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IN FLANDERS FIELD...Members of American Legion Post No. 209 and Veterans of Foreign War Post No. 10122, along with Fanwood Councilman Dr. Chester Lindsey, are pictured near the Memorial at the Fanwood Memorial Library.



STANDING AT ATTENTION...The Honor Guard takes part in ceremonies to pay tribute to the war dead during Monday's Veterans Day ceremonies held at the Scotch Plains War Memorial.

OWNER DISCUSS

EMENT PLANS

Decision Postponed On Variance Waivers For Scotch Plains Zoo

By SUZETTE STALKER
Specially Written for The Times

The Scotch Plains Board of Adjustment heard approximately two hours of testimony last Thursday concerning an appeal by the owner of the Scotch Plains Zoo for exemptions from variances related to his plans to upgrade his facility. However, no decision was reached by the conclusion of the public hearing, which is scheduled to resume on Thursday, December 5, at 7:30 p.m.

Joseph E. Murray, the Berkeley Heights attorney representing zoo owner Harold Kafka, discussed the improvements his client is hoping to make to the 5.89-acre establishment, which is bordered by Terrill and Raritan Roads and Clover Lane. Mr. Kafka also testified during the meeting, as well as engineer John Vincenti of EKA Associates of Scotch Plains.

Animal-rights activists have protested that animals at the zoo are being housed and maintained under unsatisfactory conditions, and have called for the establishment to be closed and the animals relocated elsewhere. A small group of activists from the New Jersey Animal Rights Alliance, based in Englishtown, attended last week's meeting, but were advised by board Chairman Thomas P. Barth that they would not be allowed to speak because the board's authority only extended to zoning concerns.

Mr. Kafka is seeking formal site plan approval to renovate the facility, which he has owned since 1993, but requires multiple variances from the township code to implement his proposed improvements. The zoo owner withdrew two of his original variance requests, including one to build a house for himself on the property and another to remodel an existing two-story, frame structure used as living quarters and office space by a caretaker.

The zoo is home to some 60 species of animals, including lions, tigers, jaguars and other large cats; birds, llamas, monkeys, giraffes and elephants, some of whom have resided at the zoo for 20 years, according to Mr. Murray. When Mr. Kafka acquired the zoo three years ago, "the

animals were in very bad conditions," his attorney said this week, adding that his client has since been trying to rectify the situation.

Mr. Murray told *The Times* that his client was under the impression he would not be able to clean up debris or upgrade the zoo without first obtaining the necessary variances, but that "the Board of Adjustment appears to be understanding of his situation at this point," and may give him the authority to renovate the facility prior to awarding of the variances.

The zoo owner is seeking to maintain the six-foot-high exterior fencing he erected around the property in compliance with requirements established by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), which has jurisdiction over the zoo. The fencing was in violation of the township code, however, which prohibits the fence from being more than four feet high.

Mr. Kafka also requires a variance for proposed interior fencing between eight and 15 feet in height in order to keep certain animals, such as large cats, from climbing over the enclosure. Local ordinance requires that the interior fencing be no more than six feet high. The applicant is also seeking board permission to erect sheds adjacent to the animal pens to provide more living space and better protection for the animals during inclement weather.

The owner of the zoo has proposed expanding the giraffe area by constructing a 50-foot by 80-foot structure for storage of hay which is currently kept outside. It would also possibly house a truck used to transport animals for breeding purposes and for delivering them to other zoo facilities, Mr. Kafka's attorney explained.

In addition, he is seeking to expand the parking area to create an exit where the entrance to the establishment is currently located, and to change the location of the entrance. Mr. Kafka does not wish to pave the parking area because it would increase water run-off into the adjacent Robinson's Branch of the Rahway River and would take away from the

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Township Council Considers Law to Silence False Alarms From Home Security Systems

By JEANNE WHITNEY
Specially Written for The Times

In response to resident complaints, the Scotch Plains Township Council considered an ordinance last Wednesday night to silence noisy false alarms from home security systems that sound for longer than 30 minutes.

At the council's conference meeting, the matter was discussed at length. Police and possibly fire officials would be allowed to disconnect an offending malfunctioning audible alarm system from outside a house, according to attorney Julianne Duncan, who has drafted portions of the proposal for the township. Ms. Duncan said the neighboring Town of Westfield has had a similar alarm ordinance for 15 years.

