



Horace R. Corbin for *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*
STRUTTING THEIR STUFF...The Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School marching band and color guard cheer on the Raider football team at its game against East Side High School on Saturday. The Raider gridgers won the contest, 14-7.

SP Considers Stormwater Management Ordinances

By FRED T. ROSSI
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS —The township council will hold a public hearing next week on a set of ordinances that will affect most residents and homeowners and are designed to bring Scotch Plains further into compliance with stormwater management regulations that were issued two years ago.

The six proposed ordinances, which were introduced at last week's council meeting, address litter control, the improper disposal of waste and the proper disposal of pet waste and containerized yard waste, while also establishing a yard waste collection program and prohibiting illicit connections to the municipal storm sewer system.

The state regulations are designed to curb contamination of ground water, waterways and the ocean that results from activities such as lawn fertilizing, walking pets, changing motor oil and littering.

Stormwater is defined as water resulting from precipitation such as rain and snow that runs off the land's surface, is transmitted to the subsurface, is captured by separate storm sewers or other sewerage or drainage facilities or is conveyed by snow-removal equipment.

Councilwoman Paulette Coronato said the ordinances, which actually amend existing municipal statutes, are required so that Scotch Plains remains "eligible to receive EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) grants and FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Administration) money if needed."

Mayor Martin Marks said the new ordinances are a result of federal regulations that were passed down to the states for enforcement and then passed down to municipalities to ensure compliance.

The litter control ordinance would make it unlawful to discard any litter of any nature anywhere except in a litter receptacle and would extend to litter thrown from a vehicle. The fine for violating this ordinance would be \$100.

A second ordinance to be enacted by the township would prohibit spilling, dumping or disposing of materials other than stormwater into the

municipal storm sewer system. There are a number of exceptions in the ordinance including water line flushing, uncontaminated ground water, irrigation water, residential care-washing water and swimming pool discharges and flows from the clean water rinsing of items such as beach maintenance equipment and salt and de-icing equipment. The ordinance would include a \$500 fine for violators.

A third ordinance would set requirements for the proper handling of yard waste and prohibit "the owner or occupant of any property, or any employee or contractor of such owner or occupant engaged to provide lawn care or landscaping services" from sweeping, raking, blowing or placing yard waste such as grass clippings or leaves — unless containerized — into the street. Violation would carry a \$100 fine.

A separate ordinance states that such yard waste would only be allowed to be placed in the street uncontainerized during the seven days prior to a scheduled and announced municipal collection and would not be permitted to be placed closer than 10 feet from any storm drain.

Councilwoman Coronato said the township government is "trying to avoid mandatory bagging [of leaves]" because of the burden it would place on residents, especially older homeowners and those with large properties.

The pet waste ordinance would set out requirements for the proper disposal of pet waste by mandating an immediate removal and proper disposal of pet waste from any property not owned or possessed by the owner of that pet.

Proper disposal would include placement in a waste receptacle that is regularly emptied by a refuse collector. There would be a \$100 fine for violation of this ordinance.

The final ordinance would make it illegal to illicitly make connections to the municipal storm sewer system in order to discharge residential sewage, process wastewater or other industrial waste. Violators would face a \$500 fine.

The public hearing on the ordinances will be held at the council's Tuesday, September 26 meeting.

Board Reviews Complaint On Driveway Application

By SARA MAGNOLA
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

FANWOOD — The borough's planning board reviewed a letter during its Monday night agenda meeting from a resident regarding a driveway variance being requested by Gerald Vidas of Oakwood Court, who seeks to widen his driveway from its existing 11 feet to 14 feet. According to the Fanwood Land Use Code, the permitted width is currently 10 feet.

According to the letter from the anonymous resident, which was signed "A Fed-up Resident and Taxpayer," the request as submitted by Mr. Vidas is "not quite accurate since [Mr. Vidas] widened his driveway and has been using it for at least six months (in violation of the borough's ordinance)." The resident then questioned "why the construction was allowed to take place without a variance being in place and why Mr. Vidas has been allowed to use the driveway."

Mr. Vidas is scheduled to make his formal request for the four-foot variance during the board's Wednesday, September 27 meeting. Board member Andrew MacDonald said he would ask to abstain from voting on the issue, as recommended by board attorney Clifford Kuhn, since Mr. Vidas has "contributed to Mr. MacDonald's (political) campaigns in the past."

