



SCOTCH PLAINS

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Mayor outlines seven-point program for 1979

While the majority of Scotch Plains citizens spent a quiet, recuperative day on January 1, recovering from New Year's Eve excesses and watching televised bowl games, the Municipal Building was a bustling scene at noon, as a new government took over the reins in annual reorganization festivities. Alan Augustine was unanimously elected to the mayoralty by an all-Republican Council. Three newly elected Council members, Alice Agran, Philip Shick and James Flinn, were sworn into office.

In his inaugural address to the citizens, Augustine outlined a 1979 program. Augustine's first priority will be improvement of the public image of Scotch Plains. Toward that end, he plans to call a meeting of Mayor, Council, Township Manager and representatives from the Westfield Board of Realtors, to discuss what the public impression of Scotch Plains is now, and how it can be improved, with an accompanying improvement and maintenance of real estate property values.

Augustine plans to seek a productive and cohesive rapport with the local Board of

Education and new school administration, "being very careful not to interfere with their independence, but being secure in the belief that the rank and file of our town would like us to get along with the Board of Education..."

He noted that he does not suggest that "either body roll over and play dead in contacts with the other, but it is time for recognition of the role and the philosophies of the Board and the municipal government, and for respect for the other's viewpoint in times of agreement and disagreement. He welcomed Board representative Edward Spack, who attended the inaugural meeting.

Public safety will be a major focus in the New Year, Augustine said. He listed a nine-point program for improvement. The Mayor will seek a meeting with the county prosecutor to discuss improved crime prevention, detection, etc.; plans to establish a new crime prevention tactical force, the "BEV Squad," with focus on breakings and enterings and vandalism; will recommend increases in the number of police cars in service and increased police visibility; hopes to add

to the auxiliary part-time police force; will give recognition to police and fire personnel who distinguish themselves; and will encourage further community and citizen awareness projects.

Augustine also will recommend implementation of a "snow watch" for storm preparedness and a review of weather forecasting techniques here. He will pursue ways of helping the Rescue Squad to acquire a new ambulance, and will seek a meeting with Governor Brenden Byrne to seek the "long overdue" construction of a Route 22 overpass.

The Saturday morning "Listening Post,"

a nonpartisan forum for township residents to air complaints and/or concerns, will be reinstated this Saturday, January 6, from 10 to 12 and monthly thereafter. Augustine hopes to reach the public further by periodic neighborhood "fireside chat" meetings.

He'll contact neighboring mayors to seek improved intermunicipal relations and cooperative spirit; will create an Ad Hoc Committee to focus on greater cultural development and more performing arts possibilities, and will reappoint a Mayor's Senior Citizen Advisory Committee of senior citizens to represent their interests to Mayor and Council.

Council upholds boards on two appeals for overturn

By Maria C. Sartor

A new twist has been added to the traditionally Republican Borough Council this year. Although the GOP's still hold the majority four to two, at last Monday's reorganization meeting, Democrat Patrick J. Dunne was elected to serve as Council President.

Beginning the third of a three year term, Dunne is second only to Republican Mayor Theodore R. Trumpp in seniority amongst the council members. Having also served previously as a Councilman, Trumpp is beginning his eighth year as Fanwood's Mayor. The four year mayoral position is decided in a general election by the public.

Republicans Loren R. Hollembaek and Francis T. Boyle are each entering the second year of a three year term.

Sworn in at the New Year's Day ceremony, were freshmen councilmen Arthur Lundgren and Robert S. Rau Jr. The two Republicans had won their three year seats in the November election by defeating Democrats Donald Dugan and Paul Davis. Their victory had secured for the Republicans the long held majority which had hung in abeyance following the decisions of incumbent GOP's Robert J. McCarthy and William S. Winey not to seek re-election.

Also sworn in at the noon meeting, was Democrat Patricia Kuran. Kuran had been filling out the remaining unexpired term of Carol Whittington, who had resigned last May. In the November election, Kuran narrowly defeated Republican Eric Hurch in the contest for that seat.

Nominations and appointments of Borough Officials proceeded routinely at the reorganization meeting, with the exception of the position of Borough Engineer. For the first time since October of 1961, Richard O. Luster is Fanwood's "Acting" Borough Engineer. The Borough Engineer had the

work "Acting" prefixed to his title in an attempt to implement an investigation into the relative costs of engineering services. The investigation was suggested last summer.

