

FYO Operation A Concern Of Recreation Commission

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

FANWOOD — The recreation commission expressed concerns during its meeting Tuesday night about the current operation of the Fanwood Youth Organization (FYO).

Borough council liaison Joseph Higgins said the FYO "is being run with no real oversight."

"I think it's time the [recreation] commission jumped in with two feet to see that [the FYO] is run properly," he said.

Mr. Higgins noted that he has spoken with Mayor Colleen Mahr about the issue and said the mayor supports an "attempt to form a FYO committee in September."

Commission member Phyllis Mirabella agreed with the idea, adding that the FYO "is an institution now."

Commission member Rob Degnan said, "I can help with this," pointing to his background in physical education and college-level athletics.

"If [the FYO] is going to be left to do its own thing, it's going to fall apart," he said.

The commission discussed the status of multiple current programs and a pending grant application.

Regarding the summer park program, which was given a total makeover for 2007, Recreation Director Bob Budiansky said he has received "almost entirely positive feedback from the parents" of kids participating in the six-week program at LaGrande Park.

"We probably could have had 50 percent more attendance. We turned

away a lot of people," Mr. Budiansky said. He added that the commission, in setting up the new program, "couldn't anticipate the kind of jump" in attendance it has experienced this summer after years of dwindling participation in the borough's old-style playground program.

"Parents are saying, 'I wish I signed up for more weeks, or I wish the program [ran for] more than six weeks,'" he said.

"I think that speaks volumes," Mr. Degnan said.

Mr. Budiansky said he plans to e-mail parents of kids participating in the summer park program to clarify the "voucher" policy. Under the policy, if the park program is rained out on a particular day, participants get a \$4 voucher to apply to other recreation programs.

Mr. Degnan asked whether the borough should consider moving the program from the park to a school, which would allow activities to be moved inside on rainy days.

"This program operates very effectively right here; you might lose a lot of that if we move it to a school," Mr. Budiansky responded.

Commission member Russell Wells suggested that park program counselors and supervisors be invited to next month's recreation meeting to provide a "wrap-up" of the program and feedback regarding potential changes for next year.

In other business, Mr. Budiansky reported that the commission has applied for a \$70,000 Kids Recreation Trust Grant from Union County, with half to be matched by the borough.

If the grant comes through at that level, he said the commission could use the money for playground upgrades at LaGrande and Forest Road Parks, tennis court resurfacing at Forest Road Park, an inflatable movie screen and picnic tables, as well as goals and goalie equipment for the newly formed Scotch Plains-Fanwood Lacrosse League.

However, Mr. Budiansky said, "It's too late" for the FYO baseball league to be included in the grant application package. He said the FYO "did not respond" to e-mails and phone calls prior to the application deadline.

Mr. Budiansky reported on the first-ever Summer Party in the Park held a few weeks ago.

Although the pizza and lemonade ran out, and commission chairman Pam Sayles said the music was "a little loud," commission members agreed the event was successful and worth repeating.

"We probably covered our costs or [came] very close to it," he said.

Commission member Trish Nering credited the party's success to "better advertising and just having fun things to do," such as inflatable rides, face painting, pony rides, a clown, prizes and food.



ANATOMY OF A TEARDOWN...An aged home from the late 1800s is torn down last Wednesday at 700 Clark Street in Westfield to make way for the building of new homes on the site. Courtesy of Sharon Stockwell

SP Council Seeks Final Plans, Bond Ordinance for Field

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

SCOTCH PLAINS — The township council has authorized the recreation commission to fine-tune its plans for the proposed soccer field at the southside firehouse and will ask township finance officials to prepare a bond ordinance to fund the project.

At the council's conference meeting on Tuesday, Recreation Director Ray Poerio spoke about the previous evening's commission meeting with residents who live near the proposed field about their concerns.

The plan presented to the neighbors, he said, "is probably version number seven, which is not unusual in a recreation project" due to the months of ongoing dialogue between recreation officials and neighbors that has led to various compromises and reworking of the plans.

