

Rec. Panel Votes, 7 to 2, to Allow Temp. Hockey Rink to Continue

By KATE BROWNE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — Hundreds of Westfield and Garwood residents attended Monday's Westfield Recreation Commission meeting where the panel voted 7-to-2 to recommend to the town council to allow Ken Anderson, the owner of Union Sports Arena, to continue to operate a temporary ice rink at the Gumbert Park basketball court. The issue will now go to the town council, which will vote and also be responsible for drafting the terms and conditions of the contract with Union Sports Arena.

Commissioners Larry McDermott and Peter Echausse cast the dissenting votes, noting that while they fully

support all youth sports including hockey, the rink's location in a residential neighborhood was inappropriate because of the noise, traffic and the aesthetics of the 40-foot-tall white tent.

The meeting, which lasted more than two hours, included passionate presentations from residents in favor and opposed to the rink. Tom Pedas, a Garwood resident asked how the commission members would feel if dozens of children, idling buses, construction vehicles, and Zambonis operated outside their homes at 9 p.m. at night and several members of the Westfield Girls Hockey Team described the positive impact the rink has had on their program. Others noted

that while the town's Master Plan might eventually include a permanent rink there was an immediate need for ice time and to lose the rink would negatively affect the local hockey community.

Commission Chair Gary Fox presented data on the estimated costs of installing a temporary rink at other locations in town including Tamaques Park and Memorial Field. In both cases, the annual site preparation estimates were in excess of \$150,000 and the cost of installing utilities were in the range of \$50,000 to \$100,000. Commission member Russ Howell detailed the results of his interviews with the owners of several small business owners near the rink, who described minimal impact to their operations.

Commission member Ruth Malone stated that she intended to advise the town council, to consider responding to residents' concerns by requiring the rink to close earlier and to limit the hours of operations for holidays such as Thanksgiving and Christmas.

The Westfield Rink Advisory Committee's report on the rink's operations noted that the town received upgrades to sidewalks and picnic areas valued at approximately \$35,600. In addition, after closure of the rink, approximately \$6,600 worth of concrete blocks and stone dust was donated to the Westfield Department of Public Works and \$1,400 worth of shrubs were planted. The town spent \$3,600 of additional Department of Public Works expenses and incurred \$9,800 for crossing guard salaries.

Westfield residents accounted for 60 percent of public skating attendance the equivalent of 4,400 users. The index on the traffic and safety impact included 36 "calls for service" to the Westfield Police Department between November 1, 2018 and

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Mahr-Led Ticket Sweeps In Fanwood In Primary

By PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

REGION — Fanwood Mayor Colleen Mahr and her line of candidates for the Fanwood Democratic Committee defeated a line backed by the Union County Democratic Committee and its chairman, Senator Nicholas Scutari, in Tuesday's Primary Election.

Mayor Mahr and Fanwood borough council members Kathy Mitchell and Jeff Banks and council candidate Kevin Boris, a former councilman, ran unopposed in the Primary for mayor and three council seats, respectively. Mayor Mahr is unopposed in the General Election, while the three Democratic council candidates will face Republicans Brian Walter and Jay Morris.

Mayor Mahr announced before screaming supporters at a victory party at Fabio's Bistro in Fanwood that her "Column B" candidates had swept all 14 seats in Fanwood's seven voting districts to maintain local control of the party in the borough. She said they won by margins of four to one or better, including the seat formerly held by Union County Freeholder and Fanwood resident Alexander Mirabella.

"We won each and every one of our districts, all seven. We swept by over four to one," Mayor Mahr said.

Unofficial tallies as of Tuesday are as follows: In District 1, Kathy Mitchell, who was not challenged, received 120 votes, while Bill Lee garnered 111 votes to 15 for his challenger, Michael Marcovecchio. In District 2, Steven Falco defeated Robert Brennan, 97 to 6, while Patricia Walsh bested Barbara Brennan, 99 to 5. In District 3, Scott Sinclair beat Scott Brelinsky, 133 to 2, while Amy Boroff beat Kerry Brelinsky, 132 to 3. In District 4, Adele Kenny beat Jennifer Ann Campion, 142 to 3, and

Matthew Glennon defeated Michael Campion, 142 to 2. In District 5, John Celardo bested Mark Brink, 154 to 16, while Erin McElroy Barker defeated Anita McNamara, 150 to 20.

In District 6, Salvatore Fazzino defeated Alexander Mirabella, 104 to 29, and Mayor Mahr defeated Phyllis Mirabella, 111 to 24. In District 7, Thomas Plante bested Jeffrey Briel, 88 to 8, while Patricia Plante defeated Vanessa Hobbs, 89 to 8.

Mayor Mahr thanked the Fanwood Democratic Committee members as well as Fanwood voters who she said "came out in historic numbers" to vote, referencing the traditionally low turnout in Primary Elections. Turnout was 10.7 percent in Cranford, 6 percent in Westfield and 7 percent in Mountainside.

"We are diverse, we are dedicated and we are here because we deserve to be here," Mayor Mahr told supporters.

Three Union County incumbent Freeholders won a nine-candidate Freeholder race in Tuesday's Democratic Primary Election.

Unofficial tallies show Freeholders Bette Jane Kowalski, 8,309; Sergio Granados, 7,997, and Rebecca Williams, 8,508, winning the race, followed by Lorraine McNeil, 1,655; Jack Molenaar, 1,447; Anthony Esposito, 1,408; Wilma Campbell, 4,170; Alex Lospinoso, 3,785, and Sylvia Turnage, 3,730. The winners will face Republicans Peter Kane of Summit and Glenn Gelband of Mountainside in November.

