

Scotch Plains Town Redevelopment To Pick Up Steam In 2018

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

SCOTCH PLAINS — The new year promises to bring at least the start of significant changes to downtown Scotch Plains and how the overall business district will look in the years ahead.

With a final settlement of litigation regarding the township's affordable-housing obligations imminent, it is expected that the process of not only building new housing but also expanding commercial and retail space in the downtown will start up in earnest sometime in 2018. Mayor Alexander Smith said as much in the fall when he told *The Westfield Leader* and *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* that he hopes that "over the course of 2018, we'll start to see" the first phase of the downtown redevelopment plan implemented.

Nine months ago, the township council created the downtown redevelopment committee to advise about ways to redevelop the downtown business district. Its initial focus is on properties and businesses located in the Phase 1 area along Park Avenue from Grand Street to Westfield Avenue as well as the first block-and-a-half of East Second Street.

It is expected that about 3,000 new housing units — with about 450 of them deemed "affordable" — will be built in Scotch Plains over the next eight years. Slightly less than half of the new housing units will likely be located in and around the downtown business district as part of the overall redevelopment effort. Other sections of town also will see new housing. The committee's planner, Michael Mistretta, said in October that two of the south-side sites slated for housing include the Parker Gardens property on Terrill Road and the Amberg garden center property on Lamberts Mill Road.

A study of the 63 properties in the central business district along Park Avenue was submitted earlier this month to the planning board for review in advance of public hearings expected to get underway in February. The report includes recommendations of which of those properties should be designated as an Area in Need of Redevelopment, a designation that will give the municipal government much greater control over redevelopment of those properties.

So far, a good deal of the committee's attention has been on the municipal-owned property between Bartle Avenue and Grand Street that now houses the Scotch Plains Public Library and on the area along Park

Avenue where the municipal building, the parking lot and the fire house are located. A series of conceptual renditions have been shown at recent committee meetings depicting how redevelopment of those two areas might proceed.

One series of sketches and animated videos of possible redevelopment of the library area showed new buildings housing a mix of retail and residential apartments along with a new library and a possible community center. Another set of sketches depicted a new building consisting of 90 rental units atop a two-level parking deck that would be located where the municipal parking lot on Park Avenue is now situated. A driveway between that new building and the municipal building would connect Park Avenue and Senger Place. Along Senger Place, where the fire house now stands, the renditions showed a row of brownstone-type homes facing east, with a driveway and garage under each unit.

In all likelihood, the police and fire departments, and probably the township administrative offices, would be moved from their present locales to sites elsewhere in town.

Away from the downtown, it is likely that signs of new residential building will be evident sooner rather than later. Back in October, Mayor Smith said that, as the affordable-housing litigation is concluded, builders are "going to move quickly," and said he expects "extensive" building on the south side of town by the end of 2018. Mr. Mistretta, the planner, said at an October committee meeting that the first 563 housing units to be built "will not be anywhere near the downtown." He also said that, in addition to the 563 units already planned, another 25 acres of land outside of the downtown will be rezoned for high-density housing.

Besides the Phase 1 area that is the current focus of the downtown redevelopment committee, there are six other phases in the square bordered by Park Avenue, East Second Street, Terrill Road and Route 22 that will eventually be addressed in the coming years: Phase 2 encompasses Park Avenue from Grand Street to Route 22, Phase 3 includes Park Avenue from East Second Street/Westfield Avenue to Portland Avenue, Phase 4 is East Second Street from Senger Place to Myrtle Avenue, and Phase 5 runs from Myrtle Avenue to Farley Avenue on East Second Street. Phases 6 and 7 encompass Terrill Road from the Fanwood border north to the Watchung border.

Committee Says Survey Supports New Expanded Library, Com. Ctr.

SCOTCH PLAINS — The Scotch Plains Downtown Redevelopment Committee (SPDRC) released the results of its month-long survey on both a new, expanded Scotch Plains Library and a community center. A total of 773 people participated in the survey aimed to gather input and evaluate the needs of the public for these facilities. Forty-eight percent of respondents believe that Scotch Plains needs a new, expanded library. Thirty percent don't believe Scotch Plains needs a new, expanded library and 22 percent are undecided. Fifty-eight percent of respondents said Scotch Plains needs a community center. Twenty percent don't believe Scotch Plains needs a community center and 22 percent are undecided.

