

Work Begins on Temporary Ice Rink Despite Opposition

By SARAH McGRAIL
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — Work has started on the installation of a full-size ice rink on a basketball court next to the Gumbert Park baseball field despite opposition from nearby residents.

The Westfield Town Council voted, 6 to 3, to allow the temporary rink to be installed, and be used by both local hockey teams and recreational skaters, on a trial basis.

The lease agreement to install the rink, located near South Chestnut Street, is with Ken Anderson, owner of Union Sports Arena on Route 22, who will share any profits with the

town.

Mr. Anderson will absorb most of the costs of installation, as well as carrying out improvement work to build sidewalks and improve the nearby picnic area.

A walk-through presentation of the site by Mr. Anderson and Town Administrator Jim Gildea was organized on Wednesday to allay the fears of a substantial impact on the local community.

Mayor Shelley Brindle also attended the presentation and was confronted by angry residents expressing their opposition to the scheme.

Mayor Brindle was forced to shout

to be heard over heavy rain as she told the crowd of more than 40 people. "The council has voted on this and approved it. We have signed a lease and we should now work together to address any remaining concerns."

Residents of the streets surrounding the basketball court expressed concern about increased traffic and inadequate parking, the impact of noise and light on their quality of life, child safety on the roads and damage to trees, amongst other things.

Susan Levy, of the Gumbert Park Neighborhood Coalition, said, "We don't disapprove of an ice rink in Westfield; we disapprove of an ice rink in this location. You are wedging a commercial hockey rink into a very small location that cannot support what you are looking to do here."

"It feels as though this has been ram-rodged down our throats. It is amazing to me how so many projects in Westfield, like Tamaques Park (turf field), are taking years to move forward and yet, in the blink of an eye, this has been voted on."

Ms. Levy accused the town of being "cavalier" in violating its own zoning ordinances regarding height of buildings, as well as lighting and noise.

The plans for the ice rink show the intention to erect a tent, which will be 40 feet at its highest point, over the rink to reduce light and noise, and to install temporary changing rooms, bathrooms and a dumpster, as well as a tent to house a Zamboni that resurfaces the ice.

Mr. Anderson said, "We've made numerous adjustments to our plan in an effort to try to accommodate people who oppose the rink. I am also heartened by the much larger, but less vocal, group of supporters, who are the families constantly letting me

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



Christina M. Hinke for The Westfield Leader

PREPARATIONS...Sidewalks are being prepared on South Chestnut Street and picnic tables were removed at Gumbert Park as part of the preparation for the temporary ice rink in Westfield.

Traffic Impact Testimony Heard for Hartz's 905 Apts.

By CHRISTINA M. HINKE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

CRANFORD — Traffic in and out of 750 Walnut Avenue, a parcel owned by Hartz Mountain Industries, LLC, is projected to see 447 vehicles coming in and out of the property during the peak morning hour of 7:30 to 8:30 a.m., said Hartz's traffic engineer, Karl Pehnke of Langan Engineering, at last Wednesday's planning board meeting.

The Hartz application is scheduled to continue on Wednesday, October 17. The planning board bumped Hartz from the October 3 meeting, due to a conflict with another application to be heard that night.

Mr. Pehnke said the amount of traffic will be similar to what has occurred on the site during its commercial use, but that the traffic patterns would be reversed. In a residential setting, vehicles would leave in the morning and return in the evening, and the traffic directions would be reversed, a point Mayor Thomas H. Hannen, Jr. had concerns with given

an elementary school is located north of the site.

Mayor Hannen asked about how the change in vehicular patterns would impact traffic in the vicinity of the nearby Walnut Avenue School.

The Langan traffic study showed more traffic flow (with a residential use) towards the north on Walnut Avenue, which would mean vehicles would be driving towards the school into the downtown, Mr. Pehnke said.

Adding a shuttle to and from the train station in the downtown could reduce the traffic further, Mr. Pehnke said.

"It's not going to help with the kids in the school," Mayor Hannen said.

The plan also calls for the addition of another driveway, and moving the location of the driveways. The proposed driveways are placed to intersect with Mitchell Place, Behner Place and Lexington Avenue, according to the architectural drawing.

A traffic light also was proposed to be added on Walnut Avenue, possibly

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



Paul Lachauer for The Westfield Leader

SUPPORTING WHS BAND...A Tag Sale to support the Westfield High School Band was held Saturday on Prospect Street.

Warby Parker Approved For Central Ave. Space

By MICHAEL BONACCORSO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — The first Warby Parker retailer to be established in New Jersey was approved to be located at 126 Central Avenue by the board of adjustment at last Wednesday's board meeting.

