



SCOTCH PLAINS

THE TIMES

of

Scotch Plains – Fanwood



OUR 40th YEAR—ISSUE NO. 32-99

USPS 485200
Periodical — Postage Paid at Scotch Plains, N.J.

Thursday, August 12, 1999

Published
Every Thursday

232-4407

FIFTY CENTS

Scotch Plains Revitalization Plan to Give ‘Cohesive’ Feel to Stores in Downtown

By DEBORAH MADISON
Specially Written for The Times

The revitalization of Downtown Scotch Plains has been an ongoing joint venture by the Scotch Plains Business and Professional Association and Municipal Government for many years, according to Association President, Ray Pardon.

The Downtown Task Force, comprised of Mayor Geri Samuel, Township Manager Thomas Atkins, Building Inspector Robert LaCosta, Councilman Martin Marks, and Mr. Pardon, was formed to implement the improvement needs of the Downtown District, which stretches from Route 22 to East Second Street and from Terrill Road to Westfield Road.

The Downtown Development Committee, formed in 1994, was the predecessor of the Task Force, and focused on “analysis and research” of the Downtown improvements,

while the Task Force, formed in 1998, has been focused on implementing the actual plans, according to Mr. Pardon.

“The goal of the Task Force is to bring a renewed sense of hometown feeling to the center of town, along with creating greater incentives to attract a wider variety of businesses to the area,” Mr. Pardon said.

The town theme, “Enjoy the Hometown Feeling,” was created by the Development Committee and signs displaying the theme were hung at major downtown intersections in 1998.

Other improvements made last year included installing the Gazebo located on the Village Green, “Welcome to Towne Center” signs, banners advertising special events and brick-pavers around business sidewalks.

John Ferrara, who owns the Stage

House Inn, is making extensive improvements to the strip of stores that he owns, located on East Second Street, from Frank’s Meat Market to the Vitamin Specialties Store. Those improvements include re-facing the store fronts and re-paving the sidewalks.

This year, through the efforts of the Township Council, the township has been awarded a \$450,000 grant from the County of Union, according to Mayor Samuel, to be applied toward bigger revitalization projects that will cosmetically enhance the entire downtown district.

Improvements will include replacing the facades of storefronts on East Second Street and Park Avenue, and installing brick-pavers along those sidewalks. In the fall, the township will install lighting fixtures that resemble old-fashioned gas lights throughout the downtown area, as

well as planting additional trees and shrubs, thanks to the recently approved grant.

Burying overhead wires underground was considered by the Task Force, but rejected, due to the enormous cost of that project, which, according to Mr. Pardon, “would have used up the entire amount of the grant, while bringing only minimal cosmetic enhancements.”

“One of the goals of the revitalization project is to tie together East Second Street with Park Avenue, giving the entire business area a more cohesive and decorative look,” he said. “We hope to create a thriving and attractive downtown to attract more businesses, especially to areas that were not previously considered prime business real-estate, but which will become desirable as a result of these improvements.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



IMPROVEMENTS COMING SOON...Scotch Plains Mayor Geri Samuel and Ray Pardon, Co-Chairman of the Downtown Task Force, are shown in front of East Second Street storefronts reviewing planned streetscape improvements that will be done within the year on East Second Street, Westfield and Park Avenues. In the background is a current facade improvement project that is underway in conjunction with planned parking lot improvements on East Second Street.



LAYING THE FOUNDATION...Public Works employees prepare the foundation last Thursday for Fanwood’s Millennium Clock, which will be unveiled during the borough’s annual Fanny Wood Day festival on Sunday, September 26, in the downtown. The clock, paid for through Fanny Wood Day revenues along with contributions, will stand near the Fanwood Train Station at South and Martine Avenues.

Fanwood Council Eyes Development Fee Ordinance To Defray Affordable Housing Application Costs

By SUZETTE F. STALKER
Specially Written for The Times

A proposed ordinance which would incorporate fees for new development into Fanwood’s Borough Code was discussed by members of the governing body during their monthly agenda meeting, which lasted slightly more than an hour on August 4.

Mayor Maryanne S. Connelly said that under the ordinance, fees charged to developers would go into a Housing Trust Fund, to be used exclusively for administrative and related costs incurred by the borough in reviewing and processing applications for low- and moderate-income housing.

