



Scotch Plains Zoning Board Denies Two, OK's Two Applicants

By DELL SIMEONE

Specialty Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS - The Scotch Plains Zoning Board of Adjustment on Thursday night denied two appeals for variances and granted two applicants variances to improve their properties.

Andy Atienza, of 2421 Westfield Avenue, was denied a variance to extend his half bath into a full bath by using part of his garage. The new bathroom would have been 12 feet wide and 10 feet deep.

"We don't like to allow a space designed for a vehicle to be used this way, despite the need," board mem-

ber Rich Druthie said.

"We haven't seen all the plans," Board Chairman Ken Anderson added.

After further discussion by the board, Mr. Druthie said, "Unfortunately, we cannot accommodate your request. I'd rather tell you now."

Judith and Dean Moukas of 2044 Newark Avenue also were turned down for trying to do the same thing. They were seeking to extend a first-floor power room into their garage space by 30 inches to install a shower.

Mr. Moukas said their twins, a boy and a girl, are 11 years old now and they need another shower. The board

denied the request, but suggested that Mrs. Moukas talk with Robert La Costa, the township's construction and zoning official, to see if they could figure out another solution.

Ernest Fantini, who owns two homes at 444 Myrtle Avenue, on a 50-foot by 125-foot lot, asked for c and d variances. One house, in the front of the property, is a two-family home. Behind it is a small structure, which has a small, one-bedroom apartment, with a bathroom in the basement. Mr. Fantini said he wishes to expand the small house by enclosing a breezeway and what is now a garage. Attorney Larry Vastola and planner Roger DeNiscia of Upper Montclair represented Mr. Fantini.

"The footprint of the building will stay the same; the apartment will be reconfigured and will be larger," Mr. Vastola said.

"The new structure will be an asset to the neighborhood and there is sufficient parking," Mr. DeNiscia said.

Patricia Santillo, whose mother lives in the house behind the property, commented on the application.

"First of all," Ms. Santillo said, "it is not a breezeway. It's just a slab of concrete. I know, I grew up there." She also said that years ago Mr. Fantini talked her mother into letting him run electric lines through her yard for the structure. Ms. Santillo also objected to a drain from the existing structure that flows right into her mother's backyard.

Mr. Druthie suggested the board approve the application with a few conditions, including the removal of the electric line from the neighbor's property, and a new positioning of the drainpipe, so it does not empty into the neighbor's yard. The bathroom will be taken out of the basement and put on the same level with the apartment. The front house has three electric meters on it, even though there are only two apartments in it. The board said one meter would have to be removed. In July, Mr. Vastola came before the board with Mr. Fantini's on with the same application. At that time, Zoning Board Attorney Vincent Loughlin refused to let the application be heard unless Mr. Fantini, himself, came before the board. The board ap-

PROF. CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



FIRE DEPARTMENT FIXUP...Workers from Mr. Handyman of South Orange, Westfield, Scotch Plains and Metuchen were at work Monday on the Scotch Plains Volunteer Fire Department as part of National Day of Service.

Sluka, Mathieu Oppose Garwood Police Contract

By CHRISTINA M. HENKE

Specialty Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

GARWOOD - The borough council Tuesday night adopted, by a 4-2 vote, an ordinance which provides for the compensation of regular police officers of the borough under the new contract with the local Police Benevolent Association. The three-year contract gives a 2-percent raise the first year and a 1.75-percent raise thereafter, as well as longevity benefits after serving five years on the force. Council President Keith Sluka and Councilman Jim Mathieu both opposed the ordinance.

"We have made a conscious effort not just this year at council and last year, but previous years because longevity was taken out of the DPW [Department of Public Works] contract long before I was here. That is the part of that contract that concerns me. I don't understand the philosophy behind it, in the sense that the employee is already getting a raise and we're just getting him an extra raise on

the purpose of being here," Council President Sluka said.

"I can't vote for raises for employees when townspeople are losing jobs," Councilman Mathieu said.

"There should be a moratorium on raises until we settle the lawsuit filed [against Mr. Mathieu and the borough] by the clerk [Christina Ariemma]. ... You are compromising the borough's position," Mr. Mathieu said.

The borough council is to vote on a new bond totaling some \$223,000. During the workshop meeting, Councilwoman Sara Todisco discussed a bond for capital items, which she said would be introduced at the Tuesday, September 25, council meeting. She told the public that she did not know the tax impact or length of the term of the bond.

The capital items include police computers, a borough hall generator, portable generators, a repeater, DPW radio upgrades, a recording sound system, a telephone

PROF. CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



NEVER FORGET...Scotch Plains held a ceremony at the site of the September 11th Memorial on the Alan Augustine Village Green on Tuesday in memory of those that lost their lives. The monument includes a steel beam that was salvaged from the World Trade Center.



IN MEMORY...Scotch Plains police officers and firefighters lay wreaths on the 9/11 Memorial on the Alan Augustine Village Green on Tuesday in memory of those that lost their lives on the tragic day 11 years ago as Mayor Mary DePaolo looks on.

WF BOE Discusses Bond Ref., Introduces New Bus. Admin.

By KIMBERLY A. BROADWELL

Specialty Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

ESTFIELD - After the moment of silence held at the Westfield Board of Education meeting on Tuesday evening for all the victims of the September 11, 2001 tragedy, members of the board and the audience discussed the upcoming bond referendum for Monday, September 24. The \$16.9-million bond referendum is for new roofs for Westfield school buildings and a lighted multi-use turf field at the high school.

