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SIXTY CENTS



SUPPORTING OUR TROOPS... Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School National Honor Society students plan a carnival for families of soldiers from the 250th Battalion now in Iraq. The event will take place at the Westfield Armory on May 14 from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Pictured, from left to right, are: Joanna Rosenberg, Emily Wallden, Michelle Swick, Kristen Henkels and Jeff Mullen.

Nelson Re-elected BOE President; Three New Members Take Oaths

By MATT MARINO
Specially Written for The Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education (BOE) Tuesday night re-elected Linda Nelson as president. Thomas Russo was re-elected as vice-president of the board.

In addition to the re-appointments, three new board members were officially sworn in: Donald Parisi and Warren McFall, both of Scotch Plains; and Sasha Slocum, a Fanwood resident.

They replace Scotch Plains residents Edward Saridaki, Jr., who did not seek reelection, and Trip Whitehouse, who was defeated in the April 19 election. Ms. Slocum replaced Fanwood resident Susan Dyckman, who did not seek a second term on the board.

Business Manager Anthony Del Sordi reported the preliminary elec-

tion results to the board. The total number of people casting votes in Scotch Plains and Fanwood amounted to 3,546, out of a total 19,603 registered voters. The budget passed by a slim margin, with 1,826 votes in favor and 1,684 votes against the budget.

Following the discussion of the election results, the meeting continued with the customary adoption of the 2005-2006 meeting schedule, designation of banks that will serve as official depositories, and other administrative details.

Ms. Nelson told *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* that she recognized

the significant responsibility that would accompany her this year as president. She has set a number of goals, with the most important relating to the budget.

Mrs. Nelson explained that the budget will continue to be reviewed for additional savings where possible, and that the board hopes to further educate the public on the mechanics of how a budget works. In addition, the ongoing labor negotiations will take on an even greater presence as the summer approaches.

"It's going to be a challenging year," commented Mrs. Nelson.



IN WITH THE NEW... Newly-elected Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education members, pictured, left to right, Donald Parisi, Sasha Slocum and Warren McFall take the oath of office from Business Administrator Anthony Del Sordi.

Planning Board Hears Testimony on Proposal To Construct Parking Lot Off of Old South Ave.

By DEBORAH MADISON
Specially Written for The Times

FANWOOD — The borough's planning and zoning board of adjustment heard the continuation of an application for a use variance to construct a parking lot off of Old South Avenue at their regularly scheduled meeting on April 27.

Fanwood Plaza Partners, owned in part by Scotch Plains attorney Robert Kraus, has filed a bifurcated use variance for a parking lot that would be situated on a lot behind houses on Old South Avenue. If approved, the new parking lot

would serve the office building at 313 South Avenue, rented by employees of Children's Specialized Hospital. Currently, these employees use the parking lot at 324 South Avenue, across the street, for overflow parking.

In the second part of this application, the lots at 314 and 328 South Avenue, which are currently owned by Children's Specialized Hospital, would be sold to Fanwood Plaza Partners to make way for a day care center and other commercial or retail establishment, once the parking lot between these two lots was freed from parking-use.

Kevin Sullivan, Director of Operations for Children's Specialized Hospital and their safety-compliance officer, testified that it is dangerous for the employees of Children's Specialized Hospital to cross South Avenue, a state highway, due to the severity of traffic.

Several board members recused themselves from the hearing due to a conflict of interest because of their close business associations with Mr. Kraus.

Board member and Old South Avenue resident Bruce Walsh, who also recused himself from the hearings, is objecting to the application, which would place the new parking lot behind his backyard.

Bill Hetfield of Plainfield, a professional appraiser and realtor, presented testimony on behalf of Mr. Kraus regarding the impact a parking lot would have on the value of the

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Staggard Pl. Rezoning Request Forwarded To Borough Council

By DEBORAH MADISON
Specially Written for The Times

FANWOOD — Several borough residents waited patiently until the end of a four-hour meeting last Wednesday night to hear how the Zoning Board of Adjustment will handle their request for the re-zoning of two lots on Staggard Place.

The residents wrote a letter to the board requesting a zoning change from light industrial to residential for the two lots.

The lots were recently purchased by a developer, which concerns the neighboring residents. The developer has not yet filed an application with the board; however, the residents are concerned that a non-residential development application could be filed at any time.

The current light industrial zoning would permit a large, three-story commercial building with a parking lot adjacent to residential homes. The residents are concerned that this type of development would greatly devalue their homes and create a traffic problem in their neighborhood. Several board members agreed with the residents that a development of this type would not be appropriate in this residential location.

The state is slated to review the zoning of the entire South Avenue corridor in October or November.

Board members discussed the various legal risks associated with waiting until October to consider the issue, as well as the legal impediments of "spot zoning."

The rezoning process would involve the board making a recommendation to the borough council, which would then vote on the issue. If approved, the council would then ask the zoning board of adjustment to research the problem and send them a fact-finding report. After reviewing this report, and holding public hearings for input, the council would be the governing body responsible for making the final decision.

Board members assured the residents that the zoning could still be changed even after an application is filed by a developer, but that no such application is pending. The board decided to forward the letter from the residents to the council asking Fanwood's governing body for their recommendation on how to proceed.

Board attorney Robert Mega explained to residents that spot zoning could be overturned in court if not done through sound planning practices.

Board Chairman, Gregory Cummings said that the board was also concerned and suggested that the residents express their concerns to the council.

