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THE TIMES

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LIBERTY EXPLORATION... McGinn Kindergartners had a field trip to the Liberty Science Center on January 16. Of particular interest was the Green House Room where the children were able to touch such creatures as hissing Madagascar cockroaches and tarantulas. Pictured are some curious and courageous students with staff member Tim Bayonne having a close encounter with a red snake. Shown, left to right, are: Christopher Magnan, Jayne Dzuback, Gaby Stember-Young, Matthew Fitzgibbon, Emily Meehan, Cassie Kontur and Michael Bover.

Extension for Two-Car Garage on Alton Way Granted By Township Zoning Board; YMCA Proposal Postponed

Application of Jewish Community Center to Be Reviewed at Thursday, February 8, Meeting

By MICHELLE H. LEPOIDEVIN
Specially Written for The Times

The Scotch Plains Zoning Board of Adjustment reviewed the application of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew Shepard and the Fanwood-Scotch Plains YMCA for resolution at its January 18 meeting.

The first application of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew G. Shepard of 4 Alton Way, Scotch Plains, requested approval for the extension of their two-car garage. This extension would allow for a third garage.

Mrs. Shepard explained to the board the purpose of the third garage would be to provide better accessibility for their car. Due to the fact the other two garages have an awkward bend which leans to the left, the third garage would allow the car to go right up the driveway.

Mr. Shepard asserted they originally considered building a shed, but decided the garage would look better. He explained the shed placement "just didn't look right." He concluded if the third garage was approved, the remaining two would be utilized for

storage space.

When board member, Mrs. Gail Iammatteo, asked if the facade of the garage would match the house, Mr. Shepard assured her it would be consistent.

Mr. and Mrs. Shepard stated nothing would go beyond their driveway. They said the tree on their property would remain and they have considered adding shrubbery.

The proposed garage extension would require 350 square feet and the two garages that already exist comprise an estimated 700 square feet.

Mr. and Mrs. Shepard were not opposed by any of their neighbors in adding on their third garage.

Before Vice Chairwoman, Mrs. Alice Agran, stepped in as temporary Chairwoman of the board, she moved for approval of the proposal and the extension was unanimously approved.

The next application on the agenda involved the Fanwood-Scotch Plains YMCA, located at 1340 Martine Avenue, in the township.

Board Attorney Anthony Rinaldo

addressed the board and the application representatives, noting there was a question as to whether the application would fall under a type "C" or "D" variance.

Mr. Rinaldo stated it was his determination, after thoroughly reviewing the application, it should be handled as a "C" variance. He stressed there was absolutely "no need for argument" on the issue, as it was his final decision.

Mrs. Michele Donato, attorney for the applicant, adamantly expressed her disagreement and opposition to the board's conclusion and later implied there might be "a conflict of interest" on the board.

This discord caused the board to consider postponing the discussions for a later meeting. The board discussed the possibility of having five members, as opposed to the present four members, for a vote at the next meeting. The board concluded they would feel comfortable with seven members, including three members

from the Scotch Plains Planning Board.

Mrs. Agran advised Mrs. Donato and the other parties involved that, if possible, the two parties should get together and try to reach a resolution.

The application will be heard at a meeting on Thursday, March 21, canceling the original meeting on Thursday, March 7.

Mr. Rinaldo noted by the March 21 meeting it is likely the board will have a new member due to the retirement of Raymond Hilliard.

In additional business, an application from the Jewish Community Center of Scotch Plains will be tentatively reviewed at the Thursday, February 8, meeting.

The board also resolved the adoption of the 1995 Annual Report by a unanimous vote.

The board memorialized resolutions regarding Mr. and Mrs. John Crawford of 1072 High View Court, Mrs. Joyce Greaves-Codrington of 242 Pinehurst Avenue and Mr. and Mrs. Charles Read of 1626 and 1632 East Second Street.

PREVIOUS TWO-YEAR CONTRACT EXPIRED ON JUNE 30

School Board, Union Negotiators Await Word From State Official Whether Mediation Will Continue

Assignment of a Fact-Finder Would Be Next;
Teachers Have Not Gone on Strike Since 1983

By PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for The Times

Negotiation teams from the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Education Association and the Board of Education are awaiting a decision from the state mediator assigned to the contract talks on whether a third mediation session will be scheduled or if negotiations will move into the fact-finding stage.

