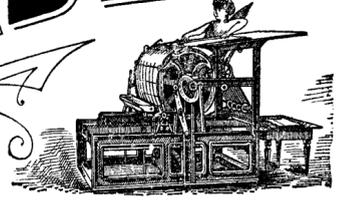




WESTFIELD LEADER.



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FIFTY CENTS



SPRING SPLENDOR IN THE DOWNTOWN...Sunday's annual Spring Fling activities were enjoyed by residents and visitors to Westfield's downtown. Pictured, at top, crowds gather on the corner of Quimby and Elm Street to savor Italian ices and view rare artifacts; center, a youngster has his caricature done by a visiting artist; bottom, members of a musical ensemble from the New Jersey Workshop of the Arts perform festive selections.

Spring Fling Attracts 30,000 to Downtown

By DEBORAH MADISON
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

The Spring Fling street fair held in downtown Westfield on Sunday attracted its "biggest crowd ever," according to Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce Chairwoman, Debbie Schmidt.

The weather cooperated with a near perfect day to draw approximately 30,000 participants, she estimated.

"We also had more vendors and more non-profit organizations than in previous years," she added.

Many new vendors introduced their wares to this year's event, making it a truly multicultural experience, with food, jewelry, clothing and music from countries spanning the globe.

Raagini filled the air with the enticing aroma of Indian cuisine, while pan flute melodies from Bolivia wafted down East Broad Street. If curry wasn't your thing, you could dine on Greek, Chinese or Italian dishes. And, there was plenty of good ol' fashioned American fare like Bobbie B's barbecued ribs and country tunes or down-home delta blues to please the more domestic palate.

Kids of all ages were having a ball whether they were petting llamas from the Cloverland Petting Zoo, defying gravity in the moonwalk or just getting cotton-candy all over their faces.

The annual event is sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce in conjunction with the Advertising Alliance and raises money to fund other

programs also sponsored by the Chamber. The Chamber also hosts another similar event in September, the Festifall.



BRIDGE OVER THE POND MINDOWASKIN...Youngsters from many of Westfield's nursery schools gathered at Mindowaskin Park in Westfield last week to celebrate April as the month of the young child. The students held various colored balloons for their respective schools.

Council Committee Gathers to Address Ways to Relieve Parking Woes in Westfield

By JAMES FOERST
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

Jitneys, valet services, and a parking deck were just a few items of discussion last Thursday at the Town Council's Transportation, Parking and Traffic Committee meeting.

Emergency Still Effective For Water Use

By HORACE R. CORBIN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

Local residents served by Elizabethtown Water Company were urged to continue to boil their water while making every effort to conserve water following a major water main break Monday night near the company's primary water treatment plant in Bridgewater.

The area affected included Westfield, Scotch Plains, Fanwood and Mountainside, as well as one million customers in 46 municipalities served by Elizabethtown Water, including most of Union County.

The break also impacted customers in eight other communities serviced by Edison and Liberty water companies.

Erin Reilly, spokeswoman for Elizabethtown Water Company in Westfield, told *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood* that the break was isolated as of Tuesday morning.

The water company reported that customers began seeing normal pressures and flows by early Tuesday morning. However, major news stations reported that some customers were still experiencing low pressures throughout the day.

Backup pipe lines were brought into service, and the output of Elizabethtown's Franklin treatment plant was increased to maximum capacity, Ms. Reilly reported.

The company issued a precautionary boil water advisory notice on Tuesday morning, in case contamination entered into its distribution system due to low pressure in the mains. As of Wednesday, the advisory remained in effect.

Many area schools were closed on Tuesday due to the water advisory, while schools that remained open advised students to bring their own water.

To date, there is no evidence that contamination entered the distribution system, Ms. Reilly stated. The company recommended, as a precautionary measure, that customers continue to

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Third Ward Councilman Neil F. Sullivan, Committee Chairman, stated that in finding a solution to the parking problems, "The overriding objective of any decisions will be to determine how to best serve the community. Everyone will have access to all the information involved in the process" and "there will be a commitment to involving and incorporating public input."

Hiring a full-time parking director was the most pressing order of business for the committee. The committee agreed that the first step toward a parking solution would be to fill this position. The job recently was advertised to the public through various media outlets.

"Some resumes have been received," said Mr. Sullivan, who indicated that he would like the council to hire a parking director "before the summer."