Under regulations established by the state Council On Affordable Housing, municipalities bear the responsibility of administering affordable housing applications, and development fees serve as a mechanism to

help towns deal with the financial burden of meeting this obligation, the Mayor said.

The ordinance would charge developers half of one percent of the equalized assessed value of any eligible residential activity, Mayor Connelly explained. While the discussion last week focused only on residential development, Councilman Joel Whitaker later told *The Times* he expects the proposed ordinance will also address commercial projects. Mr. Whitaker chairs the council’s Land Use and Historic Preservation Committee.

With Fanwood presently more than 99 percent developed, Mrs. Connelly noted that the development fee initiative would be “very limited.” If adopted, the ordinance would be the first such measure included in Fanwood’s Borough Code.

In response to an inquiry from

Councilman Whitaker, the Mayor stated that the proposed ordinance would not impact additions to existing homes, such as decks. She also said the ordinance would not be retroactive.

Council members additionally weighed the pros and cons of including state statutes within the borough’s revised zoning ordinance, which Councilman Whitaker said he hopes will be introduced by September and adopted before the end of the year.

He revealed that Richard Preiss, a planner retained by the borough, had expressed concern that if state statutes were included in the ordinance, the document would require frequent updating to reflect future court decisions, as well as changes in the state’s Municipal Land Use Law, which serves as the basis for the borough’s zoning ordinance.

Mr. Whitaker said he was agreeable to either alternative regarding the state statutes, but emphasized that he and fellow members of the Land Use and Historic Preservation Committee needed to know which option to go with as the updating process moves toward conclusion.

Attorney Jessica Mayer, representing absent Borough Attorney Dennis Estis, said at the meeting she felt it would be best for residents to have all

information regarding zoning laws in one place, rather than requiring them to seek out state laws somewhere else. It was indicated by council members that Mr. Estis also supported including state statutes within the ordinance.

These sentiments were shared by Councilwomen Karen M. Schurtz and Katherine Mitchell, who sit on the Land Use and Historic Preservation Committee.

They concurred that having all the zoning information in one place would make the updated ordinance more “user-friendly” for the community. A consensus was reached among governing body members to keep all the zoning data in one document.

Under other business, officials confirmed that public hearings will take place at the council’s regular meeting tonight, August 12, on two ordinances which were unveiled by the governing body at separate meetings last month.

The first of these, a salary ordinance for the Fanwood Police Department, was introduced on July 15. Borough officials and the Fanwood Policeman’s Benevolent Association Local No. 123 recently reached a new three-year contract agreement.

The second ordinance, which de-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Public Portion of BOE Meetings May Move Up Earlier; Firm Hired for Facilities Feasibility Study

By SUSAN M. DYCKMAN
Specially Written for The Times

The public may be spared hours of waiting to speak before the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education at its monthly agenda meeting if members approve a recommendation to move the comment period to an earlier spot on the program.

During the board’s first meeting of the new school year on August 5, Board Member Thomas Russo suggested revising the policy which allows the public to speak only at the conclusion of the agenda meeting, sometimes as late as 11 p.m. The board could decide the matter at its Thursday, August 26, business meeting.

At the meeting, the board approved a contract with The Thomas Group of Princeton to conduct a feasibility study of the district’s ability to meet the needs of its growing student body.

While the board received a report from a volunteer task force on the facilities and enrollment issue in June, it elected to hire a professional firm to look at the situation and prepare its own recommendation.

According to Business Administrator and Board Secretary Matthew A. Clarke, the report should be completed in four to six weeks at a cost not to exceed \$14,700.

During the meeting, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction Dr. John R. Crews offered an abbreviated version of his recent presentation to superintendents at Oxford University, England regarding “Schools for the Information Age.”

In his presentation, which urged administrators to accelerate the integration of technology into the schools, Dr. Crews said, “If we can’t get tech-

nology to the (students’) desktops soon, we’re in danger of our education becoming irrelevant.”

Ninety percent of the superintendents in attendance claimed their

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Fanwood Merchants Voice Ideas and Concerns As Plans Continue for Business Association

By SUZETTE F. STALKER
Specially Written for The Times

FANWOOD — Local merchants and business owners shared their ideas and concerns August 4 during

morning and evening open house forums sponsored by the Fanwood Downtown Revitalization Committee (FDRC) to help launch a business and professional association

in the borough.

