

# THE TIMES

of  
**Scotch Plains - Fanwood**



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**CRUSHED!**...Last week's heavy winds caused this large tree to fall on the dugout on the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Youth Baseball Little League Association's field. Although the dugout itself is made of concrete, the wooden viewing area directly behind it sustained substantial damage. This area is utilized by those persons who wish to take photographs or videotape games.

David B. Corbin for The Times



**WHEN NATURE CALLS...** The tree which fell on the viewing stand behind the dugout of the Little League field in Scotch Plains was a sad occasion, given the fact the dugout was just recently completely re-done. The Mayors of Scotch Plains and Fanwood were set to dedicate the new dugout on opening day, set for Saturday, April 12. The dugout was entirely paid for through donations.

David B. Corbin for The Times

## Residents Offer Input On Revamping Downtown

By SUZETTE STALKER  
Specially Written for The Times

The Fanwood Downtown Revitalization Committee (FDRC) sponsored a two-hour workshop last Thursday for members of the public to offer input on prospects for redeveloping the downtown. Approximately 15 residents turned out for the program, which was held at the Community House at the Fanwood Train Station.

The RBA Group, a Morristown firm hired by the borough, is currently developing a preliminary plan for revitalizing the business district based on a tour of the area conducted by company representatives, as well as input from committee members, municipal officials and the public. This preliminary document is expected to be presented shortly to the Fanwood Borough Council for review, according to FDRC Chairman Jack Molenaar.

Mr. Molenaar, who is also a member of the Fanwood Planning Board and the Master Plan Committee, said the governing body will review the preliminary report and provide comments before returning it to RBA. A revised plan will then be presented publicly by the company, probably sometime in early May, which is expected to highlight proposed improvements and also give an overview of how much the project would cost, according to the FDRC Chairman.

During the workshop, participants were each given a miniature map of the downtown to indicate where they felt the area could be enhanced. They also viewed a slide presentation showing the types of improvements which might be applicable to Fanwood's downtown.

Michele Picou, Program Manager for Westfield Main Street, spoke to the group about her organization's efforts to revitalize its own downtown. Acknowledging that Westfield has a much larger business district than Fanwood, Mr. Molenaar remarked that the borough is not trying to duplicate Westfield's downtown. "We're just trying to be a better Fanwood," he noted.

Prior to the workshop last Thursday, RBA representatives performed a reconnaissance of the downtown to determine where aesthetic improvements such as landscaping, lighting and benches could be implemented. On March 5, they met with FDRC members for a planning exercise and to review opportunities and constraints regarding redevelopment of the downtown.

Earlier in the day on Thursday, the company representatives met with Fanwood officials including Police Chief Anthony J. Parenti, Fire Chief Daniel Librandy, Director of Public Works Raymond Manfra and Borough Engineer Richard Marsden for a similar discussion as the one the day before with the FDRC, according to Mr. Molenaar.

Noting that the last thing the RBA wants to do is "reinvent the wheel," the FDRC Chairman said he provided company representatives with background information including past surveys of the downtown, a recent marketing study done by members of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School DECA and minutes from committee meetings.

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## BOE Candidates' Night Set For March 19 at High School

The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) Council will host a Board of Education Candidates' Night on Wednesday, March 19, at 7:30 p.m. in the auditorium of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School, located on Westfield Road in Scotch Plains.

Eight candidates are running for three seats, all in Scotch Plains: Lillian M. Dettmar (incumbent), Frances L. Gonzales, Theresa Larkin (incumbent), Jean McAllister, Kristen Croag Paparella, Norman A. Ross, August L. Ruggiero (incumbent) and Thomas Russo.

The evening will begin with the introduction of the candidates by program moderator, Margaret Walker, of the Westfield Area League of Women Voters. Each candidate will then have the opportunity to make his or her own introductory remarks, and reasons for running for the Board of Education. The PTA Council has posed two questions to the candidates and the Junior States of America (JSA), an organization of Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School students, has posed one question. Candidates will answer these questions and then the forum will be opened to questions from the audience.

The questions posed by the PTA Council are:  
• "With the prospect of a magnet school for science and technology on the horizon, which do you think is more important in this day and age, a comprehensive education or a specialized education? In which direction do you think our school district should go, how do you see the district getting there, and how can it be financed?"

