



THE TIMES



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OUR 35th YEAR

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FORTY CENTS

Planners Give Okay To Fencing

Modification Will Continue Chain Link on the Property Rather Than Stockade Type

By SUZETTE STALKER
Specially Written for The Times

The Scotch Plains Planning Board during its regular meeting Monday adopted a resolution memorializing its approval February 23 of a bid by 1923 Westfield Avenue Associates to modify its original site plan for a commercial building at that address.

The original plan, which was approved by the Planning Board on March 17, 1986, called for the demolition and removal of a two-and-one-half story frame dwelling and the construction of a two-story commercial and office building complete with a full basement.

Applicant Michael Locascio, representing 1923 Westfield Avenue Associates, had sought a modification to the site plan in order to allow him to retain a chain-link fence surrounding six exterior air conditioning units on the easterly side of the property.

Mr. Locascio sought to keep the chain-link fence around the units rather than a stockade variety, claiming the latter type restricted air flow from the air conditioners and had created a malfunction within one of the units.

Board members, after considering Mr. Locascio's arguments in favor of the chain-link fence, coupled with supporting expert testimony, granted the applicant's request.

Officials also cited Mr. Locascio's cooperation with the board over the years as the reason for the positive vote.

Several years ago, Mr. Locascio had installed a board-approved stockade fence but later replaced it with a chain-link model after determining the former was responsible for the air conditioning malfunction.

During last month's public hearing, Mr. Locascio and his attorney Robert Kravitz submitted a number of color photographs of more than 30 air conditioning units on township properties, none of which was equipped with a stockade fence.

Board members concurred the photographs, along with testimony by hearing and air conditioning expert Wayne A. Ortlepp of Ortalis Corporation of Plainfield, was "sufficient documentation" to warrant allowing Mr. Locascio to retain his current fence around the units.

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.



HOISTING THE COLORS...Cub Scouts from Den No. 1 of Pack No. 277 at McGinn School in Scotch Plains took their turn for a month to raise the American flag daily at their school. The scouts were in charge of arriving at the front office, carrying and raising the flag and leading the entire school in the Pledge of Allegiance over the public address system each day. Shown, from left to right, are: Walter Blaser, Ben Flath, Michael Gleason and Scott Wojcik. Missing from the picture is Chris Zdonik.

Borough Council Decides Not to Increase Insurance

Annual Liability Premium Was Set to Rise by \$2,000

By TUCKER TRIMBLE
Specially Written for The Times

In a turn around from a previous decision, the Fanwood Council decided not to increase its general liability insurance from \$10 to \$20 million at its agenda meeting last Thursday.

Borough clerk, Mrs. Eleanor McGovern, told members of the council the premium for the extra insurance had been increased from \$7,500 to \$9,500. Westfield, Summit, Mountaintop and Bernardsville all opted to take the increase, she said, but apparently Scotch Plains decided not to, so the premiums were increased. All the towns are part of the Joint Insurance Fund Fanwood joined earlier this year.

"I'm opposed to it at \$9,500," said Councilman Bruce Walsh.

"It's my feeling we don't need the extra liability insurance," added Councilman Donald J. Kollerjahn. "It was the Kenilworth situation that fueled the concern in the council."

The Mayor, Mrs. Linda Stender, told the council, "To me, the issue is what juries are doing," and Council President, Mrs. Maryanne Connelly, added, "I still think we should have the courage to protect the borough."

"This is a litigious society with awards that are incomprehensible," she noted.

Although Councilman Louis B. Jung pointed out the borough is still saving nearly \$50,000 with the new joint fund, Mr. Kollerjahn asked him at what point does that extra coverage give peace of mind. Mr. Jung replied \$20 million.

Since four Councilmen, Mr. Kollerjahn, Mr. Walsh, Andrew MacDonald and Kevin McGonigle, were against the additional coverage, and only the Council President and Mr. Jung in favor of it, it was decided not to request the additional coverage. No vote was necessary, said Mrs. McGovern, since the council would simply inform the fund they were not interested.

Fanwood is the only participant in the fund who didn't request additional coverage for its borough officials, Mrs. McGovern noted.

Reviewing the correspondence

with the council, the Mayor cited several letters from residents commending the Public Works Department for its efforts in snow removal and street clearing. "They outnumbered the less-than-happy ones," she said.

A letter from outgoing Planning Board member, Jan Swider, outlining possible improvements to the downtown district, prompted discussion concerning the formation of a Special Improvement District.

"We made a good start when the Merchant's Association was formed last year," said the Mayor. "But the Special Improvement District question needs to be evaluated, and either scrapped or gone ahead with."

Mr. MacDonald initially told the Mayor, "You may want to put someone else in charge of it; I'm very busy," but later added he would meet with those involved and report back to the council.

"To make something like Jan Swider wants to happen," he said, referring to suggestions in conformity in awnings, tree plantings and

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Improved Appearance of Downtown Suggested by Survey of Township

Building-Front Upgrading, Flower Plantings, More Cooperation Suggested

By ROBERT R. FASZCZEWSKI
Specially Written for The Times

A number of suggestions for improving the appearance of the Scotch Plains business district, along Park Avenue and East Second Street, are contained in a survey recently completed by marketing students at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School.

