

Scotch Plains Council

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

doesn't care how much taxpayers' money was spent," said the mayor, who opposed the board's move. Deputy Mayor Dominick Bratti noted that the council had expressed its concern with Mrs. Schiller's hiring, given that her husband sits on the SPMC board and is the organization's treasurer. Calling the board's action "ridiculous" and "reprehensible," Mr. Bratti suggested that a resolution be drafted for the council's approval that would put a stop to the SPMC's hiring decisions until the governing body can look further into it and also make changes to the ordinance.

Councilman Kevin Glover noted that the council two years ago had vowed to the local business community that the council would make sure the new entity spent money wisely and also provide oversight. "I applaud you, mayor," Mr. Glover told Mrs. Malool, "for not forgetting this vow."

Mr. Bratti again returned to the idea of a resolution, saying he didn't "want another dime spent" by the SPMC until the council's concerns were fully addressed. "Dissolve it if that's what's necessary," he said at one point, although his colleagues were not supportive of that idea.

Councilman Jeffrey Strauss—who had attended last week's SPMC board meeting in Mayor Malool's stead and at Tuesday's meeting had initially provided a very positive report about the board, its members and their enthusiasm before his colleagues began their criticisms—urged the council to "find out the facts before we act." He said the Tuesday, February 16, meeting with the SPMC board should be conducted with the aim of trying to improve the organization. "It doesn't mean throwing out the baby with the bath water," he said.

Mr. Glover reminded the council that it had been in agreement during the SPMC's hiring effort, when Mrs. Schiller's name was being proposed, that it did not agree with the move. "They need to come here and tell us why they wanted to do it," he said. Later, he headed that the council's "opinions [on the hirings] fell on deaf ears."

But the mayor said, "There is nothing they can say to me to convince me that it was not irresponsible to spend 70 to 75 percent" of their budget on salaries and "that there was not a conflict" in Mrs. Schiller's hiring.

Councilwoman Mary DePaola said the hiring smacked of "favoritism,"

which she said "doesn't look good" for the SPMC or the township. She asked that the matter be put on the "front burner," calling it an "immediate problem that needs to be resolved."

Near the end of the discussion, Mayor Malool said she was concerned that the SPMC's 2009 budget adoption had not been done legally due to lack of public notice or a public hearing. She said the council will consult with the legal department to see if the governing body has the means to withhold funds from the SPMC or prevent it from expending funds for a period of time. In the meantime, the mayor said her goal is to "get the SPMC back on track." Saying she is "still optimistic," she said the ordinance needed to be amended "to make [the improvement district] the most effective it can be."

SP SID

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

said FirsTEAMmanagement will be paid \$1,500 per month for its efforts.

"What has happened here is that the board decided to spend 70 to 75 percent of its annual budget on salaries and administration," Mayor Malool told *The Times*. She said she favored utilizing FirsTEAMmanagement only for about \$22,000 per year, equivalent to about a third of the budget.

"This is taxpayers' money, and the board doesn't see that," she added. While praising Mrs. Schiller for doing "a great job" with last year's Memorial Day music festival, the mayor said the dual hiring was "irresponsible to do," adding that Mrs. Schiller also has a conflict of interest since her husband is an SPMC board member.

The mayor also noted the opposition of Mr. Verdic, who heads Westfield's SID, which Mrs. Malool said is "arguably the most successful one in the state." She said Mr. Verdic's opposition to the twin hiring "speaks volumes because he knows how a successful SID operates."

Mrs. Schiller told *The Times* she is opening an office next week at the CEO Executive Suites at 1812 Front Street for "business owners to come to with questions and suggestions." She will also coordinate programs and interact with SPMC members. Office hours will be Mondays and Wednesdays from 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

POLICE BLOTTER

Westfield

Monday, January 25, Theodore Acosta, 22, of South Amboy was arrested on an outstanding Sayreville traffic warrant in the amount of \$170 pursuant to a motor vehicle stop at the intersection of Kimball and Mountain Avenues. He was transported to Westfield police headquarters, processed and released after posting bail.

