

750 Walnut Re-zoning Hearing Continues; Board Asks for EIS

By **CHRISTINA M. HINKE**
Specially Written The Westfield Leader

CRANFORD – The planning board hearing for Hartz Mountain Industries continued August 1 for the re-zoning application for 750 Walnut Avenue, where the applicant proposes to change the current commercial zone to a residential zone. Hartz Mountain's plan calls for 905 apartments within five buildings along the 30-acre property that borders a golf course in Clark, a Conrail line that borders a residential neighborhood, a portion of Raritan Road and Walnut Avenue. It was standing-room only in the municipal chambers.

The planning board hearing began with testimony provided by

the applicant's civil engineer, Jeffrey Martell, of Stonefield Engineering and Design in Rutherford. He gave testimony on a site plan, also called a concept plan, that he prepared. He went over items such as parking, the buildings, the driveways, the fire access road and a landscaping plan.

In discussing the plan, the board made a motion to demand the applicant provide an Environmental Impact Study (EIS). The property at one time was the site of a pharmaceutical company, Mayor Thomas H. Hannen, Jr. noted.

"What is going to be in the EIS? Reason I ask, you pointed out maybe some of the berm can stay if you build the detention underground...you won't find out

what is underground until you get further along, and it was a pharmaceutical facility and the reason why it was zoned commercial was because of that," board member Dan Aschenbach said. He said he would like to know what is going to be in the EIS.

The plan calls for 1,775 parking spaces contained in both surface lots and garages. Planning board member Peter Taylor said the plan shows parking stalls that are sized smaller than the township ordinance requires. Mr. Martell said he used the Residential Site Improvement Standards (RSIS) from the state. The site plan calls for nine-foot by 18-foot stalls, whereas the township ordinance requires parking spaces sized 10 feet by 18 feet. The ordinance also requires a break between every 12 spaces, Mr. Taylor noted.

Should the plan be adjusted to meet the township requirement, Mr. Taylor said the applicant would need to provide more space for parking.

Deputy Mayor Ann Dooley asked if this site could accommodate another parking garage.

"No, without changing other elements," Mr. Martell said.

"Like what other elements?" Ms. Dooley asked.

"Current parking lots, building configurations, etc...It would domino into other changes," Mr. Martell said.

Mr. Taylor later made a comment that under the RSIS that should this site plan be termed a townhouse, and not garden apartments under RSIS definitions, then the applicant would have to provide more parking than it has calculated.

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STANDING-ROOM ONLY...The Cranford Planning Board hearing for Hartz Mountain Industries continued for the re-zoning application for 750 Walnut Avenue, where Hartz Mountain proposes to change the current commercial zone to a residential zone. The hearing, which drew a standing-room-only crowd, went on past midnight. The hearing will continue on Wednesday, September 5, at the Cranford Municipal Building.



Christina M. Hinke for The Westfield Leader

SUITED UP...Cranford Police display body armor and equipment during the National Night Out held in front of the firehouse and the municipal building in Cranford Tuesday. The event had many free kids activities, ice pops and hot dogs.



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DUNKED...Cranford Police Officer James Knight gets dunked in the dunk tank after a boy hit the bullseye and dunked the officer. This was all part of the activities happening at National Night Out in Cranford Tuesday.