

Local Letters to the Editor – continued

phones, or personal paperwork where such personal information is available. These thefts are not just about teens trying to steal pocket change – identity theft as most of us realize can lead to a host of serious problems which are often not easy to resolve.

In terms of the vehicles themselves – if you own a newer attractive car, protect it like you would your own home. There is no more sickly feeling than to walk out to go to work in the morning and have an empty driveway – don't let that be you!

The bottom line here is that when you go to sleep at night this

criminal element I am referring to goes to work.

Recently on Hort Street we saw multiple vehicle burglaries and at least two motor vehicle thefts. This frankly, is the result of thinking, "it can't happen here," but it does and will continue to do so unless we take the easy step to lock our vehicles each evening and protecting our valuables! Believe me, this is not the work of local delinquents, but of an organized out of town area theft ring.

Michael C. Ince
Special Agent FBI (Retired)
Garwood

July Committee Hearing on Affordable Housing - Garwood Is A Lost Cause

I apologize that I cannot attend [Committee Hearing on Affordable Housing (AH) July 25th, Chair Wimberly]. I am the secretary of the citizens grassroots committee, "Citizens Improving Affordable Housing" (CIAH). Our president Jim Burd is in attendance at your hearing.

Please read this into the record.

I am a resident of 25 years in Garwood, NJ, in Union County. Our boro has completed a court-approved affordable housing plan to provide for approximately 90 AH units where 20 were already satisfied by senior housing, leaving 70 AH units. This number was negotiated down with FSHC due to the fact that our less than one-square mile borough was already built out. We do have two defunct factory properties and 1 large factory parking lot that we situated our AH plans and a fourth overlay zone on a mall. It was almost immediately that two developers came forward to propose to build three of the four projects, leaving the overlay zone alone.

We are a very small community, as previously noted 7/8ths

of a square mile. Our population is approximately 4,500 residents. We have 1,501 residential units, of which 36 percent is rental.

These high-density projects were imposed on our borough under threats of lawsuits, just like every other town is being subjected to. To satisfy 60 our 70 AH units, the developers' three proposals included 439 market rate units for a total of 499 units to be built within three years. They are all rental units. Set asides as agreed by our planning board were 10 percent to 15 percent. Density per acre is 30 to 60 units where our existing zoning allows 16 units per acre.

We residents are incredulous of the impacts to our borough as follows over the next three years: Housing units are increased 499/1501 = +33 percent. Population increase of 790/4500 = +35 percent. Rental ratio will go from 36 percent to 65 percent rental/ownership. Our two main roads North and South avenues, which are only 2 lanes each are already at 100 percent capacity. The two main intersections per traffic testimony are at the worst RSIS

rating of F (fail). Yet our planning board approves these projects. Our traffic, infrastructure, programs, services, schools will be all impacted negatively. Many towns are facing these same ratio impacts, hopefully some are here to testify to that.

Because of the circumstance of many towns regretfully dragging their feet regarding Mt. Laurel, I do not think this severe punishment is warranted by the state assembly on the towns. Is gov't supposed to be that harsh to its citizens?

Issues arise such as: no governing bodies of most suburban type towns have any experience in mega-high density projects, proving no critical thinking possible for best achievement and balance for AH units and maintain quality of the towns. They lost control. This poor planning is left to the developers themselves and to the planning board professional who is usually hired part-time and we find has a full-time conflicting job at a consult-

ing firm working for developers. Developers are now cherry picking towns to build based on how much profit they can achieve with very expensive market rate rentals to offset the AH rental rates. We found in Garwood that a developer had "paid up" for a property to be developed thus needing more market-rate units to offset his first cost financials.

As a resident and I hope my voice is supported, I request a moratorium on this overdevelopment that is being created. This issue must be taken up now before the Assembly to resolve before anymore towns' destruction happen. One suggestion would be for the Assembly to create a state agency, similar to the "School Construction Corp" to analyze, re-formulate, identify, distribute and oversee the building of the AH projects to be fair to all communities while providing affordable housing. Possibly publicly-owned land could be also utilized to offset project costs.

To excuse my bluntness, but our Garwood is a lost cause now, a poster child of the failure of a good intention gone awry, what inexperience of our boards sadly wrought. The issue of affordable housing is indeed just, it is what is piggybacking on it that is the misfeasance and destruction.

Thank you for your time and attention and hopefully you can read this into the record and resolve something more proper than just overdevelopment.

Bruce Paterson
Garwood, NJ

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Area Students

Graduate Loyola Univ.

AREA -- Loyola University Maryland recognized the class of 2018 at its 166th Commencement Exercises on May 19. The following area students were part of the Class of 2018:

Mary Hrinkevich of Westfield, received a BA degree in Political Science; Margaret McKay of Cranford, received a BBA degree in Business Administration; Katherine McLaughlin of Mountainside, received a BBA degree in Accounting; John Piassek of Cranford, received a BBA degree in Business Administration; David Player of Westfield, received a BBA degree in Business Administration; Elena Scarano of Westfield, received a BA degree in Speech-Language-Hearing Science.



Courtesy of Tom Kranz/Borough of Fanwood

COMMUNITY GAMES... Fanwood Police Officer Mike Rusin is pictured at the bottle game with an excited participant during Fanwood's National Night Out at LaGrande Park.