

Freeholders Name Representatives To Open Space Advisory Committee

By PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

ELIZABETH — Following action by voters last November to pass an open space and recreation trust fund for Union County, the Board of Chosen Freeholders last Thursday officially named those who will serve on a 12-member bi-partisan committee that will implement the plan.

Voters passed a referendum on the November ballot to create a 20-year program that assesses property owners at the rate of 1.5 cents per \$100 of assessed valuation. The fund will create \$4.89 million in revenue per year to finance the program.

The trust fund may be used to acquire, develop and maintain lands for recreation and conservation purposes, and for acquiring and preserving historic properties.

Named to the committee are: Republican Summit City Councilman Henry Ogden; Cranford Democratic Mayor George Jern, and members of public, Oscar Ocasio of Elizabeth, Cindy Theissen of Union and David Winn of Plainfield. Each of these committee member's terms will expire on Monday, December 31.

Jim Lynch and Elizabeth Brody, both of Rahway, environment representatives; Clark Township Historian Brian Toal, historic representative, and Debbie Lyons of Summit, business representative, will serve until December 31, 2002.

The last group of members, to serve through December 31, 2003, are: Union County Freeholder Linda d. Stender of Fanwood, who will chair the committee; Union County Manager Michael J. Lapolla; Union County Department of Economic Development Director George W. Devanney; Union County Director of Parks and Recreation Chuck Sigmund and Union County Division of Cultural and Heritage Affairs Director Susan Coen.

The county has applied for a \$1.5 million grant through the New Jersey

Department of Environmental Protection's Green Acres program to be used solely for land acquisition.

"It is our goal to be successful in securing state dollars to assist us in acquisition of open space," said Freeholder Stender.

In other business, the county announced last week it will provide financial assistance to Cranford for a planned \$8.1 million flood control project.

Freeholder Daniel P. Sullivan explained that the county will provide \$2.45 million to the five-year project. He said the project will alleviate flooding that has impacted some 500 homes along the Rahway River over the years. The township sustained substantive damage from Tropical Storm Floyd in 1999.

"Hopefully, it will go a long way towards solving the flooding problem here," said Freeholder Sullivan. "It certainly was critical for us to participate (in the project)."

The board also took action to enter into a \$15,700 agreement with Bloomfield, Conn.-based Boundless

Playgrounds to develop the first handicapped-accessible park in the state.

"What a great idea that was born here in Union County," said Freeholder Chairman Alexander Mirabella. "I hope other counties and other public facilities take the lead and have other opportunities for handicapped accessible playgrounds and play facilities."

The county has designated the new Phil Rizzuto Park, located at the corner of Morris and North Avenues across from Kean University, as the location for the universally-accessible playground for children of all abilities.

"Kids with disabilities will benefit by being able to interact, learn, and play with peers, while children without disabilities will benefit also as they have an opportunity to change their false preconceptions about what it means to be disabled," said Freeholder Mary Ruotolo of Westfield, in a written statement released Monday by the county's Office of Public Information.



SPRING HAS SPRUNG... Volunteer Margaret Di Salvi of Westfield assists children with crafts at a past Spring Festival at the Miller-Cory House Museum in Westfield. This year's festival will take place on Sunday, April 22, from 1 to 4 p.m. Visitors will be able to witness preparation of wool and demonstrations of 18th-century skills, and children's activities are also planned. In addition, there will be a bake sale and opportunities to visit the museum's gift shop.

S. Plains Council Denies Appeal On Permit for Pet Store License

By FRED ROSSI
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — Scotch Plains health officials again denied an application for a permit to operate a pet store on Route 22, ending, for now at least, the effort by Charles Guthrie of Burlington to re-open the business he acquired earlier this year from the former owners of Puppies Just 4 U.

In late March, township health officials, based on some two dozen violations, denied Mr. Guthrie's initial application to open the store.

Earlier this month, the Township

Council, acting in its capacity as local board of health, gave Mr. Guthrie 48 hours to comply with the necessary regulations if he wanted to open his store and prevent the dispersal of some two dozen puppies remaining on the property.

When the conditions weren't met, Mr. Guthrie removed most of the puppies from the premises and then filed a second application for a license to operate.

Township health inspector Andy Snyder, after visiting the store on April 5, denied the license, saying that Mr. Guthrie had failed to implement a disease control and health care program set forth for him by a local veterinarian.

At Tuesday night's appeal of the

second denial, the veterinarian and Mr. Guthrie testified to continuing operational problems at the store, including missing and incomplete official paperwork pertaining to the puppies, missing identifying tags on more than half of the animals, several puppies that were unfit for sale and missing out-of-state health certificates for several others.