The union, representing 427 teachers, aides and secretaries, has been working under the conditions of its previous contract since it expired on June 30. After the 12th negotiating session on September 13, the school

board declared an impasse with the state Public Employee Relations Committee. The main sticking points have been over salaries and benefits.

Scott Buchheit was assigned by the committee to mediate the negotiations. Under state mediation, the two sides are kept in separate rooms while the mediator tries to hammer out an agreement. When it is decided mediation has failed, a fact finder will be assigned.

Dr. Donald E. Sheldon, President of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education, said Tuesday he was waiting to hear from Mr. Buchheit on whether another mediation session would be held.

In this phase, each negotiating committee submits a fact sheet based on their offer to settle the dispute. The fact-finder then makes his recommendation for a settlement. This decision, however, is non-binding in that neither side is required to accept the recommended settlement.

The board's negotiation team is chaired by Morris H. "Butch" Gillet and includes Dr. Sheldon, Mark W. Koster and Mrs. Theresa Larkin. The union is represented by Mrs. Barbara McGuane, President of the education association, and Past Presidents, Mrs. Sonya Martin, Irwin Kauer, Mrs. Mary Salinar, Mrs. Grace Klimko, Mrs. Judith Massimo and Mrs. Elaine Kolker.

The union has been assisted during the contract talks by Ronald Harvey from UniServe of the New Jersey Education Association, the state teachers union. UniServe offers advice on negotiations for municipal teacher unions.

The union has staged several job actions including picketing outside the school district offices at the Evergreen School prior to the school board's meeting on September 21.

Union members also took Election Day, November 7, as a public holiday, an option they have under state law. Due to the action, Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Carol B. Choye, decided to close schools on that day.

In addition, teachers decided not to participate in back to school nights. School officials rejected the union's request to delay these events until after a settlement was reached.

Dr. Sheldon has previously told *The Times* that teachers were doing their best to provide as little interruption as possible to students.

However, in a past edition of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood student newspaper, *The Fanscotian*, an editorial noted teachers have not been available for students seeking additional help after school and have not provided decorations in their classrooms.

A representative of Mr. Buchheit's office said the mediator would have no comment on the status of the negotiations which began last January. The last time negotiations reached the mediation stage was in 1991. The union has not gone on strike since 1983.

The union has sought a multi-year contract. The past two contracts have been for two years.

**Township Lions
Plan Breakfast
For February 4;
Story on Page 2**

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Township Has Satisfied Share of Housing Units

Planner Says Scotch Plains' Requirement Met Until 1999

By SANDY J. DEVIN
Specially Written for The Times

Due to the efforts of the Scotch Plains Planning Board, township residents have been spared the architectural eyesores and budgetary woes other communities suffered in order to comply with the dictates of the New Jersey Council of Affordable Housing.

At the January 17 Planning Board meeting, the board brought the public up to date on the amount of low-income units needed to satisfy the state and also served to approve the 1996 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan, one of two mandatory ingredients of the municipal Master Plan.

Professional planner, Mrs. Susan Kimball, explained since Scotch Plains had previously been sued and found wanting in the amount it sets aside for low-income applicants, the township was now required to update its plan every six years and become recertified by the state in order to protect itself against further litigation.

"We were the most vulnerable township in Union County because we had the most open land," Board Chairman George Tomkin said.

In 1986, the state published estimates of housing needs for every community in the state based on projected growth. The Scotch Plains low-income housing need was 351 units, comprised of 58 previously existing units and 293 new units needed to address the township's fair share for the region.

However, after the 1987 stock market crash and the hatchet of recession, most communities in the state had their housing numbers slashed, the predicted rate of growth just didn't occur. Scotch Plains was among the lucky and the state revised the township's numbers downward after the 1990 census, to reflect a need of only 218 units. By this time, though, the township had the previous 351 units all accounted for.

Each component of the plan was covered with "no monetary impact on Scotch Plains' taxpayers," according to Zoning Inspector and Planning Board member Robert La Costa.

The township's rehabilitation component consisted of 58 units. Twenty three of them were rehabilitated with federal Department of Housing Funds. An additional 35 units were completed in 1992 with funding by the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs' Balanced Housing Program. All units were owner-occupied family dwellings located on scattered sites in the township.