Township Council Will Award Bulky Waste Clean-Up Program at Next Tuesday's Meeting

By FRED ROSSI
Specially Written for The Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — The Township Council is expected to award a bid next week for the June residential bulky waste clean-up program that will be conducted for the first time using a user fee-based system requiring residents to purchase an annual

permit if they wish to dispose of large household items.

Increasing costs and tipping fees caused the township's annual expenses for the program to rise from \$184,000 in 2003 to more than \$300,000 last year, and projections of as much as \$500,000 in future years led the council to change the program

in March.

The new structure will be financed by only those homeowners with a need to dispose of bulky household items instead of being funded by all property owners via property taxes.

Midco Waste Systems was the sole bidder at \$69.99 per permit; \$33 of that figure is for labor, benefits, fuel and other related expenses and the other \$36.99 is for tipping fees.

Residents wishing to take part in the program, which will occur in June, will have to purchase a permit that will cost \$60 this year and will entitle the holder to dispose of up to 750 pounds of bulky waste. Bulky waste will not be allowed to be placed at curbs any earlier than the Wednesday prior to the following Monday start date of a designated collection period.

Fines for violating the weight limit, the permit system or the time limit for setting out items will be subject to fines of \$100 for the first offense, with second offenses punishable by fines of \$200 to \$1,000 and, possibly, five days of community service.

At the council's conference meeting on Tuesday evening, Township Manager Thomas Atkins noted that Midco is also handling similar pick-up programs in Westfield, which is paying \$68.76 per permit, and Cranford, which is paying \$74.67 per permit.

At next Tuesday's regular meeting, the council will hold a public hearing

on the \$20.5 million municipal budget, which calls for a 4.7 percent, or six-point increase in the municipal portion of property taxes.

Next week, the council is also expected to renew its participation in the Union County Sheriff's S.L.A.P. (Sheriff's Labor Assistance Program) initiative, which makes non-violent offenders available to municipalities to perform certain jobs, such as cutting grass along roads, litter pick-up, light stream clean-up, etc.

The program, in which Scotch Plains participates in a shared arrangement with Westfield and Clark, will cost the township \$13,276, which will be paid for county law enforcement officers that accompany the individuals working in the program.

Mr. Atkins told the council that a preliminary report has been received from Potter Architects on how to address the roof and heating-ventilation system at the municipal building and the building issues at the public works facility on Plainfield Avenue. He indicated that a special meeting between the council and the architects might be needed soon to discuss the report in detail.

A \$174,400 bid is expected to be awarded next week to Mark Paving Inc. of Kearny to resurface a portion of Plainfield Avenue this summer. Mr. Atkins said plans are still being finalized for this year's township-wide roadway resurfacing program.



KICKING OFF CAMPAIGN... Members of the Center For Hope Hospice and Palliative Care's Capital Committee officially launched a campaign on Monday to raise \$10,144,000 in funds to construct Hope Village, a 30-bed residential facility located behind the facility's administrative offices at 1900 Raritan Road in Scotch Plains. Members of the committee, pictured, left to right, are: June Fischer, Jim O'Brien, Pam McClure, Jay Boyle, Alfred Sauer, Robert Sloan and State Superior Court Judge John Boyle.

Fanwood Council Agrees to Replace Retiring Police Officers; Residents Discuss Staggard Pl.

By MEREDITH MANNINO
Specially Written for The Times

FANWOOD — Police Chief Donald Domanoski, Captain Edward White and Lieutenant Richard Trigo met with the Borough Council at Tuesday night's agenda setting session to verify the importance of maintaining a 21-member force.

With the retirement of 35-year force veteran Corporal Stephen Sanislo and 27-year veteran Corporal Martin Haluza this summer, Chief Domanoski and his two colleagues wanted to reiterate to the council the importance of replacing the retiring officers.

Chief Domanoski noted that the

department has been nationally recognized for its public safety programs.

All members of the council agreed with the officers' request to keep the Fanwood Police Department a 21-officer force.

On another matter, several borough residents requested that Staggard Place, located off of South Avenue, be re-zoned to residential. The area has been designated light industrial zone since 1954.

"We can't just change the zone; we have to change the master plan first," said Councilman Jack Molenaar.

Residents brought the issue before the Borough's Board of Adjustment on April 27.

Also discussed at the council's agenda session was the LaGrande Park ball field and tennis court improvement projects. Borough Engineer Joe Pryor reported that the layout for the ball field has been approved, and that he is now proceeding with the final design. A final contract document should be available in about three weeks, he said.

Mr. Pryor emphasized that the council provide authorization to advertise the project as soon as the contract documents are ready, which would allow the borough to award a contract in July.

Work has been initiated on the tennis courts at LaGrande Park. According to Mr. Pryor, the survey is complete and the design is almost finished. As with the softball field, he recommends that the council autho-

rize him to advertise the project as soon as the contract documents are ready, enabling the borough to award a contract in July as well.

He said the goal is to have the project constructed before the start of the fall tennis season.

Mr. Pryor and Councilman Joseph Higgins have requested that, prior to any construction at LaGrande Park, a public meeting be held so that residents have the opportunity to ask questions and give feedback about the project.

Regarding Forest Road Park, work has commenced on the irrigation system. Since several electrical issues must be resolved with the utility, Mr. Pryor recommended that it be bid separately from the LaGrande Park project.

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OOPS... Rush hour started off with a bang Tuesday morning as noted by the collision at Park and Mountain Avenues in Scotch Plains which tied up traffic.

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