Mr. Guthrie admitted that, in removing the puppies from his store earlier this month, he had given several of them to an employee to whom he owed back salary.

He said the employee eventually sold the puppies, including one that was sold to a couple who had earlier given Mr. Guthrie a deposit for a puppy. This admission brought expressions of incredulity from some on the council, who felt that Mr. Guthrie's action in this regard amounted to a circumvention of a cease-and-desist order issued in late January to prevent him from selling any puppies until his operating license was in order.

Mayor Martin L. Marks said that even if Mr. Guthrie had implemented the disease control program, "there are some very disturbing things that have transpired" in the past several weeks, including Mr. Guthrie's admission that he had sold puppies without a license, violated the cease-and-desist order and sold several puppies of questionable fitness.

"I feel very uncomfortable" having Mr. Guthrie operate a pet shop in Scotch Plains, Mr. Marks said, in urging his fellow council members to deny the appeal, which they did by a 5-0 vote.

Photographer Thanks Westfield Community For Return of Camera

Editor's Note: Cheri Rogowsky is a photographer with The Westfield Leader and The Times of Scotch Plains and Fanwood.

I'd like to apologize to the public for not writing this letter any earlier, but it's better late than never. Yes, I did have my back-up camera that was stolen, returned to me, soon after I wrote the letter that it was missing on the night of the menorah lighting in Westfield.

We have honest people among us in the Town of Westfield. Thanks to the Westfield Police Department for holding the camera until I claimed it.

Cheri Rogowsky
Scotch Plains

Spring Festival Set for Sunday At Miller-Cory House Museum

WESTFIELD — On Sunday, April 22, the Miller-Cory House Museum will welcome in the season with a Spring Festival from 1 to 4 p.m., under the direction of Patricia D'Angelo, a volunteer with the museum.

The museum is located at 614 Mountain Avenue in Westfield and the event will take place rain or shine.

Visitors will be able to see the carding, spinning and weaving of wool. In addition, craftspeople will be on hand to demonstrate other 18th-century skills. Children will have an opportunity to make various crafts and to participate in a "scavenger hunt."

Music of the Colonial period will be played on the dulcimer and guitar, and visitors will be invited to sing along.

A bake sale will be conducted throughout the afternoon, featuring a variety of home-baked pies, cookies, breads and cakes. Lemonade and homemade cookies will be available for visitors in the Frazer Building for a small fee.

There is no admission charge for the Spring Festival; however, donations are welcome to help support Miller-Cory's educational programs.

The museum's gift shop offers a variety of educational materials, Colonial reproductions and handi-

crafts. A variety of cookbooks are also for sale in the gift shop, including several prepared by the Miller-Cory Cooking Committee.

On Sunday, April 29, "Colonial Fashions - Plain and Fancy" will be featured at the museum, presented by volunteer Renate Maroney.

For information about the museum, its upcoming events or volunteer opportunities, please call the museum office at (908) 232-1776.

Deadlines

General News - Friday 4pm
Weekend Sports - Monday 12pm
Classifieds - Tuesday 2pm

How To Reach Us

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More Letters to the Editor

Proposed Ordinance Would Address Underage Drinking on Private Property

Last week's paper contained an editorial discussing a proposed local ordinance regarding underage drinking on private property. Your editorial expressed concern over illegal searches of private property. I would like to point out that the proposed ordinance would not increase or change in any way the access police have to private property.

What the proposed ordinance will do is impose penalties on underage persons consuming alcohol on private property. The proposed ordinance will impose a fine of \$250 for a first offense and \$350 for subsequent offenses. In addition, driving privileges may be suspended or postponed for six months. These are consequences that directly affect teens in a meaningful manner.

The right of parents to allow alcohol consumption by their children in their home, for religious or any other reason, is referred to and protected. The proposed ordinance is meant to stop "house

parties" or "keg parties" where parents, possibly away for the weekend, may not even know their home was used to host such an affair.

In your editorial you refer to helmet and seat belt laws as protecting the vulnerable. This proposed ordinance is also meant for the protection of those underage. Teens consuming alcohol often do not use their best judgment.

It is the opinion of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Municipal Alliance Committee, a grassroots coalition for the prevention of substance abuse, that underage drinking is the biggest substance abuse problem in our communities. We believe such an ordinance would help keep our communities safe and strong.

I appreciate the opportunity to set the record straight.

Cathy Cvetovich, Coordinator
Scotch Plains-Fanwood
Municipal Alliance Committee

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