Also during the September 27 meeting, the board will hear a request from a LaGrande Avenue resident for a deck variance, as well as the re-application for the Goddard School. The planning and zoning board of adjustment voted in June to deny a development application by Scotch Plains attorney Robert Kraus of Fanwood Plaza Partners for a branch of the Town Bank and Goddard Day Care Center to be located at 314 South Avenue. Although board members favored the project 4-2, a fifth affirming vote was required because a use variance was needed.

The borough's fire department said the building needed to be 15 feet from the curb in order for the fire department to be able to access the roof from a fire-truck ladder.

Paul Ricci of the civil engineering firm T&M Associates was absent from the agenda meeting, but the board did review the Transfer of Development

Rights (TDR) demonstration project status report sent from the firm. The report explained how "public outreach has been a critical component of the TDR demonstration in Fanwood."

Fanwood applied for a grant in 2004 to establish a TDR program, which enables interested property owners in one section of town (Fanwood's historic district, in this case) to sell a portion or all of their future development rights, preserving their properties indefinitely.

Willing participants in another part of town (in this case, along portions of South Avenue beyond the boundaries of the ongoing redevelopment program) can buy these development rights within the so-called "sending district" in exchange for credits to build or redevelop on their properties in the so-called "receiving district."

The report said the borough held special "informational meetings throughout the planning process" and residents "participated in three visionary workshops to establish the foundation of the South Avenue Corridor Vision Plan." Also, during the planning process residents were able to access "a description of project milestones and frequently asked questions" utilizing a link on Fanwood's homepage.

During a special meeting on Thursday, September 28, T&M representatives will "present a draft of the TDR plan element to the planning board, including value and use of credits, restrictions, prioritizations of contributing and non-contributing properties, tax implications and administrative mechanisms." According to T&M's timetable, the approved plan should be submitted by Friday, December 22.

In response to past discussion regarding an oversized home variance, which could reduce the number of variances brought before the planning board each year, Zoning Officer Nancy Koederitz presented the board with a "general overview of the types of projects that have received permits so far in 2006."

The list showed 37 additions, 29 fences, 18 decks, seven sheds, four porches, four pools, three detached garages, two new houses and two patios. Ms. Koederitz will give board members another update by the end of the year.



David Samsky for *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*
LET THEM EAT PIE...Two contestants tied for first place in the Fanny Wood Day pie-eating contest. Dino Caminiti and Ed Sheaffer with hands behind their backs ate their way through each pie leaving a tin can alley. Lynda Moore was closing in but savored that last bite long enough to place second.

SP Resident Drops Civil Rights Complaint; Suit Possible

By PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

WESTFIELD — A Scotch Plains resident has dropped a civil rights complaint against Westfield but is pursuing the matter in Superior Court.

William McMeekan alleged that his civil rights were violated when he applied for a volunteer firefighter position with the Westfield Fire Department. *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* has learned. The town's policy requires paid firefighter applicants to first serve as volunteer firefighters.

Lee Moore, public information officer for the state's Department of Law and Public Safety, which includes the attorney general's office, told *The Times* that William McMeekan filed a claim with the Division of Civil Rights on May 9, 2005.

"The case was officially closed out, as a Division on Civil Rights matter, on August 30, 2006. The reason was

Mr. McMeekan's withdrawal of the complaint," Mr. Moore told *The Times*.

Mr. Moore said it is not unusual for someone to drop a civil rights claim in favor of taking the matter to superior court. "You can't do both (a civil rights complaint and litigation in superior court)."

Westfield Town Administrator Jim Gildea said the town council met Tuesday night in executive session, at which point the governing body was told of Mr. McMeekan's decision.

Mr. Gildea said the Division of Civil Rights notified the town of Mr. McMeekan's decision and that it was Mr. McMeekan's "intent to pursue the matter in Superior Court."

When asked whether a tort claim had been filed as of yesterday, Mr. Gildea responded, "Not that I am aware of."

Calls to Mr. McMeekan's attorney were not returned.

Chemidlin Gives Talk

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Before being sent to Freetown's Pandemba Road Prison, Mr. Chemidlin stayed in Freetown's police lockup for 10 days without being charged and slept on the floor, suffering symptoms of malaria. Authorities accused him of being a spy and conspiring to free Taylor.

The African newspapers broke the story with headlines like "Man Held as Spy," Mr. Chemidlin told *The Times* that afterward, officials brought him before the magistrate again and said, "We were about to free you, but..."

According to Mr. Chemidlin, police felt pressured by media coverage to officially charge him with espionage. Once charged, he ended up in prison, where hardened criminals tormented young boys upon arrival by stripping them naked.

