



SCOTCH PLAINS

# THE TIMES

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**BROWNIE FUN DAY...** On October 5 Brownies from all over Scotch Plains and Fanwood assembled at Jerseyland Park to enjoy a Brownie Fun Day. Girls attending earned the Art-to-Wear Try-It, danced the Macarena, enjoyed snacks in the sunshine and made a lot of new friends. Pictured, left to right, are: McGinn School Brownies Annie Smith, Courtney Gray, and Emily Meehan.

### Fanwood Zoning Board Approves Deck, Shed

By SUZETTE STALKER  
Specialty Writer for The Times

Two new applications were approved Thursday by the Fanwood Board of Adjustment, which also memorialized four resolutions of cases which were heard on September 19. In addition, the board reviewed several items of correspondence before adjourning for the evening.

Ms. Robin Wachenfeld of 94 South Martine Avenue was awarded a bulk variance for a two-foot-high deck to be constructed within an L-shaped space adjacent to her home. On the advice of Zoning Board Attorney Charles H. Brandt, the application was amended to include an existing shed and fence on the applicant's property.

Ms. Wachenfeld explained that she wanted the deck, which will be adorned with a railing and lattice-work, for entertainment purposes and to increase the value of her property. She required a variance because the permitted side yard setback is 15 feet, while the proposed distance with the deck would be 8.9 feet.

Board Vice-Chairwoman Kathleen Rice, a neighbor of the applicant, abstained from voting on Ms. Wachenfeld's petition but spoke in favor of the entire application. Of

the deck proposal she said, "I think it will enhance Robin's property. She takes good care of her property and I think the deck would enhance the use of her property."

Mr. and Mrs. Paul H. Robinson of 580 North Avenue received a conditional use variance to build a 288-square-foot storage shed in their backyard in which to place their dining room furniture. The couple plan to convert their dining room into a nursery for the baby they are expecting, and required a variance because the permitted shed size is 100 square feet.

The shed will replace a garage which had to be demolished because of termite infestation and dry rot, according to Mr. Robinson, and will enable the couple to avoid having to place their furniture in public storage. Eugene Bellamy of the Fanwood Fire Company questioned Mr. Robinson as to whether he would be using the shed to store any flammable materials related to his landscaping business.

The applicant responded that he did not plan to keep any fuel sources in the shed other than what was necessary to operate yard maintenance equipment such as a lawnmower. Board of Adjustment members approved the Robinsons' conditional use application with the provision that no more than 50 gallons of flammable liquid could be stored in the shed at one time.

The first of the four resolutions adopted by the board confirmed approval of a use variance awarded to Dr. Francis and Mrs. Mary Ann Besson permitting the addition of a professional to Dr. Besson's orthodontic practice at 232 North Martine Avenue, as well as continuation of a waiver on off-street parking requirements. Dr. Besson plans to have his son, Frank, a Fanwood resident who recently completed his orthodontic residency, join him in his practice.

The second resolution acknowledged that Mr. and Mrs. Brian Smith of 68 Shady Lane received permission to build a deck onto the rear of

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### Master Plan Suggestions Go to Council

The Scotch Plains Planning Board acted Monday night upon recommendations made by the Master Plan Committee regarding the Downtown Vision Plan prepared by the firm of Wallace, Roberts and Todd earlier this year.

Dr. Martin Marks, a member of the Planning Board and Vice Chairman of the Master Plan Committee, presented a list of recommendations to be passed on to the Township Council for actual implementation. Firstly, Dr. Marks asked that a program be created to include development of a theme, name, logo and various physical manifestations including signing and banners, gateway treatments, a coordinated system of lighting, planting, paving and street furnishings for the Central Business District.

Secondly, a request was made for further review of the possible consolidation of parking lots behind the stores on the south side of East Second Street. Dr. Marks suggested that a meeting should be held with representation from all the affected entities such as the Board of Education, the Recreation Commission, the Planning Board, the Engineering and Legal Departments, business and property owners, and the Township Council to further this proposal.

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### MR. McCLINTOCK, DR. MARKS FACE MR. LIPSTEIN AND M

WARTZ

## Scotch Plains Council Candidates Debate Downtown Revitalization, Mayor's Post, Zoning and Taxes During Two-Hour Forum

By JEANNE WHITNEY  
Specialty Writer for The Times

Candidates for the Scotch Plains Township Council—two Democrats and two Republicans debated for two hours last Wednesday night at the Municipal Building before a full house and television audience. The four candidates fielded questions from residents that ranged from education, zoning and taxes to downtown revitalization and the office of Mayor. The Republicans currently hold a 5-0 majority on the council.

Democrats Kenneth N. Lipstein and four-time candidate Mrs. Barbara Schwartz challenged the record of the current all-Republican council while pushing their proposal for a directly elected township Mayor. Currently, the township's five elected council members take turns serving as Mayor, usually for a one-year term. The Mayor is appointed by the governing body. A Mayor elected by residents for a four-year term, the Democrats claimed, would result in increased fiscal accountability and a continuity of vision for the township.

