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THE TIMES

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FORTY CENTS



JANUARY THAW... Edward O'Neill of Warren's Auto Electric on Plainfield Avenue, Scotch Plains clears away ice from the driveway of the establishment on Monday afternoon as temperatures rose and the week-long freeze began to melt in the area.

Michael J. Pawiano, 3rd for The Times

Scotch Plains Planning Board Approves Three Final Subdivisions

Bank From Warren Township Given Okay for O'Donnell Avenue Project

By SUZETTE STALKER
Specially Written for The Times

The Scotch Plains Planning Board awarded final subdivision approval last Wednesday to three applicants seeking to develop township properties and contemplated several other prospects for the municipality which are expected to materialize later this year.

The board's first approval gave Watchung Hills Bank for Savings, a Warren Township institution, the green light to proceed with plans for creating an extension of O'Donnell Avenue through a subdivision consisting of 15 lots on which single-family homes will be built.

The application was initially filed by C & B Associates, a now-defunct partnership, which acquired the property from its original owners, Dr. and Mrs. Albert Theurer, in 1987.

The bank acquired the property after the partnership was dissolved.

Board members had granted C & B Associates, by which the applicant was identified throughout the duration of the case, preliminary subdivision approval in October 1988.

The applicant had to receive approval for routing sewer lines to the Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority, however, before getting final approval.

William S. Jeremiah, 2nd, a Westfield attorney representing Watchung Hills Bank, stated there had been

some ambiguity regarding whether the subdivided properties would be connected to Rahway Valley or the Plainfield Joint Meeting, since the territory falls on the borderline between the areas served by each entity.

Mr. Jeremiah commended board members following announcement of their decision for what he described as the body's effective handling of the case and its long-awaited culmination.

The board subsequently awarded final approval for Snyder & Snyder, a partnership also represented by Mr. Jeremiah, to subdivide property on Lambert Mill Road into 21 lots, on which single-family homes also will be built, according to the attorney.

Snyder & Snyder, which had been given preliminary subdivision approval by the Planning Board on February 1, 1993, also had to acquire sewer-extension permits from the Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority before gaining final approval.

The third approval was awarded to Steven Needle, a homebuilder residing at 5 Pheasant Lane, who plans to subdivide the property he is now living on from one lot into four. Mr. Needle had received preliminary Planning Board approval for his proposal on March 15, 1993.

Board officials also discussed possible recommendations to the Township Council regarding the governing body's pending zoning ordinance for development of Woodland Estates, located on Woodland Avenue, to comply with regulations mandated by the Council on Affordable Housing in accordance with the state's

1988 Mount Laurel decision.

The decision required New Jersey municipalities to provide a certain number of units each of affordable housing for moderate and low-income residents.

The Woodland Estates property, for which the governing body does not yet have an agreement with a developer, is earmarked for the construction of 51 units, including single-family homes, apartments and townhouses, of which four will be designated as moderate-income housing and four as low income.

In other matters, former Mayor Mrs. Joan Papan, announced state approval recently was issued for installation of a traffic signal at the intersection of Marine Avenue and Cooper Road, which is expected to be operational by spring, officials said.

A proposal for installing a traffic light at the intersection, which is heavily travelled by commuters going to and from work each day, originally was brought up during the Planning Board's hearing on the subdivision of Ponderosa Farms, now known as Sterling Chase, in December 1988.

Finally, board members discussed the feasibility of having above-ground fuel storage tanks operational on a small scale in the township, a concept which the body initially began looking at back in August.

Board members acknowledged, however, various operational and safety restrictions would have to be carefully considered regarding regular use of these tanks, which would replace some existing underground fuel receptacles, in the municipality.

FREEHOLDERS URGED TO APPOINT PANEL ON ALTERNATIVES

Scotch Plains Council Okays Resolution Opposing Deer Hunt in the Reservation

Resident Says Those Who Oppose Hunt Care More About Deer Than Other Animals; Superior Court Judge Rules Recycling Contract Must Remain in Force for Now

By GLENN R. KAPLINSKI
Specially Written for The Times

The Township Council of Scotch Plains, by a unanimous vote at Tuesday's meeting, passed a resolution voicing its disapproval of the recent deer hunt held at the Watchung Reservation.

