



Fred T. Rossi for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times
LOCAL GOVERNMENT WEEK...Scotch Plains Mayor Alexander Smith, right rear, and Councilman Ted Spera, left rear, meet with residents and answer questions on Monday as part of New Jersey Local Government Week.

Freeholders Recognize April As Organ Transplant Month

By PAUL J. PEYTON

Specialty Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

COUNTY — In recognition of National Donate Life Month in Union County during April, the freeholder board last Thursday presented a resolution to Elisse Glennon, vice-president and chief administrative officer of the New Jersey Sharing Network. The board also recognized Eric Walano of Cranford for his decision to donate a kidney to an individual in need.

Freeholder Chris Hudak said the Sharing Network, the headquarters of which is in New Providence, is the state's organization for organ and tissue donation. He said the Network works to educate New Jerseyans about donating organs and tissue by checking the box on driver's licenses. The Network also works directly with families who have lost a loved one and want to become donors.

He said one donor "can impact eight lives with their organs and 75 with a tissue donation."

Ms. Glennon said organ donation has increased 35 percent over the last five years, "so the education and the awareness is certainly working." She said there are 115,000 people nationwide on the waiting list for a "life-saving organ transplant." She said 4,000 of those on the waiting list reside in New Jersey. Residents can visit savenlives.com to find out how people in a particular town are on the list in need of a transplant.

"Chances are that you know someone whose life has been impacted by organ and tissue donation; either they are waiting or they received a transplant or their loved one passed away and gave that gift at the time of their passing," Ms. Glennon said.

A review of the waiting list showed six people from Westfield, seven from Scotch Plains, six from Cranford and one from Garwood are on the list for a transplant.

Freeholder Alexander Mirabella said Eric attended an event in 2017 called "Hearts for Emma," based in Cranford. After attending the event he decided to become an altruistic kidney donor, where the donation is

for anyone in need of a transplant rather than a family member.

Among the resolutions on tonight's regular meeting agenda will be the awarding of the county's \$1.5-million infrastructure and municipal grants for all 21 towns in the county. The grant is funded out of proceeds from the sale of Runnells Specialized Hospital in 2014.

Amy Wagner, director of the Department of Economic Development, said the amounts for municipalities will be based on a number of factors such as the town's population and the types of projects. She said the freeholders' fiscal committee will review all the applications.

The qualified management and concessionaire contracts for the Warinanco Sports Center in Roselle will continue under Kemper Sports Golf Group, LLC, which took over from Sports Facilities Management, LLC in November. Ron Zuber, director of parks and recreation, said the resolution is for a new contract.

Another resolution recognized John's Meat Market in Scotch Plains on its 80th anniversary. Also, Cranford residents Nicholas Ryan Macchi and Brendan Hanlon are being recognized on achieving the rank of Eagle Scout.

Parks Plan

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Union County Football Club, stated Mr. Judka.

"We're just happy to provide input. We're excited we can play apart in the re-examination process. With over 2,000 active members, we are one of the largest recreation organizations in New Jersey," Mr. Judka said.

Residents are encouraged to fill out the re-examination survey online at www.publicinput.com/WestfieldMP, Mayor Brindle said. The online survey will allow respondents to provide feedback on all aspects of the reexamination, stated Mayor Brindle.



Paul Lachenauer for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times
GO PIRATES...The Seton Hall team marches in Saturday's Mountainside Youth Baseball opening day parade.



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750 Walnut Rezoning Does Not Meet Master Plan Goals

By CHRISTINA HINKE

Specialty Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

CANFORD — In the continuation of the application to rezone 750 Walnut Avenue from commercial to residential, Business Administrator for the Cranford Schools, Robert Carfagno, said currently that the eight Cranford school buildings are "full."

"They are at capacity," Mr. Carfagno said. Currently, class sizes throughout the schools, range from 20 to 25 students per classroom, he said. The board of education has set a maximum class size of 25 students, he said. Additionally, classes in the schools are "sharing spaces," he said.

