



BAGPIPE HOLIDAY TUNES...The Watson Highlanders Bagpipe Band walk through Downtown Westfield while performing for shoppers Saturday afternoon.

Marijuana Legalization

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Avallone. Health insurance programs will not cover medical marijuana because it is "still deemed illegal" by the federal government, she said. State insurance programs will not cover medical marijuana patients' costs until it becomes a "federal Schedule II" drug versus its classification as a Schedule I drug, stated Ms. Avallone.

Ms. Avallone said the New Jersey Department of Health certainly wants to be "involved in the legalization discussion before the fact and not after the fact," meaning any public health concerns should be addressed pre-emptively so the risks can be avoided or severely mitigated, stated Ms. Avallone. She said whether a portion of tax revenue from marijuana legalization will be earmarked for substance-abuse education, prevention or dangers has not been addressed by legislators.

Without any direction from the New Jersey Department of Health, the active role the Westfield Regional Health Department will have in the post-legalization environment will be limited until further notice, stated Ms. Avallone.

Upon a suggestion from the Greater Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce (GWACC), the health board reviewed the Westfield Farmers Market vendor fee schedule. Health Board member Elizabeth Talmont stated that GWACC members had asked if the board of health could review the Farmers Market vendor costs and perhaps consider a "lower fee" for those who

have a table to sell goods.

Board of Health President Thomas K. O'Neill said the board will consider a one-time "vendor fee" or table fee of \$75. The "one-time fee" would allow a vendor access to one event throughout the four seasons, stated Mr. O'Neill. Vendors interested in purchasing a table for only the Farmers Market could pay \$100 under the "new possible fee schedule," stated Mr. O'Neill.

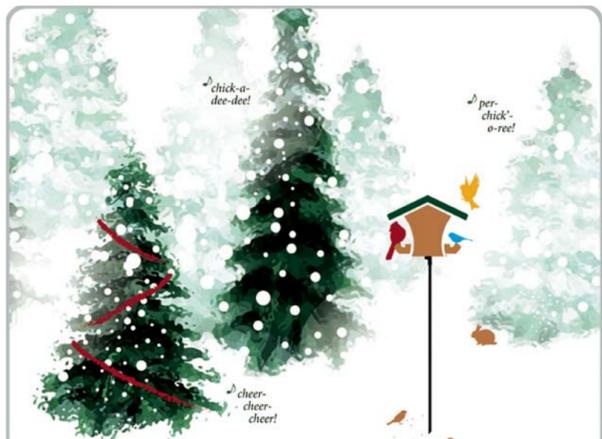
Vendors who wish to have access to all Westfield street fairs and events, including the Farmers Market, can purchase an "all-inclusive vendor pass" for \$125, stated Mr. O'Neill.

Health Officer Helen Mendez said the vendor fees offset the health department's effort and costs it must put forth when protecting consumers throughout the Farmers Market season and during other public events where "street vendors" are present. Vendors often sell food which is prepared, presenting continued risks from a health department perspective which need to be monitored more than "just say, fresh fruits or vegetables need to be," stated Ms. Mendez.

Westfield health officers will check in the beginning of a Farmers Market season and towards the end to assure health standards are being maintained, stated Ms. Mendez. If violations occur or substandard conditions are found, often oversight will become more frequent throughout the duration of the event, stated Ms. Mendez.



A SWISS TRADITION IN WESTFIELD...The New Jersey Workshop for the Arts Alphorns performing in Downtown Westfield this past Saturday.



Oh, What Fun!
Give the Gift of Bird Feeding

25% OFF
one regularly-priced item*

*Valid only at the WBU of Scotch Plains. One discount per purchase. Offer not valid on previous purchases, gift cards, optics, DSC memberships or sale items. Offer valid 12/14/18 thru 12/24/18.



2520 US Highway 22 East, Scotch Plains, NJ 07076
(908) 233-5004 • www.wbu.com/scotchplains

BIRD FOOD • FEEDERS • GARDEN ACCENTS • UNIQUE GIFTS

Cranford Schools Study Discussed at BOE Meeting

By ROBYN ORR-GIOFFRE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

CRANFORD — The Demographic and Facility Study performed by Ross Haber, Ed.D., to ready the district for full-day kindergarten, was discussed at the board of education (BOE) meeting Monday night.

