

Craftsman Karl KITCHENS

Designing • Installation • Remodeling

www.craftsmankarl.com • 522 Central Ave., Westfield • 908-377-6761 • email: craftsmankarl@verizon.net

30 YEAR ANNIVERSARY

Karl Gerckens has been creating beautiful kitchens for 30 years



LEADER ON WHEELS...Six women traveled to Holland in April to celebrate a 50th birthday. They rode 60 kilometers a day on beautiful bike paths through tulip fields, windmills, quaint towns and larger cities. The women from Westfield, from right to left, are: Joann Spera, Rachel Lipschutz, Amanda Friss, Judy Hoffman and Jackie Bass. Annette Lanning (far left) is from North Carolina.

Mayor Mahr Notes FW Redevelopment Progress

By TED RITTER
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

FANWOOD – Mayor Colleen Mahr, at Tuesday night’s regular borough council meeting, pointed to “a very historic moment for the Borough of Fanwood” regarding downtown redevelopment. The governing body, during the meeting, endorsed a “redevelopment agreement” for the next phases of the downtown’s makeover. Elements of the agreement were discussed in executive session and then during a general discussion at a special borough Redevelopment Agency meeting immediately prior to the regular council meeting.

Once it is finalized within the next two weeks, the mayor indicated, the agreement essentially will facilitate the planned redevelopment of the former Livingston-Wilbor and Sovereign Bank properties and other pieces of adjacent borough-owned property, parts or all of which will be sold to the developers who will build it up similar to other neighboring properties.

The borough will retain some of the properties for parking and other purposes, including pedestrian amenities.

Mayor Mahr said, “Five years, maybe six years since the first shovel hit the ground, we are very close” to seeing the redevelopment

through to its final phase. The mayor also said the 24 two-bedroom apartment units of the Fanwood Crossing development at South and Martine Avenues are now ready to be shown and “will probably go pretty quickly.” But, the mayor indicated, “there is no tenant signed on the dotted line yet” for Fanwood Crossing’s first-floor retail space. Mayor Mahr noted the apartment units “were priority one” and the borough wants to take its time “to find the right tenant” for the retail space. “The community wants a restaurant,” the mayor said.

On a related redevelopment note, the governing body approved an ordinance that deletes previous “conditional uses” and now allows apartment units on the second floor of properties in the general commercial district.

Mayor Mahr added the borough further plans to spend the remaining funds from a \$25,000 state “Smart Future” grant to develop façade plans for the existing stores along Martine Avenue between South and LaGrande Avenues, “which I think we can all agree on needs help.”

Finally regarding redevelopment, but away from the downtown, the borough council endorsed on first reading a zoning map revision for the property that used to be home to Rocco’s Tavern on Terrill Road. The amendment formally classifies the property, which is currently undeveloped, for planned residential use.



ALMOST DONE...Ferraro’s Restaurant is completing the facade of its building and has begun inside construction with plans to reopen in September. The landmark restaurant was destroyed by fire just over a year ago.

Benjamin B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader

Scotch Plains Council

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

required, the council vote fell short, with Mayor DePaola and Republican Councilman William Vastine voting for Mr. Saridaki, Mr. Glover voting against and Mr. Marcus abstaining.

Under state law, then, the matter returns to the township Republican Committee, which has the authority to make the appointment itself.

At the end of the meeting, former Mayor Martin Marks, who was recently selected as township Republican chairman, criticized council Democrats for what he described as a “petty and embarrassing political maneuver” in not backing Mr. Saridaki’s appointment. He noted that Mr. Saridaki’s family was in attendance, in anticipation of his appointment and swear-

ing-in ceremony.

“This was an inevitability,” Mr. Marks said as he recounted how in 1999 and 2000, when he was on the council, vacancies created by the deaths of two Democratic council members had been filled without any political wrangling among the political parties.

Councilman Glover — with whom Mr. Marks had verbally sparred, loudly and publicly at times, during their time together on the council in 2007 and 2008 — swatted back at the former mayor, calling his remarks “regrettable.” Mr. Glover said there were “serious issues about background” in considering Mr. Saridaki’s appointment. He called on Mayor DePaola to continue the policy of Mayor Malool, who Mr. Glover said had fostered a more civil atmosphere than he felt existed under Mayor Marks.

In other business, the council approved an ordinance formally appropriating \$155,000 in state Department of Transportation grant money that will be used for the milling and repaving of a section of Raritan Road from the Edison border to Rahway Avenue. The work will be done this summer and take about four or five days to complete.

The council also gave its approval to ordinances that set out salary and wage ranges for township employees, library employees and police department personnel. Annual liquor licenses also were approved for 2012-2013.

Acting Township Manager Robert LaCosta said the bulk waste pickup program was moving into its latter stages, with zones one and two completed and zone three pickups currently underway. He reminded residents in zone four that the deadline for securing a permit is today, June 21.

Mountainside Repairs

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Deerfield School needs. The members agreed they are not looking for “perfection” but rather asking for the minimum basics to help develop a better school and a more sanitary and less distracting learning environment for the students and teachers.

“Deerfield School desperately needs an update, it reminds me of a grandmother’s old-fashioned house,” BOE member Cathy Jakositz said.

According to the district’s statement, Deerfield School currently has a cold-aged look to it and contains all chalkboards versus marker boards, leaky roofs, and dark dingy bathrooms with dim lights and broken locks on the stalls. The paint is chipping and tiles are missing in the classrooms. The legs of the chairs of the student’s desks have tennis balls slashed open and inserted at the bottom of each leg. In addition, the wheels of the chairs are broken and without money to fix it the tennis balls help glide the chairs easier. The school is for grades 3 to 8. The district does not have the money to keep up the maintenance work at the school.