Patrick A. Schiazza, 22, of Fanwood, a passenger in the vehicle, was arrested on multiple outstanding traffic warrants. The warrants included two from Westfield, in the amount of \$250 each, and one from Scotch Plains, in the amount of \$1,000. Schiazza was transported to Westfield police headquarters, processed and released after posting \$1,500 bail.

Monday, January 25, Lawrence T. Thomas, Jr., 52, of Cranford was arrested on an outstanding Keyport Boro traffic warrant in the amount of \$156 pursuant to a motor vehicle stop at the intersection of West South and Summit Avenues. He posted bail and was released.

Wednesday, January 27, John Nunez, 47, of Plainfield was arrested at Plainfield police headquarters on an outstanding Westfield criminal warrant in the amount of \$313. He was unable to post bail.

Thursday, January 28, a resident of the 500 block of Cumberland Street reported being the victim of a fraudulently issued check in her name. The victim received the check from a medical company in Michigan. When she inquired as to why she received it, the company told her it was a fraudulent check.

Thursday, January 28, a merchant on the 200 block of East Broad Street reported being the victim of fraud after an individual attempted to pass a fraudulent doctor's prescription for Oxycodone.

Thursday, January 28, Damon Carter, 34, of Roselle was arrested on four outstanding warrants as the result of a motor vehicle stop at Central Avenue and Sussex Street. They included a no-bail Union County Sheriff's Office warrant, plus warrants from Newark, in the amount of \$250, and Cranford, in the amount of \$1,000. He was transported to the Union County jail.

Thursday, January 28, Frederick Smith, 35, of Jersey City was arrested on the 100 block of West North Avenue on an outstanding Newark criminal warrant in the amount of \$250. He was released after posting bail.

Friday, January 29, Michael Ciso, 42, of South Amboy was arrested during a motor vehicle stop at East South and Central Avenues on a Sayreville warrant. He was held in lieu of \$215 bail.

Friday, January 29, Sheila Troutman, 21, of Dunellen and Nyeasha Coleman, 20, of Plainfield were arrested on outstanding warrants on the 600 block of West South Avenue. Troutman posted \$125 bail on a Newark warrant. Coleman posted \$440 bail on two warrants from Fanwood and \$149 bail on a warrant from Berkeley Heights.

Friday, January 29, Robert McCrea, 18, of Westfield was arrested on an outstanding Roselle warrant pursuant to a motor vehicle stop in the area of the 100 block of Elm Street. He posted \$100 bail and was released.

Saturday, January 30, Damien Rodriguez, 34, of Union was arrested at Westfield police headquarters on an active Cranbury warrant in the amount of \$279. He was released after posting bail.

Saturday, January 30, Angela Alston-Boccia, 45, of Montclair was arrested in the area of Central and Park Avenues and charged with driving while intoxicated (DWI). She was processed and released.

Saturday, January 30, Kenneth Avery, 53, of South Plainfield was arrested in the area of Central Avenue and Clifton Street and charged with DWI. He was processed and released.

Sunday, January 31, Amon Wilkerson, 35, of Westfield was arrested on an outstanding Summit warrant pursuant to a motor vehicle stop at Ripley Place and Cacciola Place. Wilkerson was transported to Westfield police headquarters, processed and released after posting \$114 bail.

Sunday, January 31, a burglary was reported at a Michael Drive residence, which the homeowner said occurred between 7:15 and 8:15 p.m. that evening. According to police, someone forcibly entered the home and removed a pocketbook valued at \$300, plus \$180 in cash, before exiting the premises.

Sunday, January 31, a burglary was reported at a Woodbrook Circle residence in which two laptop computers and currency were taken. The total value of the theft was \$5,199.

Monday, February 1, Theodore Chletsos, 32, of Edison was arrested and charged with DWI following a motor vehicle stop at Central Avenue and Starlight Court. He was released to a responsible individual.

