

THE TIMES



of Scotch Plains - Fanwood

OUR 37th YEAR -

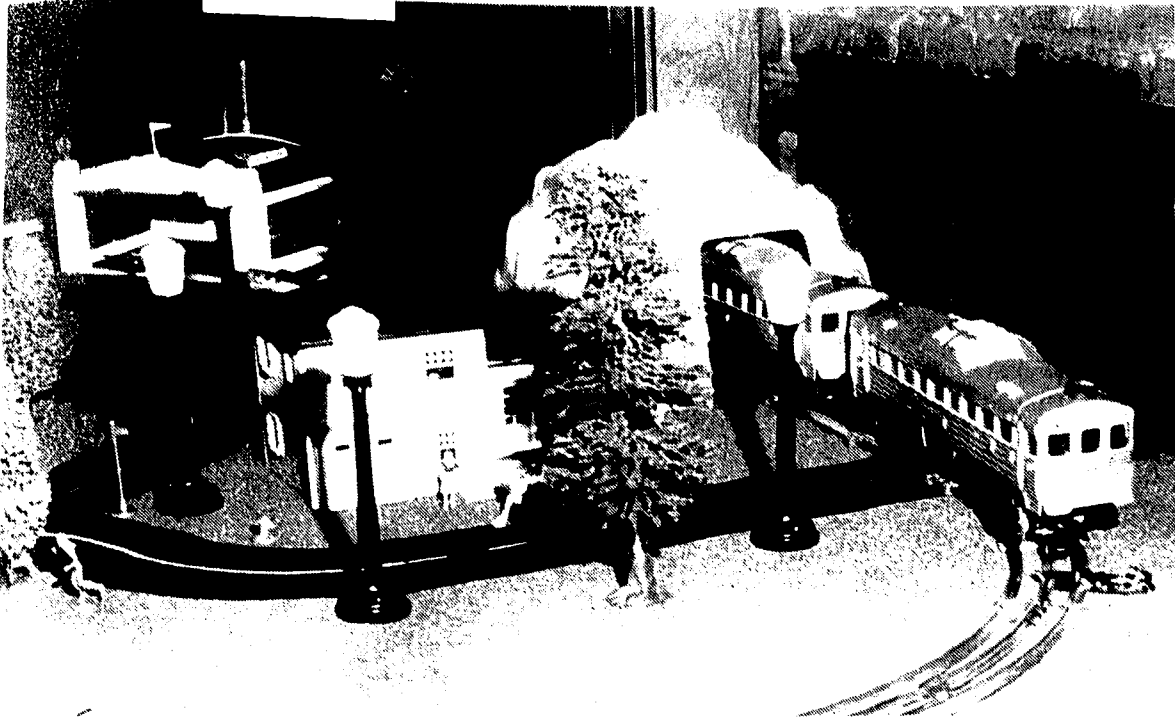
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FIFTY CENTS



William A. Burke for The Times
STILL NOT FORGOTTEN... What kind of holiday would it be without a traditional train set? The Fanwood Memorial Library has the typical Christmas attraction set up for the entertainment of young and old train enthusiasts, maybe an indication that even in this age of interplanetary rockets and sophisticated computer technology the trains have not been forgotten.

Fanwood Borough Council to Discuss Prospects For Aiding Residents Plagued by Sewage Backups

By SUZETTE STALKER
Specially Written for The Times

The Fanwood Borough Council is expected to hold a special public meeting on Thursday, December 26, at 8 p.m. during which officials will discuss prospects for alleviating the problem of sewage which has been seeping into homes along Willoughby Road and neighboring streets, and to explain the complexities of refurbishing the sewer system.

The councilman said the committee outlined approaches for dealing with the problem, including sewer line repairs, prioritizing what needs to be done, educating the public about how illegally discharging water contributes to the problem and enforcing regulations concerning illegal hook-ups. Mr. Marsden was expected to present a report to the governing body shortly, covering these topics and proposals, which will be discussed at the meeting next week.

More than half a dozen residents who have had sewage back up into their basements publicly appealed to the governing body at its November 14 meeting to bring them some relief as swiftly as possible. Two residents of Willoughby Road who testified at the earlier meeting returned last week to report that they and some of their neighbors were planning to have check valves or shut-off valves installed in order to prevent the sewage

from coming into their homes.