FDRC spokeswoman Candy Santo said “a lot of energy” was created by the two programs, during which participants discussed the current state

of the downtown, including problems they have experienced, as well as their recommendations for giving the business district an economic boost.

The morning program was held at A Tasteful Touch Gourmet Deli, while the evening session took place at United National Bank, both located on South Martine Avenue in Fanwood. Each program lasted two hours. Ms. Santo, who attended the evening event, said some participants even lingered afterward to continue their discussion of downtown issues.

The FDRC hosted the programs in hopes of generating a “core group” of individuals to help inaugurate and guide the development of an organization tentatively entitled the Fanwood Business and Professional Association (FBPA).

The committee also sought participants’ input on ideas for revitalizing the downtown using \$400,000 in state and county grant money which was recently awarded to the community. With these funds, the borough hopes to enact streetscape and related improvements along Martine Avenue between South and LaGrande Avenues.

“I’m very glad to see what they’re doing,” stated Fred Chemidin, the owner and President of Family Investors Company on South Avenue, concerning the pending development of a business and professional association in Fanwood. Mr. Chemidin attended the evening program.

He said he felt a productive dialogue had been initiated between merchants and professionals in at-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Mandatory Water Restrictions in Place as Drought Ensues; Police to Issue Warnings, Then Summonses

By DEBORAH MADISON
Specially Written for The Times

Due to the continued lack of rainfall and the declining reservoir levels, Governor Christine Todd Whitman declared a drought warning on August and mandatory water

restrictions this past Thursday by an executive order distributed to all county and local police departments affected by the drought.

The mandatory restrictions apply primarily to outdoor water use and prohibit the watering of lawns, the non-commercial washing of motor vehicles and the draining or refilling of pools.

In addition to the mandatory restrictions, residents are urged to use washing machines and dishwashers only when full. All leaky toilets, pipes and taps should be repaired. In addition, water conserving shower heads and faucet aerators should be installed to reduce water use. Also, water should not be run unnecessarily while shaving and brushing teeth.

The water restrictions also apply to users who draw their water from private wells, as many major waterways throughout the state are at historic low flows, which affect ground-water supplies to these wells.

If the water shortage worsens, the

state could impose additional restrictions that could further limit residential and commercial use.

According to the mandatory water restrictions released by the Governor’s Office, the following restrictions and exceptions apply:

- The watering of grassed areas is prohibited, except for newly-seeded or newly-sod areas, which may be watered for 20 days from the date of planting, from 8 to 9 p.m. or from midnight to 6 a.m., with watering not to exceed 45 minutes per day, for any one area. Watering of newly-sod areas with sprinklers within one hour after planting is permitted.

- Grassed areas may be watered after application of fertilizer, pesticide or herbicide within the same time limitations as newly-sodded areas.

- Companies engaging in the installation or repair of lawn irrigation systems may test a customer’s newly-installed or newly-repaired sprinkler system for a maximum of 10 minutes

per sprinkler zone and the company must display a sign which reads, “Authorized Limited Testing of Sprinkler System,” large enough to be visible from the road.

- The watering of plants, trees, shrubs and vegetable gardens is prohibited by any means other than by bucket, can or hand-held hose equipped with a nozzle which will be shut off automatically when dropped.

- The watering of agricultural food crops is exempted at this time. Watering of commercial sod at sod farms and nursery stock at nurseries or retail outlets may also be watered with sprinklers or by other means with certain time restrictions.

- The washing of any vehicles, except ambulances and fire engines, is prohibited, except by businesses engaged exclusively in car washing. Certain restrictions apply to commercial car washes, such as using recycled water and shortening rinse cycles.

- The use of water for sweeping or washing streets, driveways, sidewalks or paved areas is prohibited, except in the instance of a threat to public health determined by the municipal

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Drought Called Worst In History of Jersey, Mid-Atlantic States

By DEBORAH MADISON
Specially Written for The Times

It is being called the worst drought ever in four states, according to meteorologists and weather experts. President Bill Clinton has appointed a special task force to coordinate the relief efforts in the four hardest hit states, which include Rhode Island, Delaware, Maryland and New Jersey.