Ross Haber Associates has been providing services to public-school districts since 1995, according to its website. The organization specializes in demographic studies, enrollment projections, attendance zone analysis and redistricting, facility utilization studies and transportation efficiency studies.

Mr. Haber, who the district hired this past spring, describes himself not as a demographer, but as "an educational business consultant."

Hired to do a "preliminary study" for the district, Mr. Haber was hired to consider the "feasibility" of creating a comprehensive middle school for the district and having full-day kindergarten.

In the fall, the district sought to take the plan further, which resulted in a 76-page "data driven" report created by Ross Haber that offers the district 10 options. The Reimagining plan, currently put forth by Superintendent Scott Rubin, Ed.D., is one of those options.

This final report by Ross Haber was made public on the board of education website Tuesday and will be discussed at length at the community meeting scheduled at Cranford High School (CHS) on Monday, December 17.

This meeting was originally scheduled as a question-and-answer meet-

ing, but has now been changed to an informational meeting that will deal specifically with the 77-page report.

In other board business, the board approved to continue to offer a fee-based full-day kindergarten program for the 2019-2020 school year. The cost for the 2019-2020 school year will be at an annual tuition rate of \$7,200 per student, paid monthly at \$720 per month. Classes will be held at Walnut Avenue School and Bloomingdale Avenue School.

The full-day kindergarten program will have two classes, with a minimum of 20 and a maximum of 21 students enrolled in each class, determined by a lottery system.

The board acknowledged and expressed appreciation to board member Daniel DeMarco, who, on December 31, 2018, will have successfully completed four years of dedicated service on the Cranford BOE.

The board offered thanks to Mr. DeMarco for his vision and leadership in helping to develop an exemplary educational program for the students of the Cranford Public Schools and for countless hours of preparation as a board member, for his attendance at and participation in numerous board meetings, retreats and seminars, his representation on various committees, and his dedication and service to the students and staff of the Cranford school district.

New hires approved by the board include Scott Steiner, a chemistry teacher at CHS, and Shannon Lorenzo, a Spanish-language teacher at CHS.

The board's reorganization meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 7.

Westfield Council

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ing to serve on a board or commission can submit an application by tomorrow, Friday, December 14.

Addressing the potential of the legalization of marijuana in New Jersey, Mayor Brindle had said she would seek public input on the matter, and establish a commission next year to evaluate and make recommendations. She said no decision will be made about the town allowing marijuana to be sold in the municipality without "broad input."

A joint statement with Mayor Brindle and Superintendent of Schools Margaret Dolan, Ed.D., was released on Monday, the mayor said, about an incident at Edison Intermediate School. "We jointly condemn all acts of racism, anti-Semitism, bigotry, and expressions of hatred targeting any minority group, religion, or ideology," she said.

During public comments, three residents from the Gumbert Park neighborhood had spoken about the impacts of the ice rink that was installed there by Ken Anderson, owner of Union Sports Arena, to operate an ice-hockey rink in an agreement with the town to lease the land.

Susan Levy, who lives two doors away from the rink, said prior to the rink opening the neighbors were advised noise was not going to be a problem, parking would be sufficient, lighting adequate... She noted that since the rink is now covering the storm drain on the basketball court that the adjacent playground is covered in ice. She said it is a "Tale of broken promises." She compared the "thwack" of a hockey puck to a gunshot, said construction began before the contracted start date of October 1, and went on until 11 p.m. in the nights leading up to the opening day, that parking is insufficient, and that additional lights were installed around the area, among other issues.

"A commercial hockey rink does not work at Gumbert Park," she said.

Colleen Meacock, who lives across the street from the parking lot intended for the players and workers of the rink, said the sounds of the rink, buses, and people outside can be heard from her children's bedrooms and "is intensified at night." "My children have to tune out noise just to do homework," she said. Also, the new LED lights installed at the streetlight, a spotlight at the baseball field, and parking lot lights now can be seen from inside her home.

She noted that ice time is available 16 percent of the time for public sessions, and 50 percent of that is for hockey. Ninety-two percent of total usage is for ice hockey, and the majority of ice hockey sessions are allocated to residents outside of Westfield, she said.

"Westfield and Garwood residents are bearing the burden for a for-profit business owner," Ms. Meacock said. She asked the town to "find a better location for the ice rink."

Councilwoman JoAnn Neylan said, "I take exception to the way this process has been handled from the beginning...the issues you present are not fair to anybody in any ward."

