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FANWOOD MAYOR, RESIDENTS CITED FOR RECENT ACHIEVEMENTS

Borough Council Adopts 1997 Municipal Budget Representing 0 Percent Tax Hike, Okays Ordinances to Fix Infrastructure

By SUZETTE STALKER
Specially Written for The Times

The Fanwood Borough Council formally adopted its \$5.5 million municipal budget for 1997, marked by a 0 percent increase in the borough portion of residents' tax bills, during a two-hour regular meeting last Thursday which was broadcast live over Cable Channel 35.

While the budget actually reflects a 3.98 percent, or \$211,256, increase over last year's spending plan, taxpayers will not have to bear the additional expense because of a \$254,000 state grant received by the borough for work which had been done on Helen and Second Streets.

Mayor Maryanne S. Connelly and Councilman Louis C. Jung, a member of the council's Administration and Finance Committee, each commended the governing body and municipal department heads for their efforts in bringing the flat budget in

on time. The budget was introduced during the council's regular meeting on February 13.

Council President Bruce H. Walsh advised members of the audience, however, that achieving a budget with a 0 percent tax increase may not always be possible. He noted that the state and federal governments, in implementing tax decreases, would no longer be funding certain programs which would have to be picked up by local municipalities.

Two bond ordinances and a 1997 Salary Ordinance for borough employees also were adopted by the governing body. The first bond ordinance authorizes the appropriation of \$110,000 and the issuance of \$104,500 in bonds to repair the borough's sewer system. Officials hope that improving the infrastructure will alleviate such problems as sewage backing up into homes on Willoughby Road.

nations, which are due by the end of June, may be sent to The Organizing Committee, 1997 Mayor's Gala, care of the Scotch Plains Recreation Department, 430 Park Avenue, Scotch Plains, 07076.

Councilman Walsh reported that Police Chief Anthony J. Parenti met earlier this month with members of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Parent-Teacher Association Safety Council to discuss traffic safety issues near McGinn Elementary School and School One which were outlined in two letters from area residents.

Chief Parenti said on Friday that some parents have been making K-turns on Roosevelt Avenue after dropping their children off at McGinn, rather than going down to the cul-de-sac at the end of the street to turn around. The writer of one letter maintained that this practice posed a hazard to children walking to the school.

The second problem, according to the chief, involves parents who leave their vehicles parked on Madison Avenue while walking their children to School One. There are no sidewalks on Madison, and the parked cars mean that children have to walk further out in the street on their way to school, he said. The chief confirmed that the Fanwood Police Department is studying the situation to determine whether sidewalks should be installed on Madison.

During the first portion of the meeting, Mayor Connelly announced the appointment of Wilma Mende as a member of the Environmental Commission through December 31, 1998.

She also made a presentation to Tom Pearson and Peter Righette, owners of the Fanwood Grille, which recently opened on South Avenue. The Mayor explained that it would be a new tradition to welcome new businesses to the community.

A proclamation was issued to Eric J. Breidenstein, an 18-year-old student at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School, who was recently named as the recipient of the Eagle Scout Award, the highest award bestowed by the Boy Scouts of America. As his Eagle Scout service project, Eric coordinated a cleanup and beautification project for the wooded area behind the First United Methodist Church of Scotch Plains.

Additional proclamations were issued in recognition of March as National Middle Level Education Month and Women's History Month, and of yesterday, Wednesday, March 19, as Youth Art Day.

Seven students from Terrill Middle School, along with Assistant Principal Joseph Farrell, were on hand as the Mayor read the proclamation in honor of National Middle Level Education Month. The national observance, as described in the proclamation, celebrates the "distinctive mission of the Middle Level School" in the course of a youngster's total education.

In reading the proclamation in honor of Women's History Month, the Mayor highlighted the "critical, economic, cultural and social role" which women have played in American history, noting that women have

also been at the forefront in founding charitable organizations and implementing "progressive social change." She also called on residents to take part in "ceremonies, activities and reflection" regarding Women's History Month.