Scotch Plains

Monday, January 25, Szymon Berwick, 24, of Irvington was arrested following a motor vehicle stop for an outstanding warrant. He was processed and released.

Tuesday, January 26, David Mason, 45, of Plainfield was arrested following a motor vehicle stop for an outstanding warrant. He was processed and released.

Tuesday, January 26, a resident of Prospect Street reported that someone cashed a fraudulent check from his business account in the amount of \$1,976. According to police, the victim does not recognize the name on the check.

Tuesday, January 26, a student at the Union County Vocational Technical Schools reported that someone removed his iPod valued at \$225 from his work area.

Friday, January 29, a manager at a Route 22 restaurant reported an act of criminal mischief after someone carved letters in a bathroom mirror causing approximately \$100 worth of damage.

Saturday, January 30, a resident of Tanglewood Lane reported that someone entered his vehicle while it was parked on Maple Hill Road. According to police, once the suspect was in the vehicle they damaged the rear view mirror but nothing was taken.

Saturday, January 30, Edwin Estevez, 26, of Princeton was arrested following a motor vehicle stop for an outstanding warrant. He was processed and released.

Saturday, January 30, a resident of Springfield reported that she parked her vehicle in a Route 22 restaurant parking lot and while she was eating, someone smashed her rear window and removed a computer and iPod valued at approximately \$1,200.

Saturday, January 30, the manager of a

Route 22 store reported that two suspects removed approximately \$360 worth of games and fled the store.

Saturday, January 30, a resident of Aberdeen Road reported that she received a call from an unknown suspect that her grandson was in trouble in Canada and to send money. According to police, the victim called her grandson and realized it was a hoax and notified the police.

Mountainside

Wednesday, January 27, Adrian Solis, 25, of Bound Brook was arrested following a motor vehicle stop for driving without a license.

Wednesday, January 27, Chevonne Miller, 27, of Union was arrested following a motor vehicle stop for driving with a suspended license. She was processed and released at the scene with a court date of February 10, 2010.

Wednesday, January 27, Maritza Perdoma, 49, of Newark was arrested following a motor vehicle stop for driving without a license. According to police, she was also charged with driving with a suspended license and an outstanding warrant out of Newark in the amount of \$400.

Thursday, January 28, a resident of Derby Lane reported that she received several phone calls from a male with a heavy Nigerian accent informing her that she had won a large sum of money in a sweepstakes, but in order to claim the money she needed to send him a modest sum of money. According to police, the victim obtained the number the suspect was calling from and when authorities called the man he stated he worked in the claims department of a sweepstakes company. When the officer identified himself as a police officer, the suspect abruptly hung up the phone, authorities reported.

Thursday, January 29, Richard C. Pfarr, 58, of Union was arrested for an outstanding Union warrant in the amount of \$500 after a motor vehicle stop for an expired inspection sticker.

Thursday, January 29, Jeremiah A. Carter, 27, of Newark was picked up at the Matawan Police Department and charged with an outstanding warrant in the amount of \$409.

Thursday, January 29, an officer responded to a Route 22 business on the report of a possible assault. According to police, the victim stated that his older brother pushed him down. The suspect told police that the victim was not to be on the premises and that he was cursing at the employees who work in the building. The suspect told police he escorted the victim off the premises but did not strike or push him, authorities reported.

Thursday, January 29, Richard C. Pfarr, 58, of Union was arrested for an outstanding Union warrant in the amount of \$500 after a motor vehicle stop for an expired inspection sticker.

Sunday, January 31, Fredy Ali Cruz Lima, 29, of Bound Brook was arrested and charged with driving under the influence (DUI) after being involved in a one-car motor vehicle accident on Route 22. According to police, an officer noticed debris in the roadway and tire marks in the grass next to the curb in the roadway. Upon following the trail of debris, mud and grass, the officer found Lima's vehicle disabled in the left shoulder, police said. When the officer approached the vehicle he observed that it was leaking a large amount of transmission fluid, the left rear and left front tires were flat and the bumper and lower portion of the vehicle were damaged, authorities reported. According to police, Lima told the officer that he did not have an accident but had pulled over because he thought he had a flat tire. The officer smelled the odor of alcohol and performed several field sobriety tests, which Lima failed. He was transported to headquarters where he was processed and released to a responsible adult.

