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SIXTY CENTS



PLAY BALL!...Players and coaches from the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Youth Baseball League kick off the 2005 season on Saturday with a parade through downtown Scotch Plains.

Candidates Selected For Boro. Council Election in June

By MEREDITH A. MANNINO
Specially Written for The Times

FANWOOD - Republicans Michael D'Antuono and Maureen Mawby will face Democrats Joan Wheeler and Bruce Walsh this fall in the race for two seats on the Borough Council.

Republican Councilmen Stewart Kline and Andrew Calamaras are not seeking reelection. All candidates filed their nominating petitions with Borough Clerk by Monday's deadline.

Mr. D'Antuono is a 40-year resident of Fanwood and retired vice president of the Trust Company of New Jersey. He is a member of St. Bartholomew the Apostle Roman Catholic Church in Scotch Plains and is active in the Knights of Columbus.

of corporate marketing and sales. Her three adult children are all graduates of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools.

"Maureen is a longtime resident who enjoyed the opportunity last year to meet the residents of Fanwood and has a great desire to serve them in an official capacity as councilwoman," said Mr. Trumpp.

Meanwhile, Fanwood Democratic Municipal Chairwoman, Assemblywoman Linda Stender, spoke fondly of Ms. Wheeler and Mr. Walsh as candidates for the Democrats this year.

"We are proud to endorse and support Joan Wheeler and Bruce Walsh," said Assemblywoman Stender. "We are confident that Bruce and Joan will work hard for our community



Joan Wheeler (D)



Bruce Walsh (D)



Maureen Mawby (R)

Republican Municipal Chairman Ted Trumpp said he is pleased that Mr. D'Antuono is running and feels, if elected, the experienced business executive will contribute greatly to the borough.

"I think Michael as a candidate brings to the table a great deal of expertise in real estate development, which is a major concern in the borough at this time," said Mr. Trumpp.

Ms. Mawby, who ran last year for Fanwood Borough Council, is a longtime Fanwood resident. Mr. Trumpp said her dedication and commitment would enable her to excel if elected. Her career background is in the area

and continue the progress being made by Mayor Colleen Mahr and the Democratic majority on the Borough Council."

Mr. Walsh is an attorney in private general practice with law offices in Fanwood and Staten Island. He previously served on the Fanwood Council from 1988 to 1990, and again from 1993 to 1998. He was Fanwood Council President in 1996 and again in 1997.

Mr. Walsh is a former commissioner of the Fanwood police and fire departments and a member of the borough's board of health. He cur-

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Council Introduces \$20.5 Mil. Budget With 6-Pt. Tax Hike

By FRED ROSSI
Specially Written for The Times

SCOTCH PLAINS - The Township Council on Tuesday night introduced the 2005 municipal budget, which will be financed by a 4.7 percent, or six-point, increase in the municipal portion of property taxes.

Most of the 3.9 percent increase in the \$20.5 million spending plan, according to Councilwoman Carolyn Sorge, is due to higher mandated expenditures, including health insurance costs, contracts with local unions, sewer fees, fire hydrant and utility fees and pension contributions.

Coupled with a freeze in state aid, "we were left with little wiggle room" in areas to cut spending, she said at the Council's meeting on Tuesday evening.

She called this year's budget "responsible," adding that the council had, during the past two months, reviewed "line-by-line" the spending proposals submitted in late January by Township Manager Thomas Atkins.

Mr. Atkins had submitted a budget that called for an eight point increase in the local tax rate - from \$1.27 per \$100 of assessed value to \$1.35 - which would have translated into a \$95 increase for the average assessed property of \$120,000.

Last week, however, the council was unanimous in changing the increase to \$1.33 per \$100, which will mean a \$72, or 4.7 percent increase for the average taxpayer.

Ms. Sorge noted that the increase in property tax by the township is lower than increases imposed by most other area towns, and it is "well below the state average increase of seven percent."

A public hearing on the budget will be held on Tuesday, May 10, and Mayor Martin Marks encouraged residents to attend and offer their opinions before a vote is taken by the council.

Details of the budget will be posted soon on the township's website, www.scotchplainsnj.com. Copies will also be available for public inspection at the township library and in the township clerk's office.

In other business, the council gave final approval to an \$825,000 bond ordinance that will fund building improvements at the Scotch Plains Library, including the replacement of the sheet metal roof that has been leaking with increasing frequency in recent years, the installation of thermal-paneled windows and new equipment to allow easier access for handicapped individuals.

"We've put off making improvements for years so as not to impact on taxpayers," said Council-

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THREE SCOTCH PLAINS CANDIDATES RUNNING FOR TWO SEATS; SASHA SLOCUM RUNNING UNOPPOSED FOR FANWOOD SEAT

Voters to Decide Fate of Proposed \$58.7 Mil. School Tax Levy Tues.

By PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for The Times

SCOTCH PLAINS - Voters in Scotch Plains and Fanwood will go to the polls this Tuesday, April 19, to decide the fate of the proposed school tax levy and select three members to serve on the Board of Education.