Councilman Walsh, during the presentation of council resolutions, announced that Mayor Connelly and former Mayor Linda d. Stender had recently received Women of Excellence Awards from the Union County Commission on the Status of Women, an organization which focuses on expanding rights and opportunities for women in Union County.

Mayor Connelly and former Mayor Stender, along with fellow Fanwood resident Marjorie Odell, were cited by the commission for their civic contributions. Before taking office as Mayor in 1996, Mrs. Connelly served nine years as a member of the Fanwood Borough Council. Former Mayor Stender is now the Chairwoman of the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders, while Mrs. Odell has been active in volunteer work.

A resolution also was issued by the Borough Council in support of the Retarded Citizens Fund Drive sponsored by the Knights of Columbus.

Business Group Dinner-Dance Tomorrow Night

The Scotch Plains Business & Professional Association will hold its second annual major spring fundraising affair tomorrow night, Friday, March 21.

The Spring Fling Dinner-Dance, to be held at Snuffy's-Pantagis, will kick off at 7:30 p.m. and continue until 1 a.m.

Attendees will have the opportunity to meet business leaders during a cocktail hour which will precede the dinner.

A five-and-one-half hour open bar will be available for guests. Also, throughout the evening, a live disc jockey will entertain attendees.

Mayor Irene T. Schmidt, who will be among the guests attending, will deliver a speech during the affair.

As part of the fundraising event, a silent auction will be featured.

All proceeds for the dinner will go to support the association's Downtown Beautification Program. Association members and non-members are invited to attend the dinner-dance.

Tickets cost \$45 per person and may be purchased at Apple Blossom Flower Shop, located at 381 Park Avenue; or from Nuts 'n' Plenty, located at 1906 Bartle Avenue. Apple Blossom may be reached by calling 322-4999 while Nuts 'n' Plenty's telephone number is 322-7388.

Tickets will not be available at the door.

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. 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.



SCIENCE AT WORK...Steph Koleda, left, and Samantha McCarthy perform a water and sound demonstration during School One's science fair on March 14.



MAN MADE DISASTER...Justin Hensal, left, and Philip Assad cause a volcano eruption with basic chemicals during last Friday's science fair held at School One in Scotch Plains. Various scientific societies and representatives of local organizations had exhibits alongside those created by the school children.

Township Council Hears Report From Committee On Planned Dredging of Brookside Pond in Fall

By ALEXANDRA JELKES
Specially Written for The Times

The Scotch Plains Township Council, heard a report Tuesday night from the Brookside Pond Renovation Committee on the latest developments pertaining to the dredging of the pond this fall. Last week, officials reported that the results of soil tests from the pond indicated no hazardous levels.

Committee member Kenneth Anderson indicated to the council that funding has been received and

that a soil analysis has been completed. He added that an application had been made to the State Department of Environmental Protection for walking trails around the pond. An engineering construction firm will review the findings of the soil analysis and report the results to the community.

Nick Denichilo, who is a hydraulic engineer and a volunteer on the project, gave the council a progress summary and an evaluation of the

dredging of the pond. Mr. Denichilo explained that the Brookside Park Committee came forward and presented a feasibility study. He showed the council a map of what needed to be done with the pond.

The concern, he said, is with the amount of spoils in the pond.

"It needs to be dredged," he added.

"Additional problems were found due to significant erosion of banks. Banks need stabilization. These are the key components that require re-

habilitation and will preserve the value of the pond."

"It will prevent silt, but it won't stop it altogether. It will help in the long term. Dredging is needed," Mr. Denichilo added. "Our reports tell us that the last time the dredging process occurred was 1985. It's definitely time for a clean up."