Plans call for a 70-by-110-foot artificial turf, lit field to be situated alongside Martine Avenue, with a new 50-space parking lot to be built east of the firehouse and accessible



UPGRADES COMING...Westfield receives a \$100,000 federal grant for upgrading police communications equipment. Pictured, left to right, are: WPD recruit Christopher Scurozo of Clark, Police Chief John Parizeau, Councilman Mark Ciarrocca, Rep. Mike Ferguson (R-7), Mayor Andy Skibitsky and WPD recruit Joseph Saunders of Westfield.

SP Rec.

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Residents also said a concession booth was unnecessary.

"Our objective is to maintain the quality of life, and those lights will be on until 10 p.m. Also, to house that equipment, you do not need a stand that is 30 by 50," Mr. Kyllish said.

"The concessions are a sticking point for you," Mr. Zazzali said. "These are all conceptual types of things that can be reevaluated. Is it the possibility of litter and varmints that go along with concessions?"

"It is all of it. That building is going to be on top of us," Mr. Heath said. "The playground is also just unnecessary. It is ridiculous."

"I really do understand your concerns, but don't you think the parents in the neighborhood would use a playground? The park is for everyone," said Lynn Barratucci, a member of the commission.

"It's practically going to be in my backyard," Mr. Heath said.

Resident Russ Francisco said the construction would disturb the environment and cause an underground river to flood his basement.

"I have four pumps going down there, and my worst nightmare is that they will remove the trees that are a buffer, and I will wind up flooded," Mr. Francisco said, pointing out the area on a map for commission members.

"This is a town project, and I am going to look into this," Mr. Zazzali said. "We are going to treat this as if we are living next door to you."

See related township council discussion in the article above.

POLICE BLOTTER

Scotch Plains

Friday, July 20, a resident of Maddaket Court reported being a victim of harassment. She told police she had received several phone calls over the last several weeks at all hours of the day and night.

Saturday, July 21, a resident of Sycamore Avenue reported being a victim of theft. He said someone removed a bicycle from his property that was left unlocked. The bike was valued at \$150.

Saturday, July 21, Malcolm Wade, 32, of Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding warrant after a vehicle stop. He was transported to the Union County jail.

Saturday, July 21, Drew Miller, 22, of Scotch Plains was arrested and charged with burglary. Police said he was seen entering Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School. Police apprehended him as he was exiting a window with items belonging to the school. He was taken to the Union County jail and is being held on \$20,000 bail.

Sunday, July 22, Carle D'Angelo, 25, of Scotch Plains was arrested on an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop. He was released after posting bail.

Sunday, July 22, Patricia Knechtel, 40, of Scotch Plains, was arrested and charged with driving while intoxicated after a motor vehicle accident. She was released on a summons.

Sunday, July 22, a resident of Hill Road said someone scratched the window of his vehicle, which was parked in front of his house.

Monday, July 23, a resident of Lake Avenue reported that he received a phone call from an ex-client, who made threatening statements to him.

Fanwood
Wednesday, July 18, a resident of the 100 block of North Avenue reported an attempted break-in. An active investigation is currently in progress, police said.

Wednesday, July 18, a resident of the 400 block of South Avenue reported the fraudulent use of his credit card to purchase an item delivered to California. Police are investigating the incident.

Thursday, July 19, Marcos W. Ferreira, 39, of Clarksburg was arrested after a motor vehicle stop on Martine and North Avenues for an outstanding Union Township warrant. He posted bail and was released.

Thursday, July 19, Constance D. Collins, 32, of Plainfield was arrested after a Terrill Road motor vehicle stop for an outstanding South Plainfield warrant. She posted bail and was released.

Westfield
Tuesday, July 17, Danny Robinson, 41, of Westfield was arrested on the 200 block of Grove Street and charged with two counts of burglary, two counts of theft and criminal mischief pursuant to an ongoing investigation. He was held in lieu of \$7,500 bail pending a July 20 court date.

Wednesday, July 18, Turrel Sutton, 22, of Plainfield was arrested and charged with possession of less than 50 grams of suspected marijuana following a South Avenue motor vehicle stop. He was released on his own recognizance with a summons pending an August 2 court date.

