



# THE SCOTCH PLAINS-FANWOOD TIMES

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**YEARS OF SERVICE...**Two Fanwood police officers are retiring after many years of service. Police Corporal Stephen Sanislo, left, is retiring after 35 years of service to the borough, and Marin Haluza is retiring after 27 years of service.

## SP Mayor Proposes Public Forum To Discuss Property Tax Reform

By **BETSEY BURGDOFF**  
Specially Written for The Times

**SCOTCH PLAINS** - Scotch Plains Mayor Martin Marks, in a press release sent to *The Scotch Plains Times*, proposes to hold a public forum to discuss the issue of property tax reform.

He is calling out to local legislators as well as *The Times* to join him in this forum, which will be televised on Channel 34.

"In light of the attention the recent property tax summit received, I feel it is important to keep the issue fresh on our citizens' minds. I make the following three-part challenge. First, I invite my fellow elected officials, in particular District 21 and 22 state legislators, Union County Freeholders, area mayors and board of education members to join me in an open to the public forum on property taxes and the prospect for reform.

"Second, I challenge *The Westfield Leader/Scotch Plains Fanwood Times* to be the facilitator of the event. Third and most importantly, I challenge my fellow citizens in this region to attend the event and interact with their elected officials on the issue of property tax reform," Mayor Marks' release said in part.

*The Times* has agreed to support Mayor Marks and will be moderating the event to be held in the Scotch Plains Municipal Building. Another venue may be sought if the municipal building proves to be unable to house the forum.

"The paper will definitely support the mayor's call," *The Times* publisher Horace Corbin said. "Such an issue is important to our readers."

Senator Tom Kean, Jr. (R-21,

Westfield) told *The Times* that he would also participate. "We have been trying for property tax reform since I have been in the Assembly," Senator Kean said. "I am just as frustrated as Mayor Marks."

"I think the legislature should do their job," Senator Kean continued. He noted that one key issue contributing to skyrocketing property taxes, or "corruption tax," as he labeled it, is the Pay to Play, a system where contractors give donations to elected officials and in return get lucrative government contracts.

"If there is an opportunity to discuss this issue, I am happy to be there," he concluded.

Assemblyman Jon Bramnick (R-21, Westfield) said, "That is exactly what we need because the Democrats control the government."

"I have asked for this discussion on the floor of the Assembly," he continued. "If you could get the legislatures together, I think that would be great. I would really love to do it."

Scotch Plains Board of Education President Linda Nelson echoed Senator Kean's and Assemblyman Bramnick's responses.

"The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education shares the public's concern over steadily increasing property taxes and the challenge of maintaining a quality school district without overwhelming local taxpayers," Mrs. Nelson said.

"We welcome an opportunity for public study of the many factors involved in the current property tax crisis in New Jersey. Certainly we all can benefit from the kind of in-depth look at the issues that Mayor Marks is

proposing."

Mrs. Nelson stated that a discussion of how public education is funded would be an item on the board's June agenda.

"Our concern is how to bring about the relief that taxpayers need while insuring equitable funding for all

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## Borough Planning Board Adopts Storm Water Plan, Marcovecchio Proposal Still Not Accepted

By **MEREDITH MANNINO**  
Specially Written for The Times

**FANWOOD** - Members of the borough's Planning Board approved Borough Engineer Joseph Pryor's storm water management plan during the board's meeting Monday night.

The plan was drafted from a general outline provided by the Department of Environmental Protection and then customized to fit the borough's needs, according to Mr. Pryor.

He summarized the nine-section plan, which explains in detail why the plan is being prepared and how it will help reduce flooding. The plan also describes hydrology and features background information about Fanwood.

The final section of the plan describes mitigation options. According to Mr. Pryor, waivers cannot be granted on extensions if options are not in the borough's Master Plan.

The board also heard an application filed by developer Michael Marcovecchio regarding his preliminary and final site plan for 221 South

Avenue. This application is the first to be filed with the borough as a part of Fanwood's Downtown Redevelopment Plan.

James Watson, professional land surveyor and planner of E.K.A. Associates was the first to testify on behalf of Mr. Marcovecchio.

Mr. Watson explained that the proposal is for a three-story building and a new parking lot behind the structure. The first floor of the building will be residential, and the third floor will occupy the building management.