"We cannot handle space-wise either projection," referring to the school board's consultant Ross Haber's projection and the Hartz Mountain consultant's projections for school-aged children who would be living at the proposed apartments. Also, the school's budget wouldn't allow for the extra staff, technology and supplies.

"It wouldn't fit in the 2 percent (state) cap," Mr. Carfagno said of the costs associated with the influx of additional students. So, what the schools would end up seeing is larger class sizes, which could be in excess of 30 students in the elementary level and in excess of 40 students in higher grades, Mr. Carfagno said.

The increase of students would affect the "café-torium" where children eat lunch and have gym and other activities. He said the lunch space is at capacity.

He said the current statutory requirements does not allow the school board to budget for an increase of students that may happen, rather only after the students have been enrolled.

Based on the school's attendance zone map, students who would live at 750 Walnut Avenue would attend Walnut Avenue School in grades K-2, Livingston Avenue School in grades 3-5 and Hillside Avenue School in grades 6-8.

The costs associated with additions include classrooms, which could cost about \$550,000 without furnishing it, traffic in and out of facilities, security upgrades and enhancements. Also costs over the budget cap would have to be voted on by the residents in a bond referendum.

In a case where a developer built a school building — "the school wouldn't be able to staff it," Mr. Carfagno responded to a question from Mr. Rothman. The school board could put a question to the voters to go over the budget cap for staff, he said.

Students who would be sent out-of-district for special-services could be two under Hartz's proposal or five students with the school's consultant's proposal. Each out-of-district student costs \$87,000 and transportation can cost an additional \$20-25,000, Mr.

Carfagno said.

Resident David Pringle of Walnut Avenue asked if the schools cannot ask taxpayers to pay for the added costs could that mean a loss of services provided to students.

"Potentially yes," Mr. Carfagno said. Following Mr. Carfagno, the board's planner, Ray Liotta, offered planning testimony. He is to return on Wednesday, May 8 at 7:30 p.m. to present his fiscal-impact analysis, Board Attorney Mark Rothman said.

He presented a zoning exhibit dated April 2019 that depicted a zoning map of the township highlighting all the multifamily zones in the township since this an application for a multifamily zone. He said the actual density per acre in the multifamily complexes in the downtown area along South Avenue are between 32 and 47 units per acre. Cranford Crossing and Riverfront Station are both within 1,000 feet of the Cranford Train Station in the downtown core, while Woodmont Station, Lincoln Apartments and Edward K. Gill Apartments are within 3,000 feet of the train station. 750 Walnut Avenue is more than 6,000 feet away from the train station and downtown core, the map depicted, and is proposing 30 units per acre. He said in comparison the Birchwood Avenue development currently in development is further away from the downtown is at 15 units per acre.

He referred to the master plan adopted in 2009, and detailed the goals of the plan that would not be furthered by rezoning 750 Walnut Avenue, which included to implement sensible land use policies to avoid adversely impacting the school district, preserve small town character and historical architecture, and concentrate density in downtown core.

The "proposed density is largely out of character with the neighborhood and area where this site is located," Mr. Liotta said of the proposed 905 apartments to be located on the 30.5 acres of land at 750 Walnut Avenue. The "density is not consistent with the master plan vision and goals where multi-family should be," he said. Also, the buildings proposed, some of which are five stories and 67 feet high, Mr. Liotta said, "that volume and height is inconsistent with the surrounding neighborhood and master plan" and is not permitted in the zone.

Mr. Liotta said the site is large enough to prove a variety of multifamily structures, including townhomes, that could address a goal of the master plan.

He also said the loss of close to 400 jobs would be lost and would not achieve a goal of the master plan.

The impact to the surrounding neighborhood would be a "substantial detriment," Mr. Liotta said.

Derrick Nelson

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Derrick Nelson. He was a tremendous principal and made an impact on all that met him. Thoughts and prayers with the Nelson family."

Westfield Board of Education member Brendan Galligan said, "Dr. Nelson was a transformative leader who inspired everyone that had the pleasure of working with him to strive to be their best self. While his loss creates an immense void, his lasting impact on the entire Westfield Public School system will never be forgotten."