“Yesterday (June 15), when I decorated the school for the eighth-grade dance, pieces of ceiling tiles were crumbling on my head as I hung up decorations,” BOE member Jeane Parker said.

Deerfield has sent a memo around looking for helpers to paint classrooms because there is no money for the district to do it on their own.

“We’re just asking for our money back,” BOE President James Ruben said.

Mr. Gioia mentioned that on Election Day, parents complained and did not want to use Deerfield’s bathroom. Deerfield is one of the borough’s polling places.

“The parents would rather wait till they got home,” Mr. Gioia said. “That’s how ridiculous and unappealing they look.”

The BOE members said they feel Governor Chris Christie is on their side, however, they said the Governor is giving the district money and spending it on unnecessary things the school does not need.

“You are 100 percent right and I couldn’t agree with you more,” Asm. Bramnick responded. “You are fighting for (state) Supreme Court justice and for fair funding, however, you are a minority in Trenton and this is a war you are up against.”

The meeting pressed on as they discussed their top priorities in the order of maintenance work needed

and resulted in the top of the list being improvements to the bathrooms and repair work to the school parking lot at the bottom of the list.

Mayor Paul Mirabelli said he felt the Deerfield athletic field and gymnasium should be put at the top of the list of improvements to be done first, a point that BOE members disagreed.

“The roof has been leaking for 30 years. We need ceiling tiles because they’re all deteriorating,” BOE Vice-President Chris Minks said.

Mr. Gioia commended, “This is a nice little town with little crime and Deerfield School is presenting itself with a bad reputation.”

“I will try and get as many people here as possible including Governor Chris Christie,” Asm. Bramnick responded. “I will give you a lot of attention and bring you someone to see the school for itself.”

Mr. Ruben thanked the assemblyman, saying, “(We) hope changes will be made soon,” Mr. Ruben said.

Freeholders

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ers of America (CWA) Local No. 1080, representing social, case and clerical workers in social services, voluntarily agreed to donate 600 furlough days to reduce layoffs in its department.

“That saved two social workers,” Mr. DiRado said, noting that the county rescinded another seven layoffs in social services.

Three other unions voluntarily agreed to take three unpaid workdays, which was matched by department heads, the nine freeholders and the county manager.

The freeholders approved a \$1.9-million, one-year contract on April 26 with Kennett Square, Pa.-based Genesis ElderCare Rehabilitation Services, Inc. to privatize occupational, physical and speech therapy services at Runnells. Officials said Runnells was running an \$11.3-million deficit at the conclusion of 2011. The county also is looking at leasing unused sections of Runnells to bring in additional revenues.

Mr. Sullivan noted that the county also is looking to privatize its 900-inmate jail, which has an annual budget of \$55 million. In addition, the county has gone out for a feasibility study for the operation of the Watchung Stables, which is \$600,000 in the red.

Commenting on the budget, Bruce Paterson of Garwood said despite the actions by the county, the freeholders are increasing taxes by over \$11 million.

“So the infrastructure of this county is flawed,” he said. He said the \$2 million in savings from refinancing \$83 million in debt is not as great as it seems as professional services such as the bond counsel must be factored. He said the county also used a number of “one-shot” budget mechanisms this year.

As a related cost of labor negotiations with employee unions seeking givebacks, the freeholders increased the contract with Bauch, Zucker, Hatfield, LLC from \$75,000 to \$170,000. Kathy Hatfield of the Springfield firm has been negotiating on behalf of county management. The cost of fact-finding services also was doubled to a cost of \$24,000.

The board approved a resolution approving a one-year, \$236,456 contract to Holbrook, N.Y.-based Louis Barabato Landscaping to replace some 1,000 trees lost during Hurricane Irene last summer.

In addition, an ordinance was adopted that increases one-way individual fares on Paratransit vehicles to \$2 per trip and to \$45 for groups from residential facilities.

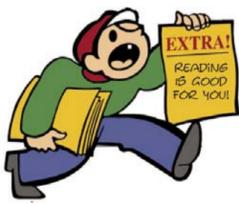
WF Council

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

sible fees for potential probationary firefighters applying for employment in the town’s fire department. The application fee will be capped at \$75.

The next town council meeting open to the public is scheduled for Tuesday, July 10, at 7:30 p.m. at the Westfield Municipal Building, located at 425 East Broad Street.

READING IS GOOD FOR YOU!



GOLEADER.COM/SUBSCRIBE



The FANWOOD RESCUE SQUAD

wishes to thank the following generous businesses and organizations who supported us during EMS Week:



Fanwood Rescue Squad • 123 Watson Road • Fanwood, NJ 07023
JOIN OR DONATE TODAY!
www.fanwoodrescue.com



Attention Homeowners: There has been a rash of electrical fires in the area.

Federal Pacific electrical panels lost their Underwriters Laboratory rating over twenty five years ago, because their circuit breakers did not work. Would you like us to replace them? Are you protected? Are you safe? Do you have 120 volt smoke detectors with battery backup? Do you have carbon monoxide detectors with battery backup? If not, call your friendly local neighborhood electrician.

S. Swenson & Son Inc. • (908) 276-9000

We’ve been here since 1928 • www.swensonandsons.com

We install generators and sump pumps too • NJ Lic #4309