



SCOTCH PLAINS

OUR 37th YEAR - ISSUE 1

THE TIMES

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FANWOOD

FIFTY CENTS



MAKING A POINT...Hank Frederichs, a long-time Fanwood resident and businessman, speaks at the meeting of the Fanwood Downtown Redevelopment Committee held February 29.

Results of DECA Group's Report Outlined Before Fanwood Revitalization Committee

Councilwoman Schurtz Seeks 'Concerted Effort' to Redevelop Business District

By SUZETTE STALKER
Specially Written for The Times

The proposed redevelopment of Fanwood's business district, from the perspectives of merchants, consumers and local government officials, was discussed last Thursday during a public meeting led by Fanwood Downtown Revitalization Committee Chairman Jack Molenaar in the Borough Council chambers.

Mr. Molenaar reviewed a market research report prepared last fall by DECA of Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School, an association of marketing students. The report gathered data from local merchants and consumers to determine shopping habits and opinions on both sides hoping to encourage economic growth.

The survey of residents, for which 2,558 questionnaires were distributed and 20.8 percent responded, revealed that 98 percent patronize Fanwood businesses, 54 percent at least one a week. The overwhelming reason given for not shopping in Fanwood was the lack of variety, according to 75 percent of those who responded.

Sixty-three percent of those surveyed feel increasing the number of retail stores in the district would be a benefit and 52 percent wanted to develop the Dean Oil site on LaGrande Avenue into a chain of retail stores. The property is not owned by the municipality.

Eighty-six percent believe easy identification of businesses is an important appeal factor. Although only

26 percent feel a Colonial image for the downtown area was very important, 37 percent said that attractive building fronts definitely influence shopping preferences.

The survey, distributed to 45 downtown merchants, shows that 70 percent of respondents have had businesses in Fanwood for more than five years.

Regarding proposals for rejuvenating the downtown area, 96 percent of merchants surveyed concur with the importance of additional retail stores in boosting the downtown's economy. Seventy-four percent feel developing the Dean Oil property would benefit the district and 43 percent stated they are "strongly in favor" of converting the site.

By GLENN R. KAPLINSKY
Specially Written for The Times

The Township Council of Scotch Plains introduced its 1996 Municipal Budget of \$14,807,859 at its Tuesday Conference Meeting. A public hearing and final vote on the budget will take place at the meeting of Tuesday, April 9.

The recommended spending plan fits the state budget format, officials said. The Township Council has made

a policy decision which will have the tax rate for local government purposes and the reserve for uncollected taxes modified from 83 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation to 87 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation. The average home in Scotch Plains is assessed at \$114,500. This home would sell for approximately \$225,000. This 4 cent increase would translate into the payment of an additional \$46 more in local government property tax for the average assessed home in 1996.

The proposed budget is \$781,728, or 5.5 percent over last year's spending plan.

The municipal cap index rate for this year is 3.5 percent. The budget appropriations inside cap are significantly under the 3.5 percent permitted increase of over \$358,000, not including added assessments that have been certified by township Tax Assessor Michael Ross.

Officials said the major reasons for the increase in the 1996 budget of \$781,728 are:

- Police and Firemen's Retirement System Contribution, \$90,000.
- Contribution to the Public Employee Retirement System, \$5,000.
- Social Security Contribution, \$13,000.
- Debt Service, \$256,075.
- Police Interest Arbitration, \$105,000.
- Streets and Roads, Other Expenses for Winter Weather, \$110,000.
- Streets and Roads, Salaries and Wages for Winter Weather, \$80,000.
- Fire Hydrant Rental, \$15,000.
- General Insurance, \$24,468.
- Reserve for Uncollected Taxes, \$10,000.

These items represent \$708,543 or 91 percent of the total budget increase.

Township Manager Thomas E. Atkins said the most serious chal-

lenge Scotch Plains will face over the next few years is funding for capital improvements to maintain the capital plant.

Scotch Plains will conduct a bond sale on Tuesday, March 26, in the hopes that favorable interest rates will continue. The closing for the bond sale will be Wednesday, April 3, and the sale will total \$4,590,000.

The council will pass the authorization resolution on Tuesday, March 12.

On March 1, some appropriation adjustment had to be done and modifications pertaining to debt service, streets and roads, recreation, salaries and wages and uniform fire safety services were made, officials said.

Director of Public Property Walter DiNizo has been working with Emergency Management Coordinator George Reider as Scotch Plains has been advised that federal or state funds might be available due to the January 7 blizzard.

Mr. DiNizo has calculated the costs incurred to Scotch Plains' effort to deal with this severe winter emergency.

Overtime hours for township personnel totaled \$41,120 with snow plowing equipment costs based upon the Federal Emergency Management Association equipment rate, costing \$30,400.

Outside contractor snow plowing costs were \$57,375 with snow hauling that met emergent conditions criteria of \$20,709. The total cost of the storm was \$149,604.

Mr. Atkins said he is not optimistic that many dollars will be returned, if any. However, even if only 10 percent might be returned that is still close to \$15,000.

Last week, Scotch Plains heard from Courtney Clarke of the Union County Community Development

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Board of Education Campaign Underway With Five Candidates Seeking Three Seats

By PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for The Times

The campaign for the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education will kick off this week with five candidates seeking three seats on the board. Three candidates are running for two slots on the board representing Scotch Plains. Two candidates are opposing each other for the one Fanwood seat up for election this year.