While acknowledging there is a deer population problem at the reservation the resolution urged, "A blue-ribbon panel" of experts be impaneled to find an alternative and humane solution to the problem.

The idea of impaneling a "blue-ribbon panel" originated with Councilman Alan M. Augustine.

The resolution embodied complaints by residents who live near the reservation about public health, safety and welfare issues.

According to the resolution the hunt, "Appears to offer the least prospect for a lasting solution to the problem."

In the public-comment portion of the meeting residents spoke for and against the hunt and resolution.

All those who did speak requested the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders to take effective and humane steps to eliminate the hunt and find a more humane solution to the problem of deer over population.

Mrs. Beverly Lucas of 2673 Crest Lane, a 20-year resident, whose backyard faces the reservation, spoke in favor of the temporary measure of a hunt.

"People care more for deer than other animals or our children," she said.

She termed the four days of the hunt, "not a bad experience."

Mrs. Lucas added, "The forest has to live, and there are too many deer."

Mrs. Maryanne Liskowski of Evergreen Avenue took issue with the media, whom she alleged portrayed those opposed to the hunt as "kooks and animal-rights activists."

Mrs. Liskowski suggested deer contraception be looked into as a means of controlling the herd.

Another resident was in favor of

the hunt in order to correct the imbalance in the echo system.

"The Freeholders acted responsibly instead of just talking," the resident said.

This person labeled the opponents of the hunt "melodramatic."

A resident of the reservation area, he said his lifestyle was in no way affected by the hunt.

The gentleman did hear gunshots, however.

Two ordinances passed on second and final reading.

The first authorizes the issuance of \$95,000 in bonds for improvements to underground fuel storage tanks in, by and for the township.

A total of \$5,000 will be appropriated as a down payment as required by bond law for a total of \$100,000.

The second ordinance authorized the purchase of a "breathing-air compressor" for the Fire Department as a sum of \$40,000.

The purchase had been recom-

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Fanwood Board of Adjustment Grants Variance for La Grande Lot

Parcel, Once Considered a Buildable Site, Changed Due to Zoning-Law Revisions

By TUCKER TRIMBLE
Specially Written for The Times

A vacant lot at 432 La Grande Avenue is now considered a "buildable lot" because of a variance granted on Thursday by the Fanwood Board of Adjustment.

The contract purchasers, Messercola Brothers Building Co. of Rahway, were represented by Richard Gordon in their quest for a variance of the ordinance that requires a 50-foot width on a building lot. The lot measures 47 feet, according to the survey.

The present co-owner, Thomas Vitcavage, told the board when he purchased the lot in 1973 it was considered a buildable lot.

New ordinances require a 75-foot width, although, as board Attorney Charles H. Brandt pointed out, fully 40 per cent of all lots in Fanwood have only 50-foot widths.

Mr. Vitcavage obtained a building permit after purchasing the lot, but never built, mainly because of financial constraints, he explained.

Now he wishes to sell the land to Messercola Brothers, and they are seeking the variance to ensure they can build on the land before making the purchase.

Without the variance, said Mr. Vitcavage, the land only could be used to "grow tomatoes."

Several times, he said, he was asked by the borough to clean up the property, which became a dumping ground for clippings, leaves and other landscape rubble, and now he is in poor health and no longer lives in the area, this has become a hardship for him.

He added he never received calls from the neighbors asking to purchase the land.

A house on the property would be

beneficial to the borough because of the additional taxes it would generate, he noted.

Bernardo Messercola told the board he intends to build a single-family home of approximately 2,000 square feet, consistent with the style of homes in the area.

He did not anticipate any additional requests for variances for the home.

When asked by board Chairman John Celardo about drains, Mr. Messercola told him he would use underground pipes from the roof to the street.

Several neighbors spoke of their concerns about the proposed building.

Edward Clancy, a backyard neighbor on Shady Lane, wanted to know what was going to be done about the drainage and run-off into his yard.

It was proposed by the board a variance be granted with a proviso saying drainage would be taken care of.

Mrs. Lynn Wagner of Cranford spoke in favor of the variance.

"The owners are not in the area to keep up the land, and it becomes an eyesore," she said. "I think it'd be a good thing for the borough," to have a house built, she said.

Board member James Watson said, "We created the hardship by changing the zoning measurements. When it originally was purchased it was a buildable lot."

