



DOING THEIR PART...These youngsters sell cupcakes and lemonade at Sunday's Junior Women's Club (JWC) of Westfield's yard sale fundraiser at the home of Michele Higgins on Saint Marks Avenue. The event raised money for the JWC's Scholarship Fund.

Russo Details Petro/Casale Demolition, Cleanup of Site

By MICHAEL BONACCORSO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

GARWOOD — Russo Development held a town-hall meeting last Wednesday evening at Lincoln School to address any resident concerns regarding public safety during the Petro/Casale building demolition on South Avenue and subsequent cleanup.

Russo Development attorney Christopher Minks stated "paramount" to the cleanup process is "human safety." Mr. Minks said residents should be informed the cleanup "has not begun," commencing once the school year ends.

All demolition processes will follow guidelines set by the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and state law, stated Mr. Minks. The meeting was held to ease residents concerns surrounding "baseless claims and fear mongering," not because of actual impending hazards, stated Mr. Minks. He said rumors had begun to develop, suggesting residents will be exposed to "(airborne) cancer-cluster smog," stated Mr. Minks.

"(Russo Development) will have licensed and certificated professionals who will be at the site daily," Mr. Minks said.

The professionals hired have "untainted and unblemished records in doing this work," Mr. Minks said.

Resident Sal Piarulli, a member of the Garwood Board of Education, said Russo should make sure it is "doing better" than EPA standards.

"The EPA said the World Trade Center (site) was clean," said Mr. Piarulli, describing air quality after the September 11th tragedy.

Mr. Minks said Russo Development requires that its subcontractors and employees observe standards exceeding federal law and state law requirements. He said the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) has stricter cleanup guidelines than the EPA, thus benefiting New Jersey residents.

"Let's get this thing going," said resident Pat DiFabio.

Mr. DiFabio said he lived across from the ALCOA aluminum plant as a child and worked there as a teenager. ALCOA aluminum owned the property before it was sold to Petro/Casale.

"I will be 90. I ain't dead yet,"

said Mr. DiFabio.

EcolSciences Vice-President Peter Hansen said he will oversee the Petro/Casale property soil cleanup. Mr. Hansen said guidelines are followed to assure soil contamination is confined to the property. Mr. Hansen said contaminated soil is removed the same day it is excavated. He said all contaminated soil will be transported in a contained process via barrels or utilizing tarp.

Environmental Health Investigations, Inc. President William S. Kerbel said he will be responsible for overseeing the demolition process regarding the plant's physical structure. He said the hazardous pollutants in the material were approved for construction purposes many years ago when the Petro/Casale plant was constructed. Years of medical research has shown the materials used when "pulverized could release cancer-causing contaminants through dust (asbestos)," Mr. Kerbel stated.

Mr. Kerbel said the air will be monitored for dust particulates. He said if dust particulates exceed specific guideline levels, the demolition must cease for a given period of time.

The dust particulates are tracked via advanced technology in real time, stated Mr. Kerbel. During demolition, water will be sprayed as per procedure at the site to suppress the dust originating from the site.

Russo Development's Demolition Project Manager, Roman Gorfinkel, said he will oversee the demolition on a daily basis, making sure all rules are followed. Mr. Gorfinkel said all hazardous material hauling loads will arrive at predetermined dumping sites that deal specifically with such materials.

Borough Clerk and resident Christina Ariemma said she works across the street from the demolition site and has "full faith" Russo Development will foster a safe demolition environment protecting residents including herself.

Mr. Minks said the demolition process including important dates, activity and any possible demolition shutdowns, including environmental setbacks or hazards, will be updated on the borough website.

Mr. Minks said any residents who still have concerns can reach out to Russo Development.



FRESH TOMATOES...This mother checks out the tomatoes at the first Westfield Farmers Market of the season. The market, now located on the north side of the train station, is sponsored by the Greater Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce.

Mayor Addresses Lawsuit Regarding Police Officers

By KATE BROWNE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

MOUNTAINSIDE — Mountainside Mayor Paul N. Mirabelli read a statement at Tuesday's borough council meeting regarding a lawsuit that was recently filed by five Mountainside police officers and a dispatcher against the police department alleging a hostile work environment created by the actions of Officers Andrew Huber and Thomas Murphy and Police Chief Allan Attanasio.

The mayor began by stating that the recent allegations of police misconduct do not reflect the community's values and assured the public that the council is evaluating all the issues that have come to light and has hired an independent attorney, William Maderer, a former assistant United States attorney, to conduct an investigation of any allegations. The mayor said the borough is cooperating with the Union County Prosecutor's Office. In addition, the borough has retained Christine A. Amalfi, an attorney with the law firm of Gibbons LLC, to defend the borough in the lawsuit. Ms. Amalfi is chairwoman of the firm's Employment and Labor Law Department.