"Mr. Anderson has been a bad neighbor," Ms. Neylan said.

Mayor Brindle said the town council meeting is not the forum to discuss the rink.

"I think this is the proper forum. I don't think they should be marginalized to a listening session," Ms. Neylan said.

Mayor Brindle also said that she has heard from other residents in the neighborhood who have voiced that they are happy with the rink, and said all voices should be heard.

Ms. Neylan also noted that in the parking lot behind the stores in Garwood adjacent to the rink that drivers are "reckless."

"These are very serious issues that are unfortunately impacting a very tight area...I'm sorry you are enduring this," Ms. Neylan said.

Jeff Pate, of Salter Place, noted that the planning board denied a subdivision on New England Drive after residents were opposed. "Please give us that same courtesy," he said.

Resident Janice Karlen Pollack of Summit Avenue asked for policing of on-street parking in her neighborhood because commuters park there daily all day and are not being ticketed. The result is she cannot place her leaves on the street and she cannot park.

Another resident made a comment about a stolen car from the premises of the 7-Eleven on Central Avenue that was then used in an armed robbery in Irvington. Shawn Mullen of Carleton Road, which is nearby 7-Eleven, said the theft and armed robbers are a detriment to the neighborhood. He called on the mayor to "gut" the planning board of any of the members who voted to approve the application that allowed the 7-Eleven and consider a number of changes to the master plan including banning 24/7 operations of a convenience store.

The council had then entered into executive session. The town council reorganization meeting is to be held Thursday, January 3, at 6:30 p.m.

Ice Rink

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

surprised to learn the influx of parking congestion generated by the rink has impacted businesses in neighboring Garwood.

Cherrybrook Premium Pet Supplies is one such business, located on North Avenue, and operated by Claudia Loomis, who addressed last Thursday's meeting.

"We have had customers come in continuously complaining to us that they can't find a place to park," she said. "Those are customers that care enough to come back and shop our store at a less busy time. I'm sure there are other customers that can't find a place to park and move on to Pet Valu or Pet Supplies."

Ms. Loomis went on to cite a recent local business Black Friday event where her sales were down 24 percent from the previous year.

"There has to be something done so the hockey parents aren't parking in our lot," she said.

At the end of the meeting, the advisory committee stated it would compile a list of pros and cons based on input from the listening session. When asked if this information would be made available to the public, future Westfield Recreation Commission meetings were mentioned as the place where the public would be able to learn of the advisory committee's conclusions.

The rink's 2019-2020 winter renewal will be an issue facing the Westfield Town Council, where the Gumbert rink will have to be approved through another council vote.

The advisory committee estimated that next year's proposal could be put forth in March, around the time of this season's rink closure — when Gumbert Park transitions back to hosting basketball and baseball.



BAAAA...At Sunday's Live Nativity and Petting Zoo, held on the front lawn of The Presbyterian Church in Westfield, children got to feed sheep, a baby goat, a young cow and a lama while costumed characters from the congregation brought the nativity scene to life.

Hartz Mtn. Provides EIS For Proposed Development

By CHRISTINA M. HINKE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

CRANFORD — Engineer for Hartz Mountain Industries LLC, Jeffrey Martell of Stonefield Engineering, presented an Environmental Impact Study (EIS) of 750 Walnut Avenue, dated November 28, to the planning board Wednesday. Hartz is seeking to construct a 900-unit development at the site.

Planning board member Dan Aschenbach and residents questioned why a study for contaminated soil was not performed in the EIS, given that the site was home to a variety of manufacturing and industrial companies, including pharmaceuticals, and the adjacent Hyatt Hills golf course is a brownfields redevelopment site after General Motors shut down. Attorney for Hartz Mountain, James Rhatigan, cited the township ordinance does not specify such a test is necessitated.

Resident Kathy Allegro asked, "Do you recall in the August planning board meeting a discussion of an Environmental Impact Study by the board members and residents whether or not there was contamination in the soil going back to 1902 of manufacturing there?"

"I do," Mr. Martell responded. "Did that seem to you that the board and residents...are concerned about rezoning the property?" Ms. Allegro inquired.