• "Some school districts have built flexibility into the curriculum and schedule (some through vehicles such as block scheduling and integrated curriculum). Do you feel our district can benefit from more flexible curriculum and scheduling options? If so, in what ways, and if not, what in particular do you consider inappropriate?"

The question posed by the JSA is:  
• In view of recent budget cuts in music departments across the state and citing studies that have shown that an education supplemented with music can produce a more well-rounded child, what is your stance on the current status of the music department and do you see any cuts in its future?

Candidates' Night provides an opportunity for the voters of Scotch Plains and Fanwood to see and assess all school board candidates together, a PTA Council spokeswoman said. All residents are invited to attend this event to hear and question potential members of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education.

## Council Tables Vote On Zoning Amendment

By JEANNE WHITNEY  
Specially Written for The Times

The Scotch Plains Council decided Tuesday to table for two weeks a final vote on a zoning code amendment defining townhouses and building heights while attorneys consider the changes in light of the Council On Affordable Housing (COAH) regulations. Councilwoman Joan Papen said the Planning Board asked for the additional time to review the amendment.

Officials said certain township properties will be affected by the changes if developers seek to build multiple-family housing that includes 20 percent low-to-moderate income units. Neighboring residents of such properties are said to object to the amendment. The township council did, however, unanimously adopt on Tuesday a related affordable housing code change from last year that corrected a "clerical error."

In other action, the council appropriated \$37,500 from last year's Community Development Fund for playground equipment in Farley Park. The improvements will meet standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Township Municipal Manager Thomas E. Atkins said federal grants for these types of projects have dried up due to changes in Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requirements.

In moving ahead with the \$1.7 million capital improvement project approved last year to upgrade the township sewerage system on the south side, the council authorized the Mayor and clerk to contract with Killam Associates for the design of the pumping stations and sanitary sewers. Fees for the professional services and preliminary plans could run about 10 percent of the total cost, officials said. The south side system connects with the Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority. Officials have said the work on the pumping stations will take about two years to complete.

On a separate matter, the council

## Fanwood Council Slated to Adopt \$5.5 Million Municipal Budget, Sewer Repair Ordinance Tonight

By SUZETTE STALKER  
Specially Written for The Times

The \$5.5 million Fanwood municipal budget for 1997, distinguished in that it calls for a 0 percent tax increase, is expected to be formally adopted by the Borough Council today, Thursday, March 13, during the governing body's regular meeting beginning at 8 p.m. The budget, which was drafted in less than eight meetings, was introduced last month on schedule with the state's February 10 deadline.

Although the budget represents an increase of 3.98 percent over last year's spending plan, or \$211,256, a state grant of \$254,000 covered that amount, with the remainder channeled into surplus. The borough was reimbursed by the state for work done on Second and Helen Streets which Fanwood had paid for up front.

Officials are also scheduled to hold public hearings tonight on several ordinances which the governing body passed on first reading last month. One of these is a bond ordinance appropriating \$110,000 and authorizing the issuance of \$104,500 in bonds to refurbish the municipality's aging sewer system. The project is presently slated to begin in June or early July.

The infrastructure's problems came to light late last year when residents of Willoughby Road complained that sewage chronically backed up into their homes, creating hardships, expense and health concerns. The council confirmed last month that repair efforts would begin with Willoughby Road, which is part of a subsystem that encompasses one third of the sanitary sewer piping system in the borough.

A second bond ordinance provides for the appropriation of \$406,080 and authorizes the issuance of \$385,766 in bonds for various general improvements to borough structures. The third ordinance is the 1997 Salary Ordinance which addresses wages paid to borough employees.

In addition, the council is expected to support a resolution in favor of Assembly Bill No. 2006, which asks the state to reevaluate its regulations concerning student bus service. In order to be eligible for bus service, elementary school students currently must live two miles from school, and for high school students the distance is 2.5 miles. The regulations, however, do not take into account hazardous routes which students may have to travel on foot to get to school.