A variance was approved unanimously with the stipulation for no increase of drainage into adjacent lots and pipe drains to the front.

The board also granted a variance

to Mr. and Mrs. Richard Lieblich of 135 South Glenwood Road to enclose a screened-in porch attached to their home.

Mr. Lieblich told the board he originally talked to the borough about the situation in August and was under the impression a variance was not needed, since no actual expansion is being done.

A foundation exists, he said, but has to be brought up to code. This was done in October.

"We're just waiting for a permit," he said.

Since new furniture is sitting in his garage, Mr. Lieblich requested if a variance was approved, a verbal consent be given instead of waiting for the next meeting to receive written notification.

"We got a loan and purchased furniture," he said, adding "we're in limbo."

The screen will be replaced with sheetrock and a new roof.

"To the best of my knowledge we aren't changing the overall size at all," he said, although the new roof will be higher than the present one.

The board voted unanimously to approve the variance for side-yard clearance, and also to grant a verbal okay so the Lieblichs can begin construction immediately.

In other business, Mr. Celardo was re-elected Chairman of the board with another one-year term, with John Todd again as Vice Chairman.

Mr. Todd was absent from the meeting, as was Mrs. Janice Shackell.

The board also approved its budget for the year.

They will submit to the borough a request for \$6,185 for 1994, with \$5,500 requested for the professional services of Mr. Brandt, \$350 for training, \$60 for dues, \$75 for books and periodicals and \$200 for miscellaneous expenditures. This reflects an increase of \$610 over last year's budget, board members said. In speaking of his retainer fee, Mr. Brandt said, "Some years are great, other years I take a beating."

DEADLINES HELP PAPERS SERVE YOU

Those preparing press releases for submission to The Westfield Leader or The Times are reminded all copy should be in the hands of the Editor at 50 Elm Street, Westfield, by 4 p.m. on the Friday before the Thursday on which they wish it to appear.

Leader releases also may be mailed to Post Office Box 250, Westfield, 07091, and Times releases to Post Office Box 368, Scotch Plains, 07076, to meet the above requirements.

For events which happen the weekend prior to publication, press releases should reach the Editor by Monday of the week of publication at 10 a.m.

Obituaries will be taken until Tuesday at 5 p.m.

For events which are planned weeks or months in advance, we encourage submission of stories as early as possible prior to the event.

The above deadlines are meant to enable us to prepare your copy carefully.



TOWNSHIP LANDMARK... Seelye's Falls, also called the Twin Falls, in Scotch Plains, are shown around 1900. The Seelye home on the hill was destroyed by fire.

Courtesy of the Scotch Plains Public Library

Mrs. Meyer Decides Not to Seek Reelection

Mr. Ruggiero Will Seek Sixth Term on the Board

Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education member August Ruggiero will be seeking a sixth term on the school body in the Tuesday, April 19, School Board Election, while board member, Mrs. Kathleen L. Meyer, will not be seeking a new term and board Vice President, Mrs. Lillian M. Dettmar, has not yet decided whether she will seek another term.

Mr. Ruggiero, who has served five one-year terms as the President of the school body, first ran for the board in 1976 and served until 1979.

He was appointed to an unexpired one-year term in 1984, and was elected to the board for three-year terms in 1985, 1988 and 1991.

The incumbent is a teacher and the Physics Coordinator at Essex County College in Newark.

Mrs. Meyer, who served for nine consecutive years, from 1978 to 1987, was again elected to the school body in 1991 when her name was placed in nomination as a write-in candidate and she chose to accept the position because fewer candidates than the

number of positions open had filed nominating petitions to have their names placed on the ballot.

The board member, who professionally has served as a part-time consultant in home economics and a food photographer, told The Times she made a decision this year to reassess her decision about running for the board as she did three years ago.

"I felt it was time to move on," she said, "and, since my children are no longer in the school system, I decided the position should be left open for someone whose children are in the system."

Mrs. Dettmar told The Times on Monday she has not yet made up her mind about running.

The three seats open this year on the board are from Scotch Plains.

Petitions supporting the nomination of candidates to the board must be in the hands of board Secretary Richard L. Marshall at the board offices on Evergreen Avenue, Scotch Plains, by 4 p.m. on Thursday, February 24.