The township's Downtown Committee will discuss the results of the survey with business owners at a breakfast to be held on Monday, March 14, at 8:30 at the Park Place restaurant.

A copy of the survey was made available to *The Times* by the township's Mayor, William F. McClintock, Jr.

One of the primary concerns of business owners, according to the survey, is the appearance of the business district.

Better and more attractive lighting, more flower planters, cleaner and more attractive windows, painting and repair of buildings, brick sidewalks and better seasonal decorations all were suggested as contributing to the upgrading of the district.

In order to fund improvements of building fronts, merchants and shoppers said, grants should be pursued through the township's government, and, if this is not possible, the municipality should consider some form of tax abatement to building owners.

The Township Council, respondents said, also should study ways to keep costs of improvements at a minimum, such as utilizing the talents of township vocational school students and local tradesmen.

Recommendations should be made, according to those responding to the survey, about specific types of businesses the township should attract, with the emphasis on family shopping and stores offering upscale clothing and shoes for all ages and both sexes, records and tapes, hardware,

groceries and gifts.

An expanded district, according to the survey, also should include some specialized shops such as those found in New Hope, Pennsylvania, but the district should not be limited to these

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Township Council To Meet on Budget

The Scotch Plains Township Council will hold a special meeting on Monday, March 14, at 7:30 p.m. in Room Nos. 204 to 206 of the Municipal Building at 430 Park Avenue, Scotch Plains to continue discussion of the 1994 local municipal budget.

BLOOD PRESSURE TESTED MONDAY

The Township of Scotch Plains will hold its monthly hypertension, high blood pressure, screening clinic on Monday, March 14. The clinic will be held in the Scotch Plains Public Library Community Room from 10 a.m. to noon, and it will be free.

The intent of the clinic is to identify new cases of high blood pressure. Those who are over the age of 30 and smoke or are overweight or have a family history of heart disease or diabetes and have not had their blood pressure checked recently should attend.

PROJECT WOULD OCCUPY SITE IN PLAINS AND PLAINFIELD

Woodland Estates Ordinance Passed 3-1 on First Reading Over Some Citizen Objections

Nine-Acre Area, in Controversy for Many Years, Would Provide for Eight Low-Cost Units And 43 Market-Value Homes; Final Reading Is Scheduled for March 22

By GLENN R. KAPLINSKI
Specially Written for The Times

SEE ANOTHER STORY ON PAGE 3

The Woodland Estates ordinance to allow for some low-cost housing passed 3-1 on first reading at Tuesday's meeting of the Scotch Plains Township Council.

Councilwoman, Mrs. Irene Schmidt, was absent due to illness.

Voting in favor were Mayor William F. McClintock, Jr., Deputy Mayor Robert Johnston and Councilwoman Joan Papea. Councilman Alan M. Augustine cast the lone negative vote.

The second and final reading will be taken at the March 22 public meeting.

The ordinance proposes an area near the Plainfield border be rezoned to allow for multi-family dwellings. Eight of the proposed 51 units would be reserved for affordable housing. There are 6.4 acres of the site in Scotch Plains with 3.1 acres in adjoining Plainfield.

Plainfield recently lost a court fight in its battle against the project. Last week the Appellate Division found that the site is suitable for such development.

John Grimaldi of 5 Short Hills Lane, Scotch Plains, voiced strenuous objections against the development, the developer and the council. Mr. Grimaldi has been fighting the Woodland Estate project since 1987.

He was "incensed" by the quotations attributed to Mayor McClintock and Councilwoman Schmidt which appeared in the March 8 issue of *The Star-Ledger of Newark*.

According to Mr. Grimaldi, the quotations give the impression that the council had no choice but to pass the ordinance at the direction of the State's Council on Affordable Housing.

Not so, said Mr. Grimaldi. "The council has allied itself with the developer," he charged. He hinted at some unwritten, off-the-record agreement between the township and the developer.

Calling the process a "charade," he alleged that the council was "hiding behind the skirts of COAH."

Mr. Grimaldi wanted to know why Scotch Plains went against a 1986 recommendation of an independent planner, retained by the town, who found the site unsuitable for Mount Laurel housing.

Mr. Grimaldi urged the council to amend the ordinance and stay the process and withdraw the site from the fair housing requirement. At the least Mr. Grimaldi wants 40 units built rather than the proposed 51.

The development is too "dense" for Mr. Grimaldi. "No effort was made by the council to try to modify this," Mr. Grimaldi said.

A resident of Clark Lane in Scotch Plains also spoke against the proposed ordinance echoing Mr. Grimaldi's assertions. Calling it "a

preposterous scheme," he went on to say a "serious mistake is being made."

The mayor, council and township Attorney, Donald T. DiFrancesco, would not respond to any of Mr. Grimaldi's points. They said they will respond at the public meeting on March 22 when the ordinance will be read for the second and final time. Debate and a vote will then take place.