During the meeting, Mayor Maryanne S. Connelly recapped an announcement by Congressman Robert D. Franks, earlier in the week that an agreement had been reached to proceed with the lower portion of the Green Brook Flood Control Project. Further action on plans by the United States Army Corps of Engineers for the upper basin, however, have been delayed for a year.

Congressman Franks, whose Seventh Congressional District includes Fanwood and Scotch Plains, revealed during a press conference on March 3 in Scotch Plains that the agreement was reached at his request between the Army Corps of Engineers, the Green

Brook Flood Control Commission and the state regarding the time frame for implementing flood control measures in the Green Brook Basin.

The arrangement, which calls for flood control measures to begin with Bound Brook and Middlesex in the lower basin, allows for "the most critical portion of the project to go forward on schedule," according to a statement released by the Congressman last week. It will also allow time to reevaluate plans for flood control in the upper basin, he said.

The Congressman's statement maintained that "the one-year delay for the upper basin proposal is needed because of the concerns raised by the affected communities about the proposed two detention basins in Berkeley Heights and the level of flood protection the Army Corps' plan would provide to the communities of Scotch Plains, Fanwood, North Plainfield and Plainfield."

At the outset of the meeting, members of the Borough Council heard a presentation by Robert F. Smith, Area Director of Public and Government Relations for Comcast Cablevision of New Jersey, in accordance with a franchise agreement known as the Municipal Consent Ordinance. The agreement calls for Comcast to give an annual update on its programs to all municipalities which receive cable service through the company.

Comcast, which acquired Suburban Cablevision in December of 1994, is the largest cable operator in New Jersey with 146 channels. The company provides cable service to every municipality in Union County except Elizabeth, and provides many communities with their own municipal access channels, such as Fanwood's Cable Channel 35.

Calling 1995 and 1996 "years of significant achievement" for Comcast Cablevision, Mr. Smith reported that the company recently completed "a multi-million dollar rebuild of the cable television system serving Fanwood and a number of other municipalities" which he said provided improved signal quality, increased channel capacity and enhanced signal reliability to Comcast customers.

Mr. Smith, a resident of Fanwood, said that Comcast has added a number

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**NET CONTRIBUTION...** On March 7, Alex Goldfinger, Secretary of the Amateur Computer Group of New Jersey, presented a check for \$800 to Brunner School Media Specialist Sally Swettis to help fund Net Day to be held in June. Pictured, left to right, are: John Thompson, Brunner Parent and Net Day Organizer; Jeffrey B. Ross, Director of Technology; Mrs. Swettis; Fred DeFeo, Principal, and Mr. Goldfinger.

## Computer Group Donates \$800 to Brunner Net Day

"We are happy to have the opportunity to give something back to the community that has been our host since the founding of the Amateur Computer Group of New Jersey (ACGNJ) over 20 years ago," said club President, Bill Farrell, on announcing a gift of \$800 to the Brunner Elementary School Net Day.

"We will also be urging our members to participate as volunteer workers on Net Day to be held in June," continued Mr. Farrell.

The check was handed to Acting Principal Fred DeFeo, Director of Technology Jeffrey Ross, Media Specialist Sally Swettis and Net Day Organizer John Thompson by the ACGNJ Secretary and local resident Alex Goldfinger.

Brunner School, located in Scotch Plains, has had a connection to the Internet for several years and has been running a highly-successful educational program with other schools called "The Monster Project."

The purpose of Net Day is to ex-

tend the computer network wiring to reach all the classrooms, according to Mr. Farrell.

The ACGNJ was founded in April, 1975 and is now the oldest, continuously operating computer user group in the nation, Mr. Farrell noted. Most of the group's dozen meetings each month are held at the Scotch Plains Rescue Squad building. These include meetings for special interest groups such as personal computer users, programmers, investors, genealogists and Internet users. All meetings are free and open to the public.

The ACGNJ is also major force in putting on the Trenton Computer Festival which will be held on Tuesday and Wednesday, April 29 and 30, this year at Mercer Community College. There, over 100 seminars and classes will be held for all levels of participants, from novice to highly experienced.

For more information on Net Day, please call Mr. Thompson at 594-4766.

### 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 [goleader@aol.com](mailto:goleader@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, editing style and clarification at the discretion of the editor.

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