

Applicant Closes Case for 120-Foot Cranford Cell Tower Bordering WF

By CHRISTINA M. HINKE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

CRANFORD — In the sixth hearing for the cell tower application before the Cranford zoning board on Monday, the applicant's attorney, Gregory Meese, closed his case. At the next meeting on August 25, John Schmidt, the attorney representing the residents opposed to the application, will bring his expert witnesses to the stand.

The applicant, SMSA Limited Partnership, composed of Verizon, AT&T and T-Mobile, seeks a use, height and setback variance to place the 120-foot monopole and an equipment shelter at its base in a residential zone at

the Cranford Swimming Club located on County Park Drive and bordering Westfield. It was announced last month that Sprint dropped out.

Another variance was added to the application on Monday. During Mr. Schmidt's address to the applicant's planner, William Masters, Mr. Schmidt began reciting parts from Cranford's Master Plan. The plan specifies that in a residential zone, only one principal use is allowed per site.

Board vice chairman Jeffrey Pistol requested the board attorney add this as another variance to the application, since the tower would be a second principal use should it erect on

the swim club property.

At the last meeting, Mr. Masters said the shelter to house the telecommunication companies' equipment would stay the same size "in case of an additional carrier in the future." At the meeting this week he amended his testimony, stating that the size would reduce by 360 square feet to 2,400 square feet to account for the loss of Sprint.

Mr. Masters said this does not change the side-yard or front-yard setbacks because the unit would sit on the east side of the lot in an interior side of the property.

He said the site is suited for a telecommunications tower, citing proximity to major traffic corridors, such as Kenilworth Boulevard and Springfield Avenue, the size of the swim club property, which he said is 3.02 acres, the proximity of the club to Lenape Park, some 270 acres of open land that is Green Acres property that cannot be developed for residential purposes, and a willing landlord. He also said the landlord picked the spot on the property where the tower would sit.

Mr. Masters presented an aerial photograph of the proposed area to place the tower, and several posters with photos showing simulations of views with the tower in place.

The simulated photos depicted a red helium balloon erected at the approximate height where the tower is proposed. Then he took the same photograph and digitally added in a tower where the balloon was shown. His pictures were taken from areas on Nomahegan Court, Springfield Avenue, Lenape Park, the swim club, and Manatoga Circle in Westfield.

"It would have some negative impact, but I don't think it would be substantial," Mr. Masters responded to Mr. Schmidt's question of the impact of the view of the tower from a home.

Mr. Masters said "it's possible the view will change once the 14 trees are removed."

Mr. Masters also gave the board photos showing a simulation of a tree pole, a pole that is outfitted to appear like a tree. Mr. Meese said the applicant is willing to use a tree pole should the board decide to approve the application and make that a condition of approval.

"I believe this board can grant this variance without substantial detriment to the public good," Mr. Masters said.

"Other than the park and Union County College, I saw no other sites that were more particularly suited [to place the tower]," Mr. Masters responded to a question from the board.

Mr. Schmidt asked Mr. Masters if the cell tower is an essential service as described in the Master Plan and Mr. Masters said he "agrees it is not an essential service."

About 35 residents were in attendance, a drop from previous meetings.

GW BOE Approves Contract For Superintendent Quigley

By RAYNOR DENITZIO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

GARWOOD — The Garwood Board of Education voted on Tuesday to formally approve the contract of Teresa Quigley as the borough's new superintendent of schools.

Ms. Quigley was named as the new superintendent in April, pending approval of her contract by Union County Executive Superintendent Carmen Centuolo. The board received notice of Ms. Centuolo's approval in a letter last week. Ms. Quigley had served as acting superintendent since May of 2007 after former superintendent Wilfred Murphy became ill.

Resident John Conlin said he was "most happy" with the hiring of Ms. Quigley, saying she has acted in "a very personable, comfortable, kind manner" during her dealings with him.

"I'm happy Dr. Quigley is going to stay with us and I hope she is going to stay with us until that date in 2011," Mr. Conlin said.

Ms. Quigley will earn \$126,000 in the 2008-2009 school year under the new contract, which runs through 2011. Full text of the contract, along with the contracts for all superintendents in Union County, is available on *The Westfield Leader's* website at www.goleader.com.

In other personnel matters, John Sullivan, board member and chairman of the board's negotiations com-



LET FREEDOM RING... Westfield Town Crier Tom Sherry shared local news for the last time with residents during the Westfield Community Band concert on July 3 in Mindowaskin Park. Mr. Sherry was presented with a certificate of appreciation for his service to Westfield. He is moving out of the area and passing the bell to a new Town Crier.

Mountainside Residents React To Arrest of Church Youth Director

By DEBBIE HOFFMAN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

MOUNTAINSIDE — Mountainside parents reacted this week to the arrest of Jason Hagg, the 35-year-old youth director at Mountainside Gospel Chapel.

Hagg was arrested and charged of having a relationship with a 16-year-old youth group member.

"I hope the girl is okay," one parent said. "I don't like hearing things like this, especially in my own community." This parent, and others, requested that their names be withheld from the story.

Hagg, a deliveryman with United Rental in Piscataway, was arrested July 7 at his job, by Mountainside Police Detectives Andrew Huber, Jeffrey Stinner and Michael Jackson, Captain Richard Osieja said. The Piscataway resident was released after making \$100,000 bail.

Hagg is the son of the Chapel's Minister, Gregg Hagg. He is married and is the father of young children.

Capt. Osieja said the charges are proof that "the system works" when it comes to having police officers at the schools. In this case "a counselor at the school (Governor Livingston High School) told Officer Huber" about Hagg's relationship with the girl after hearing about it from a student. This initiated the investigation.

"The student who initially reported the incident should be treated as a hero," another Mountainside parent said. "He or she has potentially kept other kids out of harm's way."

