



LEADER MEETS CHURCHILL, FDR...Lisa Zavetz shares an article from *The Westfield Leader* with Winston Churchill and Franklin Delano Roosevelt on her trip to London.

Redevelopment Plan

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redevelopment coordinator, told *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* after last week's meeting that it made sense "financially" to keep the municipal building where it is rather than relocate it elsewhere in town. Doing so, he said, and relocating the library behind it and having the Village Green next to the two facilities creates "a one-stop shop" for cultural and community events.

In the existing parking lot behind the row of stores along Park Avenue between Bartle and Westfield Avenues, the concept sketch shows a five-story residential structure including a parking garage. And on the fourth municipal-owned property, located behind the row of businesses along East Second Street that include the emergency-medical care facility, the plans showed a three-story residential building and garage located in what is now the township-owned parking lot.

Unveiling the sketches, Mr. Mistretta said, "This is our idea; we have to start somewhere." He said he expects that developers will submit proposals "in many shapes, sizes and forms," adding that the redevelopment committee is trying to create "a design competition" to find the best proposals for the four properties. Mayor Smith pointed out that if developers submit plans that do not meet the township's expectations, "we don't have to accept it." Mr. Mistretta added that township redevelopment officials also can tell developers that they "like part of this one and part of that one" as the proposals are evaluated.

Addressing concerns that the five- and six-story structures would look overwhelming and create a canyon effect, Mr. Mistretta said only the first three stories of any building would be visible from the street because the upper floors would be required to be set back significantly. This was done with new development in Princeton's downtown, and several committee members, after walking tour there in June, marveled at how the upper floors were not visible from the street and also how the parking facilities were not evident either. "There are ways of hiding them," Mr.

Mistretta said.

Parking is a key element to the plan, both Mr. Mistretta and Mayor Smith said. "Without parking, none of this happens," Mr. Mistretta stated. Adding a large amount of density to the downtown, he noted, will be unfeasible, "if there is insufficient parking." The mayor pointed out that the proposed new parking facilities will serve not only the new residential units, but also provide adequate additional parking for any private property owners wanting to expand their own buildings. Private property owners will be encouraged to become part of the process, Mr. Mistretta and the mayor said, especially as additional parking is added to the downtown.

The township's first responders — police, fire and rescue — will be relocated out of the downtown, and Mayor Smith strongly hinted last week that a new facility for all three could be built at the public works facility on Plainfield Avenue. The township currently is in discussions with neighboring towns about potential public works shared-service arrangements.

The downtown redevelopment committee was expected to formally vote last night (September 12) to urge the township council to endorse the plan at its Tuesday, September 25 meeting. After that formal backing, requests-for-proposals and requests-for-quotations can be issued to interested developers, whose proposals will then be evaluated by redevelopment committee members and then the township council before a developer is selected. "We want to get this plan out on the street and see what comes back" from developers, Mr. Mistretta said.

Mayor Smith said that developers will utilize the services of township professionals as the process moves forward and will be required to establish escrow accounts to pay for those services. He said the township is not going to go into debt as the redevelopment process unfolds. Construction of the new library and first-responder headquarters will be financed mainly by money realized from the sale of the four public properties.

Scotch Plains to Develop New Recreation Programs

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

SCOTCH PLAINS — Recreation Director DJ Salvante stated at Thursday's recreation commission meeting that the panel will continue to develop new programming for residents and especially youth programming.

Mr. Salvante stated that the programming will be focused on non-athletic activities, or specifically "non-sport activities," although some activities may be physical in nature. Mr. Salvante said the first additional programming proposed is yoga classes for middle-school-aged children.

No official date has been set for when the yoga classes will begin, but the classes signify one way the recreation department and the recreation commission could introduce new programming opportunities.

This Friday, September 14, the family movie night will take place, stated Mr. Salvante. *Wonder Woman* (2017) will begin at 7 p.m. on the Alan Augustine Village Green.