School board member Michael Bielen said, "No words can truly reflect the positive impact he had on everyone. Whether it was to celebrate our successes or mourn with us during tragedy, he was the positive role model that we wanted our children to follow. He will be greatly missed, but we are all better people as he inspired our students, teachers and community as a whole."

Dr. Nelson was WHS principal since February 2017, having served as acting principal beginning in August 2016 after being appointed assistant principal in July 2012. He began his administrative role in Westfield as assistant principal of Roosevelt Intermediate School in 2010. Prior to coming to Westfield, he was an assistant principal with the Orange, N.J. Public Schools from 2007 to 2010. He also taught for six years in the Orange Public Schools prior to that.

He had been a CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear) officer in the United States Army for over 25 years as a member of the Reserves.

According to his LinkedIn account, he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Mass Communication and Media Studies from Delaware State University, a Master of Arts degree in Educational Leadership and Administration from St. Peter's College, and a Doctorate in Educational Leadership and Administration.

A candlelight vigil for Dr. Nelson was to be held Wednesday night, at 8:15 p.m., in front of the high school at 550 Dorian Road. The vigil was organized by the WHS Student Government Association (SGA) with the assistance of the WHS Parent-Teacher-Student Organization (PTSO).

Visitation will take place on Mon-

day, April 15, from 5 to 9 p.m., and Tuesday, April 16, from 10 to 11 a.m., at St. John's Baptist Church, 2387 Morse Avenue, Scotch Plains. Dr. Nelson's funeral will be held Tuesday, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the church. Arrangements are by the Plinton Curry Funeral Home in Westfield.

A petition is circulating online seeking to rename the high school after Dr. Nelson.

Hi's Eye News Editor Avery Conrad said the staff "has been completely humbled by the responsibility of commemorating Dr. Nelson" in the paper's Friday, April 12, issue, available at hiseye.org.

"This man meant so much to the community," said Adam Holtzman, one of the paper's sports editors. "Even if you never spoke a word with him, his impact was felt the moment you walked in as a freshman," he said. "We wanted to commemorate him and honor his legacy."

Avery added that she hopes the paper's coverage, "shines a light on how much he meant to everybody."

Dr. Nelson, a Plainfield resident, is survived by his fiancée, Sherond, their 6-year-old daughter, and his parents.

Zoning Board

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

although his concerns about a business being operated seemed to be alleviated after listening to the couple's responses.

Mr. Sarkar and Ms. Parmar last week sought to retain the containers via a temporary operating permit, which Board Chairman Ken Anderson pointed out is "a short-term permit for something not typically allowed."

He also told the couple that the zoning board has to "look at applications with the future in mind," saying that a large garage could, years down the road when a new owner is living in the house, be ideal for a business or as a place for someone to live, both of which are disallowed in that neighborhood.

In the end, the board voted five to two — with Kendra Duran and Rich Polhamus voting no — to approve the permit allowing the 10 containers to remain for one more year, regardless of whether a garage is built or not.



Paul Lachenauer for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times
ON YOUR MARK, GET SET, GO!...These youngsters try to get a jump start during Sunday's Cranford Cougar Dash Fun Run in Nomahegan Park. The Cougar Dash 5K and Fun Run benefits Cranford's Walnut Avenue School and Livingston Avenue School PTAs.

Utility to Replace Natural Gas Lines in Cranford

By MICHAEL BONACCORSO

Specialty Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

CANFORD — Elizabethtown Gas will begin replacing natural gas lines throughout Cranford in the upcoming year, stated Elizabethtown Gas Company engineering director Michael Scacifero at Tuesday's township committee meeting.

The vintage gas lines operation total 87 miles underneath Cranford's streets. Mr. Scacifero said Elizabethtown would "like to start a dialogue" including the township engineer to assure the project is completed with respect to township ordinances and with efficiency for residents.

"Utility projects (without coordination to one another) "make us (committee members) look pretty stupid," stated Township Commissioner Thomas Hannen to Elizabethtown representatives. Mr. Hannen described the residents angst towards road projects coupled with a "recently paved road being re-dug up" for multiple-utility projects over a couple years span.