The committee also took another step toward the construction of the proposed parking structure by recommending the passage of an ordinance authorizing the allocation of \$700,000 of general revenue funds toward capital parking solutions. Although no solution has been agreed

to by the council, this would allow for the council to move forward "without committing to a particular solution or site," said Mr. Sullivan.

The funds would be paid for through the recent increases in parking meter and permit fees which are projected to raise approximately \$400,000 in the first year.

The committee recommended that the council proceed with a proposal for jitney service in and around the town as well as converting the South Avenue parking lot from a self parking facility to a modified valet service.

The council presently has pending before NJ Transit an application for a grant of two jitney vehicles to the town. The council and NJ Transit are slated to discuss this capital acquisition in early May. The town would incur no capital expense but would be required to hire drivers as well as maintain the multi-passenger vehicles.

Councilman Sullivan stated that, "The jitney service could be up and running before the summer" with the possibility of an additional two vehicles being acquired by January 2002.

The jitney would incorporate

routes throughout the residential neighborhoods of Westfield stopping at designated pick-up locations around town. The service would also encompass remote parking facilities such as the lot at the Westfield Memorial Pool. Riders would be required to pay a minimal fee to utilize the services of the jitney. Although slated as a short-term solution to the parking deficiencies, "the jitney could be incorporated as part of an overall long-term solution to the lack of parking in the downtown area," said Mr. Sullivan.

The committee also recommended the implementation of a valet parking service at the South Avenue lot. The lot presently has capacity of 469 permit parking spaces available with an additional 81 metered spots. The valet service would increase the number of available spaces in the lot by approximately 125 with the ability to sell approximately 200 more permits based on current usage.

The first 469 vehicles in the lot each day would maintain the ability to park and lock their cars. Once all

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POLITICAL VISIT...Democratic politicians stopped by the office of *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times of Scotch Plains-Fanwood* during Sunday's Spring Fling festivities. Pictured, left to right, are: Union County Freeholder Lewis Mingo, Jr., former Westfield Mayor Thomas C. Jardim, Woodbridge Mayor and candidate for New Jersey Governor Jim McGreevey, Union County Freeholders Mary P. Ruotolo and Daniel Sullivan, and former Seventh District Congressional candidate J. Brooke Hern. Mr. Jardim and Mr. Hern are both running for Assembly in the redrawn 21st legislative district.

Council Agrees to Fund Hiring Of Consultant to Design Deck

By PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

The Westfield Town Council agreed Tuesday night to move ahead with an ordinance to fund the hiring of a consultant to complete the design phase of a parking deck pro-

posed for the downtown.

The bond ordinance, to be introduced next Tuesday night, will enable the town to raise \$700,000 in bond anticipation notes for professional services that will include the design and construction management for the building of a maximum, 826-space parking facility.

Town Administrator Thomas Shannon, who expressed eagerness to move the project along, said the conceptual, or schematic design, phase

will include design of the deck in terms of aesthetics, the size and footprint of the facility, as well as possible development of businesses and residential development along the frontage of the facility on Elm and Prospect Streets.

The second half of this phase, he explained, will include producing the actual building plans and specifications for the project, leading to the hiring of a contractor.

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Enrollment Crisis at RIS Discussed by School Bd.

By MELISSA BETKOWSKI
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

Westfield Superintendent of Schools Dr. William J. Foley presented the recommendations of the Citizens Advisory Committee regarding overcrowding at Roosevelt Intermediate School at the Board of Education's regular meeting held Tuesday night at Jefferson Elementary School.

The committee, made up of 22 parents, administrators from both Roosevelt and Edison Intermediate Schools, two teachers from Roosevelt and three members of the board, met six times to formulate possible solutions to the growing enrollment at Roosevelt Intermediate School.

The committee developed seven suggestions which Dr. Foley pre-

sented to the board. These include:

- Beginning with the 2001-2002 school year, offer parents of entering sixth grade students the option of attending Edison School with transportation. Dr. Foley noted that it will take a minimum of 15 students to make instituting this plan practical.

- Beginning with the 2001-2002 school year when the average class size on a team exceeds 25 students, provide a paraprofessional that will be assigned to assist teachers as needed. Rather than assigning the paraprofessional to one subject or teacher, they could move to different classes depending upon the lesson, Dr. Foley added.

- Provide additional cafeteria workers at Roosevelt in 2001 to ensure

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David B. Corbin for The Westfield Leader

SPECIALLY SELECTED... Steven Krakauer, a Westfield High School student and reporter for *The Westfield Leader* and *The Times of Scotch Plains and Fanwood*, was accepted into the special summer program 2001 for journalism at Northwestern University. A prestigious honor, Steven follows in the footsteps of *Leader/Times* intern Michael Babik, who also attends Northwestern.