Registration for adult yoga and line dancing classes is still open. Yoga classes are on Mondays and Wednesdays through Monday, December 3. Intermediate-level classes will be held from 11:45 a.m. to 12:45 p.m. Beginner-level classes will be held between 1 and 2 p.m.

The in-town registration cost for yoga is \$30, and all yoga participants must bring their own mat, Mr. Salvante said.

Line Dancing will take place on Mondays, continuing through December 10. Each class will be held from 10:30 until 11:30 a.m. The in-town registration cost is \$20 per participant, stated Mr. Salvante. Line dancing is open to participants age 55 and older.

The Senior Citizen Advisory Committee will take a trip on Wednesday, October 10, to the Gramercy at Lakeside Manor in Hazlet. Interested seniors will participate in Octoberfest, stated Mr. Salvante. The event will include a German band, line dancing and a comedian. Food choices will include corned beef, cabbage, and chicken fraise or broiled tilapia. Also included is coffee, potatoes, vegetables and dessert.

Fanwood senior citizens can participate for \$48 per person, stated Mr. Salvante. Non-residents will pay \$50 per person. The bus will leave from the Scotch Hills Golf Course parking lot at 9:45 a.m. and return at 5:30 p.m.

On Saturday, October 13, a Health and Wellness Fair will be held on the Village Green. Various vendors, including specialists and local health facilities, will provide advice and giveaways, stated Mr. Salvante.

For Fall 2018, a girls' softball clinic has begun at Farley Park on Saturdays and will continue through October 13, stated Mr. Salvante. It commenced on September 8. The clinic is for youth from kindergarten through fifth grade.

Zoning Bd. OKs Subdivision Of Property on Valley Ave.

By FRED T. ROSSI
Specially Written for *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*

SCOTCH PLAINS — The zoning board of adjustment last week gave its unanimous approval to an application to re-subdivide a lot that contains two homes but has been designated as a single lot for reasons unknown.

Located in a B-3 business zone, the property at 1971 and 1975 Valley Avenue has been used for residential purposes for "many, many years," according to attorney Stephen Hehl, who represented Cheryl Engallena, trustee for the property. He said the properties, which are adjacent to Ponzio's, are going to be sold and marketing them as a single property was not the best option. He said that despite being located in a business zone and backing on to commercial properties fronting on Route 22, the neighborhood the two homes face is "really a residential area," noting that the Italian-American Club and single-family homes populate Valley Avenue.

Stephen Fisk, a surveyor, testified at the zoning board's September 6 meeting and said he could find no legal basis in township records going back decades to show that the lot is actually considered to be two separate properties.

Mr. Hehl said if the properties are kept as a single lot and not sold, it is possible someone could purchase it

and develop a commercial business in the midst of a residential neighborhood. He said there were interested buyers for both houses, one of which is a single-family home and one of which is a two-family home. There were some concerns raised about the sizes of the existing and proposed lots, both of which are smaller than is permitted in that zone. Kendra Duran noted the board was being asked to take an undersized lot and subdivide it into two even more undersized lots. But Dan Sullivan felt that keeping the properties as is would help preserve the residential character of the neighborhood.

The board also gave approval to an application by Jay and Mayu Dalal to install a deck at the rear of their home at 1929 Evelyn Street. The deck would extend to within 14 feet of the rear property line, in contravention of township code that requires a 30-foot setback, and would cover more of the property than is permitted. Board Chairman Ken Anderson, who voted against the application, expressed concerns about the size of the deck and how much of the rear yard it would cover. "It's basically taking up the whole back yard," he said.

The board also gave its approval to an application from David Robertson to install a six-foot-high fence along the front of his property at 1756 King Street.

Planning Board OKs Three New Med. Offices In Town

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

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 design).

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 employee 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 requires 20 parking spaces, while the site plan proposed 11 parking spaces. The existing two-bedroom apartment on the second floor will remain, stated Dr. Amy H. Hoch.

Dr. Hoch said she has been in business with her father and brother, who are practicing dentists as well for many years. The 435 East Broad Street location will be a second office for Hoch Orthodontics. The practice also has an office in Matawan.

