



DEDICATION...On June 9, Westfield High School tri-captain Annie Onishi addresses the crowd celebrating the dedication of the new girls' fieldhouse at Kehler Stadium.

Mayor Proposes Only Northside Deck, Calls For Non-Binding Referendum

By MIRIAM BAMBERGER
 Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

In a surprise announcement last night, Mayor Gregory McDermott presented a new proposal for downtown parking development at the Westfield Town Council's public meeting. His proposal consisted of one deck only, to be located at the Prospect and Elm Street lot on the north side of town. The mayor also called for a non-binding referendum on the matter, to be held this November. The mayor detailed what he called a collaboration of much discussion and review.

There was considerable discussion, and varied opinions were offered on the mayor's proposal - from those of

the town council and from residents that were present.

The mayor described his plan as one "scaled down" parking deck yielding 490 parking spaces on the Northside, leaving open the possibility of building a second structure on the Southside in the future. The proposed structure is to include eight apartments, 11 townhouses and 3,300 square feet of retail space.

According to Mayor McDermott, this plan is considered most satisfactory to the needs of commuters, shoppers and downtown employees.

In his plan to fully utilize all downtown parking, approximately 140 employee permit spots in Lot 9 (Paine

Webber) would be relocated to the new deck. Then, the lots on both sides of the train station would be filled entirely with commuters. Any remaining commuters would be placed in the deck with downtown employees.

Mayor McDermott also said that

lice would be able to better enforce meter-feeding regulations (prohibiting employees and others from parking in a spot for more than two hours).

The council directed Westfield Town Attorney Robert Cockren to draft non-binding referendum language in a "yes or no" format. It is intended that the public will vote on this in the November general election.

Councilman Lawrence Goldman called for two referendums, to include the mayor's plan and the existing plan for two decks. By voice vote, Mr. Goldman's motion was defeated.

A definitive plan will be prepared for the council in time for their July 6 council meeting. The council must approve this by the August 3 meeting to allow time for the Union County Board of Elections to put the referendum on the November ballot.

The mayor and council promised to provide full details of the proposal to the public during the summer.



MAYORAL PROPOSAL...Westfield Mayor Gregory McDermott discusses his proposal of a northside deck and non-binding referendum during the June 15 Town Council meeting.

112 spaces in the deck would be available for long-term meter parking for non-permit employees and shoppers.

The mayor said his plan for relocating commuters to the north side of the train station would alleviate traffic on Central Avenue and the South Avenue Circle. With the new parking available, he said the Westfield Po-

liceman Goldman criticized Mayor McDermott's plan. He denied that the plan is a true representation of the council's discussions.

Furthermore, Mr. Goldman noted a referendum may be a risk because the public is not fully aware of all financial implications of the proposal, and could be unfairly influenced by biased lobbying from both sides of the issue.

Councilmen Mark Ciarrocca, Rafael Betancourt and Andy Skibitsky expressed support for the mayor's plan and downtown development. Mr. Betancourt argued in support of immediate action on the first deck, saying, "If we don't start small, we run the risk of failing."

Councilwoman Neylan said it was "too premature" to form a true opinion, but applauded the mayor for putting the issue to referendum.

Councilman Caruana expressed concerns that the public and the council are not ready to decide on the issue. "We did not finish the process, and our work was cut short," said Mr. Caruana. The councilman noted that the current plan is founded on questionable data, and called for a revised plan based on facts for the community to vote on.

Councilman Peter Echausse commended the mayor for "staying on course" despite strong public sentiment. He favored the mayor's proposal for a referendum. However, like Mr. Caruana, Mr. Echausse said, "I am not on board with this location."

Mr. Caruana called it "absolutely the wrong location." He questioned the proposal in that it had only a net gain of 250 parking spaces at a cost of \$10 million. He said the public must ask, "Do the benefits justify the costs, risks and impacts?"