Friday, July 20, Rasheem Moore, 28, of Westfield was arrested on two contempt of court warrants from Westfield during a motor vehicle stop at South Avenue, East and Livingston Street. They included a criminal warrant and a traffic warrant with bail amounts of \$550 and \$250, respectively. Moore was committed to the Union County jail in lieu of bail.

Friday, July 20, three bicycles were reported stolen from a residential property on the 400 block of Harrison Avenue. They were described as a red specialized hybrid, a blue and white Schwinn mountain bike and a maroon and purple mountain bike.

Saturday, July 21, Adolfo Plaza, 22, of Berkeley Heights was arrested and charged with possession of less than 50 grams of suspected marijuana during a Mountain Avenue motor vehicle stop. He was released with a summons.

Saturday, July 21, an incident of burglary and criminal mischief was reported on the 400 block of Roanoke Road. Responding to an alarm call at a residence, police officers noticed an open front door. After establishing a perimeter and searching the residence, they noted the presence of smoke in the house. The Westfield Fire Department responded and located the fire's source — the alarm panel — and extinguished the small fire. The owner of the home told police that nothing appeared to

Mountainside

Monday, July 16, Anthony P. Mazzilli, 19, of Mountainside and Craig E. Campbell, 19, of Westfield were arrested and charged with criminal mischief and theft for previously reported crimes at two gas stations and at a muffler shop.

Monday, July 16, someone attempted to break in into an unoccupied Mountain Avenue store by throwing a stone through a window. Police were unable to determine if anything was taken.

Monday, July 16, a disposal company employee was bitten by a dog while collecting garbage from a residence on Mountain Avenue. The Westfield Health Department was notified of the incident.

Monday, July 16, a Highland Road resident said someone capped a drainage pipe on his property that routes runoff from the home's gutter to the rear yard. Police said the property owner said damage to the home was \$2,000.

Monday, July 16, police reported that 22 caliber bullets were found in the roadway at Summit Road and Route 22 West. Police said passing vehicles ran over the bullets. Police responded to the scene after a call of suspicious items in the roadway.

Tuesday, July 17, John A. Silva, 48, of Mountainside was arrested and charged with aggravated assault and possession of a weapon for unlawful purposes. Police said the arrest was the result of an investigation into a June 2 altercation that resulted in the victim sustaining facial injuries.

Tuesday, July 17, Gregory D. Lewis, 23, of Newark was arrested and charged with theft of movable property, receiving stolen property and driving while on the suspended list, police said. Police stopped Lewis on Route 22 Eastbound for driving a stolen vehicle following a report of a stolen 1996 Pontiac Bonneville from Second Street in Scotch Plains.

Tuesday, July 17, a resident reported that someone made a payment for a cell phone account with the victim's bank debit card.

Tuesday, July 17, someone broke into a motor vehicle, parked in a Long Meadow resident's garage. A GPS system and a set of golf clubs were reported missing, a value of \$1,250, as well as \$5 in loose change.

Tuesday, July 17, police received a call of a suspicious person on Mountain Avenue. Police responded and attempted to question the man, at which point he ran towards the driveway of the Mountainside Community Pool. When questioned, the man ran a second time towards Route 22, at which point police lost sight of him. Police described the man as black, 6 feet tall and in his 20s. He was wearing a white T-shirt, blue jean shorts and a baseball cap.

Wednesday, July 18, Tyrone M. Ritter, 39, of Maplewood was arrested and charged with driving on the suspended list following a motor vehicle stop.

Wednesday, July 18, a resident called police headquarters to report that someone called her home asking for money. The caller said the resident's son owed him money. The woman said her son no longer lives at the residence.

Wednesday, July 18, an Elston Drive resident reported receiving harassing calls from a male caller. The resident traced the calls to Virginia.

Thursday, July 19, David Appleby Jr. of Lafayette was arrested for an outstanding warrant of \$750 out of Hanover Township. He was initially stopped for a loud muffler on Apple Tree Lane.

Thursday, July 19, a Route 22 East business reported a large sofa in its rear parking lot.

Thursday, July 19, a 13-year-old juvenile was found intoxicated on the softball field at Deerfield School. The youth was transported to police headquarters and later transported by the rescue squad to Overlook Hospital in Summit. The incident was turned over to the juvenile bureau.

