

WF Zoning Board Hears Full Slate of Applications

By DELL SIMEONE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

WESTFIELD – On Monday evening, the town's zoning board of adjustment had such a full slate that seven applications had to be carried over to the May meeting.

Joo Durk Ho of 346 South Avenue, East, sought to retain two signs in storefront windows contrary to town code, which allows one sign at the main public entrance. Mr. Ho proposed a main entrance sign plus two signs in the front windows. The board denied the application, telling Mr. Ho he could have one sign over the main entrance and no signs in the front windows. Mr. Ho must return with a new sign design at the board's Monday, May 13 meeting.

Michael and Lizette Tormey of 238 Clark Street came before the board seeking to construct a deck and a two-car garage contrary to town code, which allows a maximum building coverage of 20 percent, where the applicant proposed 22 percent. The ordinance allows a maximum building coverage with a deck of 22 percent, where the applicant proposed 23.9 percent. The maximum building coverage with a deck and a porch is 24 percent, where the applicant proposed 25.8 percent.

Mr. Tormey, who is an architect, said he wanted to build a two-car garage because the family had four drivers, and also needed a storage space. The proposed garage would be 420 square feet, house two cars and provide storage space. He said the roof of the garage would match the roof on the house. Mr. Tormey assured the board that new drainage would be put in the yard to carry runoff out to the street.

Francis Paulino, a backyard neighbor of Mr. Tormey, refuted some of his assertions and said with so much ground coverage he was concerned that water would come into his yard. The board did not approve the application and asked Mr. Tormey to come back with new plans and less ground coverage.

Joanna Wayner of 723 First Street is seeking to construct an outdoor barbeque/cabinet area in the rear yard contrary to town ordinance, which allows a maximum building coverage of 20 percent, where Ms. Wayner proposed 23.3 percent. The ordinance allows a maximum building cover-

age with a deck of 22 percent, where the applicant proposed 25.5 percent. In addition, the ordinance requires a minimum side-yard setback for a deck of 10 feet, where the proposed is eight feet. The board approved the application.

John Labbate of 825 Harding Street was seeking to construct a roof over an existing patio contrary to code, which allows a maximum building coverage of 20 percent, where Mr. Labbate proposed 22.2 percent. The roof with a gable would cover the 15-by-18-foot patio. The board deemed the proposed roof to be too large and denied the application.

Bryce Salvador of 422 Lenox Avenue sought to construct a detached, two-car garage contrary to the town ordinance, which allows a maximum building coverage without a porch of 20 percent, where the applicant proposed 21.8 percent. The ordinance allows a maximum building coverage with a porch of 24 percent, where 25.68 percent was proposed. The ordinance allows a maximum all improvements coverage of 50 percent (3,750 square feet), where the applicant proposed 50.5 percent (3,788 square feet). The application was approved.

Jennifer Shurman of 634 Norman Place sought to construct a two-story addition and a second-floor addition. Ms. Shurman said she wanted to add a bathroom, guest bedroom and a laundry room on the second floor and bump out the kitchen four feet on the first floor in an effort to stay in her home and not have to move. The board approved the application.

There was not enough time to hear all of the applicants. The following applicants were asked to come to the May 13 meeting: Richard and Lynn Toner of 681 Dorian Road, Robert and Delores Leone of 745 Belvidere Avenue, Michael and Alesia Liddy of 746 Belvidere Avenue, Robert and Theresa Whitehead of 1903 Boynton Avenue, Douglas and Karen Luka of 637 Roosevelt Street, 440 North Avenue, LLC, Joseph and Denise Logozzo of 27 Stoneleigh Park.

F & J Foot, the preliminary site plan of which was previously approved by the board, was granted an extension to develop 112-116 Cacciola Place until December 31, 2014. The company was represented by attorney Peter Fico, who said the company is still seeking financing.