Incumbent County Surrogate James LaCorte of Union defeated challenger Lisa McCormick of Rahway, 8,524 to 4,609, in that Democratic race. Mr. LaCorte faces a challenge from Republican Peter Lijoi of Summit in November.

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GREEK FEST AND FRIENDS...The 2019 Holy Trinity Greek Fest, held on Friday night at Westfield's Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church, was a chance to meet friends while enjoying "A Taste of Greece" with souvlaki, spanakopita, falafel, gyro and baklava, as well as music and dancing.

Town Council Adopts Ordinances, Crossing Guard Mgmt. Outsourced

By CHRISTINA M. HINKE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — The council at its Tuesday night regular meeting adopted ordinances that would amend code pertaining to tree preservation, allow weekend overnight parking at Lot 3 at the train station by South Avenue, setting annual salary ranges for town administration positions and installing a stop sign at Boynton Avenue at the intersection of Elizabeth and Boynton Avenues.

The hearing on the ordinances to designate the Reeve House and Triangle Park as local historic landmarks were moved to the Tuesday, June 18 council meeting to allow for the notification of area residents.

Crossing guard management services are to be reallocated to an outside firm.

The low bid of \$609,496 by All City Management Services was accepted by the council, with the contract to begin July 1, 2019 and ending on June 30, 2020. The Police Department has been managing the program, and also has had police officers filling in as crossing guards when guard positions are not filled, Mayor Shelley Brindle said. She said none of the crossing guards currently employed will lose their jobs. Police Chief Christopher Battiloro said at the conference session the change of management to an outsourced company "will put manpower back towards enforcement activities."

FVHD Architects and Planners LLC was awarded a one-year contract not to exceed \$17,400 by resolution to review and evaluate the Town Council Chambers and meeting rooms within the municipal building for upgrades including mechanical, electrical and plumbing systems, as well as a review of the audio-visual broadcast video system.

Salaries of town administrative personnel were set for 2019, retroactive to January 1, 2019. Salaries include Town Administrator James Gildea, \$184,442; Chief Financial Officer Scott Olsen, \$153,121; Town Clerk Tara Rowley, \$103,771; and Police Chief Christopher Battiloro, \$153,500, among a list of other personnel. Payroll for library staff also was passed for 2019.

The town received a Sustainable Jersey Grant of \$2,000, as well as a Clean Communities Grant of \$61,023.

The town also passed a resolution that would allow for the acceptance of bequests and gifts for public art throughout Westfield. One public art project that is being discussed with members of the governing body is a mural by artist Ricardo Roig, Mayor Brindle said. The mural is being considered to be painted at the train line underpass between South and North Avenues by the circle, as well as another mural on the other side of the street. Mr. Roig's sketches of the mural will soon be available on the town website for the public to see, and the town is eyeing having one mural completed this summer. NJ Transit will first need to approve the mural. So far, James Ward has offered to donate \$5,000, Mayor Brindle said.

Liquor license renewals for the 2018-2019 term were granted by resolution. Those include retail consumption licenses for Ferraro's, Chez Catherine, Echo Lake Country Club, Akai Lounge and 16 Prospect Wine Bar and Bistro, as well as retail distribution licenses for Trader Joe's, Liquor Basket of Westfield, Nos Vinos, Peterson's Wine Unlimited, ShopRite Liquors of Westfield and Central Avenue Wines and Liquors, and Club Licenses for the Italian American Club, Centennial Lodge and American Legion. Seven more liquor licenses have yet to be renewed, but license holders have until the end of June to submit the paperwork to the town, the town clerk said during the conference session held before the regular meeting.

PSE&G has postponed the meeting with council members that was scheduled

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CAMPAIGN KICKOFF...The Westfield Town Republican Committee kicked off their campaign for town council last Thursday at Ferraro's restaurant in Westfield.

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A TASTE OF GREECE...Delicious pastries, especially loukoumades, or honey puffs, draws crowds of fans of the fried dough that the women who served it boasted are, "Better than zeppoles!"

Board of Health Discusses Legionnaires Cases In N.J.

By MICHAEL BONACCORSO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — After five people died with 22 infected from a legionnaires outbreak in New Jersey last week, the Westfield Board of Health addressed "resident safety concerns" at its meeting Monday night. Westfield Regional Health Department Director Megan Avallone said discovering what prompted the outbreak is a multi-step process. She said containing the outbreak with such a quick response has been a "win" for the New Jersey health community.

Legionnaires disease, also known as legionellosis, is a form of a typical pneumonia caused by any type of legionella bacteria, stated Ms. Avallone. Symptoms include cough, shortness of breath, high fever, muscle pains and headaches.

Drinking water containing the virus in certain concentrations is often the cause or the source, stated Ms. Avallone. She said New Jersey's drinking water is not dangerous to consume, adding that New Jersey Department of Health officials will

investigate where each infected person was to draw a conclusion on a possible source.

DNA testing of the bacteria and the suspected source can be a way to verify the suspected source to eliminate possible further infections, stated Ms. Avallone. She said those often most vulnerable to legionnaires bacteria are those who frequently smoke or who have suppressed immune systems.

"We have found the recent cases were not necessarily those in long-term-care facilities or who had multiple comorbidities before infection," stated Ms. Avallone.

Ms. Avallone said "more likely than not" a source with an overwhelming bacteria count will be discovered as causing the outbreak after a further state investigation is completed.

The health department director stated that she will remain in contact with the state's Department of Health to receive updates on the legionnaires source with plans to disseminate the updates to concerned residents.

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GARWOOD ROCKS...The Garwood Rocks Street Fair was held June 2, along Center Street, and is sponsored by the Greater Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce. The annual music festival and street fair features live entertainment presented by Crossroads, hundreds of vendors, a classic car show, delicious festival food, beer garden, activities for kids at the Kids Zone, and much more.

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