

## Revaluation Process of Property Is Underway In Westfield

By CHRISTINA M. HINKE  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD—The town's revaluation process is underway, with letters having been mailed to those property owners whose revaluation is complete, it was announced Tuesday at the town council meeting. Property owners who wish to discuss the letter or appeal the assessment have a five-day window from when the letter was received to call Realty Appraisal Company and make an appointment, which will take place in town hall. After the appointment, the company then will send a separate letter to the property owner. The next step in the appeal process is for the owner to

appeal the assessment with the county, which has a deadline of Wednesday, May 1. The town hall will be open Mondays through Fridays, and on Martin Luther King Day, Monday, January 21, specifically for appointments with people who have questions about the revaluation letter, Town Administrator Jim Gildea said.

Five ordinances were introduced at the official meeting. One ordinance was to allow for a handicapped-parking spot to be placed in front of a home at the resident's request.

Another ordinance would change the no parking setback from the corner on South Euclid Avenue near Lenox Avenue to 75 feet after an

accident occurred there recently, Mr. Gildea said. He said the street corner had a line of sight issue.

A portion of Lenox Avenue was to be changed to a one-way street. The project has been put on hold, Mr. Gildea said, and will be part of the master plan process.

A smoking ban at public events and rooftop bars and restaurants will be added to an ordinance pertaining to smoking laws.

An ordinance modifying the zone map and zone boundaries in response to the recent application on New England Drive was introduced. The neighborhood will be zoned RS 16 instead of RS 12, the town attorney, Thomas Jardim, said. The ordinance will be sent to the planning board and be sent to the council on Tuesday, February 12, for adoption.

Referring to a zoning application for a development on Wychwood Road and East Broad Street, Councilwoman Jo Ann Neylan said, "I wished it would have happened at Wychwood and East Broad."

She also asked if modifying the zone is considered spot zoning. Mr. Jardim said the neighborhood has much bigger lots than RS-12.

Ms. Neylan asked about the Wychwood application, saying the house that was built is in close proximity to surrounding homes in an otherwise larger lot neighborhood. "Is that an oversight?" she asked.

Planning Board Chairman Robert Newell's home at 603 Clark Street is to be designated a historic landmark, per his request. The ordinance will go to the planning board before being adopted by the town council in February.

A contract with NV5 Engineering was awarded to not exceed \$17,000 for on-call traffic safety and engineering services to assist the town as

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## Garwood Discusses New Street Sweeper, RVSA Rep.

By MICHAEL BONACCORSO  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

GARWOOD—After a brief discussion at Thursday's borough council meeting, Mayor Sara Todisco and the council unanimously agreed the borough will purchase a new street sweeper this year. Mayor Todisco said residents have vocalized their desire for "more scheduled" and frequent street sweeping. The existing borough-owned street sweeper was purchased in 1990 and has needed repeated repairs.

Councilwoman Jennifer Blumenstock said a replacement street sweeper will cost roughly \$265,000. The council unanimously agreed that bonding for \$275,000 would be most efficient when dealing with any pricing discrepancy throughout the acquisition process.

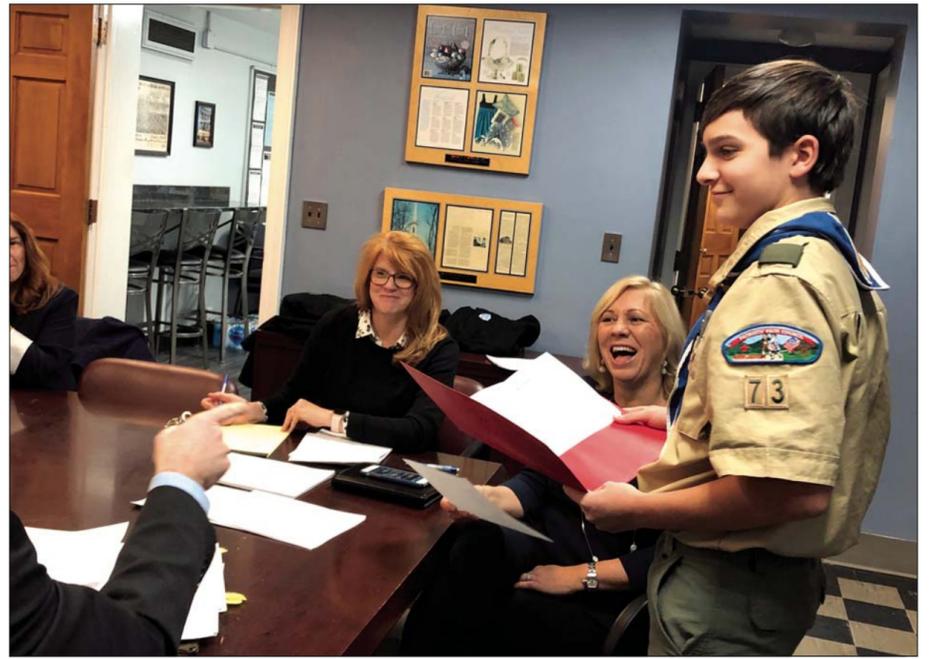
Ms. Blumenstock said the sweeper has been a part of the borough's capital expenditure plan for "quite some time." The council has decided to "adjust the plan, moving the expenditure (street sweeper purchase) up in priority," stated Ms. Blumenstock.

"Twenty-eight years of service; you cannot get mad at that," said Mayor Todisco, describing the street sweeper's operational life.

Councilman Sean Benoit said equipment lasting 28 years in operation "speaks to how well the Garwood DPW (Department of Public Works) treats borough equipment."

Garwood DPW professionals informed Ms. Blumenstock and other council members that "even if the sweeper is repaired again," something else "on it could go."

