

## WF Planning Board Approves Little Gatehouse Subdivision

By CHRISTINA M. HINKE  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — The Westfield Planning Board approved a subdivision, with variances, at 200 Canterbury Lane, better known as the "Little Gatehouse" property, during Monday night's meeting. The application was approved on the condition property owner Julie Marsella does not demolish the gatehouse within five years or for the remainder of her term occupying the house, whichever is greater.

Should she move prior to the five years, the board said the condition would remain on the deed and the

new owner would have to comply for the full five years. After the five years are up, the new owner could do as he or she wished.

Robert Newell was the only one among seven board members to vote against the application.

Ms. Marsella plans to build a two-story, English country manor-style home, with a 4,092-square-foot floor area, on the new subdivided lot and have an addition built on the rear of the gatehouse. Her lawyer, Robert Krause, said she plans to add a bedroom and bathroom.

The board asked her to agree to the condition to have her plans for the

gatehouse reviewed by the town's historic preservation commission for comment. After motions of protest by Ms. Marsella, she agreed to the request.

The four-hour meeting began with public comments. Eleven Westfield residents came before the board opposing the application, for reasons such as safety and historic preservation.

Wychwood resident John Boyle said Judy Thornton, town-planning consultant, initially agreed that the frontage was on East Broad Street, but changed her mind after Elizabeth McKenzie, a planner hired by the applicant, filed her report. Ms. Thornton's basis was that the "frontage is di minimus," Mr. Boyle said in a letter dated December 15, 2006.

After the meeting, board chairman Vincent Wilt told *The Westfield Leader* that Ms. Thornton never said the frontage was on East Broad Street. "She didn't change her mind. That was a misinterpretation. She may have changed from de minimis to a point," he said.

At the December 3, 2007 planning board meeting, Ms. McKenzie said 200 Canterbury Lane had a 300-foot frontage on Wychwood Road. She said "just a corner" of the land touches East Broad Street, whereas Dennis Hudacsko, a planner hired by the proposal's opponents, testified that the property's frontage was 17.98 square feet along East Broad.

Resident Richard Watkins said he found a letter from Ms. Thornton dated August 2007, in which she referred to a December 2006 letter from board attorney Russell Finstein to the applicant, and in it was a chart for variances for the application for frontage on East Broad Street.

"When I read these documents, the attorney wrote to the applicant that this application is incomplete, it requires these variances. Apparently, she [Thornton] reversed her decision. She changed her opinion," Mr. Watkins said. Reading parts of the town's ordinance, he said, "You are not upholding your own ordinance. You must deny this because the application does not consider the frontage on East Broad Street."

Later, board member Francis Smith said, "I'm totally persuaded that there is no sideline on East Broad Street."

Resident Betty List said, "This placement [of the new home] will destroy the visual symmetry of the two complimentary gatehouses. The little gatehouse would be lost behind new construction."

Prior to the vote, Mr. Newell, also a member of the historical preservation committee, said, "I have some confusions. The issue I'm struggling with is the historic character of this property."

"The property is not designated by state, federal or local historical commission, but is listed in the Westfield master plan as eligible for historical designation, as quite a few properties are," said Mr. Newell. "So, I disagree that the gatehouse is not historically significant, even though it's not designated."

Board member Lori Duffy said it would be under the tree commission jurisdiction to approve any tree removal and also the decision of new trees planted to replace those lost.

"My biggest fear is the gatehouse is going to be torn down," said Ms. Duffy, a fear that resonated with most board members.

Mr. Wilt asked the applicant, "Why not make a condition to not tear the house down?"

Ms. Marsella mouthed "Bob, No," to her attorney, after Mr. Wilt's suggestion of bringing her addition plans to the historic preservation committee.

When a board official asked Mr. Krause that the applicant consider her plans to be subject to the advice from the historic preservation committee, Ms. Marsella said, "advice only."

"I find this objectionable. You see the pain of the people. Don't you have any consideration for them? They have come to every one of these meetings," Mr. Wilt said, which drew applause from the residents. "If it goes through a vote now you would not be happy with the outcome."