Friday, July 20, police said a gas line on Summit Road was broken by a sewer service operating a backhoe on a lawn on a residence. Police closed Spruce Road and contacted Elizabethtown Gas Co.

Friday, July 20, Monica Vieramosco, 33, of Kearny, Raquel Viera, 20, of Newark and Yarelis Ramos, 20, of Union, were arrested and charged with criminal mischief per an investigation of a motor-vehicle keying on Sheffield Street. Viera was charged with theft of a registration card. They were released pending court dates.

Friday, July 20, a patron of a Route 22 movie theater said someone broke the passenger's-side door lock on his car. The owner said damage to the vehicle was \$650.

Saturday, July 21, police said a home on Standish Avenue was entered and that it appeared that a bedroom had been entered. Police said a jewelry box was found on the floor, as was an empty watch display. The homeowners were not home at the time.

Sunday, July 22, police responded to a report of a dispute at a Route 22 East restaurant. Police said an employee reported that upon questioning a co-worker about a soup order, the co-worker used profanity and lunged across a kitchen counter at her.

Sunday, July 22, a patron at a Route 22 theater said while viewing a text message on her cell phone, a male patron in her row grabbed her hand and shut her phone. The victim said the patron said if she used the phone again, he would "tread on the phone." He was described as a middle-aged, slightly overweight Caucasian with glasses and a British accent. He drove a grey Volkswagen.

Sunday, July 22, Joshua L. Schmookler, 24, of Plainfield was arrested for an outstanding Mountainside warrant for \$1,000 and \$580 out of Elizabeth. Garwood police transported him to Mountainside.

Sunday, July 22, Blair McGuire, 32, of Newark, was arrested and charged for driving while suspended. Police stopped him for driving erratically at a high speed on Route 22 East near Walnut Avenue.

HS Parking

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air structures would be identical to the pavilion at Jerseyland Park. The pavilions, which will cost \$16,806, will be suited for parties at the mini-golf course at Scotch Hills and for shelter for participants in summer recreation programs at Farley Park, officials said.

The council also approved a lease agreement for use of the new lighted ballfield at the Union County Vocational-Technical School on Raritan Road. Mayor Marks said the baseball field is "ready to go."

The council awarded a contract not to exceed \$90,000 to Arco Roofing to make repairs to the roof at the public works facility on Plainfield Avenue.

Two-thirds of the building's roof, which Councilman Kevin Glover described as being in "dire condition," will be repaired; the other portion will be rebuilt. With the council currently meeting with architects in an effort to decide whether to refurbish the existing building or build a new facility, Mayor Marks said the roof repair "gives us a little more flexibility in dealing with the overall building renovation."

The council's next meeting will be on Tuesday, August 14.

'Mad Hatter' Bank Robber

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Woodbridge and Montclair, dye packs were put into the moneybags by bank tellers, according to police reports.

The robber was dubbed the Mad Hatter due to the fact that he wore a different cap or hat during each of the 18 robberies.

Mr. Quinn said Madison did make an initial appearance in court Monday morning.

"The next step is an arraignment, which is going to be Friday (July 27), and from there the next date will be set," he said.

According to *The Star-Ledger*, U.S. Magistrate Judge Mark Falk ordered Madison held without bail after Assistant U.S. Attorney Mark McCarren asked for the judge to do so because of his serious criminal record and violent past.

Madison has already served 18 years in prison for the bludgeoning death of

his former girlfriend in 1986. He had stuffed her body into a suitcase before dumping it in the Passaic River.

Special Agent in Charge Weysan Dun also made a statement Monday: "My message to robbers and violent criminals of all types is that the old adage is true: 'crime does not pay.' Sometimes it may take longer than we would like, but we will catch you and justice will prevail."

Mr. Romankow credited the "Mad Hatter" Taskforce and the FBI with Madison's capture. The taskforce comprised detectives from Union, Morris, Essex and Middlesex County Prosecutor's Offices, as well as municipal police departments in the four counties.

"This is a perfect example of effective cooperation among federal and local enforcement," Mr. Romankow said.

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Dr. Abeshaus received her M.D. from Dartmouth Medical School.

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