"Everything was forgotten about but my faith. This whole ordeal turned my world upside down," he said.

"The legal system is very good but only good as pertaining to law. God, to me, is higher than all that. Getting through this ordeal, there was nothing, really, anyone could have done. There was nothing — the government, the FBI,

the State Department, the family, the church people, my magistrate, no one, my solicitor — there wasn't anything that anyone could have done. The bottom line, to get my freedom, I have to say, was really an exercise of faith."

On July 4, the Sierra Leoneans dismissed all charges against him and on July 7 returned his passport. He arrived in America two days later. Having given up his apartment before he left for Africa, Mr. Chemidlin stays with a relative in West Harlem.

He told his audience the experience affected him profoundly. "I don't have the set times to go to lunch, have breakfast, go to sleep, what to wear, things that we accustom ourselves to in everyday living. You have to see pretty much what's important in life. I felt all of these people's fears."

"After several months, I have to tell you, I'm still unsettled as to where to live. I'm almost afraid to settle down again. And the fear of malaria, fear of lack of food, it's almost, I guess, like something that prisoners of war go through...It was a trying experience to say the least," he said.



David Samsky for *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*
HOT RIDE...Rich Sulzer of Westfield Road in Scotch Plains entered a 1956 Ford Fairlane Sunliner in the Long Hill Senior Citizens' antique and classic car show on Sunday afternoon in Stirling.



POLICE BLOTTER

Scotch Plains

Friday, September 15, a resident of Lamberts Mill Road reported being the victim of online fraud. The victim told police that one or more unidentified individuals made unauthorized purchases via the Internet using the victim's credit card.

Friday, September 15, a Fanwood resident reported that his bicycle was stolen from Park Avenue. The value of the bicycle is \$150.

Friday, September 15, Juan A. Serrano of Plainfield was arrested on an active warrant out of Plainfield after a motor vehicle stop for a violation.

Fanwood

Monday, September 11, Arthur D. Frink, Jr., 53, of Middlesex was arrested and charged with outstanding warrants out of Metuchen and Bridgewater after a motor vehicle stop on South Avenue.

Monday, September 11, Michael G. Steirman, 33, of Scotch Plains was arrested following a motor vehicle stop on South Avenue, which revealed an outstanding warrant out of Clifton.

Tuesday, September 12, Christopher B. Borgess, 35, of Cranford was arrested following a motor vehicle stop on Terrill Road, which revealed an outstanding warrant out of Fort Lee.

Tuesday, September 12, Richard J. Kutney, 43, was arrested for an outstanding Watchung warrant after a motor vehicle stop on South Avenue.

Tuesday, September 12, Colin E. Reid, 34, of Jacksonville, Fla. was arrested and charged with an outstanding Mount Olive warrant after a motor vehicle stop on Terrill Road.

Wednesday, September 13, Lakeisha M. Jackson, 33, of Fanwood was arrested and charged with interfering with a police investigation. Jackson was also charged with providing a false identity, police said.

Thursday, September 14, Lawrence M. Dicks, 38, was arrested and charged with an outstanding Plainfield warrant after a motor vehicle stop on North Avenue.

Thursday, September 14, Loretha M. Cabbie, 43, Plainfield was arrested and charged with credit card theft and receiving stolen property. She was transported to the Union County jail. Bail was set at \$4,500.

Friday, September 15, Rasheem M. Ailes, 27, of Elizabeth was arrested on outstanding warrants out of Newark and Elizabeth after a motor vehicle stop on LaGrande Avenue.

Friday, September 15, a manager of a South Avenue gas station reported that an

unidentified customer paid with a counterfeit \$50 bill.

Saturday, September 16, Raed M. Alasmir, 26, of Howard Beach, N.Y. was arrested and charged with possession of suspected marijuana and controlled dangerous substance (CDS) paraphernalia. He was also charged with an outstanding warrant out of Jersey City.

Saturday, September 16, Christopher D. Cassett, 18, of Westfield was arrested and charged with possession of suspected marijuana. Jarez L. Baron, 18, of North Plainfield, a passenger in the vehicle, was also arrested and charged with possession of marijuana. Shaun R. Mason, 18, of Plainfield was charged with possession of suspected marijuana and hindering apprehension.

Sunday, September 17, Jamal W. Hester, 31, of Dunellen was arrested following a motor vehicle stop on Midway Avenue for outstanding warrants out of Dunellen and Piscataway.

Sunday, September 17, seven juveniles between the ages of 14 and 16 were brought into headquarters for trespassing on an abandoned property. The incident is under investigation.