According to Associated Press Wire Reports, President Clinton said, “The current drought threatens to cripple

businesses and communities that depend on farm economies.”

The President has vowed to send assistance to those businesses and farms. He called the assistance to drought-stricken farmers, “our duty as a national community.”

Long-range forecasts by meteorologists call for normal rainfall for the drought-stricken areas for the rest of the year. However, normal precipitation will not eliminate the 18-inch shortage for this year, according to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

INDEX

Arts.....	Page 19	Editorial.....	Page 4	Religious.....	Page 9
Business.....	Page 15	Mountainside.....	Page 3	Social.....	Page 6
Classifieds.....	Page 17	Obituary.....	Page 8	Sports.....	Page 11

CYAN YELLOW MAGENTA BLACK

Township's Revitalization Plan Aims to Aid Downtown

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The Task Force has been meeting with the professional planning firm of Wallace, Roberts and Todd, located in Philadelphia, who have made numerous recommendations on the types of improvements that could enhance the downtown district. It is now the goal of the Task Force to "decide on and prioritize those goals, and implement an action plan to carry them out," according to Mr. Pardon.

One of the projects under consideration is the sale of a portion of township-owned property, approximately 9,500 square feet, located in the Municipal Building's parking lot next to Fagioli Café.

The township has applied for an additional County grant, which will fund the hiring of a professional appraiser to determine the value of the property.

More research is needed to determine "what types of stores might come to the business district and to see if the concept makes sense," according to a project description issued by the township.

"The Task Force will also be meeting with a commercial real-estate developer who will be able to advise the Task Force on the type of businesses that would most benefit the Business District, and other considerations the township needs to take into consideration before developing this project," according to Mr. Atkins.

"We want to be certain that we know where we're headed with these projects, before we jump in," Mr. Atkins said.

"By enhancing the business district, the value of homes in the township are also increased," Mr. Pardon commented. "Township residents can contribute to this quality in many ways, by supporting our local businesses and downtown projects."

Construction on some of these projects could begin as early as September, according to Mr. Pardon, however, a time-frame for completion would be difficult to estimate, as some of these projects require further research, Mr. Atkins commented.

September, and surveying the municipal lot property could begin in early fall.

Additional grant money has been applied for, through the Department of Transportation, to fund other streetscape projects, and according to Mr. Atkins, the township expects to receive word on the status of that grant in the fall.

"I am very excited about these projects, but disappointed by the size of the grant," Mr. Pardon stated. "We received the same amount of money as other, smaller towns, who don't contribute as much to the County as we do. I think that is unfair."

The township applied for \$1.5 million, but only received about a third of that, according to Mayor Samuel.

"The County distributed \$5 million to 20 municipalities, based on need and specific projected costs," said Michael Murray, Director of Public Information for Union County. "We received triple that amount in requests, and couldn't fulfill all of them."

These projects, Mr. Pardon explained, are only the beginning phase of the goal to revitalize Scotch Plains' downtown. After completion of the construction, the Task Force will be looking for ways to market Scotch Plains to attract new businesses.

"We need an ongoing partnership between the residential community, businesses, government and our Downtown landlords. The vitality of a business district is just as important as the quality of a town's homes, schools and parks," Mr. Pardon said.

"By enhancing the business district, the value of homes in the township are also increased," Mr. Pardon commented. "Township residents can contribute to this quality in many ways, by supporting our local businesses and downtown projects."

Construction on some of these projects could begin as early as September, according to Mr. Pardon, however, a time-frame for completion would be difficult to estimate, as some of these projects require further research, Mr. Atkins commented.

Firm Restrictions in Place To Compensate for Drought

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

health department.

- The serving of water in restaurants and clubs is prohibited unless specifically requested by the patron.

- The use of water for flushing sewers by municipalities or private persons is prohibited, except in the instance of a threat to public health or safety.

- The use of fire hydrants by fire companies for testing or for fire department drills is prohibited, except as deemed necessary in the interest of public safety.

- The use of fire hydrants by municipal road departments, contractors and all others is prohibited, except as necessary for fire fighting or fire protection purposes.

- The use of water for outdoor-recreational purposes is prohibited subject to the following exceptions: Golf course greens, tees and clay tennis courts may be watered with certain time limitations.