"She's afraid if it is binding...it [the gatehouse addition] would be too hard to accomplish," said Frank Marsella, the applicant's brother.

Residents Garland Booth, Brain Molloy, Brian Fitzpatrick, Richard Lewis, Mercedes Fol-Okamoto,



Christina Hinke for The Westfield Leader  
GATEHOUSE GATHERING...Resident John Boyle shows that Wychwood's 'little gatehouse' has lot frontage on East Broad Street, at Monday night's Westfield Planning Board meeting, a point the board did not concur with.

## Hatfield Beats Marks for County GOP Nomination

By PAUL J. PEYTON  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — Former Summit Councilwoman Kelly Hatfield edged Scotch Plains Mayor Marty Marks at last Saturday's Union County Republican Convention to win the organization line for Congress in the June Primary. State Senator Joe Pennacchio (LD-26, Morris Plains) defeated Anne Estabrook, also on the second ballot, to win the line for U.S. Senate. Ms. Estabrook withdrew from the race, at press deadline, citing health reasons.

Ms. Hatfield defeated Mr. Marks with 60 percent of the vote, 196-134, on the second ballot after none of the eight candidates for the open Seventh District garnered 50 percent of the vote total plus one tally to win on the first ballot. A total of 410 members of the Union County GOP Committee participated.

Ms. Hatfield won the first round, 156-113, over Mr. Marks. Discussing her victory, she told reporters, "I think [voters] understand my message," noting she has been a "public servant for at least 15 years" in Union County. Summit had 60 delegates to Scotch Plains' 45. Westfield had 57 committee member votes; Cranford, 43; Fanwood, 11; Mountaintop, 21; and Garwood, eight.

Looking ahead, Ms. Hatfield said Middlesex County does not have a local candidate. "So, they (delegates) will be looking for candidates [who] can bring the top vote in the county and that have the potential to win in June."

She said six candidates reside in Somerset County. "I think everyone's

got to go for it (the Somerset nomination)."

State Senator Leonard Lance (LD-23, Flemington), who won the Hunterdon County convention with 68 out of 82 possible votes, finished third in Union County with 65 votes. "I am very pleased with my showing here today," he told *The Westfield Leader* afterwards.

He told convention delegates that Congress needs a "real leader with real experience."

Kate Whitman, the daughter of former Governor Christine Whitman, finished fourth with 16 votes, followed by Tom Roughneen, former assistant prosecutor and Iraq War veteran, 12; Victor Sordillo, former Watchung mayor, four; and Chris Venis, former Congressional staffer, one. A.D. Ahr, a professor of business at Seton Hall University, did not receive any votes.

Mr. Marks, who ran for State Senate in 2003, told delegates prior to the vote that the government taxes and spends too much. He also called the treatment of veterans "a national disgrace." He called illegal immigration "a blight on our economy."

In the three-person race for the GOP nomination for U.S. Senate, Mr. Pennacchio out-tallied, 191-151, Ms. Estabrook, a businesswoman and former head of the state's Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Pennacchio won the first ballot, 178-170, with Ramapo College Professor Murray Sabrin receiving 17 tallies.

In his comments to delegates, Mr. Pennacchio said, "I don't buy into the pessimism that New Jersey is a blue

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Michael Pollack for The Westfield Leader and The Times  
KEAN SUPPORTERS...The Westfield Republican delegates clap for Senate Minority Leader Tom Kean, Jr. (LD-21, Westfield), who spoke at the Union County Republican convention on Saturday morning at Westfield High School. Seated, at center, are: Mayor Andy Skibitsky; his wife, Debbie, at left; and Republican United States Senate candidate, Anne Estabrook, at right. Ms. Estabrook resigned from the race, at press deadline, citing health reasons.

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Benjamin B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader  
HATS OFF FOR READING...Westfield Tamaques Elementary School children celebrate Reading Across America on Monday as Mayor Andrew Skibitsky is the guest reader of Dr. Seuss.