More than a dozen townspeople

Borough Council Objects to State-Mandated Taxes

By MICHAEL POLLACK
 Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

During Tuesday's Mountainside agenda meeting, the governing body passed a resolution authorizing indemnification to certain Mountainside police officers in the case of Laurent vs. Mountainside Police Department. According to resolution 86-2004, "the governing body of the Borough of Mountainside does hereby agree to indemnify, defend and save harmless Detective-Corporal Kenneth Capobianco, Captain Richard J. Osieja, the Estate of Lieutenant Todd Turner and any other employee or representative of the Mountainside Police Department that may be further identified or listed as defendants in this litigation as it proceeds." The board passed the resolution unanimously 7-0, with Councilmen Robert Messler and Werner Schon absent.

The board unanimously passed "adamant opposition" to New Jersey Governor James McGreevey's proposed cell tower tax - part of a \$1 billion dollar tax plan to help balance New Jersey's budget. The pending legislation taxes cellular towers owned by municipalities throughout the state.

The board agreed to a tax appeal settlement with A.K. and A.G. Kurz, the owners of the AK Stamping property designated as 1159 Route 22, Block 23.C, Lot 8.D on the tax map of the Borough of Mountainside. Under the settlement, the taxpayer withdraws the 2002 tax appeal, the 2003 assessment will be reduced to \$700,000, and the 2004 assessment will be reduced to \$620,000. The appropriate Borough officials are further authorized and directed to refund to the owners' attorneys the overpayment of \$5,091.25 made by the taxpayers for the 2003 tax year.

The board also agreed to refund to NJ Manufacturers Insurance for overpayment of police reports in the amount of \$70 due to reduction of fees needed to complete the report.

The board conducted first reading on an ordinance amending Chapter VII of the Code of the Borough of Mountainside by increasing the fines for non-moving traffic violations by one dollar. The New Jersey Division of Motor Vehicles requires this.

"It'll cost us a couple hundred

WHS Guidance Report Outlines Specific Areas for Improvement

By ED COONEY
 Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

This article is the conclusion of the report on the WHS Guidance Department (The first article ran in the June 10 issue).

Former Cornell University Dean of Admissions Donald G. Dickason presented his evaluation of the Guidance Department to the Westfield Board of Education at its June 8 meeting.

Mr. Dickason's evaluation, commissioned by the board and the district's administration, focused on the college guidance and advising function of the Guidance Department at WHS.

Over a five-month period, Mr. Dickason spoke with 124 of those most closely involved in the college process, including students, parents, counselors and administrators, as well as some members of the Board of Education.

Mr. Dickason investigated the policies and procedures in place for guiding the college application process, and he reviewed the records of 51 2002 WHS graduates. These reviews "provided the means to assess the appropriateness of the college application choices of individual students and the colleges' admission decisions."

The overall grade given to the Guidance Department by Mr. Dickason is "pretty good." His report noted "many positive possibilities" and said that "the guidance counselors are a superior group of committed professionals with substantive experience."

Mr. Dickason reports that each counselor deals with 232 students, a number that will drop to 214 for the 2004-2005 school year. This year's number is well below the national average of 315 students to one counselor.

Despite being below the national average, those interviewed stressed the need for "improved planned communication, written and electronic as well as personal."

Mr. Dickason spoke specifically of the need to bolster the college experience for sophomores, citing a "void of planned communication in the 10th grade." He suggested that the Guidance Department have a yearly Sophomore College Preparation Night to give "an overview of college-choice making, a timeline of what is to come, how and when to visit colleges, an identification of information, a discussion of stress vs. non-stress and success stories."

In interviewing counselors, administrators, students and parents, Mr. Dickason asked each person to grade

the "effectiveness of the guidance and counseling function at WHS" on a scale of one to four, with four indicating "Excellent" and one indicating "Poor." The counselors themselves rated the Guidance Department at an average of 3.67. The administrators gave the department a 3.17, the students gave it a 3.08 and parents gave it a 2.23. According to the report, "These data clearly identify dissatisfaction by parents as a group."

The graduates reviewed ranged in class rank from 1 to 135 and in grade point averages from 4.35 to 3.22. Mr. Dickason judged 49 of the 51 applications to be "a perfect fit." 41 of the 51 admission decisions were found to be "exactly as predicted."

The report briefly focuses on Tufts University, where 11 WHS students applied in 2002. The class ranks of those applying ranged from one to 35. The data are worth noting because of the noticeably erratic distribution of acceptances versus refusals. The student ranked number one was refused while the student ranked number 22 was offered admission. "This is a perfect illustration of a college or university crying out for personal contact with and knowledge of WHS."