Eighty-three percent of respondents believe the Scotch Plains Library is a very important or important community service. Respondents would like to see more children's activities (40 percent), additional computer/workstations (35 percent), additional quiet reading spaces (34 percent), and additional meeting spaces (33 percent) in a new, expanded library. Respondents frequently commented that they would like to see family activities/programs, sports activities/programs, arts and crafts activities/programs, summer camp activities/programs, volunteering activities/programs, meeting spaces, multi-purpose room(s), pool(s), senior activities/programs, children activities/programs, music activities/programs, and teen activities/programs in a community center.

"These survey results confirm what I have heard from SPDRC members and the public at our meetings: that Scotch Plains residents want both a new, expanded library and a community center," said Mayor Al Smith. "People also want the new, expanded library and community center to be downtown. This will be an important draw and bring more foot traffic to our downtown. I have discussed eventually repurposing the town hall building as a community center, and I will continue to get feedback from the public on their views of a new, expanded library and a community center."

The survey participants were mostly Scotch Plains residents (99 percent) between 35 to 54 years of age (58 percent). Participants were 66 per-

cent female and 32 percent male. Eighty-five percent of respondents use the library in some frequency. Eighty-two percent of respondents said they have a library card.

As part of downtown redevelopment, the SPDRC has discussed both a new, expanded library and a community center for the downtown area as a way to draw more people downtown. This survey was developed by the social recreation study group of the SPDRC, and was conducted from November 3, 2017 to December 4, 2017 and was administered online using the survey platform Survey Monkey, which was set to accept one submission per IP address. The survey was shared online on the township website, Facebook page, Twitter, and Friday e-newsletters. The survey was also administered through hard copies available at Scotch Plains Town Hall and the Scotch Plains Library. The survey is not a scientific survey of the population, but an opportunity for those who care about or who are interested in a new, expanded library, a community center, and downtown redevelopment to give their feedback and opinions to the SPDRC.

To view the full report and results of the survey, please click on <https://www.scotchplainsnj.gov/departments/downtown-redevelopment-committee/survey-2-results>

Middle Class Tax Breaks Expire In '25 While Corp. Rate Is Permanent

Congress rushed through a massive tax bill without permitting direct input from the people!

Hard pressed homeowners in high taxing New Jersey will be limited to deduct \$10,000 in real estate taxes while General Motors, Apple, Microsoft, Boeing, and AT&T so desperately need their tax drop slashed from 35 percent to 21 percent! Just got to feel sorry for Apple with its net profit of \$8.7 billion and AT&T with its net profit of \$3.9 billion for the fourth quarter of 2017! (AT&T is so financially well off that it is buying Time Warner for \$85.4 billion! Most homeowners must think twice before replacing the dishwasher!)

Houses in New Jersey regularly sell for \$1 million. Yet the new tax legislation only permits interest to be deducted on a mortgage of up to \$750,000 while doubling the estate tax exemption from \$5.6 million to \$11.2 million!

The standard deduction has been doubled to \$12,600 for individual filers and to \$24,000 for jointly filing married couples but taxpayers in high taxing states will have more to deduct than the new standard deduction will permit!

There is more unfairness. The so-called "middle class" tax breaks, including the doubled standard deduction, expire in 2025 while the corporate tax rate cut is permanent. And so many middle-class taxpayers face increased taxes in 2025 while Caterpillar, General Electric, Exxon, Intel, Johnson & Johnson, Wal-Mart, and Disney among other components of the Dow Jones Industrial Average will continue to enjoy Congress's largesse.

Is it relevant that in 2013 the net worth of a member of Congress was \$1,029,505, a majority of the members of Congress were millionaires, the median wealth of Senators was \$2.3 million, and the median wealth

of Representatives was \$843,507 in 2013? (Center for Responsive Government). This while the median value of assets of householders under 35 years of age is \$6,676 and \$35,000 for householders 35 to 40 years of age! (Business Insider)

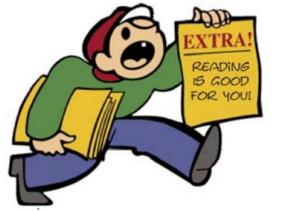
Is it relevant that between 1998 and 2017 the industries benefiting from the corporate tax cut spent huge sums lobbying Congress? For example, pharmaceutical and health products companies, \$3,714,580,815, insurance, \$2,579,796,902, and electric utilities, \$2,264,059,045! (Center for Responsive Government) This while the median income in 2016 was \$59,039! (Census Bureau)

German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck was wrong in quipping "Laws are like sausages. It is better not to see them made. President Wilson proposed the Fourteen Points to help end the First World War. His first point is most applicable today though the words are different! "Open covenants, openly arrived at, after which there shall be no private international understandings of any kind but diplomacy shall proceed always frankly and in the public view."