- Partially-filled pools may not be drained for maintenance.

- The outdoor use of any water for ornamental purposes, such as fountains, artificial waterfalls and reflecting pools is prohibited.

There has been considerable confusion and conflicting information disseminated by the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) regarding specific restrictions that apply to the filling of residential pools.

Sharon Southard, a spokeswoman for the DEP told *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times* that it is permissible to fill kiddie pools of any size and one time filling of larger pools with filters is permissible.

"Adequate water levels are required in order to enable pool filters to work properly insuring healthy water quality," said Linda Friedman, another DEP spokeswoman. "For that reason, pool clubs and private pools can be topped-off, to maintain public health, but not drained and refilled."

The DEP's drought hotline number, (800)4ITS-DRY, DEP spokeswoman Linda Ofori said that small kiddie pools of four-foot in diameter were allowed to be filled, but that larger pools of six feet by eight feet in diameter and more than two feet deep were not permitted to be filled.

Meanwhile, Westfield and Fanwood Police Departments all stated that kiddie

pools of any size are not allowed. One police officer, who asked not to be identified, stated that technically, kiddie pools of any size are not allowed, but that they wouldn't arrest anyone who was using one of those small four-foot wide/six-inch deep pools. They might have to issue a warning if neighbors complained, however.

Local police departments report that they have been receiving a number of calls from residents asking for additional clarification of the restrictions.

The police are asking residents to call the DEP hotline number, (800) 448-7379, for specific answers to water restriction questions. The DEP, in turn, is referring residents to call their local police departments to clarify specific questions, which may differ from one municipality to another.

"Whichever statute is more restrictive, the DEP's or the municipalities, that law will apply," said Ms. Southard.

The police will look for violations on their routine patrols or answer complaints of violations, according to Scotch Plains Police Chief Thomas O'Brien. "We've had numerous complaints from residents turning in their neighbors for watering their lawns," reported Chief O'Brien. "These were either people who claimed not to know about the restrictions, or from automatic sprinkler systems belonging to people away on vacation."

"We (the police) will wait until we are able to reach those homeowners, giving them an opportunity to comply, before issuing a summons," he added.

Sergeant Howard Jarvis of the Fanwood Police Department, and Deputy Chief John Wheatley of the Westfield Police Department stated that they will also issue warnings first, giving residents an opportunity to comply, before issuing a summons.

None of the Police Departments contacted had received information regarding the amount of the fines that would be imposed, as of Monday.

The restrictions will remain in effect until the Governor's Office issues another order declaring that the state of water emergency no longer exists in the affected areas.

Residents may also find more information at the DEP's Drought internet site at: www.state.NJ.US/dep/watersupply.

FANWOOD POLICE BLOTTER

WEDNESDAY, JULY 21
 • Police reported that a burglary took place in the 20 block of Hunter Avenue, in which the homeowner discovered two televisions and three videocassette recorders missing, along with cash and some jewelry. There was no sign of forced entry, authorities said.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 28
 • A shoplifting incident occurred at a South Avenue supermarket. Police said a black male in his late 20s or early 30s fled the store with unknown merchandise. The suspect was not apprehended.

THURSDAY, JULY 29
 • A bicycle valued at \$50 was reported stolen from a rear yard in the 10 block of Cray Terrace.

SATURDAY, JULY 31
 • A man seen entering a car in the 10 block of Paterson Road was confronted

by a resident, at which time the suspect fled on foot into Plainfield, authorities said. The individual, described as a heavyset black male, was not apprehended.

MONDAY, AUGUST 2
 • An Acura Legend was reported stolen from the northside Fanwood Train Station parking lot, according to police. The vehicle had not been recovered as of press time.

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 4
 • Trina Robinson, 31, of Keyport was charged with driving while intoxicated after she was stopped for a motor vehicle violation on South Avenue, according to police. She was released on her own recognizance.

MONDAY, AUGUST 9
 • Authorities revealed that the Martine Avenue bridge was defaced with spray paint.

SCOTCH PLAINS POLICE BLOTTER

MONDAY, AUGUST 2
 • Theodore R. Gutwein, 35, of Plainfield was arrested on a warrant from the Union County Sheriff's Department for possession of a controlled dangerous substance. Gutwein was also found to be in possession of marijuana (under 50 grams) when he was taken into custody. The incident occurred at approximately 11:20 p.m. at Cooper and Terrill Roads.