The candidates for the Scotch Plains seats are incumbent Morris H. "Butch" Gillet, Edward J. Saradaki, Jr. and Mrs. Gail Schoenbach. In Fanwood, incumbent Mrs. Jessica D. Simpson is being challenged by Mrs. Victoria C. Manduca.

Mrs. Simpson has been a claims representative with the Social Security Administration for the past 22 years. She is a 11-year resident of Fanwood.

The candidate serves as Chairwoman of the board's Policy Committee and as the board representative to the Delegate Assembly of the New Jersey School Boards Association. Mrs. Simpson also serves as a member of the Strategic Planning Team along with 35 other community members.

She was originally appointed to the board in May, 1992 to fill a one-year vacancy on the board. Mrs. Simpson was re-elected in 1993.

Mrs. Manduca owns a computer integration firm based in Union. She had worked for 17 years for the American Telephone and Telegraph Com-

pany in middle management positions.

She teaches Sunday School at the St. Bartholomew the Apostle Interparochial School in Scotch Plains. Mrs. Manduca also belongs to the Garden State Coalition of Schools and is a member of the district's Assessment Committee.

Mr. Saradaki has worked in the field of corporate financial management for over eight years and is currently Financial and Network Controller for over eight years and is currently employed as Financial and Network Controller by a Springfield-based publisher of non-fiction books for children and young adults.

The candidate coaches for the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Youth Baseball and Scotch Plains-Fanwood Soccer Associations. He teaches Sunday School at the First Congregational Church of Westfield and is a Cubmaster for Pack No. 34 at the Evergreen in Scotch Plains.

He serves on the district's Technology Task Force, the Citizen's Budget Committee and the Strategic Planning Team.

Mr. Gillet, a 27-year resident, is seeking a second three-year term on the board. He has served on the board's negotiating team for the supervisors contract and is presently chairing the negotiating team for the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Education Association contract.

Prior to his tenure on the school board, he was President of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Music Boosters Association and President of the Terrill Music Boosters. He is a member of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Parent-

Teacher Association and a past member of the Coles School and Terrill Middle School Parent-Teacher Associations.

Mr. Gillet is a Past President of the Congregation Beth Israel and was

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



Mrs. Virginia Manduca



Morris H. Gillet



Mrs. Gail Schoenbach



Mrs. Jessica Simpson



Edward J. Saradaki, Jr.

Voter Registration Deadline March 18 For School Election

The annual school election will take place on Tuesday, April 16. All citizens who intend to participate in this election are reminded that they must be registered to vote by Monday, March 18.

"The Scotch Plains-Fanwood School District is leading a voter registration campaign designed to maximize participation in this critical election involving school funding and new members for the Board of Education," according to the district's Public Information Coordinator, Mrs. Kathleen Meyer.

Voter registration forms and instructions have been made available at all district buildings and can be obtained from the Parent-Teacher Association presidents of each of the district's schools. In addition, registration forms are available at all Scotch Plains and Fanwood municipal buildings or from the Union County Board of Elections.

For the convenience of those wishing to register in person, evening hours have been scheduled by both the Fanwood and Scotch Plains municipal clerks on March 18, when their offices will remain open until 9 p.m.

All citizens who are at least 18 are eligible to vote, but for new voters and those who have changed municipalities of residence, "registering to vote is the essential first step," Mrs. Meyer noted.

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On Page 10
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Woodland Avenue Subdivision Plan Draws Indignation From Neighbors

Fanwood Planning Board Awaits Testimony From Experts

By MICHELLE H. LAPODEVIN
Specially Written for The Times

The Fanwood Planning Board listened to testimony from Angelo Appezato of the Appenov Construction Company, and several indignant neighbors February 28 and decided to continue the hearing of the subdivision request in order to hear from expert witnesses who will testify for Mr. Appezato.

The controversial application requests a subdivision and bulk variance on the property at 85 Woodland Avenue.

Mr. Appezato's attorney, Renato R. Biribin, stated at the beginning of the hearing that the necessary experts were unable to attend because one was out of the country and he was not yet able to confer with the other expert.

Mr. Biribin said one of the experts is experienced in the value of real estate and the second is a certified planner.

The applicant, a resident of Scotch Plains and Fanwood for approximately 40 years, has been in the construction business for 31 years.

He stated that he is seeking to subdivide the property and extend the driveway. The board noted the property does not have sufficient frontage of 40 feet which would allow access for emergency vehicles, fire engines and enough turn-around capacity for standard vehicles.

Mr. Appezato testified the rental income does not satisfy mortgage payments and noted he is under a hardship because it costs his company \$1,700 per month to pay the rent.

He said that on the property, which he purchased approximately two years ago, he plans to construct a one-family unit of 50 feet by 34 feet. He claimed the plan meets all borough bulk requirements.

The board noted, with assistance from the public, that the very same property was under appeal for subdivision in 1976, but was withdrawn because of several problems which still exist today. Mr. Appezato claimed he was not aware that someone tried to subdivide the property in the past.

Public officials were invited to comment on the application and

Deputy Fire Chief, Eugene Bellamy, listed several hazards for emergency medical technicians and firefighters due to the narrow frontage.

He stated, "It would be a very, very poor set-up for firefighters." Deputy Chief Bellamy added it would be difficult to fit a second fire engine or an emergency vehicle, due to lack of space.

Borough Engineer Richard Marsden read from a copy of his report on the application and stated the ordinance defines the proposed lot as a "flaglot" which is prohibited in all zones. He added a neighboring property would be impacted if the owners chose to improve their frontage.

During public discussion, Joseph Jacobi of 24 St. John's Place said he

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

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.