Enrollment Crisis at Roosevelt School Discussed by Westfield Board of Ed.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

that students have sufficient time to purchase and eat lunch.

• During the 2001-2002 school year, develop a plan to return health classes to the seventh grade physical education period and a curriculum for a technology class in grade seven. This would permit a reduction in physical education class sizes in the 2002-2003 school year.

• If average class sizes in English exceed 25 at the sixth grade level in 2001, five off-team English sections would be created to reduce total class-sizes. This will require hiring one full time English teacher to work between two teams, Dr. Foley said.

• Add the ACE (Algebra Curriculum Enrichment) program that supports seventh grade math students to the sixth grade at both Edison and Roosevelt Schools. Sixth grade students will be pulled from gym classes when the math teacher determines they are having difficulty. ACE enables students to keep pace with their regular math class through short-term tutoring on a specific topic.

• Continue to update enrollment and review whether mandatory redistricting will be necessary after 2004. If the difference in enrollment between Edison and Roosevelt Schools is persistent and significant, mandatory redistricting will have to be reconsidered.

Dr. Foley expressed his gratitude to the members of the committee for their hard work in trying to find agreeable solutions to the Roosevelt School overcrowding issue.

Board member Kimberly Rhodes told the board that she has heard from parents in the community who have shown a favorable reaction to the optional redistricting. "They are happy at it being a choice and not an obligation," Ms. Rhodes said.

Dr. Foley said that a letter was sent out last week to parents of incoming sixth graders regarding optional redistricting, but he has not received any responses yet. He noted that parents have to make a decision about what is best for their children.

Vice President Anne Riegel, who sat on the committee, said that the option of creating a third team for the sixth grade at Roosevelt School was not feasible due to budgetary and space concerns.

Also on the topic of enrollment issues discussed at the meeting was the potential for overcrowding at Jefferson Elementary School. The issue at the school centers on a current fourth grade enrollment of 77 students, which is divided into three classes of 26, 26 and 25 children.

Jefferson School is also the home to two special education classes for students with specific learning disabilities (SLD). These SLD classes at one time had been housed at Wilson Elementary School and were moved to Jefferson School when the enrollment at Wilson School began to grow.

Among potential options to alleviate crowding at Jefferson School, Dr. Foley noted that he has "rejected redistricting Jefferson."

The Superintendent noted that one potential alternative would be to combine the two SLD classes into one larger, partitioned classroom at the school.

However, "sooner or later we may have to make a move," Dr. Foley stated.

One option would be to move the two classes to McKinley Elementary School, which, while its enrollment has increased, has not seen the tremendous jump in numbers that has been witnessed at Jefferson School.

"Moving any children poses potential problems," Dr. Foley admitted.

However, he said that Director of Student Personnel Services, Dr. Theodore Koziak, has endorsed the proposal to move the SLD classes to McKinley School.

Board President Arlene Gardner said that this plan would allow the SLD students to have their entire elementary school education in one school, which is ideal.

Ms. Rhodes asked Dr. Foley for assurance that other classes at McKinley School, such as the Advanced Learning Program or art and music would be modified before the SLD classes would be moved again.

This question was raised in regard to the possibility of enrollment growth at McKinley School due to new housing being constructed on Clarence Street, as well as the potential for development of Coddling Road, which Dr. Foley noted is currently being battled out in Town Council meetings.

Some members of the public in attendance questioned the reasoning behind singling out the special education students for movement. However, other parents applauded the district's efforts to keep the SLD students together in one school rather than placing one class in one school and another in a separate school.

Prior to the meeting, a reception was held at the school to honor third grade teacher Anna Jane "A.J." Sabbagh, recipient of the Westfield Rotary Club's 2001 Philhower Fellowship for outstanding teaching at the elementary school level. Mrs. Sabbagh began her teaching career in the school district 43 years ago at McKinley School.

Westfield Town Council

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

During Tuesday's meeting, tempers flared at times over whether the Elm and Prospect location is the best spot for a deck. Mayor Gregory S. McDermott and the council were in agreement that the town faces a parking capacity problem and all supported the need for a parking structure.

First Ward Councilman Peter Echausse, whose ward would be the home of the deck, questioned whether the Elm and Prospect location might present environmental problems.

The Elm and Prospect site used to house a Cigo gasoline station.

He drew an angry response from some council members when he classified last year's process leading up to the selection of the site as "flawed." He indicated that the governing body may have been pressured into selecting the site.