According to the mayor, the officers named in the lawsuit have been suspended and Lieutenant Joseph Giannuzzi has been put in charge of the department. In addition, in order to restore public trust in the police department, the borough has retained Joseph J. Santiago, who has a track record of reorganizing police departments. Mr. Santiago's website states that he served as the director/superin-

tendent of the Essex County Department of Public Safety, the Newark Police Department, the New Jersey State Police, the Trenton Police Department and the Irvington Police Department.

Mayor Mirabelli reminded residents that all employees of the borough deserve to work in a positive and productive environment and any behavior that falls outside of the code of conduct will not be tolerated. He concluded by noting that because of the pending litigation there are limitations on the amount of information that can be shared with the public but stated that the council was fully committed to keeping residents informed of all developments relating to the lawsuit as the law permits.

In other business, a representative from Jersey City Power and Light (JCPL) made a presentation on planned infrastructure improvements, including new loops and ties at the Springfield power substation, which are intended to minimize the impact of power outages. Several council members commended JCPL for the accuracy of its predictions regarding power restoration and for its regularly scheduled conference calls which updated the community regarding the storm response and power restoration efforts. The council voted to authorize the appointment of Brian Garcia, Michael Perrotta and Richard Leonardis as volunteer firefighters. Also, Councilwoman Deanna Andrea thanked all of the residents who participated in the Memorial Day ceremonies and parade.

Westfield Teacher

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Ms. Kaidariades told *The Leader* that Mr. Silbergeld regularly gave her and other girls shoulder massages in class. Additionally, she discussed an incident when they were alone in the teachers' lounge where he kissed her on the cheek, and that she felt uncomfortable. She added that while she no longer has the e-mail, she recalls sending him a question regarding her senior project and that at the end of Mr. Silbergeld's response he told her how pretty she looked in class that day. Ms. Kaidariades also said that she e-mailed the superintendent of Telluride schools but did not receive a response.

Westfield School Superintendent Margaret Dolan issued the following statement to *The Leader*: "The superintendent of a school district in another state contacted me on May 29, 2018 regarding a statement made by a 2004 graduate of Westfield High School relating to a former WHS teacher who left the Westfield Public School District in 2013. We have cooperated with the other school district.

"The well-being of our students is of paramount importance. We expect staff members to adhere to the district's Code of Ethics, as well as all applicable New Jersey statutes and

regulations, and we encourage our students and staff to reach out to a person with whom they feel comfortable, whether it is a parent, a guidance counselor, a building administrator or a staff member, if they have a concern."

The Westfield Code of Ethics says, in part, that teachers "shall not use professional relationships with students for private advantage." The code was approved on December 3, 2002 and reviewed on March 9, 2015.

In April, Governor Phil Murphy signed into law the "Pass the Trash" bill, which requires schools to ask about any sexual allegations regarding teachers when they move from one district to another and also requires administrators to tell receiving districts about any allegations and grants them immunity from civil liability. The law also prevents schools from entering into any severance agreement which would destroy the evidence or expunge the teacher's record after their departure from the district.

Former Assistant Union County Prosecutor Scott Kraus told *The Leader* that there is a five-year statute of limitations on sexual assault cases in New Jersey, but there is also a five-year statute of limitations that begins on the victim's 18th birthday for those who are assaulted when they are minors. Mr. Kraus said that it is possible to push the statute longer given that some women might not have realized a crime had occurred. He said that when a significant amount of time has passed between an incident and the current date, it is more challenging for prosecutors to bring charges. Mr. Kraus added that in these types of cases victims may have an easier time in a civil proceeding where a "preponderance of evidence" is required, versus the "beyond a reasonable doubt" requirement of a criminal proceeding.

There is a two-year statute of limitations on civil matters, but that time frame can begin from the time that a person discovers that the incident was damaging, according to Westfield attorney Brian Schiller.

Attorney Daniel Zemke of Telluride, who is representing Mr. Silbergeld and Ms. Pignoli, told *The Leader* his clients have "no comment."

A phone call to the Telluride school system was not returned as of press time.

Editor's Note: Due to the nature of the allegations and the age of the women at the time of the incidents, they are not being identified by name.

GW Primary

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giving back to the community with or without an official title," Ms. Guerrero said.

Councilman Marc Lazarow, who supported Ms. Todisco and her team, said he was "thrilled and excited our town believed in the Todisco, Ince and Benoit campaign."

"I am so excited for them to present their ideas for the entire town," Councilman Lazarow said.

Ms. Todisco's uncle and Garwood resident John Todisco said his family is "so proud of her (Sara).

"I wish my father and her grandfather (a lifetime Garwood resident) was here for this. I know she will remain committed to our awesome borough," Mr. Todisco said.

Mr. Ince's wife, Robyn Ince, said, "The people have spoken. The campaign was very professional and a well-informed, issue-focused campaign."