The report goes on to suggest specific admissions expectations for WHS students, saying, "WHS should be able to get at least one offer from each of the Ivy League colleges and MIT in any given year." In the 2002 school year, WHS students received six offers of admissions from Ivy League schools.

Next, Mr. Dickason's report discusses focus groups held with parents of current WHS students. He noted "an almost universal desire for

earlier planning information, and almost all agree that the sophomore year is seen as blank."

When asked to comment on the guidance counselors themselves, parents responded that "some are very good, but others are not accessible." They also said the counselors are "under-informed" and "overwhelmed."

Mr. Dickason's report continues, "The administration of guidance and college advising functions is problematic, perhaps even dysfunctional."

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POWER IN NUMBERS...Republicans named former Cranford mayor Phil Morin the new Chairman of the Union County Republican Committee at Tuesday night's Union County GOP convention held at the Summit Middle School. Mr. Morin, at the podium, is surrounded by, standing, left to right; Westfield Freeholder Candidate Frank Arena, Surrogate Candidate Mike Panagos, Chairman of Scotch Plains and Treasurer of Union County Republican Committee Bill McClintock. Sitting, from left to right; New Jersey State Senator Tom Keen, Jr. and Assemblyman Jon Bramnick. See story on Page 10.

Transition Committee Recommends Establishing Special Mentor Program at Westfield High School

By ED COONEY
 Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

Incoming freshmen at Westfield High School (WHS) will now have the benefit of student "transition mentors" to ease their adjustment into the academically and socially rigorous climate of high school life.

Maureen Mazzarese, WHS Student Assistance Counselor, detailed the plan to ease the middle school to

high school transition at the Westfield Board of Education meeting Tuesday night. She noted that the transition activities already in place do a good job of helping students cope with the change, and that this new plan is "trying to find a way to make a good system better."

Earlier this year, the board called for the formation of a Ninth Grade Transition Committee to review the

needs of students making the transition and the activities and events already in place to meet those needs. The group was made of up 16 members drawn from diverse facets of the affected community, including students, parents, coaches, and a representative of the Westfield Optimist Club.

Ms. Mazzarese noted that while students may have concerns like getting lost in the building or not being

able to open their locker on the first day of school, "there are not a lot of ninth graders getting lost."

She mentioned four benchmarks that can be used to judge the success of a student's transition, including academic success, a feeling of belonging in their new environment, the ability to identify resources available to them for assistance, and a student's knowledge and understanding of and compliance with the school's policies and standards.

As part of the committee's work, a survey was sent to this year's ninth graders to judge their involvement in school and community activities. The results showed that the class is a group of "very involved kids," according to Ms. Mazzarese.

Of the 331 students polled, only 26 indicated that they are not at all involved in any kind of activity.

"It's 26 kids we should be reaching out to," she said.

Ms. Mazzarese's report mentioned three recurrent themes in how to cope with the transition, including "more and better ways to communicate," the desire for a more "personal" transition experience, and an increasing emphasis on student-to-student contact. The last theme caused the committee to push ahead

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More Than 20 Appeals Examined By Westfield Bd. of Adjustment

By VICTORIA MCCABE
 Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

After memorializing the variance approvals granted at its May 10 meeting, the Westfield Board of Adjustment examined several carried-over and new appeals for variances at Monday night's meeting.

The board examined over 20 variance appeals, the majority of which eventually won unanimous board approval. Some issues raised neighborhood disputes, which the board attempted to resolve.

Stavros and Cynthia Aktipis of 230 Golf Edge reapplied for a variance that the board had approved in September of 2003, granting approval of a front-yard setback of 40.15 feet (the Land Use Ordinance requires 44 feet) to allow them to extend their one-car garage to a two-car garage.

Mrs. Aktipis told the board that they were reapplying for a variance because they now wished to convert the garage space (approximately 450 square feet) into a family room, leaving no garage on their property.

Vice Chairman William Heinbokel, running the meeting in lieu of absent Chairman Vince Wilt, asked Mrs. Aktipis whether they had made any provisions for storing children's toys or garden equipment, and she said that her backyard's ground-level basement entrance would facilitate storage in the basement. She also said that the property's long driveway would serve as a place to park cars.