"Throwing good money at bad," said Ms. Blumenstock, as she described spending tax dollars to repair aged equipment, which has a high probability to need further repair in a short time span.



GIVING SHELTER...A Bird Sanctuary Eagle Scout project was presented by Kevin Stokes, of Troop 73, to the Westfield town council and Mayor Shelley Brindle. Kevin is the son of Councilman Doug Stokes. Kevin is to build bird houses for the sparrows and goldfinches in the sanctuary, as well as a bat house, and benches.

## Cranford Votes to Allow Mayor's Designee on Planning Board

By MICHAEL BONACCORSO  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

CRANFORD — In a three-to-two decision, the township committee adopted an ordinance amending Cranford's planning board codes, further aligning them with New Jersey land use code, at Tuesday's township committee meeting. Deputy Mayor Ann Dooley said the change will allow Mayor Patrick Giblin to appoint a fellow commissioner or township em-

ployee to fill the mayor's seat at a meeting.

Mayor Giblin said the policy change will allow for flexibility in situations such as meeting quorums if he is not present and if a specific commissioner had been working on an application carried over from the previous year.

Every year Cranford's township committee selects one of the committee members as mayor. Each mayor officially becomes a Class I member (permanent planning board member or every application participant) as per the Cranford ordinance, explained Commissioner Dooley.

Resident Rita LaBrutto said she does not understand "the need for such change." Ms. LaBrutto said the policy change could lead to "potential mischief" by allowing for specific "players" to vote on pending applications such as Hartz Mountain, which is proposing to build 905 housing units at 750 Walnut Avenue.

Commissioner Dooley rejected Ms. LaBrutto's assertion regarding the policy change leading to "mischief" or "becoming a power grab."

"I'll say this to you. There is no one player on the planning board or township committee. I proposed this ordinance. We should be aligned with state law," said Ms. Dooley in response to Ms. LaBrutto's commentary.

Ms. Dooley said Mayor Giblin's option to utilize an "alternate planning board member" or circumstantial (application-to-application not a permanent replacement) "fill in" does not have to be enacted, but allows for the option to exist.

"Please come back with factual support," Ms. Dooley said.

Ms. Dooley said Ms. LaBrutto's criticism is "criticism without basis."

Commissioner Thomas H. Hannen, Jr. served on the planning board in the Class I mayoral seat. Mr. Hannen sat through more than 25 hours of testimony during the initial Hartz Mountain redevelopment hearings.

Ms. LaBrutto said new planning board members (Mayor Giblin) should "get caught up" via transcripts and the official hearings recordings, allowing Mayor Giblin to participate in voting on the carried-over applications.

Mayor Giblin said he will be officially "caught up" with all the happenings of the previous hearings regarding Hartz Mountain and any other outstanding or carried applications from 2018.

Commissioner Dooley said Mr. Hannen was an asset to the planning board, working as an effective member benefiting the township during his time on the planning board.

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A FEW POINTERS FROM LARRY JOHNSON...Retired New York Knicks player Larry Johnson, center, and the Junior Knicks offered a free basketball clinic to kids second through eighth grade on Saturday at the Westfield YMCA. The Junior Knicks recently donated an electronic scoreboard to the Y.

## Mountainside Conducts 2019 Reorganization Meeting

By KATE BROWNE  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

MOUNTAINSIDE — Dozens of residents filled the seats at the 123rd reorganization meeting of the borough council on January 8. State Senators Jon Bramnick and Tom Kean, Jr. (both R-21st, Westfield) administered the oath of office to Councilwoman Rachel Pater and Councilman Robert W. Messler, who were elected in November.

During his annual State of the Borough address, Mayor Paul N. Mirabelli expressed his gratitude to the dozens of organizations and hundreds of volunteers who support a wide range of services and community events including the rescue squad, the volunteer fire department, Beautiful Mountainside, PAL, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, the Lions, VFW and the Rotary Club.

According to the mayor, Mountain-

side is thriving and is fiscally sound. He noted that *New Jersey Monthly* magazine ranked the community the 12th best place to live and the 16th hottest real estate market, and that the *New York Times* real estate section described the borough as a "hidden gem."

Mayor Mirabelli said residents enjoyed expanded services in 2018 including dozens of new programs, several newly paved roads and infrastructure improvements. The community obtained \$290,000 in grants from the New Jersey Department of Transportation and \$149,000 in other grants. He noted the average tax increase in 2018 was \$19 and the number of shared services had increased significantly.

The mayor provided a detailed explanation of how, with the assistance of Borough Attorney John Post, the council

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THE GIFT OF GIVING...When Westfield High School (WHS) Key Club officer Kamryn Lombardi sets her mind to something, there's no stopping her. With an idea of helping children and teens in the local Children's Specialized Hospital, the senior asked her adviser of the community service club, Matt Girona, and fellow Key Club officers to allow her to run a toy drive. She compiled an approved wish list of specific toys for the patients. The new toys and gifts were used in therapy for the patients. A total of 180 toys were collected from teachers, staff and teens, as well as the local Kiwanis Club of Greater Westfield, the teen club's adult sponsoring club. The donations were delivered by the teens and their adviser just before the school's Christmas break.



NIGHT OF LIGHTS...Sam Tooley presented to Westfield Mayor Shelley Brindle and town council the Night of Lights 5K he would like to inaugurate. The race will be held on September 8, a Sunday night in Tamaques Park. The race is in honor of his brother who died in a house fire.

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## Congratulations to the Top 10 Sales Associates for December!



Sharon Steele, Julie Murphy, Mary DePaola, Francesca Azzasca, Christie Sargent, Eulondia Reese-Turner, Deborah Citarella Team, Cynthia Alexander, Beth Maloney, Patrick Manfra

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