• A Mountain Avenue resident reported the theft of a bicycle taken from his open garage. The incident occurred

late in the afternoon.
FRIDAY, AUGUST 6
 • Theft of jewelry was reported from a business in the 300 block of Park Avenue. The incident occurred over the past week.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 7
 • Two windows were reported broken at the Terrill Middle School.
 • It was reported that someone attempted entry to the Board of Education Maintenance garage behind Park Middle School by prying at a door panel. No entry was gained and nothing was taken.

Public Portion of BOE Meetings May Move Up

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

districts were fully networked.

Speaking after the meeting, the assistant superintendent acknowledged Scotch Plains-Fanwood schools are "behind," but making progress in that direction. With parental and community assistance, several of the district's elementary schools have been wired for Internet access.

Because wiring of the secondary schools is more complex (only labs are wired at present), that program is part of the technology infrastructure plan recently completed by Communication Sciences Inc.

Dr. Crews and Eleanor McClymont Henry, Director of Pupil Services, also presented an overview of the teacher workshops being conducted during the summer months. Mrs. Henry noted that a total of 51 teams of regular education and special education teachers had been established at the high school and middle schools.

Because special education students will be pulled out of regular classrooms with less frequency, regular and special education teachers will collaborate more closely than ever before to facilitate the success of every student in the regular classroom environment.

At the elementary level, the district will launch a pilot program of team teaching in second grade at McGinn Elementary School this September.

"We're beginning to build these as alternatives to self-contained classrooms," explained Dr. Crews.

George Esher of ServiceMaster Management Services Company of Downers Grove, Ill., the district's new custodial, grounds and maintenance services management company, made his first presentation to the board since ServiceMaster began work four weeks ago.

The company's goal is to create a standardized approach to equipment and materials usage that will enable all staff members to be familiar with procedures at every school. In addition, the company hopes to eliminate a "knee-jerk approach" to projects that allows staff members to make the best use of summers, holiday and other "down times."

One of the first problems identified by ServiceMaster in its audit of district facilities and grounds was insufficient mulch in playground areas.

The situation will be rectified this week. A full report on summer projects will be made to the board at the August 26 meeting.

From the audience, Debbie Grafox of Fanwood, criticized the lack of "minimum skills requirements" in determining a child's readiness to move from one grade to the next.

"How do you determine if proficiencies are met?" she asked.

In commenting on the oft-repeated call by district administrators to "raise the bar" for every child, Mrs. Grafox stated, "Without minimum requirements, we can't find the bar. We don't know what it looks like. Requirements should be in writing, on record, and available to the pub-

lic."

Board Member Jean McAllister asked if tests were available to assess student's mastery of proficiencies in a certain grade.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Carol B. Choye was "distressed" to hear a request for minimum standards, citing the nationwide move toward that 30 years ago which, she said, precipitated the minimum becoming the standard for every grade level.

The superintendent supported the need for a clearer definition of what grades actually mean and called upon teachers to write those definitions.

"Is the grade level at which proficiencies are mastered?" Dr. Choye asked.

From the audience, Edward Leonard, new President of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Education Association, stated, "Grading systems have become a gray area over the years."

Mr. Leonard teaches at Terrill Middle School.

Board Member Jessica D. Simpson said, "The proficiencies are quite specific and take into consideration all the factors of the individual child."

She indicated the board's policy regarding promotion, acceleration and retention of a student are considered in tandem with proficiencies when determining a child's readiness for movement to the next grade.

Mrs. Grafox noted there are 111 proficiencies cited for kindergarten.

"What do we really want them to do?" she asked. "Should all children be able to do these three-quarters of the time? Are 80 proficiencies good enough?"

Board Member Richard R. Meade said, "This isn't a scientific process where you can punch in numbers and come up with an answer. You make the best decision you can and move on."

"The proficiencies are a good step," added Board Member August Ruggiero. "How are we ensuring that teachers are addressing proficiencies, that children are learning them? How do we take the proficiencies to the next step of assessing them?"