The architect reported that construction was not halted even after the plans changed. The foundation was poured for a garage, but they

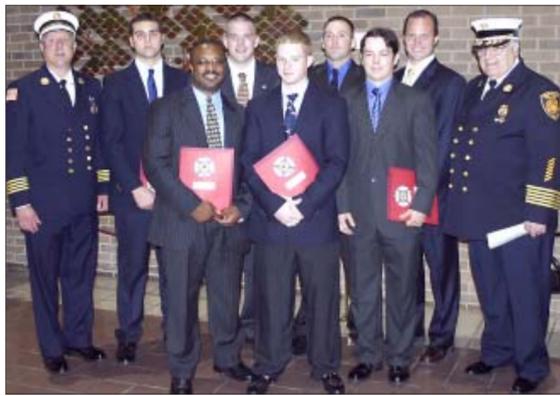
have been moving forward with plans to create a living space.

Multiple Golf Edge residents attended the board meeting to oppose the new appeal, citing the applicant's failure to notify them of a major change of intent.

One Golf Edge resident, who called the nature of the appeal "disingenuous at best," said that residents had no problem with the plans as the board had previously approved them. However, in light of the manner in which the applicants changed their plans and continued construction without first notifying neighbors or

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FIREFIGHTER GRADUATES...The Westfield 2004 graduates from the Union County Fire Academy pose above with their Chiefs. Pictured above, from left to right, are: Deputy Chief Daniel Kelly; firefighters Peter Klebaur, Kevin Caldwell, Benjamin Corbin, Daniel Kaltnecker, Steven DiTrollo, Thomas Wengerter and Richard Schwarz; and Westfield Fire Chief John Castellano.

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Former Cranford Mayor Phil Morin Named New County GOP Chairman

By MICHAEL POLLACK
Specialty Written for The Westfield Leader

COUNTY — At Tuesday night's Union County GOP convention held at the Summit Middle School, Republicans named former Cranford mayor Phil Morin the new Chairman of the Union County Republican Committee. Morin succeeds Westfield's Ronald Frigerio, who stepped down after two terms.

Also chosen for the GOP county committee's executive board were: Vice Chairwoman Kathi Fiamingo of Kenilworth, Associate Vice Chairman Harry Pappas of Springfield, Associate Vice Chairwoman Maryann Janusz of Rahway, Treasurer William McClintock of Scotch Plains and Secretary Daniel Nozza of Elizabeth.

Mr. Morin told *The Leader/Times* last week that his job would be to energize the party and help campaign for Republicans Frank Arena, Bruce Patterson, Joe Renna and Pat Quatrochi for Union County Freeholder seats, and for Mike Panagos and Peter Lijoi for Union County Surrogate and Sheriff, respectively.

Mr. Morin said, "I want to energize the county and the Republican community." In a county that includes 130,000 unaffiliated voters, he said, "it is imperative to reach out to those who may have become dissatisfied with the current administration or unaware of the current dealings in county government. I want to bring new people into the fold, bring new Republicans on board."

Scotch Plains Mayor Martin Marks told *The Leader/Times* that he couldn't agree more about Mr. Morin's strategy. Mayor Marks met with Mr. Morin and told him, "Union County Republicans must be realistic about demographics in a county where registered Democrats outnumber registered Republicans by a close to 3-to-1 margin."

Mr. Morin said he aims to reform "pay to play" contracts on a county level, and put a ban on what he called "county nepotism." Calling the county an invisible layer of government, he said, "Our candidates want to throw a bucket of paint on that invisible layer."

"We will focus on targeted races where we can be successful," he said. "Specifically, I'm thinking Rahway. There are disaffected Democrats and Republicans alike pointing out problems with that administration."

In a Republican town like Scotch Plains, Mayor Marks said he hopes that the county GOP will support his campaign for reelection because they know it is a winnable race. "Democrats have targeted Scotch Plains as a conquest after taking Summit, Fanwood and Kenilworth (typically Republican strongholds)," Mayor Marks said.