In addition to stabilizing embankments, the volunteer group found that putting a few fountains in the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12

Court Hearing on Challenge to Freeholders Replacement Of County Utilities Authority to Resume This Tuesday

By PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for The Times

Union County is in the midst of a new dilemma this week as a newly appointed seven-member Union County Utilities Authority (UCUA) and the current nine commissioners of the agency await a judge's decision on which one will be the legitimate authority.

At the center of the legal battle is whether the Democratically-controlled Board of Chosen Freeholders has the power to reorganize the current nine-member UCUA and replace them with a smaller agency. Following the board's 6-3 vote along party lines, the Republican-controlled utilities authority's legal counsel, John A. V. appeared in court at 9 a.m. last Tuesday seeking a restraining order on the board's action.

Mr. Coley has charged that the board must show cause as to why the current commissioners were being replaced. Superior Court Judge Edward W. Beglin, Jr., the county's Assistant Judge, received a promise from the Union County Special Counsel

Jonathan L. Williams that the new authority will not officially take office until the judge has rendered a decision.

Judge Beglin has ordered attorneys to supply legal briefs regarding the matter by tomorrow, Friday, March 21. The court hearing will resume this Tuesday, March 25.

The ordinance to reorganize the UCUA enacted by the Democrats was in response to a decision handed down last summer by United States District Court Judge Joseph Irenas. In the Atlantic County case, the judge ruled New Jersey's waste flow controls (which dictate where trash can be disposed) violate the commerce clause of the United States Constitution.

That decision has been appealed by the state to the Third Circuit Court of Appeals. Also, Atlantic Coast Demolition, which filed the lawsuit against Atlantic County, has appealed the judge's two-year stay following the appeal process for counties to initiate alternatives to the current waste flow system. These include

making the five incinerators currently in operation more competitive.

Mr. Williams has said arguments on the Atlantic Coast decision were heard in December and that a decision, significantly cutting the time on Judge Irenas' two-year stay, could come down shortly.

He said that failure of the UCUA to implement lower disposal costs by the time the stay is lifted will cause "financial chaos" in Union County since all 21 municipalities within the county will be permitted to pull out of the incinerator agreement, thus reducing its tonnage.

Officials have said this will happen unless disposal fees at the incinerator are lowered to compete with out-of-state landfills.

"You can't decimate this authority or any other authority," Mr. Coley warned the Freeholders last week, noting that if this was the case the Republicans could replace the new Democratic authority if they regain the majority of the Freeholder board in a few years.

"It would just go around and around

in a circle and pretty soon nothing would ever get done," said Mr. Coley, adding that the passage of the ordinance was a "waste of taxpayers money."

The Democratic Freeholders voted in favor of creating the new board during a raucous meeting in which they were heavily criticized by both the three Republican Freeholders and members of the environmental group, Concerned Citizens of Union County.

Democratic Freeholder Chairwoman Linda d. Stender said the board's action was necessary in order to put in an authority that will immediately initiate programs that will make the county incinerator competitive, should Judge Irenas' decision be upheld in the United States Court of Appeals.

She said with the judge's ruling, the county is facing a crisis. Mrs. Stender said the current authority has not the steps to begin to make the incinerator competitive. She said the board thus needed to take all legal steps available to it to ensure the facility can stay alive in a post waste

flow environment.

She said the Freeholders had asked the UCUA to provide answers as to how it was attempting to lower costs of its operation including the disposal fees.

"This ordinance allows us to make the change so that we can have a utilities authority to implement the policies reflective of this board," Freeholder Stender explained, noting that the new Freeholder majority's policy is to be "proactive" in order to ensure the county's incinerator remains competitive. The Democrats regained control this past January for the first time since 1991.

Mr. Williams said the Freeholders have the right to take the necessary steps to address the crisis by putting in an authority which best reflects the Freeholders' opinions and philosophies.

Republican Freeholders were highly critical of the decision, calling it a purely political vote since only the six GOP appointed UCUA commissioners were being removed. The

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2