Warby Parker is a prescription eyeglass and sunglasses brand headquartered in New York City with locations in 28 states. Warby Parker Retail, Inc. was approved to renovate the first floor, allowing professional services on all three floors, including eye-accessory sales and optometry examinations.

Warby Parker's Real Estate Director, Candace Cole, stated that Warby Parker (Warby) chose the 126 Central Avenue location as the New Jersey "flagship" store. Ms. Cole said Westfield was one of five locations considered for the "flagship or first store" in New Jersey, and was the company's most preferred. Two other locations considered were Hoboken and Paramus, Ms. Cole said.

Ms. Cole stated that aside from delivering a product, which is growing in popularity, the brand remains committed to community and service. Warby has a "buy a pair and give a pair" program, stated Ms. Cole, meaning that for every pair purchased, Warby donates a pair to those who cannot afford corrective lenses.

She said Warby has donated more than four million pairs of glasses to date.

Warby's application attorney, Phil Morin, stated that Warby will not provide surgical optometry services or advice onsite or offsite. He explained that in New Jersey customers must have a prescription to purchase corrective lenses.

Warby representatives noted that their research and experience in eyeglass sales has found that prescrip-



Courtesy Mary Ann McGann, Westfield Public Schools

GO BLUE DEVILS!...Westfield Police and school officials join together to display Blue Devil decals on more than 20 police vehicles, in support of student-athletes. Pictured, from left to right, are: Westfield High School (WHS) Assistant Principal James DeSarno, School Resource Officer Ricardo Johnson, Officer Timothy Donovan, Detective Sergeant Nicole Stivale, Detective Lieutenant Jason Carter, WHS School Resource Officer Elizabeth Savnik, Officer William Kleeman, WHS Principal Derrick Nelson, Superintendent Margaret Dolan, WHS Athletic Director Sandra Mamary, Acting Police Chief Christopher Battiloro, Officer Fortunato Riga and Officer Joseph Habeiche.

Area Residents Oppose Union County Deer Bow Hunt

By PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

COUNTY — A number of residents last Thursday spoke before the Union County Freeholder Board of their opposition to this fall's deer bow hunt in county parks. The program is in addition to the shotgun hunt to be held January to March. The shotgun hunt has been part of the county deer management plan since the early 1990s.

As previously reported by The

Westfield Leader, the fall bow runs from October 1 through December 31, Monday through Friday. Parks included will be the Watching Reservation, Lenape Park, Ash Brook Reservation, Oak Ridge Park, Passaic River Park, Hawk Rise Sanctuary and Linden Municipal Landfill. The winter bow hunt season runs from January 1 through February 16, 2019, and includes Passaic River Park, Cushing Road Detention Basin and Elizabeth River Park.

The shotgun season runs January 7 through March 1, 2019 and encompasses Watching Reservation, Lenape Park, Nomahegan Park, Ash Brook Reservation, Oak Ridge Park, Hawk Rise Sanctuary and Linden Municipal Landfill.

The latest deer hunt counts showed 68 per square mile in the Watching Reservation, 182 per square mile around Lenape and Nomahegan Parks, 90 per square mile around Ash Brook Reservation and Oak Ridge Park, 53 per square mile in Hawk Rise Sanctuary and the Linden Municipal Landfill, 183 per square mile in and around the Cushing Road Detention Basin, and 260 deer per square mile in Elizabeth River Park in Hillside.

At last week's meeting, Kathy Shelus of Fanwood said she is "very concerned with how the public is go-

ing to be impacted for the hunting season that has now been amplified from 10 or 12 days to...120 days." She said she is worried about children and animals being injured from the use of the "razor-sharp" bows.

"I'm just wondering if this is an overkill. I don't understand why it has to be so immense," she said. "I'm just wondering, is this program really right for our county and is it right for our parks?"

Union County Parks and Recreation Director Ron Zuber responded that, "We are not hunting every day of those 100 days," noting the 100 days is put in place in order to acquire the hunting permit.

Freeholder Angel Estrada said "it is just not feasible" that a crossbow hunt will be held over 100 days, noting that weather and fall foliage will impact the days hunts will actually take place.

Mr. Zuber said the hunt will not be conducted "anywhere near playgrounds (or) trails" and that professional marksmen certified by state instructors will be used. He said hunters will not be out during the morning hours or during weekends.

"I think the misconception is that people are running through the woods with bows and arrows, and that is not true," Mr. Zuber explained. "It would

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



Paul Lachauer for The Westfield Leader

5K FOR EVERYONE...Paraplegic bikers competed in Sunday's Westfield Y 5K for Everyone.

PAGE INDEX

Regional	2-3	Education	9
Editorial	4-5	Sports	11-17
Police	18	Real Estate	11-13, 20
Community ...	6-8, 18	Classifieds	17
Obituary	8	A&E	19-20



CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

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