CF Committee Considers Creating New Position

By FRED T. ROSSI
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

CRANFORD — The township committee will hold a public hearing a then vote on the 2013 municipal budget at its Tuesday, April 23 meeting, which calls for expenditures of \$34.2 million and a 1.69 percent increase in the municipal portion of property taxes, or about \$39 per household.

One proposed budget item yet to be finalized is the creation of a new position — facilities manager — that would be responsible, according to Mayor Thomas Hannen, for managing the various municipal properties and overseeing maintenance, heating and cooling costs and electricity expenses.

At Tuesday night's business meeting, township resident Rita LaBrutto questioned the need for such an expense, saying the position would pay \$70,000 in salary along with benefits and also require a budget as well. Mayor Hannen said the recommendation for the new position was given to the committee during its budget meetings over the past few months and told Mrs. LaBrutto that the committee was "still in the process" of deciding whether to move forward with the recommendation. He said the deciding factor will be whether a facilities manager will be able to save costs at a high enough level to justify the expense of creating the new position.

In other business, the Mayor told resident Barbara Kraus that the municipal government was in contact with Cranford High School about some parking issues on residential streets. Mrs. Kraus told the committee that student drivers are parking on an increased number of streets near the high school, with many of those drivers "unaware," she said, of various parking restrictions on those streets.

Mrs. Kraus said the narrow streets make it increasingly difficult for residents to leave their own driveways in the morning. Mayor Hannen said he had contacted the high school principal, who assured the Mayor that the concerns would be looked into.

The township committee introduced a \$4.2-million bond ordinance that Commissioner Andis Kalnins said would refinance bonds issued 11 years ago at interest rates in the 3 percent to 4 percent range. He said the savings would amount to about \$39,000 per year in interest costs. The public hearing will be held on April 23.

Another ordinance that was introduced would give preferential parking treatment to members of the Cranford Rescue Squad in front of their Centennial Avenue headquarters. Commissioner Kevin Campbell said only about three parking spaces would be affected. The public hearing will be held on Tuesday, May 7.

Lieutenant James Wozniak, a 23-year veteran of the police department, was promoted to the rank of captain in a ceremony attended by Police Chief Eric Mason and several dozen friends and family members, who greeted Captain Wozniak's swearing-in with sustained applause and a standing ovation.

The committee gave its support to legislation in the State Legislature that, according to Commissioner Kalnins, would "share the burden" of paying off tax appeals to homeowners. Currently, he noted, municipal governments collect all property taxes and then disburse the requisite amounts to the local board of education and to the county government.

In Cranford, those two outside entities account for about 75 percent of the property tax bill. But property tax appeals that are successful are paid out by the municipality alone. Legislation pending in Trenton would require the board of education and the county government to pay their relevant share of tax appeals.

At the beginning of the meeting, Daniel Curley was recognized by the committee for achieving the rank of Eagle Scout in the Boy Scouts of America. Mayor Hannen issued a proclamation pledging support for various "green" initiatives during the Monday, April 22 Earth Day celebration. Deputy Mayor O'Malley said the annual Rahway River cleanup will take place on Saturday, April 27, from 9 a.m. to noon, followed by an afternoon of "green" activities at Hanson Park.

Mr. O'Malley also presented certificates to three local businesses — Periwinkle's Fine Gifts, Atlantic Beach Soap Co. and JC and Crew Haircutters — for conducting their operations in environmentally-friendly ways.

DOT to Begin Congestion Relief Project for Route 22

TRENTON – The New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) has announced the start of a congestion relief project, using technology to improve traffic flow along a 13-mile-long stretch of Route 22 in Somerset and Union Counties.

NJDOT will address Route 22 from milepost 36.45 in the vicinity of I-287 in Bridgewater – through Bound Brook, Green Brook, North Plainfield, Watchung, Scotch Plains and Westfield – to milepost 50.25, just east of the pedestrian overpass in Mountainside.