Fourth Ward Councilman Lawrence A. Goldman, who expressed anger at Mr. Echausse's comment, said the governing body went through an "exhaustive" discussion on the parking deck.

Mr. Goldman said he was "frustrated" that the town was not making better progress on moving ahead with the project.

"We either move forward or we scuttle this thing," he commented.

Mr. Echausse, who joined the council in January and was not part of last summer's council discussions regarding selection of a deck site, asked if the governing body had agreed to a backup plan in the event of potential complications at the Elm/Prospect location.

Second Ward Councilman Rafael Betancourt questioned whether the town should put a hold on taking action on the hiring of the design consultant until it hires a parking manager.

Mr. Shannon said the council should move ahead with the ordinance so that it is ready for a review by the parking manager, who should be hired by June.

First Ward Councilman Carl A. Salisbury, also expressing concern on holding up action on the ordinance, said he envisions that the parking manager would work more on implementing other parking related plans in the hopper, to relieve the Town Clerk's office of these tasks.

In other business, the council agreed not to pursue action to remove Coddling Road as a paper street on the town's official map. A paper street is a roadway which is undeveloped but listed on maps with a dotted line for possible development in the future.

Edgar Road residents, whose properties abut the undeveloped section of Coddling, had asked the town to leave the street on maps. The residents view the land as a potential future investment.

Council members, in the end, decided that the land is privately owned and thus the town should not interfere in the process.

The governing body also agreed to take action on an ordinance that will require that leaves not be placed in the street until November 1. The action was requested by the B.R.A.K.E.S. (Bikers, Runners And Kids are Entitled to Safety Too) group, which was concerned over potential injuries to children during the Halloween season.

Residents will have the option of bagging leaves, having landscapers take them to the town's conservation center on Lamberts Mill Road or keeping all their leaves on their properties until November 1. Clear leaf bags are available at no cost from the Department of Public Works (DPW).

"It's going to be a learning curve," admitted Public Works Committee Chairwoman Janis Fried Weinstein. She said residents should call the DPW, which will pick up the bags.

Written warnings will be issued at first for violators of the pending ordinance, with summonses issued for subsequent offenses.

At the start of the council meeting, the governing body was introduced to Bruce Kaufman, the newly-hired Director of Recreation. Mr. Kaufman, who started his new position on Monday, held previous positions in Livingston and Summit.

WESTFIELD POLICE BLOTTER

MONDAY, APRIL 23

• Toni Ricigliano, 44, of Edison was arrested in the 200 block of East Broad Street and charged with driving while intoxicated. She was given a breathalyzer test and was later released on her own recognizance.

TUESDAY, APRIL 24

• An unknown individual or persons broke a loudspeaker and spray painted the side of the building at Jefferson Elementary School on Boulevard.

• A resident of Harding Street reported the theft of his bicycle, valued at approximately \$300, from the north side train station.

• An automotive business reported a theft of service in which repairs were made to a motor vehicle, which was then removed from the site without payment having been made.

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25

• Police confirmed that someone gained entry to a West Broad Street delicatessen and stole \$15 worth of lottery tickets.

• Michael Picardi, 24, of Rahway and Michael McHugh, 23, of Toms River were arrested at Rahway Avenue and Lamberts Mill Road and charged

with possession of less than 50 grams of marijuana. Both were issued summonses and released on their own recognizance.

McHugh was additionally arrested on two warrants, one for \$880 from Seaside Heights and the other for \$250 from Dover Township. He was released after posting bail on the respective warrants.

THURSDAY, APRIL 26

• An Elizabeth resident reported that a window was broken out on his motor vehicle on Woodbrook Circle.

• A Boulevard resident reported that the rear windshield on his motor vehicle was broken out while it was parked in front of his house.

FRIDAY, APRIL 27

• Brian Roach, 18, of Westfield was arrested for possession of less than 50 grams of marijuana at Central Avenue near Harrow Road after being stopped for speeding, police said. He was released on his own recognizance with a summons.

• Two garbage pails containing old copper piping, valued at \$500, were reported stolen from the premises of a Springfield Avenue restaurant.

• A woman reported that her purse, containing credit cards, cash and a cellular telephone, was taken from a North Avenue business after she had left it there. The total value of the missing items was said to be approximately \$145.

SATURDAY, APRIL 28

• A North Avenue catering business reported the theft of \$500 in cash from the establishment's register.

• Thirteen exterior lights were reported vandalized at a Hillcrest Avenue home.