"We understand the concern, certainly, and we don't by virtue... we don't offer an opinion that it shouldn't be. At this particular time, it is not necessarily part of the strict requirements or request for rezoning. We acknowledge it needs to be done. It is something the applicant has chosen to do at a later time...there are standards that DEP has that need to be met. They would likely require some action on the part of the applicant..." Mr. Martell said.

She asked if he felt knowing any environmental hazardous material was on the site was something the board would need to know before making its decision.

"I don't think that is a decision that I make," Mr. Martell said. "I think that's the board's ultimate decision."

Resident Gerry Caprario recited a list of former operations that occurred at 750 Walnut Avenue, noting Shamrock Technologies, which had chemicals on site; Summit Trust Co.; Wilson UTC Inc., a transportation freight and cargo company; Schering Corp., which had pharmaceutical preparations; Beechum Products USA, a state cleanup site related to SmithKline Beechum, Inc.; LabCorp, and a hazardous-waste program run by Fuji Poly, Inc., as well as Hartz Mountain Industries, Inc.

Mr. Martell said he did not look into any of the public reports on these companies that provide information pertaining to the environmental aspects, but had known some of those companies were operating at the site. He said Hartz had not provided any information related to these subjects.

Mr. Caprario also asked about the type of fill that Melick-Tully and Asso-

ciates found in soil test pits. Mr. Martell said the soil was not natural, but said it is not "characterized as unique." Mr. Martell said he had no direct information from Hartz Mountain regarding if they were the owner who would have added the non-native soil to the property.

"We are confident that the site can be developed ultimately as a residential use with the DEP oversight," Mr. Rhatigan said later.

Mr. Aschenbach later said Hyatt Hills placed two feet of soil over the land there to contain the contaminated soils.

The Hyatt Hills site is continuously monitored with testing wells given the original soil contains methyl tertiary-butyl ether, a volatile organic compound that belongs to a category known as oxygenates. Oxygenates are added to fuel to increase its oxygen content.

Mr. Aschenbach said he had a concern that Hartz would investigate it later. "There is a decision here whether this should be residential or commercial," Mr. Aschenbach said.

Mr. Martell also said the Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority (RVSA) had no concerns of the added sewage intake that would come should the commercial property be developed as residential. Hartz Mountain is proposing to create 905 apartments, and two clubhouses with two swimming pools.

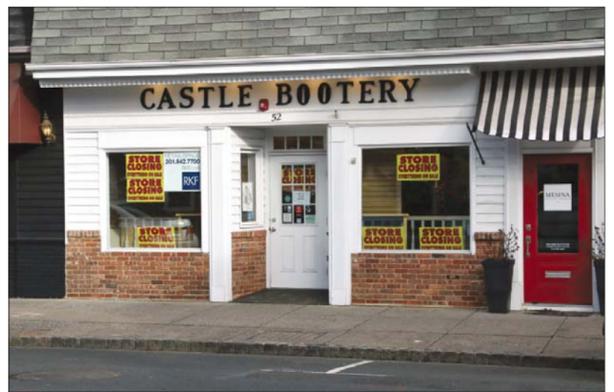
RVSA stated in a letter to Stonefield that its "conveyance and treatment facilities have adequate capacity and the Township of Cranford has adequate flow rights. Please note however that the Authority operates a trunk sewer system only and is not responsible for the collection system within the member municipality. Therefore, the Authority is unable to provide verification of the adequacy of the township's internal collection system capacity and/or any information regarding the location of existing facilities in the vicinity of the site in question, or design, connection, usage, or frontage fees imposed by the township..."

Also, Mr. Martell performed stormwater management calculations. The drainage plans consist of two underground detention basins, expanding one above-ground detention basin, and creating one new above-ground basin, he said. He said the plan would have a slight positive impact to stormwater runoff.

No negative impacts, in Mr. Martell's opinion, would occur to the historic Sunny Acres district, which is a neighborhood located within about 1,600 feet, or the Rahway River.

There was no cross-examination by the planning board's engineer.

The application is expected to continue in 2019, when Keenan Hughes, the applicant's planner, and the traffic engineer, Karl Pehnke, would present further testimony. Mr. Hughes was present at the beginning of the board meeting but the board said it was not informed that he would be present, so he was asked to come back on another date.



END OF AN ERA...Castle Bootery, above, is closing its Elm Street store after 70 years in Downtown Westfield.



PRIME REAL ESTATE...Victoria's Secret on East Broad Street in Westfield is to close at the end of January 2019.