While both said they regretted shifting the problem to other homeowners living in lower sections of the borough, they emphasized that they had no other options. "We have to do something. We just can't go through this anymore," observed Mrs. Jennifer McGuire, who told officials last month that she has had sewage spill out of her laundry sink into her basement several times in the last three years.

She added that since she spoke at the council meeting last month, three more of her neighbors, two on Russell Road and another on Willoughby, have come forward to tell her they have also been experiencing the same problem. Mrs. McGuire suggested that stronger enforcement of regulations and penalties for people illegally hooked up to the sewer system would be effective measures in halting the problem.

"We just feel we have to do something," added Mrs. Andrea Correll, explaining the decision by her and other Willoughby Road residents to have the valves installed. "I would hate to chase the problem to somebody else's house by doing this, but it's something we're forced into doing."

Councilman William E. Populus, Jr., the governing body's liaison to the Plainfield Area Regional Sewerage Authority, which serves Fanwood, urged the council to make the situation "a top priority."

He added, however, that because of the median income of Fanwood residents, the borough did not qualify for various sources of funding he had investigated so far to help defray pending repair costs. Mayor Maryanne S. Connelly noted that the borough may be eligible for a Community Development Block Grant to refurbish the sewer system.

In other news, the governing body postponed its vote on a resolution calling for the Mayor and Council to

PLANNER RECOMMENDED TO REVIEW ZONING CHANGE FOR MALL

Visual Depictions Are Sought By Council Regarding Zoning Change for Detached Structures

By JEANNE WHITNEY
Specially Written for The Times

With one meeting left to go before the year's end, the Scotch Plains Township Council met in conference Tuesday to consider possible zoning changes dealing with detached secondary structures such as garages on residential property and a request by owners of a township restaurant to further develop their Raritan Road site.

The proposed amendment to the township's zoning laws regarding secondary structures comes in the wake of protests from Arrowhead Drive residents over a structure built on residential property in a neighborhood that

reportedly includes an apartment and garage with scant setbacks from property borders. The Council agreed that they wanted visual depictions of the amendments proposed regulations before deciding on them. The amendment deals with building height limits, roofs, lot coverage and setbacks, according to officials.

A change from residential to retail business zones is necessary for owners Mr. and Mrs. George Filippatos to make certain improvements, including development of a strip mall on their Park Place Family Restaurant site, according to the officials. The township Planning Board told the Council it already had two "informal presentations" in the past year from the Filippatos' attorney, requesting a zoning change. The council said it would recommend the Planning Board seek the advice of an independent planner if the Council decided to further consider the zoning change.

In a separate action, Township Manager Thomas E. Atkins said he had authorized engineering consultants Killam Associates to begin "preliminary work" on the \$1.7 million sewerage pumping station project that the Council introduced as a bond ordinance last week. A public hearing on the proposed ordinance will be held on Monday, December 23, during the Council's next regular meeting, officials said.

In other business, Mr. Atkins told the Council that Cranford was not joining the Suburban Municipal Joint Insurance Fund (JIF) but would stay with its present private insurance company. He said the Borough of Fanwood had not yet voted on whether or not to stay with the JIF for another three years, and the Borough of New Providence received a 30-day extension on a decision to join

the JIF. Warren Township is also being considered for membership in the fund, officials said.

Other current JIF members along with Scotch Plains are Westfield, Mountainside, Summit, Watchung, Bernardsville, and Bedminster. Mr. Atkins also told the Council that Scotch Plains Township Hall will be the site of JIF meetings for the coming year, starting Thursday, January 9, at 8 p.m.

In other activity, the Council said it would consider moving ahead with testing soil from the pond in Brookside Park on Hetfield Avenue, as a first step in plans to drain the pond. Officials said they had received the okay from the State Department of Environmental Protection and Energy as well as a \$2,500 grant to pursue the park's Master Plan.

The Council agreed to wrap up year-end business with a resolution to cancel any outstanding checks that are at least six months old for a total of about \$3,600, following the recommendations of Township Finance Director Al Steinberg. The Council also agreed to consider the transfer of \$35,000 in funds to the Fire Department for equipment purchases from salaries and wages and fire hydrant services accounts.