The board adopted a \$67,084,688 budget, which is an increase of 4.5 percent or \$2.8 million in spending over last year. Seventy-five percent of the budget is devoted to salaries and benefits for teachers and staff within the district.

A total of 78.1 percent of the proposed \$58,662,794 tax levy would be raised in taxes in Scotch Plains with the remaining 21.89 in Fanwood. The average Scotch Plains household would pay \$322, and Fanwood residents contributing an average of \$371 per household.

In terms of the school election, Scotch Plains residents will elect two members to represent the township on the board while Fanwood will select one resident from the borough.

Incumbent Trip Whitehouse is seeking a second three-year term, along with newcomers Don Parisi and Warren McFall. Incumbent Edward J. Saridaki, Jr. of Scotch Plains is not seeking reelection. Sasha Slocum is unopposed in her quest for the Fanwood seat being vacated by Susan Dyckman.

Mr. Whitehouse, a resident of the district of Scotch Plains for 17 years, is married and has three children that attend school in the district. He received his undergraduate degree in

accounting from Rutgers University and holds a Master of Business Administration in Corporate Finance. He is employed as division controller for a steel mill based in Perth Amboy.

Mr. Whitehouse has coached boys

and girls house league soccer for seven years, travel soccer for two years, Fanwood Youth baseball for six years, Scotch Plains baseball for two years and the Street Devils street hockey for one year.

The candidate has served as a member of the Board of Education's Finance Committee for the past three years. He is currently the committee's chairman.

Mr. Parisi has resided in Scotch Plains for 18 years with his wife, Barbara. The couple have two sons, a sophomore at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School and a sixth grader at Park Middle School.

Mr. Parisi graduated from Rutgers in 1978 and Rutgers-Camden Law School in 1982. He had a private law practice for six years until 1988 when he joined the state attorney general's office.

In 1994, Mr. Parisi was named general counsel for First Option Health Plan, a physician-owned HMO in Monmouth County. Two years later he was appointed chief executive officer for the company. The company later became part of Physicians Health



Sasha Slocum
Fanwood Candidate



Don Parisi
S. Plains Candidate



Trip Whitehouse
S. Plains Candidate



Warren McFall
S. Plains Candidate

Services, for which he served as general manager in charge of the New Jersey region.

Mr. Parisi is currently an insurance consultant with private contracts as well as contracts with the state to fix financially-troubled insurance companies. He also teaches at the school

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Borough Council Adopts \$7.2 Mil. Budget, Tax Levy

By DAVID GIALANELLA
Specially Written for The Times

FANWOOD - The Borough Council adopted the 2005 municipal budget of \$7,274,225 at Tuesday night's governing body meeting.

This year's \$4,033,942 tax levy represents a 2.9 percent, or \$155,143, increase over last year's tax levy of \$3,878,799.

Officials announced that the borough has received a state grant for body armor for the police department that will be added to the budget as a revenue item.

The council also discussed the proposed Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education tax levy of \$58.7 million, which will be put before voters of both communities this Tuesday, April 19. The total school budget of \$67,884,688 represents a 4.5 percent increase over last year.

If the school tax levy is passed, resident owning a home assessed at \$83,000 in the borough would pay an increase of \$371 over last year to support the school budget.

The council designated Mukherji Landmark, LLC as a redeveloper at LaGrande Avenue and Second Street, at the former Dean Oil site, as was discussed at last week's meeting. The firm is still awaiting information regarding possible soil and groundwater contamination.

The council awarded a contract to attorney Daniel McCarthy of the Cranford law firm of Rogut and McCarthy as redevelopment coordinator for Fanwood's downtown redevelopment plan.

The council passed a resolution opposing termination of the Community Development Block Grant Program.

Councilman Stuart Kline voted

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Cooper Rd. Development Plan to Resume Before Adjustment Bd. in May

By FRED ROSSI
Specially Written for The Times

SCOTCH PLAINS - The Scotch Plains Zoning Board of Adjustment's hearing on an application by a developer to build a single-family house on a privately-owned portion of the island on Cooper Road will resume at the board's Thursday, May 5 hearing after a four-month delay.

In January, the board began consideration of the variance application by Mark Lustbader of West Orange, who represents HUB Realty, the potential buyer of the property that is situated on the western side of the island.

The property is presently owned by AT&T, which maintains a small building on the site that has been unused for the past few years and is no longer of use to the telephone company. At that hearing, it was revealed that the property - originally believed to be 39,338 square feet in area - was actually smaller when rights-of-way along Cooper Road were excluded. The neighborhood is an R-1 zone, meaning that lots are required to be at least 40,000 square feet in size.

At the end of the January hearing, the board decided to continue the hearings at a later date so that Mr. Lustbader could submit revised plans for the property and to give neighborhood residents an opportunity to ask questions and offer comments about the development.

The board has already heard from the applicant's witnesses, including Elizabeth McKenzie, a professional planner who told the board in January that, in her opinion, the site met all zoning criteria except size and that the application was "well within the parameters" of the intent and purpose of local zoning ordinances.

Chris Kastrud, a professional engineer, showed the board possible plans for the house and said there would be no additional storm water runoff resulting from development of the property because much of the property will remain unchanged.