Incumbent Councilman William F. McClintock, Jr., and his running mate, Dr. Martin L. Marks, responded that the current system creates a "less political" office of Mayor. As for continuity and accountability, Mr. McClintock said, the former Mayor is often still on the council following a stint as Mayor.

Mr. McClintock, a council member since 1991 after initially being appointed to fill an unexpired term, said, "The five of us work so well together, we're the envy of other municipalities." Mr. McClintock himself was Mayor in 1994 after beating Mrs. Schwartz for a seat on the council in 1992. A council term is four years.

Resident and former township Mayor Lawrence Newcomb, who said he was involved in setting up the present council system in the 1970s, said any changes to the governing system must be voted on by the township's residents.

Councilman McClintock revealed a graph showing Scotch Plains as having the fourth lowest amount spent from real estate taxes for municipal expenditures—out of 20 other communities in Union County. He said the figures were compiled from 1996 county tax information and based on a home assessed at \$200,000.

Township residents from Arrowwood Drive pressed Republican candidates for answers on zoning ordinance changes after the council voted in May to eliminate rear-yard setbacks for certain structures. Mr. Lipstein called the action, "a serious mistake." Councilman McClintock said a property owner on Arrowwood Drive had been fined "thousands of dollars" for a structure in violation, and that lawyers were still working on the case.

One Arrowwood Drive resident claimed his property had dropped \$12,000 in value as a result of this same structure. Councilman McClintock admitted there were

"weaknesses" in the zoning laws, saying, "I think we will be making some changes."

Dr. Marks, a dentist with a practice in Summit and a member of the township's Planning Board and Master Plan Review Committee, said the Master Plan Committee will reveal recommendations this week, including plans for urban revitalization. A Master Plan generally deals with zoning issues, among other things.

Mr. Lipstein praised downtown revitalization efforts in Cranford, where he has a law practice and said he would like to see similar steps taken in Scotch Plains. Cranford was the first town in the state to create a Special Improvement District. Councilman McClintock said the township downtown area has "come a long way" while noting the efforts of the Downtown Business Association.

None of the candidates said they favored New Jersey Governor Christine Todd Whitman's education proposals for state funding of school

districts. Mrs. Schwartz, a lawyer, charged that under the plan the high school would lose 21 percent of its staff.

Councilman McClintock said the Governor's proposals are "very unfair to towns like this." Mr. Lipstein added that the plan "doesn't take into account the cost of living" for each town. He referred to a graph from *The Star-Ledger* showing Scotch Plains as having the fourth highest average property tax in Union County.

The Republican candidates shot down Democratic proposals for adding firefighters and garbage collection to the township payroll, saying it would cost more overall and increase taxes. Mrs. Schwartz demanded an end to reported township leasing of cars for employee use.

Councilman McClintock, a local business owner, said the township has saved hundreds of thousands of dollars over the past few years by sharing services with neighboring towns. Examples, he said, are the Joint Insurance Fund (JIF) and regional sewer authorities.

## Scotch Plains Council Settles Tax Assessment Dispute With Gulf Oil

By JEANNE WHITNEY  
Specialty Writer for The Times

The Scotch Plains Township Council Tuesday night unanimously passed resolutions to settle a tax assessment dispute with Gulf Oil, name a Cable Television Refranchising Committee and begin a book recycling program.

The compromise agreed to out of court by the township with Cumberland Farms, the parent company of Gulf Oil, lowers the commercial property tax assessment for a Gulf Oil service station on North Avenue at Hatfield Avenue to \$270,000 from \$300,000, officials said. The challenge by Cumberland Farms to the assessment, in the State of New Jersey Tax Court, had been brewing since 1995, officials added.

The council also named a nine-member committee to reexamine the township franchise agreement with Comcast cable television company (formerly Suburban Cable) that expires in June 1999. According to the resolution, the committee will hold hearings for public input in making its recommendations to the Township Council. Committee members are: Councilwoman Joan Papan, Councilman Robert E. Johnston, Construction and Building official Robert La Costa, Board of Education representatives Jeffrey Ross and Mrs. Cynthia Mendelson, Kenneth Anderson and William Machrone of the Technology Advisory Committee and Robert Merkle and George Doldouras, members of the Telecommunications Committee.

A resolution was adopted to begin a Book Recovery Program with Re-

naissance Books as part of a solid waste recycling plan which will earn money for the township, according to the council. Bins for book contributions will be in the library and public schools. Earlier, in a conference meeting, the council considered whether it would join the Union County Utilities Authority program to collect and recycle used motor oil filters in an effort to comply with the state-mandated "60 per cent recycling" goals.

