



EIGHTY YEARS IN SCOTCH PLAINS...John's Meat Market celebrated its 80th anniversary with festivities last Saturday in Scotch Plains. There was the smoky smell of free, mouth-watering barbecue and the Doo Wop sounds of singing group Jersey Jukebox wafting through the air. Pictured left, State Assembly Republican Minority Leader Jon Bramnick (R-21st, Westfield), center, pays a visit to Vincent Losavio, co-owner of John's Meat Market.

PSE&G Community Meeting On 69kV Lines Attracts 240

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

CRANFORD — At a community meeting held at the Cranford Community Center last Wednesday, PSE&G representatives answered questions from 240 residents about a planned 69kV electrical wire route.

The route will replace existing utility poles along Walnut Avenue, Lincoln Avenue, Lexington Avenue, Chester Lang Place and South Avenue, stated PSE&G public relations representative Rebecca Mazzarella. The project is a "pole-for-pole" replacement of 73 poles, meaning that the intended total pole count will not increase, stated Ms. Mazzarella.

PSE&G was upgrading the 50-year-old 26kV lines with "standard 21st century 69kV electric lines," Ms. Mazzarella said.

"As populations have increased, consumer electronic needs have evolved. The additional 69kV network will alleviate demands on the remaining 26kV network," said Ms. Mazzarella.

She said the upgrade is required to provide "safe, adequate and reliable" service throughout the utility's service territory.

PSE&G representatives were placed at several different tables based on resident concern areas to "de-mystify" any rumors, misunderstandings, or fallacies surrounding the project, stated Ms. Mazzarella.

She said the project will be both underground and above ground based on practicality, considering surrounding infrastructure independent of PSE&G equipment and property. Ms. Mazzarella said constructing the entire project underground would be six to seven times more expensive than above-ground utility pole construction.

"Additional costs unfortunately flow through to customers. That is why we safely reduce project costs making rational installation decisions while planning our routes," said Ms. Mazzarella.

She said line voltage has no effect on the surrounding electromagnetic field and the new lines will be comparable in "existing background levels."

Ms. Mazzarella said all trees removed on public or private property can be replaced at the owner's discretion at a rate of two trees planted per one removed. Should homeowners choose not to replant a tree on their private property, PSE&G will plant the tree on public property to help in flood reduction, stated Ms. Mazzarella.

Resident Justin Quinn said PSE&G is utilizing the wood preservative pentachlorophenol (penta) on the power line poles, which he said is a "known

carcinogen." Mr. Quinn stated that penta was banned in over 26 countries throughout the world, which was acknowledged at the Stockholm Convention in 2015.

Mr. Quinn said the poles will be placed into the soil, degrading over time, releasing penta into Cranford's high-water table, which can come in contact with children, adults and family pets.

He said other utility companies settled class-action lawsuits because penta contaminated a bay.

Mike Freeman, a leading expert in the United States on penta, said penta "can be hazardous to the men working with it in a laboratory." However, he said penta is the industry standard.

"It's important to understand that treated utility poles do not pose a significant risk to people, animals, or the environment," Mr. Freeman said.

He said penta is a regulated pesticide registered for use as a wood preservative in utility poles and regulated by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Penta has been used for over 80 years as 183 million utility poles are treated with penta, stated Mr. Freeman. Penta helps preserve the structural integrity of a pole, ensuring fewer trees are needed as replacement poles.

"There have been no known incidents associated with penta-treated utility poles and customer hazards," Ms. Mazzarella added. "Penta poles are safer for utility workers to climb. All the existing poles set for replacement contain penta."

Mr. Quinn said he was "outraged" PSE&G has not taken the time to test the soil or groundwater surrounding existing poles treated with penta.

"Lead paint, second-hand smoke, cigarettes, excessive ultraviolet radiation exposure and asbestos were all considered standards as well," said resident David Pringle, previously the campaign director for Clean Water Action.

Livingston Avenue third-grade student David Ursic said, "These poles could kill the lives of children. Several hundred children live by these poles. All my friends."

"PSE&G believes the project will have no permanent impact on property values," said Ms. Mazzarella.

