

Colleagues Salute Linda Stender As She Leaves Freeholder Board

ELIZABETH — Linda d. Stender bade farewell to the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders on January 31, as she formally vacated the seat she had held since 1994 to devote her energies full time to her newly-assumed seat in the State Assembly.

Mrs. Stender, the senior member of the Freeholder Board in terms of service, was elected last November to the State Assembly from the 22nd District, a post she was sworn into last month. Her term on the Freeholder Board runs through the end of this year; it's expected a successor will be chosen soon to fill out the remainder of the year.

The former Fanwood Mayor was presented by Freeholder colleagues with a county flag, flowers and a plaque recognizing her service to Union County. A banner hung be-

hind her seat on the dais that evening as an additional tribute to her.

At the beginning of the meeting, a resolution was passed making Mrs. Stender the honorary chairperson of the night's proceedings. Mrs. Stender called the gesture "an unexpected pleasure and honor" as she took the gavel from Freeholder Chairman Lewis Mingo, Jr.

Calling her last meeting "a mixed evening for me," Mrs. Stender, who had served as board Chairwoman in 1997, termed her eight years in Elizabeth "an incredible journey" that provided her with "the best opportunity to be part of a group who had a vision and wanted to make life better for people in Union County."

She singled out the board's work on shared services, the development of a magnet school, open space preservation, the creation of a county-

level Department of Economic Development and the resolution of the county incinerator as some of the highlights of her tenure.

In other business, the board passed a resolution waiving the ice rental fee at Warinanco Skating Center for a game between Westfield and Cranford High Schools' hockey teams, the proceeds of which will go to families of victims of the September terrorist attacks who live in those towns.

The Freeholders also passed a resolution congratulating County Counsel Carol I. Cohen on her appointment as Administrative Law Judge. Jeremiah O'Dwyer was appointed as Acting County Counsel, as of January 31.

The Freeholders will hold public hearings this month on the \$323.9 million county budget being proposed for 2002. Besides the first meetings that were held on February 2 and February 5, other sessions will be held on Tuesdays, February 19 and 26, at 6 p.m. in the County Freeholders' meeting room at 10 Elizabethtown Plaza.



JOVIAL GOP...The Union County Republican Party held its traditional Lincoln Day celebration Tuesday evening at The Westwood in Garwood. Many Republican state leaders were in attendance. Pictured, left to right, are: Frank McDermott of Westfield, Senator Richard Bagger of Westfield, Republican State Senate President John Bennett, Assemblyman Thomas Kean, Jr. of Westfield and Republican State Chairman Senator Joe Kyrrillos, Jr.

State Republicans Sponsor New Bills to Battle Sprawl

TRENTON—State Senator Richard H. Bagger and Assemblyman Thomas H. Kean, Republicans representing the 21st District, are sponsoring a package of bills that will target the continuing problem of suburban sprawl in New Jersey.

The first set of bills, A-397 and S-154, also called the "Intermunicipal Development Review Act," would establish a process to encourage intermunicipal cooperation in planning for developments with impacts beyond municipal borders, and would establish a procedure for the review of such development applications.

"Because of increasing concerns about traffic, environment, and other impacts that do not observe municipal boundaries, local governments should have an effective role in decisions regarding development applications in neighboring municipalities and counties when such developments could adversely affect them," said Senator Bagger.

The second set of bills in the package, A-398 and S-505, authorizes the adoption of municipal transfer of development rights programs. The legislation would permit municipalities to direct development toward designated areas while preserving open space and agriculture.

The third set of bills, A-399 and S-155, require municipal master plans to be consistent with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan. The legislation amends the Municipal Land Use Law of 1975 by requiring municipal master plans to be consistent with the State Development and Redevelopment Plan.

The bill also stipulates that a relief granted by a municipality cannot substantially impair the intent and the purpose of the State Development and Redevelopment Plan.

Finally, Senator Bagger and Assemblyman Kean are sponsoring leg-

islation, A-1784, that would require New Jersey municipalities to include within their six-year master plan review a build out analysis. Such an analysis would project the future development and redevelopment of a municipality and its impact on public infrastructure such as transportation, water supply and sewers.

"The build out analysis is a valuable tool which offers municipal residents a clearer vision of future municipal growth and development based on existing development regulations," said Assemblyman Kean. "In addition, build out analyses demonstrate the consequences of not revisiting existing land use regulations."

The legislators hope that when enacted these bills will provide more control to officials at the municipal level so they can better address increased development in their communities and region.

"I want to thank Senator Bagger and Assemblyman Kean for bringing smart growth to New Jersey," said Jeff Tittel, New Jersey Sierra Club Chapter President. "This package of bills will move New Jersey forward and give municipalities tools to combat sprawl, protect open space and do better planning. These are important bills for the future of New Jersey."

Union County Announces Mental Illness Program

COUNTY — The Alliance for the Mentally Ill of Union County will sponsor their annual spring NAMI Family-to-Family Educational Program geared specifically for families of people diagnosed with serious mental illness.

The 12-week-series of classes will begin in Westfield on Wednesday, March 6, from 7 to 9:30 p.m. in the conference room of the Westfield Y on 220 Clark Street.

The course will cover information about schizophrenia, mood disorders (bipolar disorder and major depression), panic disorder and obsessive compulsive disorder, coping skills such as handling crisis and relapse, basic information about medications, listening and communication techniques, problem solving skills, recovery and rehabilitation and self-care around worry and stress.

The curriculum has been written by an experienced family member mental health professional and the course will be taught by NAMI-Union County family member volunteers who have complete intensive training as course instructors. The co-teachers for the

Westfield area are Marilyn Goldstein and Mary-Jo Willemsen.

"This course is a wonderful experience as it balances basic psycho-education and skill-training with emotional support, self-care and empowerment," said Ms. Goldstein. "We hope that families with relatives who have a serious mental illness will take advantage of this unique opportunity."

The course is designed specifically for parents, siblings, spouses, teenage and adult children, and significant others of people with severe and persistent mental illness. The course is not appropriate for individuals who themselves suffer from one of the major mental illnesses.

The NAMI Family-to-Family Education course is free of charge. For more information or to register, call Ms. Goldstein or Ms. Willemsen at (908) 233-1628.

NAMI-Union County is an affiliate of NAMI-New Jersey, a grassroots statewide consumer coalition of self-help support and advocacy groups comprised of families, friends and individuals who are affected by persistent mental illness.

Through education, support and advocacy activities, NAMI - Union County fulfills its mission to improve the quality of life of individuals who suffer from mental illness and their families while eradicating stigma and discrimination.

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