While Mr. Morin admitted that vying for county seats on the Board of Chosen Freeholders would be "an uphill battle," he touted the GOP challengers as capable and viable opponents. Mr. Morin said, "Bruce Patterson and Joe Renna attend all of the county meetings and place many requests for public records."

"This group [of current Freeholders] spends close to \$360 million a year based on their operating budget," Morin said. "We deserve to know where that money goes. It is only healthy to be represented by two parties."

Mr. Morin said he and his contingent would go door-to-door countywide to campaign for the Freeholder, Surrogate, and Sheriff candidates. "We will pound the pavement to establish personal, one-on-one candidates," he said. Mr. Morin said that while his approach to campaigning may seem old fashioned, there is a "true need to get back to basics."

"People get lazy with technology," he

said. "Yes, we have the ability to make 1,000 automated calls in a day or show cable television ads. I want to do this the old fashioned way. We need to inform people on what a freeholder or surrogate does. It's critical."

Mr. Morin, 35, is an attorney. Besides serving as mayor of Cranford, he sat on the Cranford Township Committee for six years. Mr. Morin resides in Cranford

with his wife Maureen and son, P.J. "I've always looked at the county with fascination," he said. "The opportunity presented itself to give it a try. I know I'm up for the challenge."

"I think he's going to be outstanding," Mayor Marks said. "We've known each other for a long time and were part of the Young Republicans of Union County together."

Eleven Police Depts. Respond To Melee Outside Legion Hall

By MICHAEL POLLACK AND SUZETTE STALKER
Specialty Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — Police units from 11 area municipalities responded to a disturbance Friday night involving a large group of people on the American Legion property on North Avenue in Westfield.

According to Captain Clifford Auchter of the Westfield Police Department, authorities were alerted to the incident shortly after 10 p.m. Upon their arrival, police discovered a large disorderly crowd and some fighting, and spent the next 45 minutes dispersing the crowd.

Lieutenant John Parizeau of the Westfield Police Department said aid was received from the police departments of Scotch Plains, Kenilworth, Clark, Summit, Roselle Park, Mountainside, Union, Springfield, Plainfield and Fanwood, along with the Union County Sheriff's Office.

Authorities, who had also received a report of gunfire, conducted a search of the scene for shells using floodlights. However, no evidence was uncovered indicating shots had been fired. None of the people at the scene provided officers with any information about what had happened, police stated.

At 11:45 p.m. that evening, authorities said, Westfield police were contacted by Plainfield authorities regarding two

Plainfield men who were being treated at Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center in Plainfield after having been injured in the altercation.

One of the victims did not want any police involvement. The other, who had been punched in the face and knocked to the ground, according to Lieutenant Parizeau, recognized two of his attackers from Plainfield High School. This individual has the option of pressing charges.

Lieutenant Parizeau said he believes someone rented the American Legion hall for a party, with an entrance fee of \$10, which was advertised with flyers that were passed out at Plainfield High School.

Police suspect alcohol may have been present at the event, although Lieutenant Parizeau could not confirm that was the case.

He acknowledged that Friday's incident was very similar to another altercation involving a large crowd that occurred in late February outside the Masonic Lodge on Central Avenue in Westfield. The lodge facilities had been rented for an event that was also advertised through flyers at Plainfield High School. One youth was injured in that incident.

Although he could not confirm any connection between the two cases, Lieutenant Parizeau said the police department is looking into it.

Borough Council Objects To State Mandated Taxes

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dollars to give the state a dollar," Mayor Robert Vigilanti said.

"This is an example of political mumbo jumbo, which says 'I won't raise your taxes, but I'll increase your fines,'" Mayor Vigilanti added. "What this is doing is the state of New Jersey mandating to every municipality in the state to increase all non-moving violations one dollar, of which the state of New Jersey gets that one dollar. We have to go through and pay the attorneys to change our ordinance, publish our ordinance, read our ordinance, reprint our ordinance, and the state of New Jersey is the beneficiary of the money."

The board also read an introduction to an ordinance, which amends Chapter V of the Code of the Borough of Mountainside, animal regulations, requiring the immediate removal of dog feces. In addition, the board read an ordinance further amending Chapter V to increase the violations and penalties to neither less than \$100 nor more than \$500 per offense.