She said studies have "proven" after the "initial installation phase" that property values return to normal.

The new poles will have the same spacing "in between them" as the existing poles, stated Ms. Mazzarella. She said the replacement poles will range from 65 feet to 75 feet in height.

PSE&G notified Cranford officials about this project in January. PSE&G presented project information to the Cranford Township Committee on April 8 at a workshop meeting.

Students Discuss Imagine, Superintendent's Retirement

By KIMBERLY A. BROADWELL
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — To begin the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education meeting that was held last Thursday evening, a handful of district students talked about their involvement in the Imagine grief counseling program offered to students within the district.

The students not only benefited themselves by learning to deal with their own personal grieving but also received training to be able to share with peers.

Imagine, A Center for Coping With Loss is located in Mountainside.

According to the students and their district mentor, Liz Knodel-Gordon, Imagine offers peer grief support services to youth ages 3 through 18 and also to young adults from 18 to 30 years old. Imagine is a not-for-profit agency.

In other business, middle-school student Ethan Murray spoke during the public portion of Thursday's meeting about how he and many of his fellow students would miss Superintendent of Schools Margaret Hayes, Ed.D., after her retirement. He read aloud an appreciation letter that he had written to her.

After 13 years heading the school district, Superintendent Hayes announced her retirement in March and that her last day for the district will be Wednesday, July 31.

Ethan thanked Superintendent Hayes for supporting so many of the events that the students participate in, noting that, "she can be seen many times at our events and productions." He simply stated, "Thanks for being there."

The superintendent likewise thanked Ethan for his comments and responded, "your words really touched my heart. All the years that I have worked for the district, no one has ever written a letter like that to me."

During her 48 years in the education field, Superintendent Hayes also has served as the assistant superintendent for curriculum, instruction and assessment for the Scotch Plains-Fanwood district. She has been with the Scotch Plains-Fanwood school district for 17 years, serving as superintendent since 2006.

She also was an elementary-school principal for the Old Bridge school district and the Parsippany-Troy Hills public schools. In addition, she served as the K-12 supervisor of social studies for the Parsippany-Troy Hills school district.

She also currently is part of the New Jersey Network of Superintendents and the National Superintendents' Roundtable.

In other business, the board unanimously voted to accept the donation of seven Durham busses to be used to transport all high-school seniors to Project Graduation in Bridgewater. Project Graduation is an overnight, non-alcoholic celebration for all district seniors following graduation ceremonies.

The next board of education meeting will be held on Thursday, May 30, at 7:30 p.m., in the administration building at Cedar Street and Evergreen Avenue in Scotch Plains. The Student Recognition Ceremony is scheduled for Monday, June 10, at 7:30 p.m., at Evergreen School.

Garwood Ladder Truck

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fore "decisions are made."

Mr. McCormack said he emphasizes the decision-making process so residents understand their safety and tax dollars are considered in every decision he supports.

At the start of the meeting, Mayor Todisco read a proclamation honoring Scotch Plains residents Tami Eagle Bowling and Lauren O'Brien, who co-founded the METAvivors of New Jersey, a Facebook group.

Ms. Bowling is a stage-4 breast cancer survivor. Stage 4 breast cancer has a 3 to 6 percent survival

rate, Mayor Todisco said.

Ms. Bowling has dedicated her survival to promoting breast cancer awareness, the mayor said. Ms. Bowling has raised \$50,000 per year since 2015 for the cancer research and advocacy group MetAvivor.

The next Breakfast with the Mayor will take place this Saturday, May 18, at Lincoln School from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Superintendent of Schools Teresa Quigley, Ed.D., and Garwood Board of Education President Christine Guerriero will be in attendance, stated Mayor Todisco.

Scotch Plains Plan. Bd.

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ing the financial plans for the proposed developments and hopes to bring in the two developers — Advance Realty Investors, a Bedminster-based developer that has been involved in similar-type redevelopment projects in Harrison and Bridgewater, and A. Gonsosa Development from Springfield — to

meet with committee members privately in June to provide details about their proposals and to get input from the members.

Reform

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way are predominantly populated by people of color, while areas west of the Parkway are mostly white. She felt the legislation would end up "entrenching the color line" in the county.

