

## Scotch Plains-Fanwood HS Graduates 400 in Class of 2018

By MICHAEL BONACCORSO  
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS – Four hundred students received diplomas during last Thursday's Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School graduation commencement.

Principal David Heisey greeted students and their families with a welcoming address, stating, "As you go out into this world, remember what hard work looks like."

Principal Heisey provided advice to graduates stating that they should continue to "constantly strive to find deeper meaning and value in life, while staying grounded in life's main purpose."

Student speakers included Valedictorian Madeline Bord, Salutatorian Olivia Barcia and Class President

Taylor Diggs.

"Springsteen sings 'Glory Days, well they'll pass you by,'" said Miss Bord, noting the relevance the last 12 years had to all the graduates' lives. She said she wanted to take a break from the "24/7 news cycle" world to acknowledge her peers' accomplishments. She said the 2018 class realized "numerous accomplishments, including winning county titles in soccer, bowling, golf and volleyball."

Other class accomplishments included 50 students graduating with the National Honor Society designation, while 10 students were recognized as National Merit Scholarship Commended Students. Graduate Patrick Gannon was recognized for receiving national distinction from the College Board 2018 National

Hispanic Recognition Program.

Miss Bord also acknowledged the music department's achievements, including the Moonglowers' saxophone section, which has been "ranked number one in the state."

"The lesson here is this: when we open our hearts, we may find some of the best people we will ever know," said Olivia Barcia.

Miss Barcia said the childhood movie *Toy Story* introduced a life lesson for all graduates to remember.

"Looking past jealousy and allowing others into your life may not only lead to more love in your heart, but it also may lead to you becoming a better person," she said.

Miss Barcia stated that she advises all her peers to remember they "can do anything no matter what you have gone through in the past."

"That is one of the most important things we can take with us as we move on to college, employment, the military, or anything else. Take advantage of every opportunity and never, ever, stop believing in your dreams," Miss Barcia said.

Class President Diggs said high school taught students "the importance of making connections."

"There are people you will come across in life that will forever change you," Miss Diggs said.

She said friends "taught us how to be better people, to love, and respect our differences. They taught us there is beauty in all of us, they taught us friendship makes this world a better place."

Senior Chorus members performed George David Weiss and Bob Thiele's "What A Wonderful World."

Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education President Nancy Bauer and Superintendent of Schools Margaret Hayes, Ed.D., also provided comments to the graduates and their families.

The high school band performed the recessional as students and faculty proceeded from the field.



PROUD GRADUATES...Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School graduates stand at the start of last Thursday's commencement ceremony held at Perry Tyson Athletic Field.



THE SPFHS CLASS OF 2018...Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School graduates walk on the field at the start of Thursday's graduation ceremony held at Perry Tyson Athletic Field.

## County Clerk's Office to Be Renovated, Reconfigured

By PAUL J. PEYTON  
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

COUNTY — The Union County Freeholders last Thursday approved a \$244,000 architectural contract for the renovation and reconfiguration of the Union County Clerk's office in Elizabeth.

County Clerk Joanne Rajoppi said The Musial Group of Mountainside was the lowest of the three bids received. She said it is estimated the work, which will be done while keeping the office open, will take 18 months to complete. The contract is for design services, construction administration and inspection services. She said some of the office opera-

tions, such as the passport office, are in a confined space and the operations have outgrown the area.

"Our passport office can only fit maybe eight or nine people at a time and the lines go all the way out down the corridor. Our elections office is extremely small...there just isn't enough room," she said.

She also said her office has outgrown the computer space for its "big" IBM computer. She said Musial will configure walls and ceilings. She also said as the books in the records room are scanned in an effort to digitize county records, the books are removed, thus freeing up space in the area.

The board also approved a contract change with E-Z-GO Textron, Inc. of Augusta, Ga., for the purpose of providing food and beverage carts at the Warinanco Sports Center in Roselle. E-Z-GO was initially contracted with for the lease of golf carts. The new contract is for \$1,065,897.

Among the other resolutions approved by the board was \$4,000 for Cranford's Fourth of July celebration, \$1,200 for Plainfield's Fourth of July event at Cedar Brook Park, and \$4,000 for Springfield's Independence Day event at Meisel Park.

The board approved a resolution concurring with Fanwood on installation of a pedestrian sign at the intersection of La Grande Avenue and Second Street.

