



SCOTCH PLAINS

THE TIMES

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Township Council Agrees To Release Funds to Pay Berwyck Chase Developer

By JEANNE WHITNEY
Specially Written for The Times

The Scotch Plains Township Council said Tuesday it would release over \$73,000 held since 1991 as part of Saugatuck Associates' performance guarantee for the development of Berwyck Chase Subdivision despite four years of complaints by a neighboring homeowner that his front yard "floods" since work on the subdivision began.

According to Councilman Dr. Martin Marks, "We've spoken to our lawyers. Legally, we can't hold Saugatuck's bond."

Dr. Nicholas Melillo, whose property is on Rahway Road, asked the council not to release Saugatuck's money after he told the council that his driveway has been under as much as 30 inches of water at times. He showed the council photographs that he said showed the pooling water and what he called "residual garbage" that washes up.

"The storm water management system for the subdivision is inadequate for the amount of water," Dr. Melillo said.

Councilman William F. McClintock, Jr. told Dr. Melillo, "We want to solve this problem."

He said other residents in the area complain of similar water problems. The council said it will seek to meet with the affected residents, the builders and the engineers in order to resolve the issue. Mr. McClintock added that bond guarantee money is released by the township only when the requirements of the original agreement are met.

In other business, the council decided by ordinance Tuesday to appropriate \$37,500 in Community Development Funds to build a playground in Farley Park that meets the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards. Additionally, last week the township said it received a \$78,000 grant from Union County Development Office towards the improvement of Green Forest Park and the Senior Citizen Housing parking lot. The township originally asked for a total of \$215,000 in funds for the two projects. The council indicated it was deciding how to parcel out the funds.

Two ordinance amendments that righted "clerical errors" in the zoning code also were unanimously okayed by the council on Tuesday. According to officials, one ordinance "defines townhouses" and the other deals with "height limitations." Both corrections came from the Planning Board, officials added. A public hearing is Tuesday, March 11.

On a different matter, final adoption of an ordinance to sell a 600-square-foot piece of irregularly-shaped commercial property on Route No. 22 in the township was unanimously approved. The sale is limited to property owners whose lots are adjacent to the sale property. Sealed bids will be accepted at a date to be announced, officials said.

Another ordinance allowing raffles in the township on Sunday, June 1, was adopted unanimously on its final reading by the council.

A different "clerical error" in the \$7 million-plus temporary township budget was fixed by unanimous resolution of the council. If all goes as planned, the council said it will introduce the actual 1997 budget next Tuesday, March 4, and send it off for state review. At last check, the proposed budget weighed in at \$15,345,937 with hints of a possible tax increase.

Downtown merchant Rose Marie Dutter of Rosie's Treasures Boutique was denied the use of a flag outside her store to display the store name. The council explained that the "special use permit" will allow her request for temporary display of mannequins outside the store doors, but not allow flags that function as a sign.

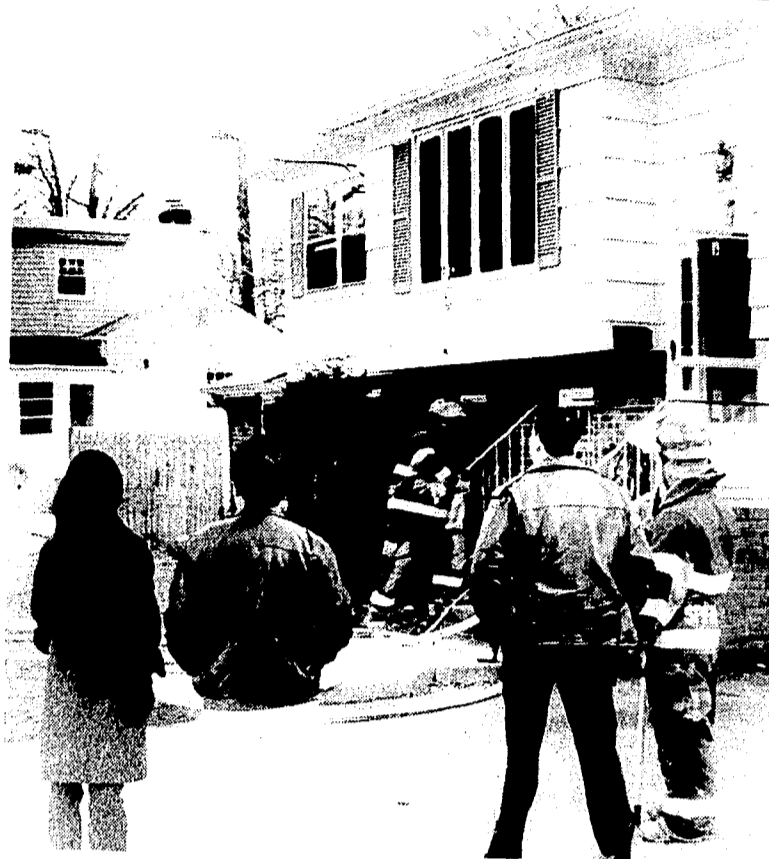
Ms. Dutter questioned why she was allowed to fly a flag last year when her store was in a different location. Officials indicated the special use permit changed in March of last year.