According to Capt. Osieja, Hagg is accused of having sex with the teen-

age girl several times this past spring at both his Piscataway residence and at the Spruce Street chapel.

A spokesman for the Union County Prosecutor's Office said the incident is still under investigation by his office and explained that Mr. Hagg was charged with second-degree assault because he was in a position of authority over the girl as the leader of the youth group.

"The investigation continues, but it's especially egregious when someone in a position of authority takes advantage of that role, particularly when it happens within a church,"

Union County Prosecutor Theodore Romankow said in a statement.

Hagg was ordered by state Superior Court Judge John Triarsi to have no contact with the girl or her family. A preliminary hearing is set for Wednesday, July 23, in Elizabeth.

Officials at Mountainside Gospel Chapel could not be reached for comment. Hagg's attorney, Thomas Pavics of Flemington, did not return messages left for him but he did tell the *Star-Ledger* that his client is innocent and that he's "looking forward to the opportunity to be able to prove that and clear his name."

Westfield BOA Denies Savannah Project Trailers

By SARA MAGNOLA
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — The Westfield Zoning Board of Adjustment on Monday declared The Savannah, an age-restricted facility under construction on Prospect Street, in violation of a board resolution and denied them an extension request for housing trailers and signage at the site.

The original variance was granted in September 2006 to facilitate James Ward's development of the 35-unit luxury condominium complex up the road at 111 Prospect Street. It allowed two trailers for sales and construction, at 201 and 215 Prospect Street for one year to accommodate construction personnel, but stipulated that 111 Prospect would not be granted a Certificate of Occupancy until the trailers were removed. In January 2008, the board passed a resolution extending the original variance until June 14, 2008.

After having called on Josephine Ward-Gallagher and Mr. Ward for testimony twice, the second time after 8 p.m., the board declared them in violation and approved a motion to deny the extension request.

In other business, Bryant Pantano of 18 Plymouth Road and his architect, Barbara Vincentsen of Westfield-

based AIA Vincentsen Associates, LLP, came before the board seeking permission to construct a one-story rear addition, a two-story side addition, an enclosed front entrance porch, a rear dormer and a new garage. Mr. Pantano, who has lived at the residence with his wife since 1990, explained that he hopes to make additions to the home to accommodate his five children, as well as his wife's live-in godmother.

Ms. Vincentsen presented the board with an in-depth explanation of the "multiple, strategically placed additions," which would include detaching the garage and moving it to the back of the house, converting the current garage into a living area, enlarging the kitchen and adding a small bedroom and dual-use bathroom on the first floor, among other things.

The proposed renovation plans would require a 5.5-foot side yard setback variance, as well as a 0.4 percent variance for buildings and above-ground structures and a 0.3 percent floor area ratio variance.

Neighbors Diane and Phillip Richardson of 800 Willow Grove Road were present to "strongly oppose" Mr. Pantano's request, citing that four trees would need to be taken

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MIND THE GAP... Norman Albert, a Union County representative, right, addresses the SMSA Limited Partnership planner, William Masters, left, during the cell tower application hearing at the Cranford zoning board meeting on Monday. An aerial photograph of the area where the cell tower would be placed is shown at the far right. John Schmidt, the opposition's attorney, sits in the foreground.

Garwood Residents Voice Ideas for Master Plan

By RAYNOR DENITZIO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

GARWOOD — The Garwood Planning Board held a special informal meeting on July 9, with the hope of receiving residents' input as the borough reworks its master plan.

The borough is in the process of updating the master plan, which according to a document provided at Wednesday's meeting, "has the purpose of guiding the use of land, including growth and development within the municipality." By law, the master plan must be reviewed every six years.

"The master plan is the guiding document for how you want a municipality to grow ... we really want to get your input tonight," said William Nierstedt, a member of the planning board.

After a short introduction by land use consultant Jason Kasler, who is preparing the master plan, residents were able to share their ideas with the board.

One of the major questions raised at the meeting was what type of development residents would like to see along North and South Avenues. Among the ideas suggested were flat-style apartments, which planner Victor Vinegra said would be attractive for senior citizens.

"I think there's an immediate need, not only in Garwood but throughout Union County, for flats," Mr. Vinegra said.

Residents expressed a desire for more community and recreation facilities in the borough. Catherine Madara proposed the possibility of a

swimming pool or other sport complexes, while resident Brenda Caffrey said there is a need for development aimed at children.

"I'd like to see something directed towards kids," Ms. Caffrey said. "We have kids with nothing to do."

Citizens also articulated concern over the potential for over development in the borough. Jeff Conlin said there is not a lot of space between his house and his neighbors' house and asked the board to look for ways to prevent "having houses on top of houses."

Resident John Conlin expressed similar concerns, saying the master plan should seek to avoid "high density" development.

"I think they [long time residents] should be protected from high intensity development by builders," John Conlin said.

Other suggestions raised by residents were ways to maintain architectural motifs and protection of trees and other environmental features in the borough. Garwood Senior Citizens Club President Pat DiFabio also asked the board to consider the borough's senior citizens in the master plan.

The board asked residents to think about whether they wanted to preserve open space and historic buildings in Garwood. Mr. Kasler said board members and residents should keep the future in mind when thinking about the master plan.

"The master plan is not the plan for next year," Mr. Kasler said. "We're supposed to be looking at five, 10, 15

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EZ-LIVING... Residents enjoy the jazz on Central Avenue and Quimby Street in downtown Westfield on Tuesday night. The popular program runs each Tuesday evening throughout the summer.



DENIED... The Westfield Board of Adjustment on Monday denied an extension of the variance for the continued placement of sales and construction trailers on Prospect Street for the Savannah complex. The variance expired July 14.

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