

Planning Board OKs Three New Medical Offices In Town

By MICHAEL BONACCORSO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD—Three commercial applicants were unanimously approved for parking variances at the September 5 planning board meeting. All three applicants are medical professionals seeking to renovate existing structures to establish new medical practices.

AH&AM Realty, LLC., 581 Westfield Avenue, was approved for a 38-square-foot addition to the existing structures first floor. The board approved demolition of an existing garage and the creation of a larger parking area with proposed improvements to the driveway and curbing. The approved site plan will allow the building to be transitioned into an

orthodontic practice.

The applicant's professional engineer, Michael Jurst, stated that the building's current condition was "dilapidated and an eyesore."

The applicant's attorney, Stephen Hehl, said a dental clinic had previously operated at the location.

The proposed construction's alterations would allow for "increased safety, energy efficiency, and would improve currently non-conforming (conforming with existing land-use codes and ordinances) aspects," stated Agnes Khan, the applicant's architect.

Ms. Khan said the non-conforming stairs in the building will be replaced, while "maintaining the shell" (the building's existing architectural de-

sign).

Planning board member Darielle Walsh said she supports the project's goals, while appreciating the building being preserved, restored and improved versus it being "torn down."

Fellow planning board member Michael LaPlace said he wanted to acknowledge that the architect agreed to preserve the existing window-layout design of the building.

Rolynn Industries, LLC., the owner of 319 Lenox Avenue, was approved to use the existing office space on the first floor for an oral and maxillofacial surgery practice. Applicant Dr. Ronen Gold, who will operate his practice in the space, said the second floor was rented to a residential tenant.

He said the second floor space will remain available to residential tenants. Westfield's land use ordinance requires 15 parking spaces be made available for employees and patients. The site plan proposed by the applicant only provides nine available spaces, stated Dr. Gold.

Dr. Gold stated that the nature of his medical practice suggests he will only treat one patient at a time or several in an hour at varying visiting intervals. The only other employees would be a medical assistant and an office administrator.

He said medical practices providing treatment for other illnesses or procedures often require numerous office assistants, with a larger patient visitation rate per hour. Dr. Gold said he wanted the planning board to understand that while his site plan offers less parking than required, the parking offered will be plenty for his business.

Applicant Broad Realty, LLC., 435 East Broad Street, was approved to convert an existing two-story law office to a dental office on the first floor and a two-bedroom apartment on the second floor. The existing ordinance

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

Garwood Council Okays Paperboard Pilot Program

By MICHAEL BONACCORSO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

GARWOOD—Acacia Financial Group's Managing Director Jennifer G. Edwards announced, at Tuesday night's borough council meeting, that the negotiated terms of the Paperboard Redevelopment financial agreement between the borough and Garwood Developers, LLC have been finalized. Ms. Edwards said the pilot program is a financial agreement organizing "financial payments" or a revenue share in lieu of existing property taxes.

Planning board member Kathy Villaggio described her interpretation of the financial agreement, stating that the collected percentage of revenue or revenue share agreed upon via the pilot program will total more than the \$98,000 in property taxes currently collected annually for the 4.5-acre site.

Ms. Edwards said the financial agreement stipulates that for years one through 15 (post development), the borough will collect 10 percent of total revenue. He said for years 16 through 18, the borough will be entitled to 10.5 percent of total revenue, and for operational years, 19 through 20, the borough will collect 11 percent of total revenue.

Ms. Edwards said the borough will collect 12 percent of the total revenue for years 21 through 25, and 12.5 percent of the revenue for years 26 through 30. The financial agreement negotiated pertains to the 3.1 acres of the 4.5-acre lot set for residential development, stated Ms. Edwards.

Councilwoman Sara Todisco said a storage facility will be developed on the remaining land and will be negotiated at a later date or in sepa-



IN OBSERVANCE...In observance of the 17th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks the Town of Westfield holds a community gathering on Tuesday at the 9/11 memorial site located at North Avenue at East Broad Street.

Hartz Planner Begins Testimony; Mayor Questions Building Heights

By CHRISTINA M. HINKE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

CRANFORD—Hartz Mountain Industries, LLC's planner, Keenan Hughes of Hoboken-based Phillips Preiss Grygiel, a firm that specializes in land use and development, presented the first part of his testimony, in which he gave his professional opinion as to why rezoning the 15-acre commercial property at 750 Walnut Avenue to a residential zone meets criteria specified in the New

Jersey statutes, at the planning board meeting on September 5.