At that time, at an agenda fixing session, several members of the council (from both parties) had questioned just what other communities were paying in engineering fees. Recent road improvements, sewer jobs, playground improvements, curbing, and plans for the now under construction municipal building, had caused considerable expenditure in the area of engineering fees. Such fees are usually determined as a percentage of the total cost of the project.

At the time of the discussion, it was decided to investigate. Mayor Trumpp thanked Councilman Representative John Llewellyn Fisher to conduct a telephone survey, and subsequently indicated that he himself would contact other towns by letter.

With the results of the investigation not yet in, at last Monday's meeting, GOP Councilman Boyle made a motion to amend the re-appointment of Luster to the Borough Engineer's position. With the unanimous approval of the council, Luster was then appointed as "Acting" Borough Engineer. Pending the results of the investigation, the issue will again be brought before the council.

Mayor Trumpp commented that he would seek the requested information on comparative engineering fees from Mayor Lawrence Anzovino. Anzovino is Executive Director of the 350 member Mayors Association.

After the meeting, Boyle commented, "In light of public money, we should have a better feeling of what other communities are spending -- what would the scope of services and related costs be?"

Other appointments included:

Eric Hursh - one year term on the Planning Board, replacing Raymond Block, who resigned last summer; Joseph Somerville - reappointed to a full, four-year term on the Planning Board; Robert T. Warrington and Robert Thiesing, both reappointed to four-year terms on the Board of Adjustment; Lewyellen Fisher - appointed borough clerk, tax collector, tax searcher and assessment searcher, as well as acting borough administrator; Frank H. Blatz, Jr. - reappointed borough attorney, and Michael Mitzner - reappointed borough prosecutor. Mitzner

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Police receive recognition



Scotch Plains Police Chief Michael Rossi presented Excellent Duty Awards to Sgt. Thomas Culp and Detective Carl Sicola at the Department's Second Annual Awards Ceremony held at Town Hall December 20th. Sgt. Culp was honored for the apprehension and arrest of a suspected bank robber who was wanted by a neighboring community as a suspect in a bank robbery that took place June 23, 1978.

Det. Carl Sicola was honored for his actions on Tuesday, May 16th when he interrupted a holdup and robbery at a Route 22 service station and, after a dangerous high speed chase, successfully captured one of the two armed suspects after they had abandoned their car in Plainfield.

Representing the Township at the Awards Ceremony which was attended by family and friends were Township Manager, James Hauser and Township Mayor Alan Augustine who officially presented the Awards of Excellence to the honored officers.

Three seated on Fanwood C'I

The Fanwood Borough Council failed to overturn an appeal of a Board of Adjustment decision, during an adjourned meeting held last week. Carol Whittington, a former Councilwoman, sought an overturning of the Adjustment Board recommendation that Dr. Robert Aruta of Martine Avenue be permitted to use his entire property for professional offices.

Whittington had argued at an earlier public meeting, that the decision violated the spirit of the Master Plan for zoning in the borough and threatened the residential character of the neighborhood. She questioned increased parking.

Councilman Patrick Dunne introduced a resolution to overturn the Board of Adjustment recommendation. He was supported by Councilwoman Patricia Kuran and Councilman William Winey. However, three other Council members, Robert McCarthy, Frank Boyle and Loren Hollembaek voted in the negative, so the issue died on a tie vote.

Dunne's resolution stated that he failed to find evidence to support the conclusion of the Board of Adjustment that the area in question is changing to a mixed professional-residential zone. There are instances of professional offices, but they haven't altered the basic residential character of the neighborhood. He cited potential increases in parking on Pleasant Avenue, the corner

where the chiropractor's offices are located, and zoning ordinance encouragement of minimum 10,000 square foot lots for business-professional uses.

Dunne's resolution also noted that, with full professional use of the building, which is residential in design, there should be 19, rather than 13, parking spaces available.

Councilman Frank Boyle charged that the Board of Adjustment "hadn't done its homework." He faulted the case, noting that legally the Borough Council was restricted in making its decision to consideration of only the material on hand, and not the entire history of the Aruta situation. Boyle said the Borough could be in a shaky position if they denied the variance and the case were carried on appeal to a court.

"Board of Adjustment members have threatened to resign. It's an idle threat. They didn't do their jobs properly," Boyle said. When Councilwoman Kuran argued for upholding the integrity of the zoning ordinance, Boyle said he'd also like to maintain the zoning, but had to base his conclusion on the facts as presented.

In 1975, Aruta was granted permission to expand the professional portion of the building at the location. That precedent allowed expansion of service at the time,

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