Before proceeding with the night's agenda, Mayor Vigilanti congratulated Board of Health President Joe Car for his 35 years of service to the department. Upon his retirement, Mr. Car becomes the longest continuously serving volunteer in Mountainside. The borough dedicated a tree and plaque in his honor at a ceremony Monday evening.

The board made two resolutions of congratulations to Deerfield school's Val-

dicatorian Christina Pindar and Salutatorian Meghan Eichner. Councilman Mirabella will award Ms. Pindar and Ms. Eichner savings bonds of \$300 and \$200 respectively at this year's graduation.

The board also honored Gary W. Whyte, the winner of the 2004 Governor's Volunteer award in the area of health. Each year, the governor's office of volunteerism reviews individuals and groups who have given of their time and talent to improve the quality of life for citizens of New Jersey. Eleven areas are reviewed ranging from arts to sciences. Whyte, a Mountainside resident, conducted a campaign to raise public awareness regarding fibrodysplasia ossificans progressiva (F.O.P.), a disease that turns normal muscles and tendons into bones when trauma is introduced.

"Gary's commitment to this cause is selfless," Mayor Vigilanti said. "His expenditure of an enormous amount of time and energy make him an example to which he deserves congratulation. I'm very proud to sign this document and present it to Mr. Whyte."

"This is a great day for F.O.P. because it's another major step for awareness for the disease," Mr. Whyte said. "One thing we really strive for, besides the research dollars, is awareness because there have been many children who have been misdiagnosed. Getting the word out to 237 mayors, 19 county freeholder boards and countless senators and congressmen in the United States as well as senators, assemblymen and assemblywomen in the state has done a tremendous service for these children who are suffering. It gives them a little avenue of hope in life."

Brian Dowd Receives Bachelor's Degree

WESTFIELD — Brian Dowd of Westfield was awarded a bachelor's degree in architecture during the 150th commencement ceremony on May 9 at Syracuse University's School of Architecture in Syracuse, N.Y.



GODSPEED...The 250 Signal Battalion from the Westfield Army leave on the bus for McGuire AFB for their flight to Fort Bliss, Texas at 0430 (in the morning) last week for final training prior to destination Iraq.

Westfield High School Seniors Will Graduate on June 21

WESTFIELD — Westfield High School (WHS) will hold graduation ceremonies on Monday, June 21, at 6 p.m. at Kehler Stadium.

In the event of inclement weather, graduation will be held in the National Guard Armory, across the street from the high

school on Rahway Avenue. Approximately 350 seniors will receive diplomas. If the weather is questionable, a decision on where the ceremonies will be held will be made by noon on June 21, with the announcement appearing on www.westfieldnj.com and on TV-36.

Later that evening, the BASH, an all-night substance-free graduation party, sponsored by the Optimist Club of Westfield, will be held at the Ricochet Health and Racquet Club.

The keynote speaker for the commencement speaker will be Matthew Sklar, a WHS graduate who is currently the keyboardist and associate conductor for the Broadway musical *Caroline, Or Change*.

WF Council

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spoke at the meeting, some heatedly. Most favored the mayor's decision for a referendum but many disagreed with the plan itself based on varied concerns such as traffic safety, financial risk, costs and quality of life.

Fourth Ward resident Carol Victor was pleased with the compromise, and commended the council for "preserving Westfield as a wonderful piece of Americana."

"Words cannot express my profound disappointment," said Maureen Rothfelder of East Dudley Avenue. Mrs. Rothfelder said she foresees a terrible traffic problem, which will be especially hazardous to schoolchildren.

Jim Baker, an opponent of the parking development, submitted an alternate parking plan that he said would not create a traffic dilemma.

Downtown resident Beverlee McGrath criticized the cost burden placed on apartment resident parking. Ms. McGrath submitted to the council an independent study she conducted, comparing resident parking in cities throughout the state such as Summit, Cranford and Hoboken.

Sharon Stockwell, a member of WECARE, presented Mayor McDermott with a petition opposing all parking development. Mrs. Stockwell called the petition of 1,419 signatures "only the beginning."

Northside resident Robert Tarte heatedly opposed the proposal, accusing the mayor of ignoring the research and information. Tarte argued that the parking development favored town businesses at the expense of the residents.