The township would continue its incremental fines for each false alarm, officials noted. Officials also said that when homeowners register or renew the alarm system with the township, they would be made aware of any new ordinances dealing with false alarms and liability.

In a similar vein, officials decided not to consider any zoning changes in an attempt to eliminate noise from delivery trucks to a 24-hour convenience store in a residential zone. Several nearby residents have complained to the township about early morning deliveries, according to officials.

Township Manager Thomas E. Atkins said noise measured in decibels from a delivery truck probably did not approach New Jersey state code levels for violations. Officials said existing ordinances might cover some aspects of the reported deliveries.

Councilman Robert E. Johnston said he had seen delivery trucks parked across roads in the township, blocking traffic.

The council has also announced that it plans to introduce a \$1.7 million bond ordinance to upgrade the township sewerage system over the next two years. The ordinance will be introduced within the next two weeks. Initial estimates by engineering firm Killam Associates for the work were \$1.5 million. Officials have said the township's four pumping stations will be improved and pipes will be added to handle increased sewerage.

The council also received a report from the Planning Board for the "urban design" of the central business district. The report was a product of the Master Plan Review Committee, chaired by Councilman-Elect Dr. Martin Marks.

The council said it wants to ap-

point a committee by Wednesday, January 1, to work towards implementing those recommendations that prove "feasible." Among the ideas in the report were combining parking lots on the south side of East Second Street behind the stores; coordinating signs, paving, lighting and colors in the business district and relocating the Northside Firehouse to allow for commercial expansion of the district. Mr. Atkins told the council, "No one wants to move the firehouse."

In other business, officials said the township finalized an upgraded bid for a \$76,970 dump truck that includes a \$1,000 trade-in on a 1979

dump truck. A bid was also settled on with resident R. J. Irvin for janitorial services for the township at \$400 per month. The service includes floor and carpet cleaning for the township's library, the Scotch Hills Country Club and Municipal Building, according to Walter F. DiNizo, Director of Public Property.

The council said it also wants to move ahead with plans for a calcium chloride de-icing system for the roads in anticipation of winter weather. Mr. DiNizo estimated a dispensing system for two township trucks would cost \$11,500. Officials noted that salt alone was not effective in de-icing

roadways in temperatures below 19 degrees Fahrenheit. The calcium chloride system works at zero, officials said.

Mr. DiNizo indicated funding was available in the Capital Equipment Plan for the proposal. The council will also consider joining a used motor oil recycling program through the Union County Utilities Authority, officials said.

Mr. Atkins said Friday, November 15, is the deadline for additional budget requests from township advisory committees. He said there is a 2.5 percent increase cap allowed for 1997

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Township Council to Initiate Actions Toward Preserving Cannonball House

By JEANNE WHITNEY
Specially Written for The Times

The Scotch Plains Township Council agreed to take steps toward preservation and repair of the Osborn Cannonball House after meeting with members of the township Historic Preservation Commission, Historical Society and historic preservation consultant Mrs. Nancy Zerbe on Tuesday.

According to Commission members, the wood shingle roof of the pre-Revolutionary War house leaks and officials doubt whether the structure will survive the winter season without sustaining some sort of damage.

Estimates on replacing the roof are about \$15,000, according to the Commission. Repair to other parts of the house and accompanying shed and privy could double or even triple the figure, also according to estimates.

The council said it hopes to qualify for state matching grant monies to restore and preserve the historic house after the site receives certification from the New Jersey Register of Historic Places. There is a June deadline for the 1997 round of grant awards, Mrs. Zerbe said.

Formerly with the state Department of Environmental Protection historic preservation offices, Mrs. Zerbe encouraged the council to enlist an architect to evaluate and set guidelines for long- and short-term preservation of the house, as part of the application process for securing a grant.

Mrs. Zerbe guessed the township might be eligible for funding in the \$60,000 range with another 15 percent of that for "up front" planning costs. She said any money spent by the township to maintain the house during the two years prior to the grant application are included in the "matching funds" total requirement for the grant. The matching funds ratio is one-third to two-thirds on a non-profit application, Mrs. Zerbe said.