Bahman Izadmehr, a traffic expert, said the proposed home would not negatively affect vehicular traffic in the neighborhood.

At next month's meeting, it is expected that several dozen neighbors, who have formed a group, "Save The Island," to oppose the development,

will speak out in opposition to the application. Formed late last year, the group, which held a protest rally in December and established a website, says that, besides the property being smaller than allowed by township zoning ordinances, building a house on the island would "take away a shared nature preserve and mar the beauty for which Cooper Road is known and for which many of us originally purchased our homes."

In addition, the group maintains that "removing trees and building a house along with its associated driveway will have a great effect on the flow and absorption of rain water and slow melt."

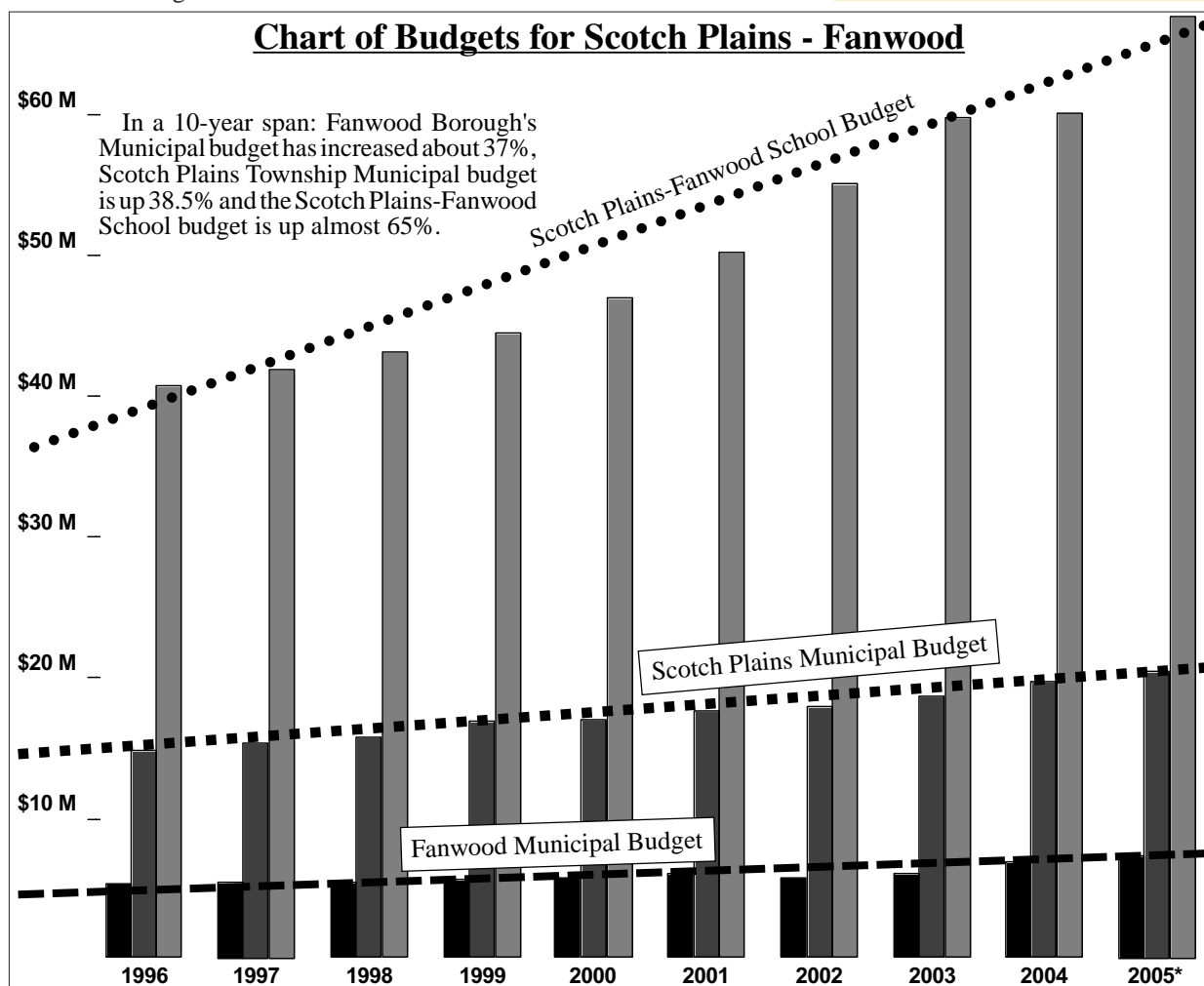
Some of our neighbors' homes are located at the base of this property and will be directly affected by any change in the terrain and/or grading, causing additional rain water and snow melt to flow directly into their yards, or indirectly overloading the stream, potentially causing homes to become flooded."

Furthermore, the group calls attention to the possible safety risks posed by vehicular traffic entering and exiting the property.

Zoning board meetings begin at 7:30 p.m., with hearings on applications typically starting at 8 p.m.



NEW CONSTRUCTION...Messercola Brothers Builders Co. is demolishing a house to make way for new construction on South Avenue in Fanwood.



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