Parking presented a major issue for the board. Discrepancy arose about the exact zoning requirements for the proposed parking lot. Board members pointed out that whether or not Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS) apply to the parking lot determines how many spaces are necessary and what exact guidelines need to be followed.

Since the proposed Marcovecchio building will be partly commercial and partly residential, it's not exactly

clear if the lot is considered residential or commercial, officials said.

According to Eileen Lianarducci, representing the board, RSIS applies to residential areas.

Another unresolved issue concerning the Marcovecchio plan is the building design.

When Salvatore Lauro of Lauro Associates Architects, gave the final

testimony on behalf of Mr. Marcovecchio, Mr. Celardo said it did seem like the building design was keeping with the Victorian style, a mission of the Historical Preservation Commission.

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## Asian Student Group Cited to Raising Funds For Tsunami Relief

By **MATT MARINO**  
Specially Written for The Times

**SCOTCH PLAINS** - The tsunami disaster in Asia affected people throughout the world, including here in the local area. Through much hard work and dedication, the Asian Student Association - a student-run club at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School - managed to raise over \$24,000 for tsunami relief during a telethon held earlier this spring.

At their meeting held last Thursday evening, members of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education (BOE) witnessed the ceremonial check presentation to the Tri-County American Red Cross.

Robin Wong and Janet McNally, the two adult coordinators of the telethon, both commented that much of the telethon's success was due to the students' perseverance and determination. That, said Mrs. Wong, led to an overwhelming response from those watching the telethon in Scotch Plains and Fanwood.

"We could not have asked for a better reception," commented Mrs. Wong.

Gina Lewis, who represented the Red Cross at the meeting, expressed admiration for the amount of time and effort put into the telethon, especially by the students.

"I've never been so impressed with students in my entire life," said Ms. Lewis.

In praising the students and others involved with the telethon, Janet McNally also publicly "challenged" both Mayor Martin Marks of Scotch Plains and Mayor Col-

leen Mahr of Fanwood to present the students with some kind of public distinction.

"These students deserve it," noted Mrs. McNally.

In other board business, the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs informed the board via letter that two grants were approved, totaling \$35,000. The grants will be used in conjunction with the Sharing Available Resources Efficiently (SHARE) program to conduct a study regarding shared parking services and shared public works.

Along that same front, the board is expected to endorse the construction of a shared field maintenance storage building at the site of the Scotch Plains Public Works Garage, located on Plainfield Avenue in Scotch Plains.

The board will pick up 40 percent of the cost for 4 bays (storage garages) that will house field maintenance equipment and materials. This cost is expected to be approximately \$32,000.

At the next meeting scheduled for Tuesday, May 24, the board is also expected to approve reception of funds totaling \$118,577 to be put toward the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) grant program. The money will be divided among three programs - Title II (Part A), Title IV and Title V.

Also at the next meeting, the board will honor Trip Whitehouse with a special resolution. Mr. Whitehouse served as a board member for the past three years, but was not re-elected this past election.



**THANK YOU...**Fanwood Mayor Colleen Mahr thanks Public Works Director Raymond Manfra, who will retire after 43 years of service to the borough. He will be replaced by Clinton Dickson, who was formerly the Public Works Director for the Borough of Garwood.

request that a potential developer of the property make some improvements to the adjacent Farley Park in exchange for the vacation.

At its conference meeting on Tuesday, the Council discussed a request from the law firm representing

Baldrige Real Estate Inc. for the vacation of Edwin Place and Croyden Place, two unimproved streets that exist on official township maps but are not traversable by cars.

Baldrige Real Estate Inc. is preparing a site plan application for submission to the Planning Board for the construction of an AutoZone retail auto parts store on the site of the former Club Malibu.

Club Malibu was closed in late 1998 after a fatal shooting took place in its parking lot. The former night club building was razed two years ago.

Baldrige Real Estate wants to construct a 7,300-square-foot retail auto parts store and a separate 4,000-square-foot retail store on the property, and hopes the Council will agree to vacate the streets prior to its hearing before the Planning Board, which has already recommended the vacation of the two streets.

During a brief discussion of the matter Township Manager Thomas Atkins said township officials believe the property can be adequately devel-

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