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OUR 37th YEAR - ISSUE NO. 18

# THE TIMES

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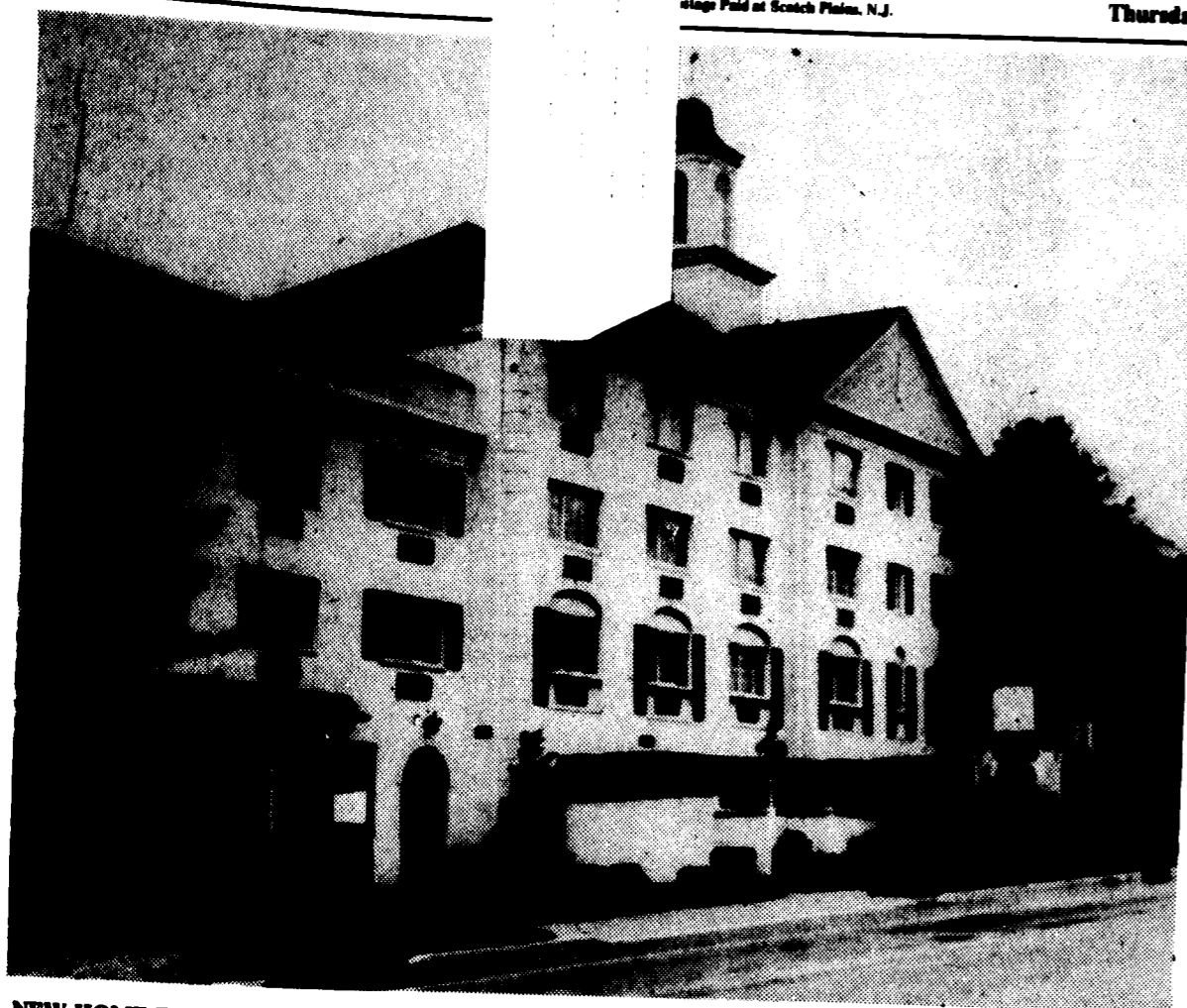
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NEW HOME FOR SENIORS...The Fanwood Planning Board has approved the conversion of the Mansion Hotel on South Avenue into an assisted living facility for senior citizens. The 71 existing rooms on the second, third and fourth floors will be refurbished to house the seniors. The project is expected to be completed by late summer.