Sunday, January 31, a resident of Globe Avenue reported that someone broke into his Snap-on-Tool truck by breaking a window and removed a large amount of tools valued at approximately \$50,000. According to police, the suspect unsuccessfully attempted to steal the truck along with the tools causing damage to the steering column. The incident is under investigation.

Sunday, January 31, Klaus Kronsteiner, 45, of Scotch Plains was arrested and charged with DWI following a motor vehicle accident on Route 22 East. According to police, Kronsteiner told the officer he was coming from Jersey City and was heading home when he struck the rear of a vehicle driving in front of him. The officer told Kronsteiner he was heading in the opposite direction from his home and when he asked him how much he had to drink Kronsteiner responded "too much." The suspect was given several field sobriety tests, which he failed, authorities reported. He was transported to headquarters where he was processed and released to a responsible adult.

Fanwood

Wednesday, January 27, Jameen Murphy, 26, of Asbury Park was arrested following a motor vehicle stop on South Avenue for an outstanding warrant out of Asbury Park. He was transported, processed and released after posting bail.

Wednesday, January 27, a resident in the 30 block of Stewart Place reported that someone damaged the locking mechanism of her back door while trying to gain entrance to the residence. According to police, entrance was not gained and the incident is under investigation.

Friday, January 29, Gary Garvin, 41, of Jersey City was arrested following a motor vehicle stop in the 200 block of South Avenue for an outstanding Jersey City warrant. Sean Oliver, 44, of Jersey City, a passenger in the vehicle, was also arrested for an outstanding warrant out of West Orange. Both men were processed and released after posting bail.

Friday, January 29, a convenience store in the 500 block of South Avenue reported an incident of shoplifting after a male juvenile put a bag of potato chips valued at \$4 in his backpack and left the store without paying. According to police, a search of the area did not yield the suspect and the incident is under investigation.

Monday, February 1, Michael Delmonte, 49, of Plainfield was arrested after a field investigation in the 100 block of South Avenue for outstanding warrants out of Fanwood, Piscataway and East Brunswick. He was processed and turned over to the Union County jail for failure to post bail.



Thomas Fortunato for *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*
JOINING THE BENCH...The newest member of the state Superior Court in Elizabeth, John Walsh of Westfield, addresses his fellow judges, elected officials, family, friends and colleagues following his swearing-in ceremony last Friday at the Union County Courthouse in Elizabeth.

Judge Thomas Walsh Joins State Superior Court in Elizabeth

By THOMAS FORTUNATO and PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*

COUNTY — Westfield resident Thomas Walsh was sworn in Friday afternoon as the newest judge of the state Superior Court in Elizabeth. Mr. Walsh was sworn in by Union County Assignment Judge Karen Cassidy in her chambers on the second floor of the county courthouse. He joins James Hely and Robert Kirsch as recent Westfield additions to the county bench.

Aside from Mr. Walsh's family, friends, and partners of his now-former law firm Triarsi, Betancourt and Wukovits in Cranford, there was a large turnout of various lawyers, elected officials and judges from across the region.

"I'm thrilled to be back in public service to try and help people now by equitably applying the law," Judge Walsh told *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*.

Judge Walsh has more than 20 years of legal experience. He started his career as an assistant prosecutor in Union County before moving on to private practice.

The state Senate confirmed Mr. Walsh's nomination to the bench on January 11. His appointment fills the vacancy created by the retirement of Judge Edwin Alley. Judges in the state courts are mandated to retire when they reach the age of 70.

At Friday's ceremony, Assemblyman Jon Bramnick (LD-21, Westfield) said Judge Walsh would bring a "compassion and warmth that is so desperately needed" on the Union County bench.