In the proposed agreement, an environmentally secure 55-gallon drum would be maintained in the township to store oil filters for periodic collection by Clean Venture, Inc. Also during the conference meeting, the council heard from attorney Ms. Julienne Duncan about a proposal to allow police and fire department officials to silence home security false alarms that sound continuously for more than 30 minutes. Ms. Duncan said homeowners would be alerted to the policy and related fees at the time of registering the alarm system with the township. Councilwoman Irene K. Schmidt questioned the township's degree of liability in deactivating a homeowner's alarm system and questioned how often the situation arose. Other council members said they had received complaints from residents about noisy, malfunctioning alarms. The council agreed to consult with the neighboring Town of Westfield about their false alarm cut-off ordinance.

During the regular council meeting, Mayor Alan M. Augustine said Union County officials told him "money is available" for improve-

ments along Park Avenue with signals or dedicated left-turn lanes when a capital funding budget is passed by the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders. In an election year, Republican freeholders have accused their Democratic counterparts of holding up votes on spending bills until after the November election. Democrats have said they want time to weigh each expenditure before them.

In a follow-up effort to address issues raised in last week's Candidates Night about township zoning laws, Councilman William F. McClintock, Jr. asked for feedback during the conference meeting from the Planning Board and Board of Adjustment. Arrowwood Drive residents in particular have objected to recent zoning changes that allow secondary structures without rear yard setbacks. "There's something wrong, I believe, with the current zoning," Mr. McClintock said.

Also during the conference meeting, Councilwoman Papan alerted the council that a proposed move to add another area code in the state, would divide the township between two different area codes, making calls within the township, in effect, long-distance. Neighboring towns would be similarly affected, officials noted.

Resident Donna Carrington of Hamlette Place asked the council for help during the regular meeting in repairing a broken window reportedly caused by a golf ball from the Scotch Hills Country Club golf course. She said the Department of Recreation admitted it was an ongoing problem in the area. Mayor Augustine said the township will pursue solutions to the twin issues of repairing the window and golf balls in residents' yards.

Township Manager Thomas K. Adkins told the council there still had been no action taken on the bidding from September 26 on janitorial services for the township.

In other business at the conference meeting, Mrs. Schmidt said a consultant would speak to the council at its November 6 meeting about repair and funding for the roof of the Cannonball House Museum.

The council noted the Halloween window decorating contest, sponsored by the Business and Professional Association, will be held from Friday, October 25, to Monday, October 28, and the Halloween parade starting from the municipal building at 6 p.m. on Thursday, October 31.

### DEADLINES HELP PAPER SERVE US

Those preparing press releases for submission to *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.

*Times* releases also may be mailed 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.



**PUMPKIN PICKERS...** Students Will Magnum, Kerlyn Iyer, Sean Stevenson and Danny Campbell from the Brunner School in Scotch Plains take a moment to show their pumpkins before returning to the hay wagon during their recent visit to Alstede Farm in Chester. Visitors to the farm included the preschool handicapped class, the Tip Top Pre-Kindergarten classes from Brunner School and the Title One Pre-Kindergarten class from School One in Scotch Plains. During a hayride tour of the farm, the children enjoyed some of the sights, sounds and scents of a farm in early fall, and all the children had an opportunity to pick a pumpkin from the vine.

### Turn Clocks Back This Sunday

We remind our readers to turn their clocks back one hour before turning in Saturday night, October 26. Daylight Savings Time ends early Sunday and will be replaced by Eastern Standard Time. Daylight Savings will return on Sunday, April 6.

### Future of SLC Might Loom If Aid Cut

By BRIAN CAROVILLANO  
Specialty Writer for The Times

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education heard from some of the district's most promising students last Thursday when they were addressed by participants in the Student Leadership Conference (SLC) at their regular public meeting.

In what began as a celebration of the wonderful opportunities available to the district's students, despair was evidenced by many of those in attendance over impending budget cuts for education by the state government, cuts which may spell the end of programs like the SLC. An ongoing debate over funding out-of-district schooling for high school mothers was also laid to rest with a vote.

Advisor, Mrs. Randy Young, introduced a group of students who were only a portion of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood delegation to the SLC, held at Camp Greenkill in Huguenot, New York. Calling the group "rich in talent as well as potential," Mrs. Young deferred to the students, representing every class at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School to explain what the SLC entails.

Freshman Whitney Sleighton outlined the history of the SLC, founded by Adelphi University of Garden City, New York, in 1980 to allow students who show a potential for leadership ability to develop those skills through interaction with their peers. Students from many high schools participate in the physical and mental challenges of "Project Adventure," described as a challenging series of physical obstacles that require teamwork and trust in order to be overcome.

Students from each high school are divided into small groups, according to class year, and are teamed with one of several "alumni facilitators," who can be teachers, parents, police officers or citizens from the community. Students spoke with pride of their conquering of "the Wall," a 12-foot obstacle that presents the final and most demanding challenge of the weekend.

"As a team, we are forced to rely on each other," said Lauren Blylock, a senior participant in the SLC. Conference alumni continue to play a role in the community after the weekend and has long passed with a number of community service and charity functions, some of which include the AIDS quilt, a stop smoking campaign in district schools and the donation of the community bulletin board in front of Scotch Plains Municipal Building.

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