In other action, the council resolved to deny the assessment of Parker's Greenhouse on Terrill Road as "farmland" for 1997 based on evidence stemming from a separate court dispute.

The council recognized students from the township's middle schools as part of March's National Middle Level Education Month.

As part of the council's recognition of February as Black History Month, Professor of Humanities and Computer Graphics at Essex County College, Dr. Robert C. Spellman, presented a slide show highlighting golf pro John Shippen, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and making the case for standards of excellence.

According to Dr. Spellman, Mr. Shippen was the golf professional at the Scotch Hills Country Club for 36 years, retiring in 1960. At that time, the club was known as Shady Rest Country Club. Mr. Shippen was the first African-American to play golf in the U.S. Open tournament in 1896, Dr. Spellman said. Mr. Shippen's life is documented in the film "A Place for Us," shown on Channel 34.



ON THE SCENE...A full complement of equipment from the Scotch Plains Fire Department responded to a blaze at 228 Watchung Terrace Monday afternoon. Flames were confined to the living room of the split-level home, but there was smoke and water damage throughout the structure.

William A. Burke for The Times

Scotch Plains Planning Board Grants Clothing Mannequins for Boutique

By BRIAN CAROVILLANO
Specially Written for The Times

Discussion at last Wednesday's Scotch Plains Planning Board meeting centered mainly on the prospect of clothing mannequins on Park Avenue and an impending Mount Laurel development that straddles the Plainfield border.

Rose Marie Dutter, owner of Rosie's Treasures Boutiques on Park Avenue, had been seeking to display two clothing mannequins and a banner outside her store's new location. Her previous site, also on Park Avenue, had featured the mannequins adorned with seasonal attire. The banner stipulation was removed from the permit request as it does not comply with township ordinance, but there was some discussion as to the fate of the mannequins.

Board members Sal Lauro and Vincent DiFrancesco were skeptical, expecting that the mannequins would be the plastic body-figure types that are used in store windows.

"Perhaps there is a better way to show what you have to sell," suggested Mr. DiFrancesco.

Mr. Lauro pointed out that with each special use permit the Planning Board grants, the next applicant might want something more.

Board member Robert LaCosta defended the mannequins, saying they

were the wire clothes-rack type. "In my opinion (the mannequins) are very tastefully done," he said.

Board Chairman George Tomkin added, "I would rather be on the side of granting a little too much leeway than having an empty store."

In the end, Mr. Lauro was won over by the pro-mannequin contingent, but not Mr. DiFrancesco, and the permit was granted for the mannequins sans banner by a five-to-one vote.

The rest of the evening's agenda focused primarily on the Woodland Avenue development which lies only partly within Scotch Plains' limits, and thus this is the only portion subject to Scotch Plains' zoning requirements.