Judge Walsh's former law partner, Jo-

seph Triarsi, a relative of former Union County Superior Court Judge John Triarsi, further emphasized Judge Walsh's strength of character and devotion to the hectic job of being a private attorney.

"He knows what it's like to be in Union at nine [a.m.], Essex at eleven [a.m.] and Camden at two [p.m.]," Mr. Triarsi said. Former Union County manager and ex-New Jersey Turnpike Authority executive director, Michael Lapolla of Westfield, worked with Judge Walsh 15 years ago in the county prosecutor's office.

"He is a lawyer's lawyer and a gentleman," Mr. Lapolla said.

A longtime family friend, Mr. Lapolla noted that back when Judge Walsh was an assistant prosecutor in Union County, he tried the first bias crime case in the state. The case involved three black high school girls who were repeatedly tormented and called racial slurs by a white man who would drive by their school every afternoon. Upon the man's conviction, the girls and their families were not only satisfied with Judge Walsh's devotion to upholding justice, but also believed that justice had been served, Mr. Lapolla said.

"He (Walsh) made sure they wouldn't become victims twice," Mr. Lapolla told *The Times*. "He did an outstanding job and got a conviction" in what Mr. Lapolla described as an "extraordinary, difficult case."

Carol Jeney, president of the Union County Bar Association, said Judge Walsh is "going to be a great asset to the bench."

"Union County is lucky to have Judge Walsh filling one of the vacancies (on the Union County bench)," Ms. Jeney said. "He is a great lawyer. He is well respected by everyone." She also described him as "very personable" and "enthusiastic."

Senator Tom Kean, Jr. (LD-21, Westfield), the Senate minority leader in Trenton, said he was happy to support Mr. Walsh's nomination and, now, his "elevation to the bench."

"New Jersey's judicial system is touted as one of the best in the country and I am quite certain that Tom will follow in this fine tradition and will be a tremendous asset to the Union County Superior Court system," Senator Kean said in a statement.

Judge Walsh spoke about his family, including his brother, James Walsh, who was killed in the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center. He said he became an attorney to serve the public. In his first job as an assistant prosecutor, he said he was committed to help crime victims and trying to make sure justice was served.

Judge Walsh's wife, Diane Curcio Walsh, is a former *Star-Ledger* reporter and currently chief of staff to Assemblyman Jon Bramnick (LD-21, Westfield).

A dinner reception followed the ceremony at Solar Do Minho banquet hall in Roselle Park.

Cummings

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

throughout the years, Mr. Cummings said he derived "great satisfaction serving the community" in this capacity and genuinely enjoyed some of the applications that came before the board over the past two decades.

Mr. Cummings said witnessing the beginning of downtown redevelopment in Fanwood was the most rewarding aspect of his years of service on the board, as well as the most significant issue with which the entity has dealt in recent years. He noted that the planning board's rulings on applications were challenged only twice in two decades—and both times its rulings were upheld in State Superior Court. One involved the placement of Verizon Wireless antennas on an existing borough utility tower, which the board had approved, while the other involved a property subdivision it had denied.

Mr. Cummings said members of the planning board must put aside their personal feelings when ruling on an application. "You weigh the facts that are presented, pro and con, on any issue," he said.

He maintained that although the state of the economy has slowed down investment in commercial property at present, the borough's downtown remains a vibrant and viable location for businesses. "It's a great opportunity for a lot of small businesses to move to Fanwood," he said. "It's got a great consumer base."

While no longer on the planning board, Mr. Cummings said he would continue to serve the borough as a volunteer through participation on the Earth Day Committee. Over the years, he also has served on various other municipal committees, including the Clean Communities Committee (19 years), the Holiday Celebration Committee (chairman for three years), the fundraising committee for redeveloping LaGrande Park, from 1994 to 1996, and last year as a member of the Mayor's Budget Advisory Committee.

Deer Cull In Ash Brook On Through Feb. 13

SCOTCH PLAINS — The Union County Department of Parks and Community Renewal will begin its Ash Brook Reservation Deer Management Program this week and continue through Saturday, February 13.