Under Hartz's application, Mr. Keenan said Hartz would develop the site at 30 units per acre, saying that the more recent developments in the township, noting Riverfront at Cranford Station, Cranford Crossing, and Woodmont Station, all on average equate to 39 units per acre.

The planning board disagreed with Mr. Hughes' comparison, in that those apartment buildings are located in the downtown and are accessible to the train station. Planning Board Vice-Chairwoman Bobbi Anderson suggested Mr. Hughes consider an apartment complex recently approved to be built along Birchwood Avenue, which is located at the edge of the Cranford border adjacent to a residential neighborhood, as is the property at 750 Walnut Avenue. The development that was approved for Birchwood Avenue is to be developed at 15 units per acre, planning board member Peter Taylor said.

Hartz is planning a two-phase development, in which it proposes to build 905 apartments, two clubhouses and two pools, with parking on the premises. Mr. Hughes said the planned

unit development that Hartz recommends allows for a variety of zoning uses, including residential, commercial and office, which would allow the property owner to have apartments while maintaining some of the commercial property during the first phase.

Within the planned unit development, Mr. Hughes said the township could choose to establish a mutual developer's agreement of up to 20 years should the developer and the township be "mutually interested."

The first phase of the construction proposes to have the four-story apartments be built in the front portion of the property and to retain part of the commercial space for current tenants in the rear.

During phase two, the commercial space would be demolished and five-story apartment buildings would be erected in the rear, part of which is adjacent to a golf course and another part borders a rail line with a residential neighborhood.

The berm that currently is located along Walnut Avenue, Mr. Hughes said, "is an essential part to screen the appearance of the taller buildings on

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



SCHOOL'S OPEN...Students stand in front of the Roosevelt Intermediate School in Westfield on the first day of the new school year on September 5.

Cranford Adopts Ords. That Change Land Development

By CHRISTINA M. HINKE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

CRANFORD—Two ordinances were adopted by the township committee Tuesday that will change the land development code in Cranford.

An ordinance will amend the code to provide for exceptions for residents to replace non-conforming front porches and uncovered front steps on their residential property without change to dimensions or footing locations, without them having to seek a variance.

An ordinance was passed to amend the code that would prohibit parking directly in front of a one-family or a two-family residence. The code also would be amended to provide exceptions for residents to replace driveways that are non-conforming in side-yard areas without change to dimensions or footings, without them having to obtain a variance. The code also would be amended to remove the requirement of granite block curbing on driveways.

The code amendments are to "provide relief to homeowners," Deputy

Mayor Ann Dooley said, in that they will not have to seek a variance from the zoning board of adjustment.

Salary increases of 1.5 percent for certain white collar positions in a full-time or part-time capacity was approved and will be retroactive to January 1, 2018.

The contract awarded to Wanda Chin for legal services pertaining to the redevelopment of the Birchwood Avenue site where an apartment complex is to be built was amended to not exceed \$81,000. The committee also amended her contract in April. The original contract in January was to not exceed \$15,000.

Construction of the Birchwood Avenue apartments has yet to begin; however, the builder has begun to remove some macadam and dirt from the site, Mayor Thomas H. Hannen, Jr. told *The Westfield Leader*.

The committee authorized execution of an employment agreement between the police chief and the township. Ryan Greco was named chief in October 2017.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



GOING, GOING, GONE...Work crews have begun the demolition of the former Casale factory recently on South Avenue in Garwood to make room for a 297-unit apartment complex.



SHOFARISOUNDED...At the Service of Remembrance of September 11, 2001, in Cranford, Rabbi Neil Tow of the Temple Beth-El Mevor Chayim gives the benediction by blowing the shofar, an ancient ram's horn that is blown especially in synagogue services on Rosh Hashanah.

PAGE INDEX

Regional	2-3	Education	16-17
Editorial	4-5	Sports	9-14
Police	15	Real Estate	9-13
Community ...	6-7, 17	Classifieds	15
Obituary	6	A&E	17-18



CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

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