## WF BOE Receives 40 Percent of Requested Debt Service Aid

By CHRISTINA M. HINKE  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — The business administrator of the Westfield Board of Education (BOE), Robert Berman, announced at Tuesday night's meeting that the Westfield school district would receive \$204,000 in debt service aid, 40 percent less than it requested.

Mr. Berman said he has talked to county officials since last week's meeting to further clarify the BOE's submitted budget.

He said he hopes to hear a decision on the budget by the end of this week or early next week.

"It's taking a little more time than usual," he said.

Mr. Berman also announced about \$150,000 in additional reductions, from last week's meeting, to the proposed budget, bringing the reductions to \$650,000 in three weeks. Last week, the board announced about \$500,000 in proposed budget cuts from the areas of transportation, technology, personnel and supplies.

The board submitted a proposed \$87-million budget, including debt

service, to the county superintendent. Last year's budget was \$82.7 million.

At this point, the board of education's budget will represent an increase of 4.85-percent in taxes, 0.85 percent over the allowed state's 4-percent cap. Ginny Leiz, board president, said the board could get approval for the 4.8-percent tax rate increase should the state approve the waivers the Westfield BOE requested.

"If we don't, we'll be back at the cutting tables, looking at other dollars," said Ms. Leiz.

"If further cuts are needed, we have no choice but to cut programs that are near and dear to parents," said Richard Solomon, board member.

Mr. Berman also announced the athletic and fine arts 2008-2009 proposed budget.

The proposed athletic budget is \$1,288,292 - 3.9 percent higher than last year. This includes salaries and stipends totaling \$946,486, a 5.2-percent increase (\$48,500) from last year. Physical-education teacher salaries are included in the general education budget.

The proposed fine-arts budget is

\$3,694,781 - 2.1 percent higher than last year. This budget includes salaries and stipends of \$3,508,929, 2.2 percent higher than last year.

Following the budget talks, Nina Attanasio, president of the Ice Hockey Association of the Westfield High School, along with Evan Einstein, Jimmy Bender and Craig Esposito, Blue Devils ice hockey team captains, asked the board of education to consider financially helping the team as their costs have increased 220 percent since its inception as a pilot program in 1994.

Ms. Attanasio said the Ice Hockey Association has a current budget of \$64,279, which includes \$18,000 for two coaches' salaries. Other costs include transportation, league fees and referees.

She said parents pay \$1,200 each year for players to participate.

"We are progressing from a test program to a varsity program," Evan said.

Twenty-one members of the team, including the three captains, attended the meeting.

"It's clear, after 14 years, that the Westfield hockey team is here to stay," Craig said.

"We'd like to do whatever we can to help you," Ms. Leiz said.

"I'm very proud of these men," Athletic Director Ed Tranchina said.

Board member Alice Hunnicutt said Westfield High School will offer driver's education theory on an experimental basis next year. Sixty sophomores can sign up for the fall semester, and 60 juniors can take the spring semester course. The class is in place of one physical education period. Should more than 60 students in each grade sign up, a waiting list will go into effect. The information will be posted on the school website, westfieldnj12.org.

The next public meeting is Tuesday, March 11, at 8 p.m., at 302 Elm Street.

### No Recalled Beef In WF Public Schools

WESTFIELD — Regarding an action by the United States Department of Agriculture's product hold on ground beef produced by Hallmark/Westland, which has affected some school districts in New Jersey, Westfield Public Schools Superintendent Margaret Dolan said, "I would like to assure the families in the Westfield Public Schools that the ground beef product from Hallmark/Westland is not in use in our school district. The school district's food-service programs are in full compliance with government safety and sanitation codes and regulations, as well as all local health codes."

"Chartwells, our food-services management company, has confirmed their practice of sophisticated food safety, sanitation and a hazard analysis critical control point program, with a quality assurance team that will continue to monitor the situation for any further instructions," said Ms. Dolan.

"Our top priority continues to be the health and safety of our students, faculty and staff," she added.

### Spring Ahead!

Daylight Saving Time '08  
Sunday, March 9, 2 a.m.



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