On a separate matter, the Council heard from the Union County Department of Human Services that new language used by the United States Census Bureau regarding disabled individuals, that was subsequently incorporated into Community Block Grant Program regulations, makes it more difficult to get funding to build a playground that meets requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Officials noted that Mr. Atkins was recently installed as 1997 President of the New Jersey Municipal Management Association.

Weeding Out Information Critical Skill Students Need in Order to Succeed

National Consultant Addresses School Board

By BRIAN CAROVILLANO
Specially Written for The Times

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education heard from a celebrated educational consultant last Thursday on the subject of curriculum development and where education is going as this country nears the new millennium.

Ms. Mary Ann Liebowitz, a Lawrenceville resident, travels all over America and the world to advise teachers on developing a realistic and effective curriculum for today's children. On this night, Ms. Liebowitz addressed the board on the subject of what role the board should play in the process of developing an effective course of study.

Ms. Liebowitz, who was introduced by Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Carol B. Choye, as "a world-renowned consultant," focused primarily on the changing face of education and how districts, states, and nations have to be flexible in order to accommodate for this flux.

"Technology has greatly altered and added to the skills and knowledge that students need to have," said Ms. Liebowitz, but at the same time, she cautioned, not everything has changed, so throwing out the old standards and starting from scratch is not necessarily the answer.

"We as educators need to be able to adapt," she said.

The technological evolution that has swept through the schools has brought with it a mass of information, which if used properly, can be of great use to both the students and the teachers. Therefore, according to Ms. Liebowitz, one of the most important skills 21st century students need to have is the ability to weed through all this information, and to determine which of it is credible and useful.

"You need to know where this information is coming from," said Ms. Liebowitz. "What are the skills that kids need to know to determine what's credible information?"

As an example, Ms. Liebowitz pointed out that on her own recent trip to Singapore to act as a consultant for the Minister of Education there, her source of news from home was the Internet. The trip coincided with the November election in the United States, and the most reliable source of up-to-date information turned out to be the Internet, and not CNN (Cable News Network).

"But how do you know if this is accurate?" she asked. "How do you know who is feeding this information in?"

Ms. Liebowitz went on to expand upon the need to redefine the skills that people will need to get by in future generations. In addition to the advent of computer-based education, recent years have seen the divisions between traditional disciplines become blurred, "as cross-cutting topics continue to grow." Mathematics, science, English, and history can no longer exist independent of one another, she advised the group. And professional development has become more of a concern as educational media have made their way into the classroom.

"What do teachers need to know now that they did not need to know in the past?" Ms. Liebowitz asked the board.

"Schools have to re-think what they're doing," said Ms. Liebowitz, explaining that the board's role is not only to approve these changes, but to facilitate and participate in this process. The board must be adaptable, willing to work with teachers, experts, students, and the government in order to determine what's best for today's, and tomorrow's kids, she explained.

Ms. Liebowitz cautioned the board to remember that they do not represent themselves or their neighbors, but the welfare of the district as a whole.

Planning Unit Says Fence Not Needed for Landscaper

By SALLY BECKWITH
Specially Written for The Times

The Scotch Plains Planning Board enjoyed a light agenda for its last meeting of 1996 on Monday evening. Two applications for site plan modifications were presented by Site Plan Committee Chairman Frank Webb.

Steven Costalos, owner of Scapabilities, a landscaping business on Waldheim Avenue, requested that he not be required to put up chain-link fencing that was indicated on his original site plan.

As this fencing had been planned for his own security purposes and not mandated by the board, board mem-

bers unanimously granted the application under the conditions that Mr. Costalos would not require board approval if he wanted to add the fencing some time in the future, and that he would add the fencing if this was requested by his neighbors.

Represented by Westfield attorney Steven Burke, Ms. Barbara Kukura, Manager of the Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage real estate office on Park Avenue, requested board approval for a free-standing sign to be placed in front of the building. The sign, approved by the Architectural Review Committee, would be on a brick base and internally illuminated, as all external lighting of the building and an existing sign has been repeatedly vandalized, according to Ms. Kukura.