William A. Burke for The Times

## FANWOOD PLANNING BOARD APPROVED PROJECT IN MARCH

# Conversion of Mansion Hotel To Senior Citizen Housing Anticipated By Late Summer

### Building's 71 Existing Rooms to Be Utilized For Assisted Living Facility's Residents

By SUZETTE STALKER  
Specially Written for The Times

The long-anticipated conversion of the Mansion Hotel on South Avenue into housing for senior citizens is expected to get underway by late summer with the Fanwood Planning Board's memorialization last Wednesday of its March 27 approval of the project.

Officials simultaneously approved preliminary and final site plans, as well as conditional use of the building, following last month's public hearing. The resolution adopted last week also confirmed several revisions to the site plan which were previously agreed upon by the applicant.

The applicant, identified as Fanwood Assisted Living, Limited Liability Company, will develop the facility as housing for senior citizens, 55 and over, who are no longer capable of living independently but do not require nursing home care. Meals and medical attention would be provided on the premises.

The concept originated in 1992 when the Boyle Corporation, a Morris County firm which previously owned the building, received approval to develop the hotel into an assisted living center. An ordinance designating the facility as a permitted use was adopted, but the original applicant never proceeded with plans.

Roseland Property Co., the Roseland company which recently acquired the property, reactivated the project with the Fanwood Assisted Living proposal, which the firm will develop with a partner.

During the public hearing, Marshall Tycher, a partner with Roseland Property Co., testified that the structure of the building will remain the same, although its function will have changed. The first floor will remain a common area featuring dining and recreational facilities, an activity cen-

ter, tea room, library, card room and other sections conducive to a social atmosphere.

The 71 existing rooms on the second, third and fourth floors will be refurbished to accommodate the facility's future residents, Mr. Tycher explained, adding that each floor will be equipped with a nurses' station, examining rooms and lounges. Nurses will be on duty 16 hours a day, with a night manager and other staff covering evening hours.

The rear parking area will be modified, with the current 82 parking spaces reduced to 53, and landscaping added to highlight the new use of the building. The remaining parking spaces will be kept where they are, though the entire parking lot will be resurfaced and the stalls restriped.

Handicapped parking spaces will be provided in compliance with federal regulations under the Americans With Disabilities Act, according to the applicant.

A lighting plan submitted to and approved by the board calls for existing lighting to remain in place, with repositioned lighting fixtures to be installed along an internal island. In addition, a supplementary catch basin and pipe system will be connected to the existing system.

Engineering aspects of the site plan were presented last month by Rocco Palmieri of Schorr-DePalma of Parsippany, the applicant's engineer, who was qualified by the board as an expert witness.

Mr. Tycher reported his company expected to replace the current sign in front of the hotel with an "externally lit, sand blasted wood sign, decoratively lit from the outside, with a seasonal color around it," as described in the resolution memorialized last week.

The revisions to the final site plan which were incorporated into the board's resolution, included plans to

widen an easterly driveway and install a bench outside the South Avenue entrance, and the applicant's confirmation that low- and moderate-income units required by law would be provided.

Mr. Tycher's partner, Herbert Helfich, told the board last month that based on the size of the facility, he expected to take in two guests who meet low- and moderate-income requirements established by the state Council on Affordable Housing.

The planned conversion received support during the public hearing from Robert Kraus, one of the principals of 313 South Avenue Condominium Association, next-door neighbor to the Mansion Hotel, as well as from the Fanwood Police and Fire Departments, Environmental and Shade Tree Commissions and the Department of Health, none of which offered any objections.

### 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 week-end prior to publication, press releases should reach the Editor by Monday of the week of publication at 10 a.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.

## Teachers Union President Calls For Progress In Contract Talks

### Dr. Sheldon Refutes Charge That Board Has Been Procrastinating

By SUZETTE STALKER  
Specially Written for The Times

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education faced a united front during its regular meeting last Thursday, as approximately 75 members of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Education Association and their supporters rallied to protest what they believe have been unnecessary delays in reaching a contract settlement.

Association President, Mrs. Barbara McGuane, calling for progress in negotiations, alleged that the board had passed up several opportunities last month to meet with a state-appointed fact finder, in the latest phase of contract talks which so far have left both sides frustrated.