Republican Primary candidates were uncontested. Ms. Cuccaro received 150 votes as the mayoral nominee. Republican council nominees include Kimberly Salmon, receiving 148 votes, and Jennifer Sirak, garnering 142 votes.

Recycling

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than 60 days over one year, except in the Central Business District. Plus, a home cannot be rented in the short term for more than 30 consecutive days. It does not affect those who rent out their home for long periods of time to one person, say for a year or longer, Town Attorney Tom Jardim replied to resident Bob Burslem's question. Currently, there are about a dozen homes for rent on Airbnb.com, Councilwoman Dawn Mackey said.

"It's affecting quality of life" for neighbors who have complained to the town, but previously there was no ordinance in place to restrict short-term renting, Councilwoman Mackey said during the conference session held prior to the official meeting. "It's been happening for years...but the town has not had a mechanism to step in and help the neighbors," Ms. Mackey said.

There was a prior version of the ordinance introduced in April by the council but it was referred to the planning board, which made requests to make it more "Airbnb-friendly," Councilwoman Mackey said.

For now, the town is looking for the neighbors to reach out to town officials to notify them of someone not following the ordinance so the town can monitor the property and enforce the ordinance. Homeowners who are in violation of the ordinance could face a fine, among other actions that would follow under the state law.

An ordinance was introduced to amend the salary ranges for administrative personnel for the town, which is done annually. The salary changes reflect a 1-percent increase in January 2018, retroactively, and a 1-percent increase in July 2018.

Mr. Gildea introduced the town's new public information officer, Kim Forde, who started the position on Monday, June 4. She is working 25 hours over Monday, Wednesday and Friday in town hall, and is to be paid an hourly rate of \$43, with no benefits. Her duties will include communicating messages from the town and its various departments via social media and the town website. The duties may change overtime, Mr. Gildea said, given that it is a new position. The goal is to have consistency in communications across all the departments. Ms. Forde has been blogging *The Fordeville Diaries* for the past seven years, and before that was vice-president, public affairs and communications for American Express, according to her LinkedIn page. She is a Westfield resident.

A resident of Prospect Street, Chelsea Krouse, asked the council

to consider an ordinance that would not allow or limit businesses from leaving their door open when their air conditioning is on. Mayor Brindle said she would discuss it at an upcoming merchant meeting. Councilman David Contract said New York City has such an ordinance in place. Councilman Frank Arena said, "If you're a small business in town, and your door is open, you're open for business...let's let our business entities determine if they want to pay a higher electric bill."

In conference, the council gave the go ahead for the Westfield Community Center to hold a rummage sale on Saturday, July 28, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., between Downer and West Broad Streets, where residents can sell belongings they are looking to get rid of.

Also, two liquor licenses are to be renewed that are owned by The Office, the license of which has been inactive for two years, and Jeffrey's, the license of which has been inactive for four years. Jeffrey's license is in the process of being transferred. Councilman Contract asked if the town could take action to oppose a license being renewed if it is not being used, saying it causes economic harm to the town. Mr. Gildea said doing so could risk the town losing the license.

Councilman Arena announced that Westfield resident Traci Gleeson's nephew, Brett Bramble, is participating in Walk Across America to bring awareness to opioid abuse. He will be in Westfield on Saturday at 9 a.m. at Bovella's Bakery, where Councilman Arena will meet him and walk with him to Mindowaskin Park. Ms. Gleeson lost her niece, Brittany, who is Brett's sister, in 2014 to an opioid overdose. See more at brettbramblewalks.com.



RUNNING FOR CENTENNIAL VILLAGE...Runners take part in Sunday's Centennial Village Velocity 5K Race in Cranford. The event raised money for The Centennial Village Group, which works for the improvement of Cranford's Centennial Village District.

Joseph Sarno Resigns from Council, Moving to Scotch Plains

Dear Ms. Christina Ariemma, Honorable Mayor Lombardo, and members of council, please accept this letter as my formal resignation from my position as Councilman effective immediately, as my wife and I will be moving to Scotch Plains to move into our new home and begin our next journey. This announcement comes with a heavy heart as I have sincerely enjoyed my time on council serving the people of Garwood.

Being a Garwood Councilman has been one of the most rewarding experiences in my life. Despite our differences, I will miss being on the dais discussing various issues and working with each of you for the betterment of this great borough. I

am deeply appreciative of the numerous opportunities being Councilman provided me and the skills it helped me build in being a better professional at home and at work. I feel better prepared in taking on different challenges every day and I can thank being an elected Councilman for that. I look forward to reconnecting in the future and am available as a resource to each of you.

I wish the Borough of Garwood good luck and fortune as it disembarks on a new journey and I only wish this borough and its people the very best as it moves forward. Thank you and God Bless.

Joe Sarno
Garwood



ELEGANT EVENING...Lifelong friends gather for Westfield High School prom night Saturday as they look forward to graduation and beginning their next chapters. The prom was held at Pines Manor in Edison.

Courtesy of Kara Revor

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