According to a DOT press release, the \$7.77-million project will improve mobility along the entire corridor through the creation of an integrated system interconnecting 18 traffic signals into one Controlled Traffic Signal System (CTSS). This includes the complete replacement of the existing traffic signal systems at five intersections and geometric improvements and signal modifications to seven other intersections.

In addition, the project includes the installation of eight new traffic cameras for the Camera Surveillance System (CSS), two new permanent electronic dynamic message signs, and fiber optic and wireless communication connecting the new integrated system to the Statewide Traffic Management Center in

Woodbridge. NJDOT's contractor, Daidone Electric, Inc., has begun preliminary construction activity, including sign installation, field mobilization and directional drilling to install underground conduits.

"As most of the improvements require the installation of electronic equipment outside the Route 22 mainline travel lanes, this work will be performed during normal business hours with minimal disruption to traffic," according to the DOT release. "All available travel lanes will be maintained on Route 22 during peak travel periods. The proposed improvements at certain intersections will require temporary closures of the jug handle ramps with traffic detoured along Route 22 to the next convenient intersection. These detours will typically be limited to off-peak hours and all travel lanes will be reopened during morning and evening rush hours."

The contractor plans to advance the improvements with multiple crews working simultaneously at different locations. The project is scheduled for completion by the summer 2014.

The precise timing of the work is subject to change due to weather or other factors. Motorists are encouraged to check www.51Inj.org for real-time travel information.

Real Dems for Change Sign Statement of Purpose

ELIZABETH – In front of more than 200 people at a rally at the Cuban Club in Elizabeth Friday night, State Legislative District 20 State Senate Candidate Donna Obe, president of the Roselle Board of Education, became the first candidate to sign the Real Democrats for Change Statement of Purpose outlining their plans and principles should they prevail in the Tuesday, June 4 Democratic Primary.

Charles Mitchell, the candidate for county sheriff, and Freeholder candidates Richard Starling and Madeline Fajardo followed her. The third freeholder candidate, Reverend Carlos Cedeno, an Elizabeth councilman who was away leading a youth retreat.

The candidates pledged to: "end any and all attempts to exceed the 2 percent cap on the county tax bill; end unqualified patronage practices including the Union County Democratic Chairwoman Charlotte DeFilippo as the head of the Union County Improvement Authority while working out of her house, and to end hostility which finds towns in western Union County so disillusioned with county government that they are trying to secede."

Further the candidates pledge to "advocate for the raising of the Bayonne Bridge which will mean increased commerce and jobs to our port without benefitting politically connected corrupt companies such as Birdsall Engineering, which recently had seven of its executives indicted for illegal political contributions." The candidates also oppose "excessive borrowing for unneeded projects such as a banquet hall at

Galloping Hills Golf Course." "Birdsall is one of the largest contributors to Senator Ray Lesniak and the Union County Democratic Organization," according to a press release from Real Democrats for Change.

Elizabeth Board of Education member Carlos Trujillo, who was master of ceremonies for the rally declared, "Ray Lesniak and his gang have forgotten the rest of us, the everyday people of Union County. He's so busy writing legislation to benefit his clients he doesn't have time for us anymore."

Ms. Obe, who is challenging Mr. Lesniak for the Senate seat declared, "The winds of change are blowing stronger every day. Thirty-six years in the Legislature is enough for anyone. We need someone new."

Rally for Fair Tax Sunday at Courthouse

ELIZABETH – Just ahead of Tax Day, a rally in support of limited government and the Fair Tax will take place at 11 a.m. this Sunday, April 14, at the Union County Courthouse in Elizabeth.

Jim Bennett will speak about the Fair Tax and Vikki Jensen will speak on "Marketing the Message of Liberty." The rally, organized by the New Jersey Tea Party Coalition, is supported by NJ2AS, the New Jersey Constitution and Libertarian Parties, New Jersey Fair Tax activists, and the New Jersey Tea Party Caucus. For more information on the rally, e-mail vjensen@comcast.net or MichelleNJTPC@verizon.net.

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