The house, built in 1742, got its name after reportedly taking a British cannonball in the wall during the Revolutionary War Battle of Short Hills. The house, located on Front Street and now a museum, was purchased by the township in 1971 from Mrs. Irene Snook. Records show it sold earlier, in 1857, for \$500.

President of the township Historical Society and Construction Service Specialists, Richard A. Bousquet said, "Thousands of students pass through the door of the Cannonball House every year."

Historic Preservation Commission member and volunteer tour guide at the house, Mrs. Judy Terry, confirmed

that "all the schools" bring classes to tour the historic site. "Even groups from other towns visit us," she said.

Councilwoman Mrs. Irene K. Schmidt, Council Liaison to the Historic Preservation Commission, said roof replacement for the historic site had been an issue since 1994. Mr. Bousquet said he and Public Works Director Walter DiNizo agreed that a new roof was in order for the house now, since annual costs for repairs to the structure would likely exceed the cost of a new roof. Mr. Bousquet said he would like to see a new roof on the house "before Christmas" of this year.

Resident James Fawcett, Chairman of the Historic Preservation Commission said, "We can deal with it (the roof and house) now, or in effect, let it rot."

Township Manager Thomas E. Atkins said if roof repair costs were less than \$11,700 there was no requirement for the township to take bids on the work. Officials said they worried that the bidding process would delay the roofing work into winter weather. Fees for an architectural assessment of the site would be exempt from bidding, Mr. Atkins said. It was unclear how other consulting fees would fit into the process, officials said.

Mayor Alan M. Augustine, speaking in favor of preserving the historic site, said, "I think we know what we have to do. Historic monuments must be cared for."

Councilman William F. McClintock, Jr., said, "We want to go ahead with this."

Councilman Robert E. Johnston reminded the council that in accepting state grant money, there would be reviews and requirements of the work done on the historic structures, even down to the color of paint used, he

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Council To Review Consultant's Bid For Downtown Redevelopment Study

By SUZETTE STALKER
Specially Written for The Times

During its agenda meeting on November 6, the Fanwood Borough Council heard two presentations concerning community development, including a progress report on the downtown revitalization effort and a discussion with the head of a firm which specializes in matching municipalities with state and federal grant programs.

Jack Molenaar, a member of the Fanwood Planning Board and Chairman of the Fanwood Downtown Revitalization Committee, confirmed that bids had been received from several companies to perform a study of the municipality's business district for the purpose of determining where improvements and enhancements should be made.

Officials and merchants hope to rejuvenate the area, which faces competition from retailers along nearby Route No. 22 and from malls, by upgrading building facades and public amenities in the downtown, as

well as improving pedestrian safety through "traffic calming" techniques. Proposals for developing the Dean Oil site on La Grande Avenue are also under consideration.

Mr. Molenaar reported that the lowest bidder, the RBA Group of Morristown, is asking for \$10,000 to perform the study, which is \$5,000 more than the governing body allocated for the project in its 1996 municipal budget. Officials will now have to decide whether they want to incorporate the additional funds into next year's budget in order to have RBA implement the study, which would be done in two parts, the Committee Chairman said.

In the first phase, RBA would do a reconnaissance of the downtown, including a physical observation of the area, to identify problems and ascertain where improvements need to be made. The consultant would also meet with the council, merchants and the committee to exchange ideas, according to Mr. Molenaar. The second phase would involve finalizing plans for redevelopment, he said.

Councilman William E. Populus, Jr. voiced concern that the initial \$5,000 would be wasted if the reconnaissance was performed and the governing body subsequently determined that there were insufficient funds in the 1997 budget to cover the second part of the project. Councilwoman Karen M. Schurtz said the council should be able to determine by now whether there is enough support among its members to go ahead with the study.

Councilman Andrew J. MacDonald, while expressing appreciation for the work of Mr. Molenaar's committee, stated that proposals for upgrading the downtown have been under discussion since 1979 without significant progress having been made, and recommended setting a time limit for implementing redevelopment goals. The governing body is expected to review RBA's bid shortly. Earlier in the evening, Charles C.

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PRESERVING THE CANNONBALL...The Scotch Plains Township Council has agreed to take steps to preserve the Osborn Cannonball House Museum. The structure dates back to before the Revolutionary War. The Cannonball House is located on Front Street.

DEADLINES HELP PAPER SERVE YOU

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.