Tuesday, September 19, Wilver Valdez, 29, of Plainfield was arrested and charged with an outstanding Springfield warrant after a motor vehicle stop on Terrill Road.

Tuesday, September 19, Jesenia V. Gonzalez, 23, of Jersey City was arrested and charged with an outstanding Newark warrant after a motor vehicle stop on North Avenue.

Westfield

Tuesday, September 12, Marcus Rawls, 38, of Newark was arrested at the Bergen County jail on an outstanding Bergen warrant for \$50.

Wednesday, September 13, Michael Bonilla, 32, of Jersey City was arrested during a motor vehicle stop at Mountain Avenue and North Chestnut Street on an outstanding Wildwood criminal warrant for \$185. He was released after posting bail.

Thursday, September 14, a resident of the 500 block of Hillcrest Avenue reported that her home was burglarized and jewelry taken from the residence. There were no signs of forced entry, police said.

Friday, September 15, Thomas Roche, 4th, 21, of Westfield was arrested at Westfield police headquarters on outstanding traffic warrants out of Beechwood and Fanwood. He was released after posting bail.

'One Strike' Policy OK'd For Bounced Lunch Checks

By TED RITTER
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

GARWOOD — The borough's board of education Tuesday night approved a measure aimed at addressing a problem regarding the manner in which school lunches are purchased.

Board member Gary Maher said the problem stems from parents giving their children personal checks to pay for their lunches. He said some of the checks have bounced, causing the district to lose money.

Mr. Maher said that the new, board-approved regulation adopts a "one strike and you're out" policy, meaning a student can still buy lunch with a personal check, but if a check bounces, that student would then have to pay in cash from that point on and cover both the bad check and any bank fees.

"We need [students] to eat, but there's no such thing as a free lunch, right?" said Mr. Maher, adding that the policy change was needed to clear up a "difficult situation for the parents."

Board member Christine Guerriero said a notice about the policy would be included in the next Parent-Teacher Association newsletter.

Local resident Peggy Staba asked the school board to consider allowing parents to purchase lunch tickets in advance, which their children could then use in the cafeteria. "I think I would feel a little more comfortable [with lunch tickets] instead of sending kids to school with large amounts of cash," she said.

Responding to a follow-up question from resident Bruce Paterson, board officials said while no bank fees have been incurred to date as a result of bounced lunch checks, the bank the district uses has merged and the fees policy is expected to change.

The meeting's full agenda was primarily devoted to addressing administrative issues left over from the sum-

mer months, as well as other issues related to the recent start of school. Among them was a date change for Back-to-School night. The revised date is Monday, September 25 at 7 p.m.

Superintendent Bill Murphy reported a "smooth opening of school" and said enrollment in the Garwood school district stands at 407 students, slightly smaller than the tally of 411 recorded in June.

Board member Monty Brown said district employees worked 168 hours of overtime during the late summer months in order to get school buildings ready to reopen. Although Mr. Brown said the overtime was within budget, local resident Mike Hajduk asked the school board to provide the actual cost of this overtime at the October meeting "to see if there are other options" for reducing expenses.

Also on Tuesday night, Mr. Murphy announced final plans are "in the works" for a children's after-school program at the district's Lincoln School building. However, the superintendent said the program, to be run by the Westfield YMCA, would not begin "until Oct. 1 or even later." He said officials haven't had time to put the finishing touches on the program due to the busy start of the new school year.

School board officials announced that next month's meeting would likely include a presentation on the district's standardized test scores, as well as an appearance by Assemblyman Jon Bramnick.

Mr. Bramnick is sponsoring legislation that could adjust the Garwood and Mountainside school districts' budget caps and surplus limits, given payments they are expected to receive as a result of the Union County Regional High School District's 1996 dissolution.

The Garwood school board approved a resolution supporting this legislation Tuesday night.



Horace Corbin for *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*
ENFLAMED...This hot item on display at the car show during Fanny Wood Day last Sunday attracted attention with its blonde 'bombshell' mannequin.

Let the Hayrides Begin!

This Weekend Only
 Free Hayride
 with Can of Food
 Sept. 23rd & 24th

Our Fall Festival begins this weekend. Saturday and Sundays we will have our pumpkin picking, ponyrides, hayrides, and our haunted house. Bring in a can of food for our food drive this weekend and receive a FREE hayride.

Don't forget we have plenty of Mums, Fall Magic, Perennials, and Pansies to add to the garden.

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