The superintendent noted that Director of Information Services Don Williams will be working with a national research organization, the Community Training and Assistance Center in Boston, Mass., to explore how the district can organize the data it collects on student performance into a usable system.

University News

SCOTCH PLAINS - Scotch Plains residents George Daniledes and Lindsey Everitt were named to the Dean's List at Franklin & Marshall College in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

George, who is a junior sociology major and music performance minor, is a 1996 graduate of Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School. He is the son of E. Joy Daniledes of Scotch Plains and Peter Daniledes of Freehold.

Lindsey, a sophomore business administration major, is a 1997 graduate of Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School. She is the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Jeffrey Everitt of Scotch Plains.

Merchants Voice Concern As Group's Plans Proceed

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

tendance and members of the FDRC, and particularly commended the efforts of James Lamca and Peter Sayles, the committee's Chairman and Vice-Chairman, respectively.

Mr. Chemidlin said he believes it is important for local merchants to have an opportunity to interact with each other on a regular basis, and also felt landlords in the downtown need to be involved with the proposed association.

"My interest is in seeing that the Borough of Fanwood stays the small town that it is," Mr. Chemidlin remarked. He said he felt the downtown community needed to have strong representation through an organization which would focus on "long-term objectives."

Ms. Santo said attendees at the open house programs "aired some very specific concerns about the proposed plans for the downtown streetscape," adding that it appeared the initiative for starting a business and professional association in Fanwood "got off to a good start."

Among the issues discussed during the sessions were the importance of involving the entire community in strengthening the business district; current signage regulations and their impact on local businesses; the need for effective lighting to accommodate extended store hours desired by residents; and increasing pedestrian safety by establishing crosswalks in the downtown.

Eric Sinka, one of the owners of A Tasteful Touch, remarked that the morning discussion revolved around long-awaited improvements to the rear area of stores on Martine Avenue.

The Scotch Plains Business and Professional Association (SPBPA) has invited shoppers to visit the town and take advantage of special promotions being offered by many of the boutiques, gift and antique shops, as well as other town businesses, and to enjoy lunch from one of the town's restaurants or other food establishments.

The summer concert series will continue this evening at 7:30 p.m. on the Village Green with a jive band, the Crescent City Maulers. There will also be a Classic Car display.

The Farmers' Market on Park Avenue will also be available from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday.

For more information on the town, please visit www.visitscotchplains.com.

downtown association, Mr. Sinka said "some kind of camaraderie" is needed among members of Fanwood's business community.

"Right now, nobody knows what the other guy is doing," he commented to *The Times* earlier this week. "If we do have grievances, we need to be able to get together and bring it before the town at one meeting."

Ms. Santo reported that the dual programs did result in people signing up to become part of the core group needed to develop the proposed borough association, which the FDRC has envisioned as assuming the same role as the Scotch Plains Business and Professional Association.

Now approximately 200 members strong, the Scotch Plains group was founded five years ago to help maintain the vitality of the business district in that community.

Since its inception, the association has not only provided local businesses with strong representation, but also established a scholarship fund and organized various special events in the township, among other activities.

Summer Sidewalk Sales Set in Scotch Plains

SCOTCH PLAINS - Summer sidewalk sales will be held in Scotch Plains Towne Centre for three days, today, tomorrow and Saturday, August 12, 13 and 14. The sales will be held in stores along East Second Street, Westfield and Park Avenues.

The Scotch Plains Business and Professional Association (SPBPA) has invited shoppers to visit the town and take advantage of special promotions being offered by many of the boutiques, gift and antique shops, as well as other town businesses, and to enjoy lunch from one of the town's restaurants or other food establishments.

The summer concert series will continue this evening at 7:30 p.m. on the Village Green with a jive band, the Crescent City Maulers. There will also be a Classic Car display.

The Farmers' Market on Park Avenue will also be available from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Saturday.

For more information on the town, please visit www.visitscotchplains.com.

Drought Considered Worst In New Jersey's History

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

James Baker, the Director of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

"This drought did not happen overnight, and it will take a long time to be alleviated," Mr. Baker remarked.

Looking at the large, ripe and abundant produce at Saturday's Farmer's Market in Scotch Plains, there is little evidence that New Jersey farmers are in serious trouble.