Mr. Jubb Corbett responded to Mr. Tarte's statements and stood in support of Westfield merchants. Mr. Corbett, whose family has owned Westfield businesses for three generations, said he "sees the whole issue as distorted." He said, "It is not right to disparage our business people. They are not bad people. Bad people do not last very long in Westfield."

In response to concerns, Mayor McDermott reiterated that the entire plan would be presented to the public prior to the fall, allowing all opinions to be heard.

In other news, Edison resident (formerly of Westfield) Stewart Weiss spoke to the council on behalf of the Inman Railroad Committee and the Coalition to Stop the Train. Mr. Weiss is involved in a statewide effort to halt proposed railroad modifications that would affect traffic in many New Jersey counties, including Union. Mr. Weiss presented to the council a letter sent to all state senators, as well as 146 mayors, outlining the problem of railroad development. According to the proposal, a new railroad plan to cross Route 22 will negatively impact motor traffic throughout the state.

Mr. Weiss' group is in the process of contacting county freeholders in an attempt to further the bipartisan project of halting railroad modification.

Katie Behr Named To Spring Dean's List

WESTFIELD — Katie Behr of Westfield was named to the Dean's List at the College of William and Mary in Williamsburg, Va. for the spring 2004 semester.

Variances

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halting work until gaming board approval, residents are now wary.

"We thought the initial plan was a good addition, but nine months later, it's sheeted for windows and we don't know why. We don't want to hear that they'll plan to build a garage in their backyard next year."

Board member Francis Smith echoed concerns raised by multiple residents, telling the applicant, "at some point, some owner is going to want a garage. In Westfield, a lack of one is considered a hardship."

When the architect responded that, according to ordinances, a future owner would be able to construct a garage without appealing for a variance, one neighbor expressed his objection to that possibility: "I don't want a new garage coming out towards my property."

Mr. Heinbokel said, "You didn't follow proper procedure. You had to show your neighbors your intent and notify them when you changed it. We (the board) voted on material that was presented to us (in September), and you have to be considerate of facts that you originally gave us."

Other board members noted similar concerns, and they unanimously defeated the new appeal, saying that the applicants could resubmit an appeal "through open process."

Janice Karlen of 501 Summit Avenue sought a variance that would allow her to construct a permanent three-season porch enclosure in her backyard. The proposed plan would create a rear-yard setback of 31 feet (as opposed to the required minimum of 35 feet) and would exceed the maximum allowable coverage of 20 percent by .3 percent.

Ms. Karlen told the board that the permanent porch she proposed was of the same dimensions as a \$2,500 portable porch that she had used until the roof collapsed during an ice storm this winter.

A Temple Place resident whose property touches Ms. Karlen's addressed the board, opposing the project.

"Our houses are both in a Westfield historic zone, and space is being compromised," he said.

He further cited several altercations between his family and Ms. Karlen regarding branches and roots from his trees that extend into her yard.

Board members expressed concern about the neighbor disagreements and requested that Ms. Karlen investigate structural changes to the proposal and present to the board next month.

"We are very committed to a good-neighbor policy, and when neighbors come out in strong opposition we recommend that you rethink your plan. Right now, I think the board has some concerns," said Vice Chairman Heinbokel.

Michael Erickson of 738 Castleman Drive proposed an addition that would not change the footprint of the house but that would build up the second floor on top of first-floor areas that had no rooms above them.

Neighbors initially objected to a front-side addition, saying that such a change would make the house look significantly different from the rest of the neighborhood.

After hearing Mr. Erickson's testimony and responses to board questions, one neighbor said that those clarifications had changed their views on the project. He said that the size of the front-yard setback suggested a "massive" front addition, but that Mr. Erickson's descriptions explained that the setback measured to the portico he planned for the entrance, not to the actual house itself.

The meeting's agenda included a variance appeal for the Caldora Project, a proposal to tear down the four existing buildings on the 147 Elmer Street and 311 Lenox Avenue properties and erect a residential apartment building, but the attorney for the applicants, brothers James and John Caldora, requested that the board hear their appeal at the July 12 meeting instead.

Westfield BOE

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with the transition mentor plan.