Mr. Hannen said Cranford residents pay for a majority of "milling and paving projects." He said ometimes a utility company will only repave "half the road."

"It just isn't going to cut it," Mr. Hannen said.

Elizabethtown will honor Cranford "moratorium ordinances," ordinances that require utility companies to fully repave a road dug up for utility work in its entirety, stated Mr. Scacifero.

Roads not in the moratorium are repaved "just" in the area where the road was compromised for the utility project, Mr. Hannen noted.

"We want to coordinate the project in a comprehensive manner with both the township committee and other utility projects in town," said Mr. Scacifero.

Mayor Patrick Giblin said Elizabethtown publicly addressing the township committee and "having reached out" to the township engineer is "a start to coordinating" the projects "in an effective manner."

Mr. Scacifero said Cranford's engineering department will keep Elizabethtown updated to which roads are in moratorium, which roads other utility companies will need to access, and which roads are planned for "flood mitigation improvements" or "restoration."

The "aggressive replacement process" of natural gas lines has been underway for roughly 10 years throughout Union County, stated Mr. Scacifero. He said Elizabethtown's gas main and pipeline project will not structurally interfere with the New Jersey American Water company's water main replacement project.

Elizabethtown will canvass each neighborhood before each project commences, he said, saying door knockers will be placed on each door with project information and company contact information.

PSE&G's regional public affairs manager Michael G. Coyle addressed the township committee regarding a separate utility project. The 69,000-volt power lines would be placed on poles along South Avenue, Lexington Avenue, Chester

Lang Drive, Walnut Avenue and Lincoln Avenue, according to a map shown by PSE&G. There would also be lines underground that would follow under the train tracks to meet up with the proposed substation at 750 Walnut Avenue.

"The new lines will provide reliability, capability, and resiliency in providing power to residents," Mr. Coyle said.

The lines will connect power substations in various towns and run along the public-right-way, stated Mr. Coyle. A proposed substation will be located at 750 Walnut Avenue, stated Mr. Coyle.

An agreement has not been finalized for the 750 Walnut Avenue site, and PSE&G is doing its due diligence, Mr. Coyle said. Should PSE&G and Hartz Mountain not be able to come to terms for a purchase of about 6 acres of land at the 30.5 acre site, PSE&G would probably rebuild the Clark substation located by the ShopRite in Clark on Central Avenue, Mr. Coyle said. This could mean a new route for the high-voltage transmission wires to connect to that Clark substation would need to be created, Mr. Coyle said. Also, Mr. Coyle said PSE&G is looking to place the substation at 750 Walnut Avenue near Hyatt Hills Golf Course and the Conrail line.

The project is a "pole-for-pole" replacement, stated Mr. Coyle.

Any trees on public property or private property which must be compromised for the pole installation will be replaced at a 2-to-1 ratio, stated Mr. Coyle. PSE&G will pay for the tree to be cut down and the two new trees, which are planted to replace the old tree.

"Often homeowners may ask for the tree to be removed only. We may need to cut the tree down, but the homeowner does not want a new one planted," said Mr. Coyle.

Mayor Giblin said trees, which are not replanted on private property's could be replanted elsewhere to assist flood mitigation.

PSE&G's vegetation manager Jay Kaplan said the proposition could be "worked out."

Deputy Mayor Ann Dooley honored four Green Team members with an Earth Day proclamation at Tuesday's meeting. Green Team co-chair Donna Bacich, member Riona Wilson, alongside new members Rosario Fico and Mary Fernanda received the proclamation.

Ms. Dooley said Earth Day is a reminder for the "need to maintain biodiversity while understanding the ecological impacts of expanding urban areas."

"It is more important than ever to defend environmental progress," said Ms. Dooley, while reading the proclamation.

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Paul Lachenauer for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times
FIT KIDS...The Westfield Area Y sponsored the 10th Annual United Healthcare Health Bee Tuesday night at the Westfield Y's Bauer Branch. Seven local middle schools competed in a quiz-show-style competition about health and fitness.