

CF Train Plaza on Track; Tree Ord

The permits for easements along the Orchard Brook were secured about 10 years ago, and not all homeowners along the brook gave their consent. Mayor Andis Kalnins has said it could help alleviate flooding impacts for about 160 homes.

A potential new tree ordinance that would include the hiring of a forester, and a new law requiring permission from the forester for residents to remove a tree considered a landmark tree, was laid out by Commissioner Robert D'Ambola. The definition of a landmark tree was not specified. Salary costs for a forester are still to be determined, Mr. D'Ambola said.

"This ordinance is needed desperately because we are losing large trees," said Barbara Krause, a member of the tree advisory board, during public comments. She cited a long list of nearby communities that have adopted an ordinance like the one presented or contains stricter laws. She noted that not only did Cranford lose 900 township trees as well as private trees in Hurricanes Sandy and Irene, but property owners have been taking down large trees that were healthy.

Commissioner Mary O'Connor said after having some businesses interested in a winter

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Holiday Journey With Celebration Singers Planned

CRANFORD – Under the direction of Brian Clissold and Jennifer Jenkins, The Celebration Singers are preparing for their winter performance "A Holiday Journey with The Celebration Singers" at St. Michael's Church, 40 Alden Street, Cranford, on Friday, December 5 and Saturday, December 6 at 8 p.m. Tickets can be purchased online at celebration-singers.org or through the phone at (908) 552-4656.

The Celebration Singers is a non-profit musical entertainment organization whose goal is to reach out to as many people as possible in as many different environments so as to expose people to the art of music. Diverse programs give audiences the opportunity to experience a wealth of musical styles and disciplines, and see this music performed by children and adults.

Although many outstanding choral groups exist in New Jersey, there are few groups that bring the same rigorous and exacting

musical standards to the performance of the variety of songs. Celebration Singers' mission is to bring before as wide an audience as possible the beauty, richness, and excitement of not only a valuable segment of American culture, "the Classic American Popular Song," but of songs of many styles and from other cultures. At the same time, they look to provide a more diverse musical education to our children and adult chorus members and audience alike. It continues to grow in scope, appeal, and audience and member enthusiasm.

Funding for the Celebration Singers is made possible in part by the New Jersey State Council for the Arts, Department of State, through a grant administered by the Union County Office of Cultural and Heritage Affairs. For more information, please visit celebration-singers.org, email celebrationsingersnewjersey@gmail.com, or leave a voice mail at (908) 552-4656.

Cranford Zoning Board Denies Mini Mart for Exxon Station

By DELL SIMEONE

Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

CRANFORD – The zoning board, on Monday evening, denied an application to allow the owner of the Exxon gas station at 464 South Avenue East to install a "Tiger Mart," or mini mart, in one of the three service bays at the station. The property is at the intersection of Centennial Avenue.

The applicant, Jaranjeet Singh, owns 25 gas stations in New Jersey that contain mini marts. The applicant was seeking the following variances: conditional use (convenience store) approval; less than the minimum required on-site parking spaces; granite block curbing not provided; no loading or unloading zone provided and no bicycle rack provided.

The existing station, which was built in 1958, has two pumps and three service bays. The applicant's attorney, Frank Capece, said there is no longer a need for the third service bay so the owner wants to use it as a space for the convenience store, which he said would not sell prepared foods. He described the average customer as someone who pulls in for gas and then runs into the store for a quart of milk. He said the average visit to the station for gas and a food item would be less than four minutes. He said the station would operate each day between 6 a.m. and 10 p.m.

The applicant's engineer, Edward Bogan, said there would be seven parking spaces for customers. However, after questioning by the board he said there would be seven parking spaces provided including three spaces for employees and one handicapped spot. Parking would be located on either side of the build-

ing. He also said there would be a small dumpster on one side.

Board members were concerned about how the cars could maneuver in and out of the parking spaces if other cars were lined up at the pumps. Board member John Mallon said, "If all employees park you only have four spaces for customers."

Board member William Montani said, "You are only 100 feet away from Krauszer's." Board member Mary Ann Hay questioned how a driver in the space nearest to the pumps could get out. "He would be stuck," Mr. Mallon said. Mr. Bogan admitted the driver would have to make a K-turn.

Mr. Capece noted that there is parking on both sides of the street on Centennial Avenue. "No one has come forward to object to the plan," he said.

"What concerns me the most is that there would be an overflow of cars on Centennial Avenue," Mr. Montani said.

Mr. Montani also stated, "I don't see any landscaping plans." Mr. Bogan responded, "There are none."

The applicant's architect said the store would be 700 square feet and take up half of the existing building.

Mr. Montani said he did not see how the mini mart would be a benefit to the community. Board member Robert Bovasso said the store is, "an adjustment to the gas station. A three-bay gas station isn't in demand. They're making use of space," he added.

The board's discussion lasted 90 minutes before the board voted 4-to-3 to deny the application. Most board members said they were concerned about the small space and the room to maneuver cars in and out of the parking spaces.

In other business, the board

approved an application by John and Maura O'Connor of 49 John Street to construct a third-story addition, which exceeds the maximum number of allowable stories on the street. Architect Maria Cosmo argued that the home is older and the addition is consistent with others in the neighborhood. She said the home is long and narrow and that there is no place to go but up. Ms. Cosmo said a dormer will be in the middle of the structure and will not change the façade of the home.

Zoning Officer Robert Hudak said it is only one-and-a-half feet beyond the code requirement. Ms. Cosmo said the dormer will not face the front of the home.

Wilf Liquors, Police

The library will hold a free practice SAT test and analysis that will offer strategies to improve scores on Saturday, November 15, from 9 a.m to 1 p.m.

The Jeans for Troops program asks employees to donate \$5 and in return allows employees to wear jeans to work for the day. "Any way we can support our veterans, it is worth it," Mayor Kalnins said.

Chamber of Commerce Pride in Cranford award winners this year for business improvement are Dreyer Farms, Martin Jewelers, 100 Steps Supper Club and Raw Bar, Jeff's Landscaping, and Needlepoint Homes. Union County Neighbors United and the Rotary Club of Cranford won the organizational award. Individual award winners were John Guempel, Barbara Ragone (posthumously), Barry O'Donovan and Martha Garcia. "These people help out our town every day and make Cranford what it is," Mayor Kalnins said.