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Garwood to Draft Letter To Brindle Re. Ice Rink

By **MICHAEL BONACCORSO**
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

GARWOOD – Borough Clerk Christina Ariemma will draft a letter to Westfield Mayor Shelley Brindle expressing residents' concerns about the possibility of the ice rink returning to Gumbert Park for a second season next winter.

Mayor Sara Todisco asked Ms. Ariemma to prepare the letter after several residents expressed concerns about the rink at the borough council's meeting last Thursday. The Westfield Town Council is scheduled to vote on the rink's location at a meeting in June.

The mayor said the borough council is not opposed to recreation programs, but said the park is "the wrong location" for the rink. Council President Marc Lazarow, who supported the letter, said he has spoken on behalf of concerned Garwood residents at several recent meetings of the Westfield Recreation Commission.

Councilman Michael Ince said in his short time on the council, few issues have "concerned me more than this one." He pointed out that several years ago, Union County had proposed installing an ice rink at Oak Ridge Park in Clark and he urged the county government to revisit the idea, saying the Clark location would be preferable to a rink in a residential neighborhood. "I am not against hockey," Mr. Ince said. "My son played hockey."

Councilman Sean Benoit said

last week that any benefits the rink brings to the community are outweighed by negative impacts, including potential lower property values and increased noise disruptions.

"I ask each of you to stand up for Garwood and your neighbors at The Pointe," Christine Spears, a resident at The Pointe located across Chestnut Street from the rink, told the council. She said owners of the rink have "absolutely no consideration" for nearby residents and local businesses. "Pointe residents endured a terrible, invasive six months when Westfield approved a rink directly on the property line with Garwood," she said.

The rink's owners recently presented to the Westfield Recreation Commission a proposal for the rink to operate for a second season at Gumbert Park, and the proposal included music to be played during operating hours. But Ms. Spears told the borough council that the proposal did not include any mention of noise impacts from the music or traffic impacts from skaters and hockey players being dropped off, picked up or parking near the site. "How can elected [Westfield] officials approve a project without doing their due diligence?" she asked.

The proposal for the rink also included increased hours of operation and on-site food sales, which Mayor Todisco said she was opposed to.

Garwood resident Stephen Barcan told the council the rink's

return should be delayed until its operator fulfills his pre-construction promise to provide reports on traffic and noise impacts. He said he did not want to merely take the operator's word that decibel levels from the rink were under the 60-decibel level promised. Another resident of The Pointe said that "whistles" and "hockey puck slaps" were consistently heard by those living near the rink during its initial season that ended in March, and accused Mayor Brindle of having "no regard for Garwood." He also claimed that residents at The Pointe had never received formal notice last year about plans to install the rink.

Despite the dispute, Mayor Todisco said discussions with Westfield about the rink would not affect other arrangements between the neighboring towns, including various shared-service and other agreements. "We will continue to work with Westfield as our good neighbors," the mayor said.

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Christina M. Hinke for *The Westfield Leader*

CRANFORD'S BRAVEST...The Cranford Fire Department marches in the Cranford Memorial Day Parade route.

Mayor Giblin Gives Update On PSE&G High-Voltage

By **CHRISTINA M. HINKE**
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

CRANFORD – At the township committee's official meeting Tuesday, Mayor Patrick Giblin provided an update on PSE&G's high-voltage line project. The utility provided a statement, which Mayor Giblin read: "Over the past few weeks PSE&G has performed extensive technical analysis regarding construction of the line along the railroad (Conrail) right-of-way...the railroad is currently evaluating our potential use of the right-of-way..."

PSE&G currently is "examining whether rerouting along the right-of-way will afford us access to construction of ongoing mainte-

nance," the statement continued. PSE&G's final decision will be made from "feedback from the railroad and analysis on access issues," according to the statement.

The township committee has asked PSE&G to reroute the proposed high-voltage power lines to along the Conrail line, so as to not be located along residential and school areas.

Deputy Mayor Ann Dooley said Governor Phil Murphy has been in contact with the Board of Public Utilities (BPU) and the BPU believes the height restriction is where the challenge will be.

Commissioner Thomas Hannen, Jr. said that existing high-tension lines currently run along the

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