Dr. Hoch stated that as she grew up in Westfield, she is excited to provide professional services to the community. Hoch Orthodontics has existed for more than 20 years, she stated.

Freeholders

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

instances where Narcan was administered, noting they involved inmates who were being booked into the jail at the time.

The board also will vote on entering into an agreement with Westfield for installation of solar illuminated pedestrian warning signs at West Broad Street and Marion Avenue; South Avenue and Boulevard, and North Avenue and Tuttle Parkway. Joseph Graziano, director of the Department of Engineering, Public Works and Facilities Management, said the signs were donated by Westfield and that the county is just signing off as the intersections are in the county's jurisdiction.

The board went into executive session to discuss settlements in two cases. One, referred to as Kevin Buckley versus Union County Sheriff's Office, involves a dispute between K-9 officers and the county on whether "time spent by K-9 officers off the clock on the care and maintenance of their canine partners

is compensable time" under the FLSA (Fair Labor Standards Act), according to Leagle, a provider of United States Court opinions and decisions. The case, filed in United States District Court in New Jersey, involves "compensation for time spent caring for the dogs," according to the Leagle summary.

The board also discussed settlement in the case of Stephen Repella versus Union County. Mr. Repella is a Union County police officer. Additionally discussed was ongoing negotiations with the Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority for a potential inter-governmental agreement.

Correction

A story regarding the fall Scotch Plains municipal election in last week's newspaper should have reported that Democrats would need to sweep all three seats up this November on the General Election ballot to take the majority on the township committee. Please see letter to the editor on page 4



GOODIES FOR ALL...Participants in Friday night's Scotch Plains Mayor's 0.5K race enjoy refreshments along the way provided by Scotch Plains merchants.

Cranford Mayor Questions Height of Hartz's Buildings

By CHRISTINA M. HINKE
Specially Written for *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*

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 the site."

Mayor Thomas H. Hannen, Jr. said, "It almost begs to point out you are trying to hide something." He suggested "lowering the overall height of the buildings in order to screen that area from the Sunny

Acres community or neighborhood." This neighborhood is located across the street from Walnut Avenue.

"There is no substantial visual impact," Mr. Hughes said.

Mr. Hughes also asserted that part of the township's master plan's goals and objectives would be met should the property be zoned as residential by providing a wide range of housing for residents in diverse income groups, being consistent with the surrounding neighborhood and environment, increasing property value and employment growth, and improving the underutilized property (a portion of the commercial space is currently vacant).

With respect to the compatibility with the surrounding environment, Mr. Hughes said, "This density of development...can be accommodated on the site in a manner that is compatible with the overall area because of the buffering, setbacks and surrounding land uses."

"In phase one, the retention of existing industrial and commercial users...but when fully built out, that goal would no longer be advanced," Mr. Hughes said.

"We lose that potential for employment growth on that property," Mayor Hannen said.

He asked how the proposed project would be consistent with the neighborhood, noting that single-family homes are located adjacent to the property on Walnut Avenue.

"Does it have to be single-family to be consistent? I would argue no," Mr. Hughes said. "This property is one that has never been part of the single-family neighborhood."

"I'm failing to grasp how you can assert that this promotes that appropriate population or contributes to the well-being of persons and neighborhoods without the screening or unless you were to decrease the overall size of the height of those buildings; that would be more in keeping of promoting the neighborhood concept of this," Mayor Hannen said.

The lack of open space on the property for recreation also was noted by the planning board. Mr. Hughes responded by saying that the applicant is not providing playgrounds, as the apartments are not being marketed to families, rather empty nesters and singles.

On Wednesday, October 3, Mr. Hughes is scheduled to resume his testimony, and present his fiscal-impact analysis, which was updated just days before last Wednesday's planning board meeting. Mr. Hughes said the impact to the township's population is included in his analysis.

Also, the planning board cancelled its September 19 meeting, and scheduled a special meeting for last night, September 12, after this newspaper went to press.

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REMEMBERING 9/11...A police color guard leads a procession at the start of Tuesday's Westfield 9/11 ceremony.

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