Robert H. Krause, a lawyer representing The Reserve, the Hovanian development planned for the Donato property, had sent a letter to Township Manager Thomas E. Atkins requesting a joint meeting of the Plainfield and Scotch Plains Planning Boards. The meeting would address any inconsistencies between the two communities' master plans, and how the differences in zoning issues could be best addressed.

Lawrence Woodruff, the counsel for the Planning Board, suggested that the board refuse the invitation to a joint session, if only because the plans for the development do not

THREE INCUMBENTS FACE FIVE NEWCOMERS

Eight Candidates Seek Three Available Seats On Board of Education

By SUZETTE STALKER
Specially Written for The Times

Eight candidates will vie for three available seats on the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education this spring, including all three incumbents whose current terms are due to expire. School district spokeswoman Kathleen L. Meyer confirmed on Monday that this is the largest pool of candidates to run for the school board in several years.

All three incumbents seeking reelection to the nine-member body are from Scotch Plains. They include board Vice President Lillian M. Dettmar, who is seeking her sixth term on the board; August A. Ruggiero, whose membership on the board dates back more than 20 years, and Theresa Larkin, who is running for her second term.

They will be challenged by newcomers Jean McAllister, Thomas Russo, Frances Gonzalez, Kristen Croag Paparella and Norman A. Ross.

School elections will take place on Tuesday, April 15, when residents will also vote for or against the 1997-1998 school budget. The deadline for school board candidates to have submitted their petitions was Monday at 4 p.m.

A township resident for 37 years, Mrs. Dettmar, who lives on Algonquin Drive, was first elected to the board in 1981. During her tenure, she has been named as board Vice President five times and has served as Chairwoman of the board's Policy, Athletic, Community Relations, Staff Appreciation and Legislative Committees. She also has been a member of the Budget, Finance, Buildings and Grounds and Negotiations Committees.

She and her husband, both retired teachers, have two grown children who were educated through the local school district. Mrs. Dettmar, who received a Bachelor of Science Degree in Business Education from Trenton State College, taught accounting and other business courses in several school districts including Scotch Plains-Fanwood, Union County Regional, Rahway and Bridgewater-Raritan.

The candidate has served on the executive boards of the Parent-Teacher Associations at McGinn Elementary School, Terrill Middle School and Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School, and her resume also includes having been President and Vice President of the Parent-Teacher Association Council, as well as an active member of other community organizations.

Mr. Ruggiero, a township resident for 24 years who lives on Pearl Place, has served four consecutive terms on the school board and previously had been appointed to a one year term for 1984-1985. Prior to that, he was a member of the board from 1976 through 1979. He served as President of the board for four years between 1989 and 1993 and also held the position of Vice President during 1987-1988. He and his wife have two grown children, both of whom graduated from the Scotch Plains-Fanwood school system.

During his long association with the Board of Education, Mr. Ruggiero has been a member of the Budget, Policy, Curriculum and Instruction and Superintendent's Evaluation Committees. The candidate, who received his Bachelor of Science and Master of Science Degrees in Mathematics from Stevens Institute of Technology in Hoboken, is a professor of mathematics and physics at Essex County College in Newark, where he has taught for 28 years. He also is Coordinator of Physics at the school.

Mrs. Larkin, who is married and the mother of three children, lives on Black Birch Road. She is a member of the Policy, Community Relations

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Scotch Plains Resident Donates \$100,000 To YMCA Effort to Build New Gymnasium

By ALEXANDRA JELKES
Specially Written for The Times

A party was held at the Shackamaxon Country Club on February 7 in honor of Norman and Marie Sevell of Scotch Plains, who recently donated \$100,000 to the Scotch Plains-Fanwood YMCA. Mr. Sevell felt that he wanted to give something back to his community and thus gave the donation.

During a recent interview with The Times, Mr. Sevell had fond memories of growing up in Irvington, along with his long-time friend, Dr. Richard Dobyms. Mr. Sevell remembers having to share a sports jacket with Dr. Dobyms so they could take turns and wear it on dates.

At that time in his life he felt fortunate for having a nice sports jacket. Today he feels rewarded to have succeeded in his field and to be able to reach out to people and promote worthy causes.