The Regional Contribution Agreement with the City of Linden covering 175 units has been fully funded by Stirling Chase, officials said. The township Finance Director reported as of August, a total of \$3,867,941 was paid to the city so this portion of Scotch Plains' affordable housing will be built there.

Thirty units of the Lake Avenue Senior Citizens Complex have been included, as well as six units in the Lamberts Mill site. The 58 units derived from the Donato and Bowcraft sites have been included in the plan but have yet to be developed.

With an extra cushion of 125 units, the Scotch Plains Planning Board can now sit on its laurels until 1999, officials explained.

According to Mrs. Kimball, the only thing left to tighten up in the housing plan is the local ordinance targeting affordability. It must be updated to control prices for the next 30 years instead of 20 so that no windfall profits on the low-income condominiums can be made by the people who bought them.

The 1996 Housing Element and Fair Share Plan now goes to the Township Council and then to county officials for approval before it is submitted back to the state.

In other business, the Scotch Plains Planning Board reapproved a conditional use permit for a sandwich sign and two flags to be displayed outside the shop of Nuts n' Plenty located at 1906 Bartle Avenue.

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.

John Celardo Reelected as Chairman Of Fanwood's Zoning Board for Year

Mrs. Kathleen Rice Chosen as Vic. Chairman of Unit by Members.

By SUZETTE STALKER
Specially Written for The Times

Fanwood Mayor, Mrs. Maryanne S. Connelly, administered the oath of office to board of Adjustment Chairman John Celardo and new members, Mrs. Amy Cohen, Mrs. Brenda Steinberg and Mrs. Nancy Kipping, January 18 during a half-hour session which also included the election of officers and board approval of its calendar and budget, as well as the services of its attorney. No new applications or correspondence were heard that evening.

During election of officers, board members unanimously chose Mr. Celardo to continue as Chairman following a nomination by Edward Ryan which was seconded by James

Watson. Representatives also unanimously supported the Chairman's nomination of Mrs. Kathleen Rice as Vice Chairman of the body, a motion seconded by Mr. Ryan.

Finally, board members unanimously approved Mrs. Ruth Page to continue as board secretary following a nomination by Mrs. Rice which was seconded by Mr. Watson. In addition, the board approved continuation of services of Charles H. Brandt as board counsel. The body also approved its calendar and, after a brief discussion, supported a proposed budget of \$6,355 which is expected to cover the attorney's fee and materials for members, among other expenses.

Under old business, the board me-

morialized resolutions on three applications which received public hearings and were unanimously approved during the zoning board's December 21 meeting. The first of these was a petition by Mr. and Mrs. Lance Wildstein of 23 Madison Avenue to expand the living quarters of their home to accommodate their family. They required a variance because the proposed 27-foot front-yard setback was in violation of the minimum 35 feet required under local ordinance.

Joseph Manno, owner of J&M Detailing of 27 South Avenue, had applied to the board for permission to erect a 30-inch by 20-foot identification sign above the roof line of his establishment, which is situated between the former Goal Post Restaurant and another business. Mr. Manno testified last month that because of the layout and location of his building, any window or wall signs would be blocked by vehicles parked out front.

Alfonso Martins of 466 South Avenue had sought board approval for him and his wife to maintain an existing 16-foot by 16-foot wooden deck on the rear of their house. The deck was built for use by the family and for entertaining guests, Mr. Martins reported, as well as to cover a bare spot on their lawn. The couple required a variance because the rear-yard setback of 12 feet did not conform to the 25-foot minimum mandated under local ordinance.

Fine Arts Program To Begin in Fanwood

Registration is in progress at the LaGrande Park Recreation Building for an eight-week session of fine arts.

The two-year-old program will be continued this year with a new instructor, Mrs. Barbara Risher Prestridge has a background in arts and education.

Questions may be addressed to the instructor at 232-6855.



FOCUS ON DOWNTOWN... Fanwood Business Revitalization Committee Co-Chairman Jack Molenaar, third from left, is pictured with DECA students, left to right, Jennifer Jimenez, Jeffrey Gander, Sean McEneely, Daniel Hall and Theodore Glucas.