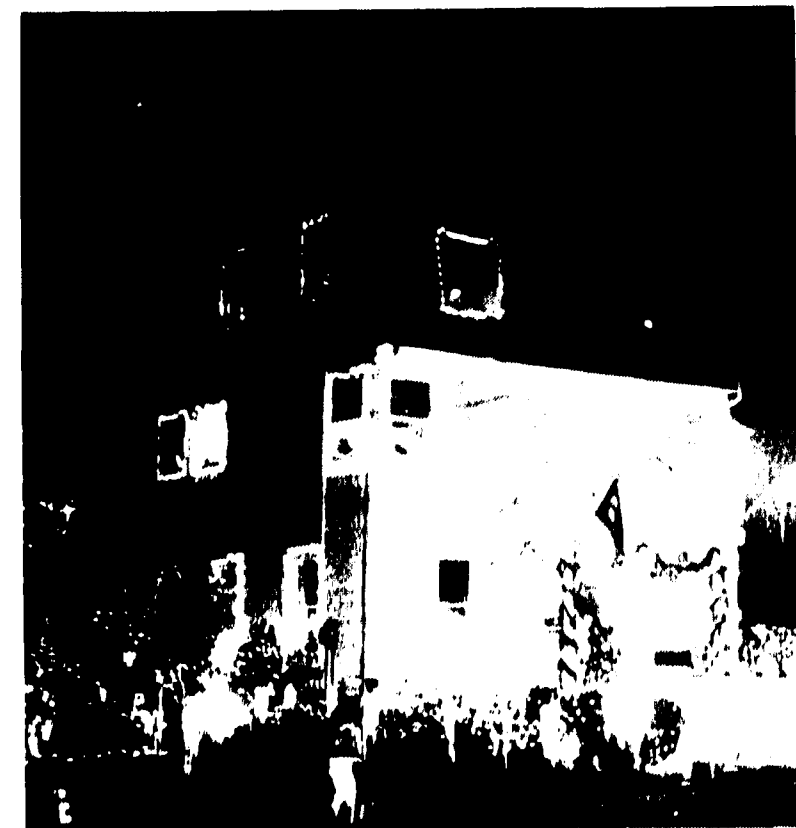
After whittling down the dimensions of the sign to what they considered an appropriate size, the board approved Ms. Kukura's request.

John Angeleria, owner of the Roy Rogers restaurant on Terrill Road, requested through his attorney Robert Kraus of Scotch Plains, that the Planning Board recommend to the Township Council that Shepard Street, a paper street bordering one side of the restaurant property, be vacated as a public right-of-way. Robert La Costa, Scotch Plains Zoning Officer, stated that both Shepard Street and nearby Gable Street are streets "going nowhere" because of undevelopable land behind them.

Mr. La Costa suggested that the board, "in the interest of good planning," recommend to the council that both streets be vacated. Board members unanimously agreed to take that action.

Just before adjournment, Dr. Martin Marks rose to say that "This will be my last meeting as a member of the Scotch Plains Planning Board." Dr. Marks was elected to the Township Council this past November. He thanked his colleagues for "four years of camaraderie," and added that Scotch Plains residents should be very grateful for the "hard work, dedication and commitment" of all Planning Board members.

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William A. Burke for The Times
SCOTCH PLAINS TRAFFIC STOPPER... This Victorian dwelling at the junction of East Front Street and Myrtle Avenue has long been a Christmas eye-catcher with its illuminated displays. This year is no exception and visitors come from far and near to view the display.

Holiday Deadlines

Those persons preparing submittals to *The Times* should note that the press release deadline for the issue of Thursday, December 26, has already passed as published on the front page of last week's issue.

However, sports articles will be accepted through noon on Friday, December 20. Obituaries and Classifieds will be accepted up until 1 p.m. on Saturday, December 21.

To ensure that submittals reach our offices by our deadlines, we recommend that copy be either e-mailed or faxed. *The Times'* e-mail address is goleda@scotchtimes.com. The fax number is 232-0473. Materials may also be dropped through the door slot when our offices are closed.

All copy must be typed, double-spaced, with a maximum of 500 words in length, and include a daytime telephone number where the submitter can be reached.

Please note that in addition to making our deadlines, press releases and/or letters may not be immediately published due to space considerations. All submittals are subject to being cut due to length and may be edited for style and clarification at the discretion of the editor.

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Happy Holidays from The Times Staff