Piloted in the 2003-2004 school year, the plan calls for the training of WHS juniors and seniors as mentors to ascending ninth graders. This year, the program was limited in scope, randomly selecting 100 ninth graders to be mentored by 30 juniors and seniors.

Ms. Mazzaresse said that the program was "very effective" and that she received positive feedback from all involved.

"They found real value in talking to other kids about real stuff," she said.

In the 2004-2005 school year, the program will expand to include all of the approximately 470 ninth graders who will be new to WHS. Approximately 115 students who received recommendations from their teachers and fellow students will mentor the program. Five faculty advisors will supervise the students. A letter will be sent home to all parents and guardians of rising freshmen describing the program and the committee's report will be placed on the school district's website.

Jeffrey Feldman of the Optimists Club addressed the board briefly following Ms. Mazzaresse's presentation. He mentioned the club's yearly involvement in the Graduation Bash, and said, "We'd love to be able to expand our efforts to this area."

He suggested a Freshman Community Project to help students from the district's two intermediate school's get to know each other and learn to cooperate in a non-academic setting.

The board also heard a report from Linda King, Supervisor of Fine Arts, which centered on the department's effort "to build on our excellent fine arts programs by expanding opportunities for students."

"We have a group for everyone," she said. Her recommendations included the possible formation of a second jazz band to supplement the one already in existence at WHS, a Theatre Technology course, a Music Theatre course, a Music/Video club for students to compose and record their original works, and a Fine Arts Day to highlight student accomplishments.

The board also briefly discussed the need for new lighting and sound equipment at WHS. Currently, the school pays approximately \$13,000 a year for rental equipment.

Ryan Leonard, a WHS senior who captured the Best Actor in a Musical award at the Paper Mill Playhouse's annual Rising Star Award ceremonies for his portrayal of Che Guevara in the WHS Spring Musical production of *Evita*, spoke to the board to thank it "for being so supportive of the arts."

Prior to the business portion of Tuesday's meeting, the board recognized the accomplishments of three WHS teachers for their outstanding work this year.

Kimberley Gosen-Fowler, a 1989 graduate of WHS, won the Distinguished Teacher of the Year Award. Leslie Jacobsen, a math teacher at WHS for 29 years, won the Fosse Memorial Award, and Roy Chambers was honored with the PTO Teacher of the Year Award.

Guidance

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"I assess this blame at the Board and Superintendent's level, at the principal's level and at the Guidance Director's level." He goes on to say that the WHS principal's functions are "overdone" and that the relationship between the two offices is "destructive, not creative."

The report states that "individual guidance counselors function at high levels of expertise and professionalism" but that "some current functions are purposeless and — even if well intended — are unproductive."

"More functions need to be planned, more responsibility assigned and more accountability required."

Mr. Dickson ended his report with a list of recommendations that include the establishment of "essential guidelines and policies for college guidance and advising," the establishment of plans and goals, the creation of expectation guidelines "for the student, parents, counselor, and guidance office partnership so that all parties are clear about expectations" and the creation of a plan for College Relations.

Former WF Student Graduates in Conn.

WESTFIELD — William Young, who attended Saint Paul's Day School and Tamaques Elementary School in Westfield, graduated from Connecticut's Weston High School, on June 22.

Mr. Young, who received the NIAAA designation of scholar-athlete, was the recipient of the Board of Education Excellence in Fine Arts Award. He also played basketball and ran on the cross-country and track teams. He will be attending Lewis & Clark College in Portland, Ore. in the fall, where he plans to major in studio art and Japanese.

WESTFIELD POLICE BLOTTER

SATURDAY, JUNE 12

• A collection of items, including a bassinet, quilt set, toys and articles of clothing, was reported stolen from the front porch of a residence on John Street.

MONDAY, JUNE 14

• Anthony C. Sullivan, 23, of Fanwood was arrested on North Avenue and charged with obstruction of justice after he allegedly became belligerent with officers who had detained him as a possible suspect in a robbery that had just occurred in Scotch Plains.

Sullivan was ultimately found not to have been involved in the robbery, according to police. He was, however, wanted on a contempt of court traffic warrant issued by the Plainfield Municipal Court for \$500, for which he posted bail. He was released on his own recognition on the obstruction of justice charge.

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