At the start of Thursday's meeting the board gave out checks totaling \$134,600 to 15 towns as part of the Recycling Enhancement Grants program. The program, which aims at improving local recycling rates, is administered by Union County with funding from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

The projects that received funding include infrastructure improvements to public recycling centers, and new recycling bins or storage containers for schools, parks, train stations and other public facilities.

The grants awarded are: Berkeley Heights, \$7,200; Clark, \$10,000; Cranford, \$7,500; Elizabeth, \$10,000; Hillside, \$7,600; Kenilworth, \$9,000; Linden, \$9,500; New Providence, \$10,000; Scotch Plains, \$7,800; Springfield, \$6,000; Summit, \$10,000; Union, \$10,000; Westfield, \$10,000; Roselle, \$10,000, and Rahway, \$10,000.

The Freeholder Board also received a presentation Thursday on reducing child gun deaths. Arlene Zezza of Moms Demand Action spoke on the group's Be SMART Campaign, which stands for Secure, Model, Ask, Recognize and Tell.

She noted that through OPRA (Open Public Records Act) requests Moms Demand Action determined that Berkeley Heights issued 202 handgun permits in 2017 while Clark

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## Planning Board Advances On Parker Redevelopment

By FRED T. ROSSI  
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — The planning board on Monday gave its approval to a report declaring the Parker Gardens property on Terrill Road as an Area in Need of Redevelopment, clearing the first hurdle in turning the 13.5-acre property into an apartment and condo development that will help the township meet its affordable-housing obligations.

The plan is to construct apartments containing 228 units along with two

rows of townhomes that will front on Terrill Road. A 2.6-acre wedge of property adjacent to the Terrill Middle School property will be remediated by the developer and turned over to the township for use as playing fields. A third of an acre of property across the right-of-way at the rear of the Parker property also will be turned over to the township by the developer.

The township council will next review the report before giving its approval to what will be the first significant housing development resulting from the recently-concluded legal settlement between the township and several builders. The formal designation of the property as an Area in Need of Redevelopment allows the municipal government to have some control over how the property is developed, much as it is doing with certain properties in the downtown business district.

At the start of the board's meeting, Chairwoman Paulette Coronato, a member of the downtown redevelopment committee, said she and several other committee members had recently toured downtown Princeton and concluded that its architecture, design and style were "an ideal situation for Scotch Plains to emulate" in its own downtown.

Planner Michael Mistretta, who is advising the township on redevelopment matters and led the Princeton tour, told the board that he had seen Princeton's downtown deal with many of the same issues that Scotch Plains presently is wrestling with, such as an excess of surface parking lots. He pointed out that those surface lots in Princeton — similar to what currently exists in Scotch Plains next to the municipal building and behind the stores

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## Fanwood to Hold Hearing Monday on Budget Changes

By ZOE RADER  
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

FANWOOD — Private personnel negotiations and amendments to the 2018 municipal budget were discussed at Monday's borough council meeting.

Amendments included an agreement with Scotch Plains for shared services and a total tax levy that will overall slightly increase the budget, among other grants and payments for programs such as the Clean Communities program and the conservation center.

Overall, the budget will increase by roughly a couple thousand dollars, the council said. The increase did not faze the governing body, however, and Mayor Colleen Mahr said the borough is doing "alright" as it heads into its seventh month of the year.

All the amendments were unanimously passed by the council. No

comments were offered in a public hearing on the budget, which was introduced on May 21. The introduced budget was \$9.9 million (including the library tax), which included a \$6.1-million tax levy. The amendments are published in a public notice on page 19 of today's issue.

Some of these changes were requested by the state government, while others were made based on the council's review.

The council said a "user-friendly" version of the budget will be available online sometime this week for the public to better understand its content and perhaps offer commentary at another budget public hearing to be held on Monday, July 2.

After the amendments were passed, the council entered a roughly 45-minute closed executive session for a discussion on personnel issues. Once

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TIME TO CELEBRATE...Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School graduate Emily Hill smiles for the camera during Thursday's graduation.



NEXT STOP, COLLEGE...Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School (SPFHS) graduates display the colleges they are headed to in the fall during Thursday's SPFHS graduation ceremony held at Perry Tyson Athletic Field.

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