SUNDAY, APRIL 29

• Justin Cutchall, 20, of Freehold was arrested in the 100 block of Elm Street, where he had reportedly been banging on doors, and charged with possession of a hypodermic needle. He was released on his own recognizance.

• Jacquelyn Peer, 20, whose last known address was in Westfield, was arrested and charged with possession of drug paraphernalia in the 100 block of Elm Street and for an outstanding warrant out of Roselle Park. She was later turned over to authorities in Roselle Park.

• An individual was seen gaining entry into the sports field house on Rahway Avenue through a window. However, nothing was discovered disturbed.

Water

Emergency

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

boil water for several days, while the company performed tests to confirm that the water was fit for drinking.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) also recommended that customers continue to heed the boil water advisory until notified that the water quality was acceptable.

Elizabethtown appealed to all customers to conserve water until further notice to preserve fire protection capacity and pressure throughout its service territory.

Repair crews were on site all day on Tuesday repairing the damaged main, which was located eight feet underground in a swampy area near the Raritan River. The area had to be drained before the damage could be assessed and repaired.

After repairs, the main had to be fully flushed and chlorinated. The entire process was expected to take several days.

The water treatment plant in Bridgewater, which dates back to 1931, normally supplies between 130 and 140 million gallons of water per day through the main which was ruptured. Currently, only 40 million gallons of water per day can be transmitted into the system from the Bridgewater plant, Ms. Reilly confirmed.

The last time that the Bridgewater plant was seriously disabled was in September of 1999, during Hurricane Floyd, when the system was completely flooded.

The water company's Franklin Township plant and reserve well sources have been pressed into full service to compensate for the supply limitations caused by the main break. These backup facilities have a capacity of about 100 million gallons a day. Storage tanks distributed throughout the multi-county network hold approximately a one-day supply of water.

The 40-year-old main that ruptured is a large, 60-inch diameter pipeline buried in the river bed. Repair costs and time are believed to be significant, although the water company would not provide a time estimate for the repair work, nor is the water company able to provide a reason for the pipe break.

The company is assessing the situation in the field and will provide further information as it becomes available. Further updates will be posted on the Web at www.etownwater.com.

If matters remain stable during the repair period, residents in this area of Union County are unlikely to recognize any service aberrations.

"At most, a slight color change in the water supply may occur as facilities become switched over," said Ms. Reilly.

Elizabethtown Water Company, a wholly-owned subsidiary of London, England-based Thames Water, along with the Edison and Liberty water companies, provides retail water service in 54 municipalities in Burlington, Hunterdon, Mercer, Middlesex, Morris, Ocean, Somerset, and Union Counties.

Parking

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

spaces are filled, traffic would be directed into a single entrance where valet service would then "stack" or "double park" vehicles.

The cost of the valet service would be included as part of the monthly parking permit. The service would run from approximately 7 a.m. until 10 p.m. Anyone not able to claim their vehicle by 10 p.m. would be required to contact the police department who would retain the keys to the unattended vehicles after hours.

The committee also recommended to the Town Council that they stream line the waiting list for parking permits by combining the list for the South Avenue lot with the list for the Waterson Street lot. Presently, the town maintains two separate lists for parking permits. One master waiting list would be maintained with two offering points.

The names at the top of the list would be offered South Avenue permits when availability arose while those farther down the list would be offered Waterson permits when spaces opened. A person would have the option of refusing Waterson parking while maintaining their name on the list for the South Avenue lot.

There are presently 469 spaces in the South Avenue lot and 104 spaces in the Waterson lot with 631 and 150 permits issued respectively. The cost of a permit at either lot is \$50 per month with a 10 percent discount if pre-paid for one year.

The committee also reviewed the adoption of an "in lieu" parking ordinance while also proposing the implementation of a "parking benefit district."

"In lieu parking," which was first proposed last July by the council, would require that all future proposed development either provide for adequate parking on premises or the property owner would be required to make a payment to the town for the parking deficiency based on the applicable zoning ordinance.

This payment would then be utilized by the town to create parking to meet the deficiency. The property owner would have the option to then purchase permits from the town to park for each "in lieu" parking space they were required to fund.

The other proposal would be to create a "parking benefit district." The town council would designate certain areas in and around town with this special designation. An annual assessment would be imposed on the property owners in the area who relied entirely or in part on public facilities for parking. This annual assessment would be calculated based on a per space basis charging property owners a fee for each space they fail to maintain on premises as required under the applicable zoning ordinance.

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