Mayor Smith said that "we're becoming all colors," noting that in Scotch Plains, a third of the population is considered to be in some type of minority category. "We need to make it clear we're not redlining," he said.

Deputy Mayor Josh Losardo said redlining is "not what we want to do" and said the committee and supporters of the legislation need to "be careful that we're not sending the wrong message."

Bramnick Calls for Hearing on PSE&G Poles in Cranford

TRENTON — Assembly Republican Minority Leader Jon Bramnick (R-21st, Westfield) has called on PSE&G to hold a public hearing before running high-voltage electric poles through residential neighborhoods in Cranford.

"The citizens deserve open discussion on the risks," said Mr. Bramnick. "PSE&G needs to be up-front with residents and discuss the project in a public hearing."



FAIRVIEW FOLIAGE...The community is invited to Fairview Cemetery and arboretum for a springtime walking tour of its flourishing foliage. Fairview Cemetery, located at 1100 East Broad Street, Westfield, will host its first spring tour, highlighting some of the 99 cataloged species of trees that reside within the cemetery grounds, while the spring blossoms are at their peak. The tour will be led by Tom Ombrello, professor of biology at Union County College, and is scheduled for Sunday, May 19, at 2 p.m. Those interested in participating should arrive at the Gallows Hill Road entrance. The tour is free to the public, and parking is available on the premises.

Township Launches Home Improvement Program

SCOTCH PLAINS — Scotch Plains Township has announced a new Home Improvement Program (HIP). The HIP will assist houses occupied by very low, low and moderate-income households by providing up to \$22,000 as a forgivable loan for needed home repairs or replacements of major systems in conformity with the state's rehabilitation subcode statute.

According to a township press release, program forgivable loans include zero percent interest, no monthly payment and are forgiven after 10 years if the property owner complies with the program guidelines. Funding is also available for rental properties. This program is required as part of the township's Affordable-Housing Settlement and Housing Element and Fair Share Plan.

HIP is a township-wide program for Scotch Plains residents. Both owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing units are eligible to receive funding for rehabilitation provided that the occupants of the units meet court-approved income limits and the units are determined to be standard and for primary residency only. Eligible uses of funds include roofs, foundations, heating, electrical, windows, insulation, plumbing and more.

"The township council and I invite eligible homeowners to apply for funds in our home improvement program," Mayor Al Smith said. "I strongly encourage homeowners to take advantage of this wonderful program. Where else can you get a zero percent forgivable home improvement loan?"

The program will process new applicants on a first-come, first served basis. To learn more, including the income limits and to submit a pre-

liminary application, visit <https://hip.cgph.net/scotch-plains-home-improvement-program-2/> or call (609) 664-2781.

General contractors can apply to register to receive free bid notices for program construction opportunities. Visit <https://hip.cgph.net/new-jersey/>, email contractorswanted@cgph.net or call (609) 664-2783.

For additional questions about the HIP and affordable-housing obligation, contact Tom Strowe, municipal housing liaison at (908) 322-6700, ext. 317 or tstrowe@scotchplainsnj.com.

Redevelopment

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The mayor said the committee will proceed on the "very clear" assumption that state aid for the construction of a new library will not be available any time soon despite the approval by voters in 2017 of a \$125-million library bond ordinance that was to be used to fund such construction. Access to the funding has been delayed as regulations are still being formulated in Trenton.

In other business, Mayor Smith said he was confident after meeting with state officials that the recent decision by the state Department of Environmental Protection to designate a significant portion of the downtown business district as a flood zone will not be much of a detriment as the redevelopment gets underway. He said that some new engineering will be required for the new buildings, but that it should not delay the process. The committee also had some discussions with East Second Street business and property owners about the study being done to determine which properties — all of them privately-owned — should be designated as Areas in Need of Redevelopment and what that designation means to them and how it might affect property owners' relationships with their tenants.



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BRAVING THE RAIN...Runners brave a chilly drizzle on Tuesday evening to take part in a 5K run hosted by the Fanwood-Scotch Plains YMCA and Scotch Plains-Fanwood PTA Council.