Those at Tuesday's council meeting were the recipients of a real treat. The Rahway Valley Jerseyaires of Westfield, a barbershop quartet serenading everyone with two selections — "My Wild Irish Rose," for St. Patrick's Day, and "Lil' Liz," a medley. Joseph Weiss of Linden sang baritone, Jack Silverman of Short Hills sang bass, William Ahearn of Metuchen sang the lead and John Huetz of Maplewood was the tenor. The group is celebrating its 56th anniversary.

They were the subjects of a proclamation declaring April "Barbershop Harmony Month." The award was accepted by Rahway Valley Jerseyaires President, Douglas Brown, who noted the volunteer group meets Monday evenings in the First Baptist Church, 170 Elm Street, Westfield, at 7:30 p.m. All are welcome.

The group performs for many benefits, recently at a local nursing home.

Mayor McClintock went on to proclaim March 22 as "Diabetes Alert Day." More than 14,000,000 suffer with diabetes, including about 460,000 New Jerseyans.

Diabetes is the fourth leading cause of death in the United States. Over 750,000 Americans will contract diabetes this year. Blacks, Hispanics and

affected.

William Pitman accepted on behalf of the American Diabetes Association.

Recognizing the fact that only 5 per cent of United States college students are fluent in a foreign language and that to remain competitive in today's world market place knowledge of a foreign language is mandatory, Mayor McClintock proclaimed

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CLEAN UP DAY SET FOR APRIL 30

Planning has begun for the fourth annual Scotch Plains Public Lands Clean Up Day.

Saturday, April 30, will be the day when neighborhood, family, service, social and school groups again will gather to pick up litter that has accumulated in various parts of the township.

Contributions through the township's state Clean Communities Grant will be made to all participating groups or individuals.

The day will begin with breakfast at Brookside Park, where T-shirts will be given to all volunteers.

Please telephone the Clean Communities Coordinator for registration information at 322-6700, Extension No. 243.

The registration deadline is Friday, April 1.

Local Municipal Courts Demonstrate Ability to Raise a Great Deal of Revenue

Municipal courts are successful money makers for most New Jersey communities, taking in revenues that are often double or triple the cost of their operations, a *New Jersey Law Journal* study finds.

Yet, the profits often are not applied to the courts themselves, leaving many of these courts understaffed and underfunded, the study alleges.

For the fiscal or calendar year ending in 1992, the most recent year for which figures are available, New Jersey's 567 municipal courts took in \$1.35 billion in fines and other costs paid by litigants.

For the same period, municipalities spent \$70 million to run the courts, leaving a net profit of \$65 million. Of the 511 courts for which complete budget information was available, 82 percent were run at a profit. Of those, 28 courts produced rates of return, net profit divided by costs of operations, of more than 200 percent, and 10 courts showed rates of return of more than 300 percent.

In the larger cities, where there is higher volume of municipal court business, the profit margin is generally higher.

The courts in the state's 10 biggest urban areas produced revenues of over \$38.5 million while spending \$13.6 million. The revenue champions of the state are Jersey City, which took in about \$8 million more than it spent on its court, and Newark, which made a profit of close to \$6 million.

Among local courts, Westfield was the highest, with \$408,733 in revenues derived from costs and fines paid by litigants and distributed to the town's government; \$190,975

in court expenditures which the town spent on wages and other expenses of running the court, \$23,599,124 for the town's total budget for the calendar year ending in 1993, net earnings of \$217,758 from municipal court sources, computed by subtracting expenditures from revenues, and 114 per cent as the rate of return, a measure of the court's success as a profit center, computed by dividing net earnings by expenditure.

Scotch Plains came in with \$129,246 in revenues, \$76,736 in expenditures, \$12,864,582 for the township's 1993 budget, net earnings of \$53,010 and 70 per cent as the rate of return.

Fanwood courts had \$168,313 in revenues, \$68,955 in expenditures, a 1993 borough budget of \$4,893,873, net earnings of \$99,358 and a rate of return of 114 per cent.

The *Law Journal* study, which was based on a review of municipal budgets filed with the state Department of Community Affairs and interviews with municipal court officials, also found municipalities typically spend only 2 per cent of their annual budgets on their local courts, less than all other line items except welfare programs.

Ironically, this disparity in funding may deny municipal courts the resources needed to collect even more revenues, such as traffic fines owed by scofflaws, according to the *Law Journal*.

The study, which was published in the February 28 issue of the *Law Journal*, includes charts showing what each of the state's municipalities spends on its courts.

The *Law Journal* is an independently-owned weekly newspaper for the legal profession in New Jersey.



LOOK TO THE SCREEN...Getting a "hands-on" look at a computer are first-grader Alex Fredus, right, and her sister, Stephanie. The girls were among the dozens of students and parents who recently attended the third annual "Evening of Discovery" at Brunner School in Scotch Plains. Area business, mathematics and science experts, and local high school science club members pooled efforts in exhibiting a variety of demonstrations and experiments.