The association, which includes teachers, secretaries and staff in the Scotch Plains-Fanwood school district, has been without a contract since June 30 of last year. Negotiations stalled late last year when the school board and the union reached an impasse over salaries and employee medical benefits. Subsequent mediation failed to bring about a resolution.

Arguing that association members have shown considerable restraint during the protracted contract talks, Mrs. McGuane, nevertheless, admonished the board not to mistake controlled emotions for "a lack of re-

solve or unity" regarding the organization's desire to have a new contract.

Union members, many of whom wore blue T-shirts bearing the association's emblem "Public Schools Work," have steadfastly maintained that although they have been without a contract since last summer, they remain "committed" to providing "quality" education to the district's students.

Board President, Dr. Donald E. Sheldon, remarked that the school board has also demonstrated restraint by not responding to recent letters in the local newspapers from members of the association critical of wage percent increases and the benefits package offered by the board.

"We would prefer not to negotiate in the press, but if we have to, we will respond publicly," the board President said.

Dr. Sheldon stated the board was just as anxious as the union to reach a settlement, but it would have to be one guaranteeing "financial stability."

He also refuted allegations that the board has procrastinated, stating that the only available date the board had been given to meet with the state fact finder was April 25 — the same night

as last week's regular meeting.

Morris H. "Butch" Gillet, who was reelected to his second term on the school board April 16 and is chairing the negotiating team for the education association's contract, recalled how four years ago the district wrapped up the school year with less than \$40,000 and warned it was imperative there be a "reasonable reserve fund within the budget" to cover emergencies.

He explained the district could possibly have to pay for, as required by law, the enrollment and transportation of additional special education students from Scotch Plains and Fanwood outside the district, and that sufficient funds would have to be included in the budget to cover such mandated expenditures.

Immediately following the discussions, all but about a dozen members of the audience simultaneously rose from their seats and exited the Evergreen School gymnasium where the meeting was held.

Earlier in the meeting, the board approved a motion authorizing the establishment of an Alternative Class Program effective in September for middle school students in the district who are classified as emotionally disturbed. These students are presently

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## Governor Whitman, Congressman Franks Call New Rule a Threat to Air Quality

### They Say Deregulating Electric Power Plan Will Increase Pollution in State

The Governor, Mrs. Christine Todd Whitman, was on hand at a Monday morning press conference at the Scotch Plains Municipal Building to support legislation by Congressman Robert D. Franks to block the implementation of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission's decision to deregulate electric power companies.

Congressman Franks said the new rule, if enacted, would allow coal-burning plants in the Midwest to increase production with the emissions likely to blow east over New Jersey. He called this part of the plan a "very serious side effect."

Governor Whitman responded that, "These intended consequences of an otherwise laudable effort will place an even greater burden on New Jersey's citizens."

Congressman Franks added that 18 other members of the House of Representatives have urged the federal agency to consider New Jersey's plight.

While supporting the concept of deregulating electric power in order to bring down rates for consumers, Congressman Franks said "the Clinton Administration ignored the environmental consequences that its regulation would have on New Jersey and other states that have been aggressively pursuing policies to clean up our polluted air."

The federal agency finalized its new regulation on April 24 which enables energy companies to freely purchase power from any generating facility and use open transmission lines to bring it to places like New Jersey.

Governor Whitman said the new rule will make it "nearly impossible" for the state to meet its clean air goals because emissions in the Midwest

will offset all pollution reductions achieved by the state.

The Governor said she has sought the help of House Speaker Newt Gingrich and the Environmental Protection Agency to rescind the new rule.

The federal agency has estimated the new rule would save consumers between \$3.8 to \$5.4 billion annually in their energy bills.

Congressman Franks explained the new rule will cause a race among

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PLAN OF ATTACK...The Governor, Mrs. Christine Todd Whitman, and Congressman Robert D. Franks held a press conference Monday in the Township Council Chambers of the Scotch Plains Municipal Building to announce actions they plan to take in an effort to combat the federal plan to deregulate electric power companies.