This program is intended to reduce the white-tailed deer population in the Ash Brook Reservation and Golf Course. Eight licensed hunters and members of the Cranford Rod and Gun Club have volunteered to participate in this program and completed a marksmanship test and orientation program, officials said.

Weather permitting, hunters may be in the Ash Brook Reservation from 5 a.m. to 8 p.m. every day except Sunday. Shooting may only occur during daylight hours.

The public should note that the Ash Brook Reservation and the Ash Brook Golf Course will not be closed during the deer management program. Park users and neighbors are encouraged to stay out of the wooded areas during that time period, and to keep pets restrained on a leash.

For further information, contact the Union County Department of Parks and Community Renewal at (908) 789-3682.

Joyce Taylor, Sales Associate
908-233-6417, Direct Dial
NJAR Circle of Excellence 1977—2008

Public Open House Saturday, February 6th 1-4 pm



224 Prospect Street, Unit 7B
Westfield, New Jersey

Location & convenience enhance the allure of this lovely 2 bedroom, 2 full bath town home, one block from Westfield's downtown & close to transportation. Desirable features including hardwood floors, living room with fireplace, formal dining room & an eat-in kitchen. There is a laundry room, storage room, central air-conditioning & a one car attached garage. Priced for \$460,000. Dir: E. Broad to Prospect



Westfield Office · 600 North Avenue, West · 908-233-0065

PAYING TOO MUCH IN PROPERTY TAXES?

Home Values have dropped. Shouldn't your property taxes? Is a property tax appeal right for you? In the last three years, home values in Union County have dropped on average by more than 15 percent. As the real estate market is depreciating, your property taxes, which are based on the market value of your home, are either increasing or remaining stable. As a taxpayer, you have the right to appeal your property tax assessment.

A taxpayer considering an appeal should understand that he/she must prove that his/her assessed value is legally "unreasonable" compared to a market value standard. With a successful tax appeal, your lowered taxes will be locked for the next three years which can amount to a considerable amount of savings.

The best way to succeed in appealing your taxes is to present your successful claim through expert tax and legal advisors with local knowledge. James M. Foerst is the principal of Spector Foerst & Associates and has been

assisting families with real estate and tax issues for a decade in our local community. Mr. Foerst brings with him his experience with local government and the municipal budget process. Evan Siegel is the principal at American Realty Appraisals and is a state certified real estate appraiser with a successful history of lowering home owner's taxes. As an appraiser who focuses on tax appeals, Mr. Siegel can determine if your property taxes are legally "unreasonable" and provide the quantifiable data needed to prevail.

Save money in this economy. Make the sale of your home more attractive. Reduce the long term expenses associated with your home. All with lowered taxes. Tax appeals must be filed by April 1.

For more information about tax appeals, visit spectorfroerst.com or get started with a free consultation and review by calling James M. Foerst at (908) 322-4886.

Paid Bulletin Board
www.goleader.com/express



James M. Foerst

SPF BOE

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Fanwood Times that the negotiations teams for the Scotch Plains-Fanwood BOE and the Scotch-Plains Fanwood Education Association (SPFEA) did not reach an agreement at their January 25 formal hearing with a fact finder. Next, he said, there will be a second meeting with the fact finder at the end of February, when the fact finder will present a preliminary report.

The BOE will meet next on Thursday, February 18, for an open agenda meeting and again on Thursday, February 25, for a regular public meeting.

DISCOVER

why 15 million homeowners

trust their homes to

STATE FARM.



Christine Cosenza, Agent
2 Elm Street
Westfield, NJ 07090-2148
Bus: 908-233-9100
www.christinecosenza.net



LIKE A GOOD NEIGHBOR, STATE FARM IS THERE.®

State Farm Fire and Casualty Company
State Farm General Insurance Company · Bloomington, IL
State Farm Florida Insurance Company · Winter Haven, FL
State Farm Lloyds - Dallas, TX
FD48106 12/04