According to a presentation given by Superintendent Margaret Dolan, the average age of the Westfield school buildings is 73 years and years of fixing, patching and repairing lasted longer than expected, but they are still old." She also stated that all 10 school buildings would have their roofs replaced by the summer of 2013 and that

the roofs would upgrade the insulation of the buildings, thus "conserving energy" and also would make it ideal for solar power.

In the presentation it was noted that in the last 12 years, Westfield's total population has grown 3.2 percent, enrollment in schools has risen 17.4 percent and that Westfield High School Athletics has grown 31 percent. It also was stated that the new field would provide physical education for the almost 2,000 students at the high school and would provide competition-size fields for soccer, field hockey, lacrosse and softball.

When addressing the lighting it was noted that the field lighting would have targeted lights for specific sports, would only be on during use, would have a remote access by district employees, would cease nightly by 9 p.m. and would not be used Sunday evenings.

Robert Zoeller of Musco Lighting, the district's lighting expert, spoke to the audience about the lighting, stating that the lighting that would be used for the new field would "provide light on the field only and darkness around the field." It was noted that the lighting effects for the area, which are measured in foot-candles, would not exceed 0.6 foot-candles at its highest

measurement in the neighborhood. He said moonlight has a measurement of .1 foot-candle while the average streetlight has a measurement of 3.0-4.9. Mr. Zoeller stated that the measurements taken at and around the field were reported at 0.0-0.2 foot-candles with a reading of .06 at the base of one property near the school.

Resident and former board of education member Gary McCready stated that he felt the field lighting was comparable to "stage lighting" and that when the field was done other towns would have "field envy."

Superintendent Dolan said the reason for the referendum was that "major capital projects cannot be funded without a school operating budget, subject to a 2-percent cap." She also noted "a bond can only be used to fund long-term major capital projects and cannot be used to fund teachers, technology and textbooks."

Resident Sharon Stockwell said she thought the board had done a good job in providing information for the public, but felt the two projects should have been separated for the public to vote on.

BOE Facilities Committee Chairwoman Jane Clancy stated that since

PROF. CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

County Initiates Study Of Runnells Operation

By PAUL J. PEYTON

Specialty Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

COUNTY - The Board of Chosen Freeholders is set to vote tonight on a \$60,000 contract with a Pennsylvania company to review operations at Runnells Specialized Hospital in Berkeley Heights, a county-operated facility, and to develop operations at the hospital, which has been running annual deficits of between \$10 and \$11 million.

The study follows the privatization of occupational, physical and speech therapy services, dietary, housekeeping and laundry services over the past few months.

Frank Guzzo, director of human services for the county, told the freeholders at their agenda-setting meeting on September 6 that the study by Complete Healthcare Resources - Eastern, Inc. of Dresher, Pa. would be completed within two months. He said lower Medicaid and Medicare reimbursement rates have made it "extremely difficult" for counties to continue to operate nursing home-hospitals.

"The thought by the board and the finance [committee] chairman this year was to look at this to see if there are options available to us to maybe reduce that deficit and look at other ways to bring in revenue. That is what this study does," Mr. Guzzo said.

"This will study everything. It studies the [lower Medicaid and Medicare] reimbursement right up to and

including whether or not it would be feasible to sell the hospital," Mr. Guzzo told the board. "So it will have everything in there. It will provide options available to the board and will detail what those options are relative to reduction of the deficit and whether we should continue to support that with county dollars."

The county also has initiated studies for the county jail and Watchung Stable to consider privatization of those operations.

Also on tonight's agenda will be a \$1.5-million contract with Let It Grow of River Edge to restore Nomahagan Park Lake in Cranford. The project is part of a four-lake restoration that includes Rahway River Park, Briant Park in Summit and Metisel Avenue Park in Springfield. The Nomahagan project is expected to take nine months. Work on Rahway River also is scheduled for this year while the Briant and Metisel Avenue projects are on tap for 2013.

It also was announced by First Assistant Prosecutor Albert Cernadas, Jr. that the Union County Prosecutor's Office (UCPO) has received a \$1.3-million DNA backlog reduction grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice for the county's forensic laboratory in Westfield.

Mr. Cernadas said the county is using the grant to purchase additional equipment and add forensic scientists to its staff.

PROF. CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



NEW MARQUEE...The dedication of the new marquee for the Fanwood Performance Series, held at the Patricia M. Kuran Cultural Arts Center in Fanwood, was recently held. The marquee is on the front lawn of the Fanwood municipal complex, 75 North Martine Avenue, and visible from Martine. Pictured, from left to right, are: Borough Councilmen Mike Szuch and Tony Parenti, Tom Plante of the Fanwood Arts Council, Jason and Steven Parker, owners of K9 Resorts, Freeholder Chairman Al Mirabella, Freeholder Vernell Wright, Mayor Colleen Mahr, Performance Series Director David Blechinger, Art Council members Susan Graham, Brian Celardo, Lorne Graham, Brian Beste and Danielle Hale.

PAGE INDEX

Table with 2 columns: Category and Page Number. Includes Regional (2-3), Education (9), Editorial (4-5,17), Sports (11-16), Police (6), Real Estate (11-18), Community (6-8, 18), Classifieds (18), Obituary (8), and A&E (19-20).