William A. Burke for The Times

## Aviation Agency and Port Authority Launch Investigations on Air Noise

### New Air Traffic Routes Had Been Aimed at Reducing Noise Levels

As part of the Solberg plan, 216 jetliners were rerouted over northern New Jersey. Eighty-four flights have been rerouted toward to the north of Newark Airport toward Montclair before turning west toward Hunterdon County. The remainder of the flights have been rerouted south near the Union County-Middlesex County border.

The aviation agency said the change in flight paths would reduce noise in western Union County while not causing significantly more noise in the eight-county area where the flights have been re-directed.

E. Dennis Hardie, Chairman of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Citizens Against Aircraft Noise, has been a strong supporter of the aviation agency's plan. However, after listening to aircraft over his township home following the implementation of the new routes, Mr. Hardie told a reporter that the noise appeared to be the same or worse. Several other residents had the same reaction.

The New Jersey Coalition Against Aircraft Noise has opposed the Solberg plan, saying it simply shifts the air traffic noise from one part of the state to another. The aviation agency has said the noise over areas of Hunterdon and Morris counties would not be significant since the aircraft are flying at higher altitudes than they are in Union County.

Critics, led by the coalition group, have supported rerouting flights over the Atlantic ocean, an option that has been rejected by the aviation agency.

Another supporter of that plan is Scotch Plains Mayor and state Assemblyman Alan M. Augustine. Regardless of whether agency's plan reduces air noise in Union County, he has vowed to continue to fight for ocean routing. Assemblyman Augustine represents the 22nd Legislative District which includes Scotch Plains and Fanwood.

Last fall five members of the New Jersey Congressional Delegation, including Robert D. Franks, criticized the aviation agency for not choosing the ocean routes plan. Congressman Franks represents the Seventh Congressional District which also includes the two mu-

nicipalities.

The coalition group has said the ocean plan would significantly reduce noise levels for between one and 2.5 million residents.

Only days after launching its new air-traffic routes at Newark International Airport, the Federal Aviation Administration announced Saturday that it has initiated an investigation to determine why the Scotch Plains and Fanwood area has not seen a reduction in air traffic noise.

The Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, which operates the three major metropolitan airports, is also said to be conducting its only investigation. Charles Meara, Manager of Public Affairs for the Port Authority, told reporters that it was possible airline pilots were still becoming accustomed to the new flight paths.

### Township to Receive Soil Study Grant For Brookside Park

Scotch Plains Mayor and Assemblyman Alan M. Augustine has announced the New Jersey State Department of Environmental Protection has approved a municipal matching grant of \$2,500 to the Township of Scotch Plains for its Brookside Park Pond Restoration Study.

The funding will allow for three soil samplings of the brook, a process which is required in order to determine whether or not the dredged material is contaminated. As disposal of contaminated soil is more expensive than that of non-contaminated soil, this study will allow the Scotch Plains Environmental Commission to estimate final costs.

Assemblyman Augustine noted that state financial assistance of this sort encourages the valuable efforts being put forth by the Environmental Commission.

As part of its new "Solberg Mitigation Plan," the federal agency is now rerouting 132 departing flights daily from Newark Airport over Middlesex, Somerset and Hunterdon Counties. In addition, about 100 flights arriving at LaGuardia Airport in Queens were routed over southern Middlesex County to make room for the new Newark Airport departing routes.

The aviation agency had developed the plan to provide relief for some 18,755 Union County residents, living mostly in western Union County including Scotch Plains, Fanwood, Westfield and Cranford. These are said to be about 40 percent of the residents that were subjected to significantly more noise when the air traffic noise controversy began in 1987.

That was the year the federal agency launched its Expanded East Coast Plan which rerouted aircraft from Newark, John F. Kennedy and LaGuardia airports in an effort to reduce flight delays. The plan was put into place, reportedly, without prior warning or environmental studies.

Responding to an order from Congress in 1990, the agency conducted a \$6 million environmental impact study. The final results of the study were not released until last October.

Aviation agency officials, however, have charged that the ocean-routing would produce significantly more noise levels for 460,000 residents, mostly near the shore, while decreasing noise for another 685,000 residents in the areas near Newark Airport.

Aviation officials have said reducing air traffic noise in the metropolitan area is difficult since it is one of the most densely populated areas in the world.

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