However, according to farm owner John Ort of Ort Farms in Long Valley, a wholesaler at the Farmer's Market, "many farms that rely on ponds, wells or small rivers for irrigation are only a few weeks away from total disaster when those ponds and wells run dry."

The season will end early and produce much less quantities than normal, Mr. Ort explained.

"That is financially devastating for some small farms," he added.

The Ort Farm draws its irrigation from the Raritan River, which is at sufficient capacity to sustain the farm's demands, according to Mr. Ort.

Farm owner George Asprocolas of Asprocolas Acres in Robbinsville, also a seller at the Farmer's Market, explained that the current produce being

harvested is relatively healthy, but next season's crops being planted now, such as fall pumpkins, gourds and squash will be severely affected by the drought, and next summer's produce could also be harmed if the drought continues.

"No amount of irrigation can replace mother-nature," Mr. Asprocolas stated.

"About 75 percent of the streams are at or about record lows in the Mid-Atlantic area. If we continue not to get very much rainfall it could conceivably become the largest drought of the century," said Janice Ward, of the U.S. Geological Survey, according to Associated Press reports.

The last time the Mid-Atlantic region suffered a serious drought was in the late 1970s, while the worst U.S. drought in recent history parched 35 states in the Midwest, Northern Plains and Rocky Mountain States between 1984-1988.

The drought follows a record-breaking July heat wave blamed for more than 265 deaths across the country. Meteorologists have blamed the drought on a jet stream that has remained north of the mid-Atlantic all summer. They have predicted that dry conditions will continue until late August.

Fanwood Council Considers Development Fee Ordinance

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

but at a special council meeting on July 21, supports a Length of Service Award Program (LOSAP) for local emergency service volunteers.

Pending adoption of the ordinance and subsequent approval of the program by voters via a binding referendum, the Fanwood LOSAP would offer local firefighters and rescue squad personnel \$500 each per year in deferred pension benefits.

In a separate discussion last week, Mayor Connelly reported that Fanwood Court Administrator MaryAnn Corcoran has now received proposals from three local banks outlining their charges to service a program whereby people could pay fines to the borough's Municipal Court using credit cards.

Members of the governing body are considering launching a one-year trial program to permit credit card payments, to determine if this option would be effective in reducing the amount of uncollected fines owed to the Municipal Court, which currently stands at \$215,000.

According to Mayor Connelly, the banks which have submitted proposals

include Summit Bank, United National Bank and Sovereign Bank of New Jersey. She recommended the matter now be referred to the governing body's Administration and Finance Committee for further review.

Finally, residents will have an opportunity to comment during tonight's meeting on a model ordinance proposed by New Jersey Common Cause, which would prohibit the use of government-owned buildings or equipment for political fundraising. The Town of Westfield adopted such an ordinance earlier this year.

New Jersey Common Cause is an organization which seeks to ensure government integrity by eliminating potential conflicts caused by political fundraising on or through the use of public property. It also advocates a strong role by citizens in setting government agendas.

Several officials indicated last week that while they believed it was inappropriate for candidates to hold fundraisers at government buildings like Borough Hall, such events should be allowed in areas such as public parks.

Fanwood's TV-35 Weekly Schedule

Thursday, August 12, 8:00 P.M.
 Live Telecast of Fanwood Council Meeting

Friday, August 13, 8:00 P.M.
 Next Station Stop Fanwood - A history of the Central RR

Sunday, August 15, 8:00 P.M.
 Freeholder's Forum

Tuesday, August 17, 8:00 P.M.
 Nature Center - Three seasons in the sun.
 Fanwood Police Auction

Thursday, August 19, 8:00 P.M.
 FYI Fanwood - Mayor Connelly's Show

Donate Your Car

American Red Cross
 Westfield/Mountainside Chapter

Help Can't Wait
Call: 1-888-999-HELP
One Call Does It All

Tax Deductible • Free Towing
 Any Make/Any Model • Cars Trucks & Vans

Advertising supplied by SAS

WEISEMAN HELY
DiGIOIA & BOYLE

A PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATION OF
CERTIFIED TRIAL LAWYERS*

INJURY CASES

See us in the Bell Atlantic Yellow Pages.
 Only 1 of 40 lawyers is a
 Supreme Court Certified Trial Lawyer.
 (908) 789-9000