Leave the last word to Will Rogers about the work of Congress!

"This country has come to feel the same way about Congress in session as when a baby gets hold of a hammer." (July 4, 1930)

Stephen Schoeman Westfield



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Al Faella, Mgr. afaella@ucnj.org
Chairman = ?
Sebastian D'Elia, Public Info. sdelia@ucnj.org



PUBLIC NOTICE

BOROUGH OF GARWOOD
ORDINANCE NO. 17-29
AN ORDINANCE TO AMEND § 106-94 (CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT) IN ARTICLE XIII (ZONE REGULATIONS) IN CHAPTER 106 (LAND USE) OF THE CODE OF THE BOROUGH OF GARWOOD TO PROVIDE FOR AN AFFORDABLE HOUSING SET-ASIDE IN THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT.

STATEMENT

TAKE NOTICE THAT ORDINANCE NO. 17-29, WAS PASSED ON THE FINAL READING AFTER PUBLIC HEARING AT A MEETING OF THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL OF THE BOROUGH OF GARWOOD ON, TUESDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2017.

ATTEST:
Christina Ariemma
Municipal Clerk
1 T - 12/28/17, The Leader Fee: \$22.95

PUBLIC NOTICE

TOWNSHIP OF CRANFORD PLANNING BOARD
2018 MEETINGS

In accordance with Chapter 231, Public Law 1975, State of New Jersey, the public is hereby notified of the following schedule of regular meetings of the Planning Board of the Township of Cranford, County of Union, for the year 2018. Workshop portion of the meeting will be held at 7:30 P.M. in Room 108 with the public meeting commencing at 8:00 P.M. in Room 107. All foreseeable meetings, including workshop sessions, are designated as meetings at which formal action may be taken.

January 10 - *Reorganization Meeting	July 18
February 7	August 1
February 21	August 15
March 7	September 5
March 21	September 19
April 4	October 3
April 18	October 17
May 2	November 7
May 16	November 28
June 6	December 5
June 20	December 19

*Will begin at 7:00pm
Kathleen Murray, Chairman
1 T - 12/28/17, The Leader Fee: \$30.09

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PUBLIC NOTICE

BOROUGH OF GARWOOD
MEETING OF THE
MAYOR AND COUNCIL

Public Notice is hereby given that the Mayor and Council of the Borough of Garwood will hold a regular meeting on Tuesday, January 9, 2018 at 7:15 p.m., in the Council Chambers, Municipal Building, 403 South Avenue, Garwood, New Jersey. Workshop session to start at 7:00 p.m.

ACTION WILL BE TAKEN.
Christina M. Ariemma, RMC
Borough Administrator/Municipal Clerk
1 T - 12/28/17, The Leader Fee: \$14.28

PUBLIC NOTICE

TOWNSHIP OF CRANFORD
2018 TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE
REORGANIZATION MEETING

In compliance with the Open Public Meetings Act, the Township Committee of Cranford will hold the 2018 Reorganization Meeting at the Cranford Municipal Building, Council Chambers, 8 Springfield Avenue, Cranford, New Jersey, on Tuesday, January 2, 2018 at 7:00 P.M. Formal action will be taken by the Township Committee.

Heather Capone, RMC
Deputy Township Clerk
1 T - 12/28/17, The Leader Fee: \$14.28

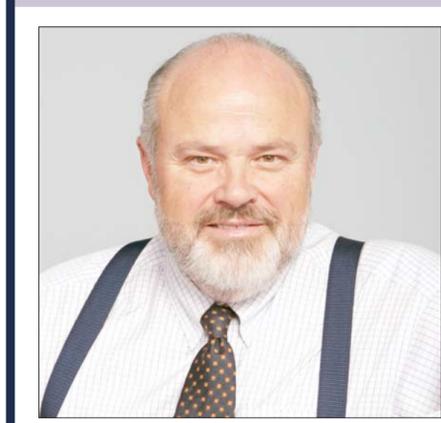
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