am hopeful that the Board's lack of recognition of these efforts is not the trend of the future."

The existing philosophy is five years old (not fifteen, as reported in a recent newspaper article). The statement of philosophy, as well as all other areas of education, are subject to continuing review and revision. Since the entire program receives direction from the statement of philosophy, the input of citizens, staff, and students should be earnestly sought by the Board, with the final document reflecting the input of Board, citizens, staff and students."

Fire Drill In Fanwood

Operation EDITH or Exit Drills In The Home will commence at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 8. In Fanwood the fire siren will blow once as a signal for all Borough residents to put to test their home exit plan, Bob Rau, Fanwood's Chief of Fire Prevention says that every family should have a home exit plan which provides two exits from every sleeping area.

Fire can start any where at any time and often starts at night when people are asleep because of a cigarette left burning or some other cause. In many cases the stairs or other normal means of escape become blocked due to the quick build up of fire. If there is no other way out people can become trapped and may die.

Often because of the panic of a fire an obvious escape route may be overlooked but if practice drills are held usually everyone knows what to do. Another essential feature of Operation EDITH is to have an assembly print out of the house for everyone to go to be sure the whole family is out. To participate in EDITH just plan two exits from each sleeping area in advance so that everyone knows what to do. Chief Rau says that it may be necessary to put rope or chain ladders to provide exit from second story bedrooms but he feels that since these are relatively inexpensive it is a small price to pay to save a life. Then at 7:00 p.m. on Wednesday when the siren sounds have everyone exit from the house by the alternate route and meet at the assembly point.

Paper Drive On Sunday

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Raider Marching Band will conduct its first paper drive of the 1975-76 school year on Sunday, October 5th, from 12 noon to 5 p.m. The deposit site will be in front of the high school on Westfield Road. It would be most helpful if people would bundle and tie their papers or package them in paper bags.

Proceeds from the drive will be used to help pay for the marching and concert bands' participation in the Apple Blossom Festival in Winchester, Virginia, next May. Approximately 160 students will be involved in the trip.