Mr. Sevell has kept in touch with Dr. Dobyms and his wife, Jo. In fact it was Dr. Dobyms who inspired Mr. Sevell to donate the money to the YMCA.

"Dedication to the YMCA's growth moved me," he stated. "It touched my heart to see someone so dedicated to a cause."

Mr. Sevell has been a resident of Scotch Plains since the early 1960s and has seen tremendous growth in the town.

"It's a great place to live," he explained.

Mr. Sevell commended the YMCA's commitment to people's health. Every time he meets an individual and hears about their exercise experience at the YMCA, he feels particularly proud that his name is attached to the YMCA gymnasium. He said he never realized how many people use the facility, adding "It's a real worthy cause."

Karen Drexler, the Executive Director of the YMCA, explained the process of how Mr. Sevell donated the money that will be used.

"About five years ago, we were involved in a 'Building a Healthier Tomorrow Campaign.' Mr. Sevell came forward in 1992 and stated his interest in donating the money for this cause. The ultimate goal for this campaign was constructing a new gymnasium for the Y. The gift was pledged over a five-year period.

"This particular year, the 'Y' honored Mr. Sevell for his generous contribution by having a thank-you dinner dance at the Shackamaxon Country Club," stated Ms. Drexler.

Mr. Sevell's family and friends were among the guests for the festivities. The YMCA Board President, William Ohnsorg, presented Mr. and Mrs. Sevell a plaque and a caricature. Assemblyman Alan M. Augustine, a Scotch Plains resident who served as

Mayor last year, proclaimed a resolution and confirmed the Sevels' generosity and commitment to the community.

Ms. Drexler explained how Mr. and Mrs. Sevell were not looking for publicity when they committed them-

selves to this cause.

"They are private people. We were reaching out to a lot of people and they came forward with this donation," she added. "This (party) was our way of thanking them for their support."



THOUGHTFUL DONATION...Mr. and Mrs. Norman Sevell are honored at a recent thank you party thrown for them after they donated \$100,000 to help fund a new gymnasium at the YMCA. At the podium is Scotch Plains Mayor Irene T. Schmidt.

Zoning Board Approves Bid For Addition

By SUZETTE STALKER
Specially Written for The Times

Only one application was heard by the Fanwood Board of Adjustment last Thursday, submitted by a couple who successfully petitioned the board for permission to create an addition onto their home by enclosing an existing porch. The applicants also received approval to widen their driveway in order to accommodate their family's two cars.

The appeal, by Igor and Elena Kruglyak of 22 La Grande Avenue, required several bulk variances from the Code of the Borough of Fanwood, covering the side yard setback and rear yard depth, as well as for the widening of the driveway. The permitted driveway width is 10 feet, while the width proposed by the applicants was 20 feet.

During the public hearing, the application was amended to reflect a change in the proposed side yard setback from 5.5 feet to 3.5 feet. The permitted side yard distance is 10 feet, and the present distance is 3.5 feet, which will remain the same. The permitted rear yard depth is 25 feet and the present depth is 25.88 feet. The proposed distance was 10.88 feet.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Deadlines Told For Submittals To The Times

Those persons preparing press releases for submission to The Times are reminded that copy should be E-mailed or faxed by 4 p.m. on the Friday prior to publication. The Times' E-mail address is goledar@aol.com. The fax number is 232-0473.

Releases, pictures, and letters to the editor can also be dropped off at our office located at 50 Elm Street or through our mail slot. To ensure that submittals reach our office prior to deadline we encourage E-mail or faxed material.

Sports stories which occur prior to the weekend should be in by the Friday deadline. Weekend sports events must be submitted by noon on the Monday prior to the publication date. Obituaries will be accepted up to 5 p.m. on Tuesdays.

All copy must be typed, double-spaced, no more than 500 words in length, and include a daytime telephone number where the submitter can be reached.

For events which are planned months in advance, we encourage submission of stories as early as possible prior to the event.

Please note that in addition to making our deadlines, the publication of submittals may be delayed due to space considerations. All submittals are subject to being cut due to length, edited for style and clarification at the discretion of the editor.