

## Garwood Board OKs Use Variance, 4th Ave. Developer

By MEGAN K. SCOTT

*Specially Written for The Westfield Leader*

**GARWOOD** – The planning board approved a change of use variance to enable construction of nine townhouses on a lot zoned as single-family residential on Fourth Avenue. The lot had been grandfathered for commercial use for the previous owner's catering business - Five Star Catering — as a pre-existing, non-conforming use.

The meeting, designated as "bifurcated" by attorneys, considered only the "change of use." Detailed drawings will be required to be submitted and approved at later hearings.

The owners are proposing to spend more than \$5 million to build the townhomes. The 5-2 vote on May 28 came after nearly three hours of testimony — including from a site planner, traffic safety engineer and architect

— and concerns from several residents about the impact on traffic, property values and the aesthetics of the neighborhood.

Planning board members Bruce Paterson and Robert Scherer voted no. Mayor Pat Quattrocchi and Bill Nierstedt, a borough councilman, were not permitted to vote because of their positions on borough council.

The meeting lasted so long that board members voted to suspend their bylaws and go past 11 p.m. because they wanted to resolve the issue.

"I feel that what we have here is something that's going to be done smart," said Kathleen Villaggio, acting as board president in the absence of Steven Greet. "It'll look nice. Not just nice. It will look great. I think that it has met the burden of use."

The one-acre linear property is adjacent to the Brookside De-

tention Basin in Cranford and used to be home to Heidi's Deli.

No site plan was approved at the meeting, but renderings were displayed to give board members and residents an idea of the envisioned community, which would be restricted to those 55 and older.

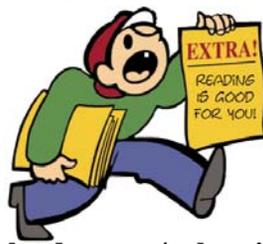
The development would include four, three-bedroom, and five, two-bedroom townhomes, each 2,900 to 3,100 square feet, and include two garage spaces. Each townhome would have its own elevator. Trash and snow removal would be handled privately and administered through a homeowners association.

Planner John McDonough put the price point near \$600,000.

The developer hoped to allay community concerns about traffic by highlighting that the development would be accessed by a driveway off of Fourth Avenue and include a striped turnaround for visitors and service vehicles like garbage trucks and snow plows. Therefore, vehicles would not have to back out of the development onto Fourth Avenue unlike the catering business, which moved to Westfield a month ago, and two single-family homes, Traffic Safety Engineer Joseph Staigar said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

Reading is Good For You



goleader.com/subscribe

## Army Corps' 2-3 Yr. Flood Study

tions would pertain to 66 structures, mostly homes, in the 10-year flood plain in Cranford. This alternative would cost about \$15.5 million. The work would include raising homes past the flood levels, dry proofing and wet proofing. It also identified two homes as a buyout. This alternative would be funded partially by federal funding and partially by state and township funding, meaning the township would most likely need to bond, and tax residents for that bond, for the money to pay for this work. The federal government would pay 75 percent with the state and municipal government sharing 25 percent.

A group of people have op-

posed the South Mountain detention basin, which was proposed to be an 810-foot long and 75-foot high dam in the South Mountain Reservation. The environmental impacts it would have there is one of the biggest concerns for those opposed to the project. This project would cost about \$108 million.

"That alternative is extremely controversial. We have not received a single letter approving that alternative," Mr. Seebode said.

Once the alternatives are selected the USACE will need to secure about \$2.4 million, co-shared by the state, to complete its study.

## Garwood BOE Agrees on Contract With Quigley

By BRIAN TRUSDELL

*Specially Written for The Westfield Leader*

**GARWOOD** – The board of education has agreed to contract terms with school Superintendent Teresa Quigley and "reached a consensus" to extend her contract, Board President Christine Guerriero told *The Westfield Leader*.

Ms. Guerriero would not divulge the terms of the contract following a more than hour-long closed-door executive session on May 28 at a special meeting of the board at Lincoln School.

"We've agreed, and a majority of the board reached a consensus," she said. "[The contract] will be shared with our full board at our next meeting."

The next meeting of the board is Tuesday, June 24.

Only five of the nine board members were present: Amanda Langston, Adele Lewis, Aaron Watkins, Susan Groning and Ms. Guerriero.

Ms. Guerriero said the reason for the special meeting was because the contract needed to be submitted for approval by Union County Office of Education Interim Executive County Superintendent Kathleen Serafino and returned to Ms. Quigley by June 1.

Ms. Guerriero said Ms. Quigley has been with Garwood schools since the 1990s, beginning as a teacher, then serving as principal before replacing Wilfred Murphy as interim superintendent in the 2007-2008 school year.

## Local Letters to the Editor

### On 'Trademarked Seal,' County Was Wrong, the People Are Stronger

In a recent edition of "Union County Directions" mailed out to each household right before this election, Freeholder Chairman Hudak proudly proclaimed on page 2 that Union County government is a strong government. Below is his and the county's apparent attempt.

In a move akin to not allowing the people to display the American flag, in 2011 Union County government came down with legal force on a Cranford resident, Tina Renna, for displaying the Union County seal in her monthly watchdog program, "Union County Citizen's Forum" which was shown on local access channel 35 out of Cranford. Union County also gave a cease and desist order to the Cranford TV station.

Union County government claimed that "their" seal is trademarked, even though the federal government rejected the county's application for trademark. In the following court case, which was brought by "The Rutherford Institute," a first amendment advocacy group, the judge asked why the county asserted the seal was trademarked when it wasn't; the county responded that they didn't know the answer. Just recently the judge ruled in favor of the Rutherford Institute allowing Tina Renna and channel 35 to use the county seal.

It appears that the county contrives intimidation tactics on residents and entities that bring transparency to Union County

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE