

Zoning Bd. Okays Parking Lot, Site Plan for YMCA

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parking. Mr. Abeel agreed that there may be "overkill" in the parking lot. Board member James Pate agreed.

Mr. Kraus offered to accept 245 spaces and bank 35 for possible future use, but Mr. Livolsi countered with an offer of 180 to 200 spaces. Several other board members appeared to favor the lower number as well.

When the discussion turned to what section of the proposed expanded lot should include the banked parking spaces, engineer James Watson warned the board that eliminating parking at the front of the new lot along Martine Avenue would require "significant re-engineering" because plans have already been drawn that include underground drainage and water detention systems at the front of the revamped lot.

A resolution was then offered to approve a parking variance allowing for 267 parking spaces to ultimately be developed, but limiting the number through the completion of the phase I building renovations to 183. The YMCA would then have to return to the board with a site plan proposal including a proposal for banking 84 spaces — the difference between the 183 and 267 figures.

After a lengthy discussion of the particulars of how a vote would occur, with board attorney Vince Loughlin proposing two votes — one on the parking variance and one on the site plan approval, which he said was necessary to protect the board from potential legal challenges — Mr. Abeel said he was "uncomfortable with the board pulling a number out of the air" for the parking lot.

He noted the YMCA's engineering and parking experts, as well as its staff, had examined and studied the situation and "came up with what they think they require. I believe that they know better than we do."

When Board Chairman Jim Fawcett polled the seven members to see if they favored the banking of parking spaces, four members opposed the idea. The first resolution was then withdrawn and for several minutes, as the first minutes of Thursday morning drew near, it appeared the board might put off taking any action on the application until a future meeting.

Mr. Livolsi said he favored shifting the proposed exit route from the parking lot a bit to the south on Martine Avenue in order to alleviate any problems with cars simultaneously turning left out of the YMCA and Peach Court, which is located directly across from the YMCA.

Mr. Watson said putting in a roadway extending across the front of the proposed new building, and running parallel to Martine Avenue similar to the existing exit roadway, would require re-engineering of the plans and also present setback issues. Instead, Board engineer Thomas Quinn sketched a slightly curved section of roadway that would shift the exit lane about 20 feet to the south on Martine Avenue.

It was only after some last-minute discussions near midnight on issues such as parking lot landscaping and other secondary matters that an obviously weary board, with about 15 residents and YMCA employees still in attendance, voted on the variance and the site plan.



SPECIALLY HONORED...Scotch Plains Recreation Director Ray Poirio, right, presents a resolution of appreciation to Harry Tishman, who is retiring after several years of service as the driver of the township's senior citizen bus.

Recent Home Sales

SCOTCH PLAINS:

Rodnell and Heidi Workman to Robert Lynch, 9 Malagna Court, \$291,250.

Enrico Pigna and Leo White to Peter Ng and Yung Shaw, 1811 East Second Street, \$270,000.

Jean Pratt DiDonato to Jeffrey Spitz, 1979 Prospect Avenue, \$200,000.

Nicholas and Denise Aloe to Peter F. and Janelle Huefner, 2308 Coles Avenue, \$445,000.

Steven J. and Michelle Willis to William W. and Ryleigh W. McMeekan, Jr., 333 William Street, \$365,500.

Terrence H. and Tracy D. Coyle to Trailer Specialties and Technologies, 329 Warren Street, \$385,000.

Eugene J. and Carol P. Mendalski to Antonio and Gladys Farez, 515 Jerusalem Road, \$495,000.

Josephine Kondak and G. Boorujy to Ran and Elena Dagan, 2667 Deer Path, \$469,000.

Russell J. and Judith Ann Nicosia to Ramazan Marke, 39 Canterbury Drive, \$350,000.

James and Pamela Keavney to Frank and Kristen Paladino, 7 Homestead Terrace, \$599,900.

Fuster Enterprises, LLC to Jorge and Aurora Rodriguez, 2366 Morse Avenue, \$390,000.

John D. and Denise M. Friebely to Mark R. and Teresa Panas, 2400 Potes Place, \$475,000.

Paul and Karen Robinson to Keith and Jennifer DeMatteo, 2371 Longfellow Avenue, \$528,000.

Jimmy and Ann Marie Hurtado to Mildred C. Monroe, 2284 North Av-

enue, \$287,000.

J. DiFrancesco and D. Pinto to Antonio Mastrocola, 2212 New York Avenue, \$300,000.

Richard L. and Sandra L. Smith to Gregory M. and Kelly A. Costelloe, 1975 West Broad Street, \$430,000.

Thomas Roland and Susila Ryskasen to Paul Morabito and Susan Barna, 1 Black Birch Road, \$550,000.

Theodore E. Scholler to Ellen R. Ramer, 2116 Gamble Road, \$600,000.

Barry and Judith Epstein to Jean Cadet and Yvonne Wright, 2 Wilshire Run, \$820,000.

Michael and Stephanie Giarraffa to Jeffrey B. Lehrer, 980 Raritan Road, \$722,500.

CDI Builders, LLC to Kin Wai and Jeanette M. Ng, 2223 Evergreen Avenue, \$657,000.

223 Katherine Street, LLC to Rez Development, LLC, 223 Katherine Street, \$510,000.

K. Hovnanian at Scotch Plains, LLC to Matthew Chyra and Hed Peng, 502 Donato Circle, \$451,842.

K. Hovnanian at Scotch Plains, LLC to William Taylor and Kristen Saunders, 505 Donato Circle, \$437,990.

K. Hovnanian at Scotch Plains, LLC to Omar and Rania Bolotok, 506 Donato Circle, \$415,792.

K. Hovnanian at Scotch Plains, LLC to Jeffrey Toney, 507 Donato Circle, \$469,220.

K. Hovnanian at Scotch Plains, LLC to Scott R. and Melina L. Reed, 512 Donato Circle, \$420,086.

Bd. Hears Testimony On Housing Project Proposed by Mr. Ward

By DAVID GIALNELLA
Specially Written for The Times

WESTFIELD — The Westfield Planning Board held a special meeting last Thursday to discuss details of James Ward's proposed age-restricted housing complex at the old Statistical Research site on Prospect Street. Preliminary and final site plans have been approved for the project.

The four-story building would consist of 35 luxury units, from 1,800 to 4,000 square feet in size. The building would be age restricted to people of middle age and older.

Representing the development firm of Ward & O'Donnell were Attorney Bruce Bergen of Krevsky, Silber, Brown and Bergen, and architect Domingo Diaz of Diaz Architects.

The building's exterior would consist of standard brick and a shade of stucco meant to evoke limestone. A synthetic stucco coating would be used to "allow elasticity." The windows would be aluminum, and units with balconies would have French doors and wrought iron grates.

Inside the building would be a first floor community room, two courtyards, two elevators and a ventilated garage at the lowest level with entrance and exit on Prospect Street.

The building will also include a trash chute, though recyclables will be collected from each floor by a maintenance staff.

Inside the individual units will be a master bedroom, an extra bedroom and washer/dryer hookups.

Mr. Ward assured the board of the units' quality, saying they "will rival anything you'll see in Paris or Manhattan's Fifth Avenue."

Board members questioned Mr. Diaz about the entrance to the parking facility, which would be enclosed by a gate system. Because of the narrowness and business of Prospect

Street, there is no room for queuing while awaiting access, said board member Robert Newell, who served as chairman for the meeting.

Mr. Diaz and Mr. Ward explained that a keypad would be used to trigger the door, "like E-ZPass," and that the door would only take about one second to open, and would begin opening a residents' cars approach.

"By the time the vehicle gets there, the door is up," said Mr. Ward.

Attorney Joseph Murray, representing owners of 133 Prospect Street, brought up concerns regarding guest parking, as none is provided for in the parking level blueprints. Mr. Ward said that he would expect guests to use the adjacent parking lot or find street parking.

Leslie Cascoe of Newpointe Realty, LLC which has filed suit against the town and Ward & O'Donnell challenging the legality of the project based on the town's zoning codes, asked Mr. Diaz several questions about rooftop structures.

Mr. Diaz explained that there would be two structures: an elevator bulkhead and a stairway bulkhead, each seven feet in height. He said that their size and orientation are in accordance with building ordinances and will not be visible from the ground except at significant distances.

Many residents, it was speculated, have other properties at the shore or in warmer climates. Rogica Urso of 112 Ferris Place expressed concern at the possibility of resident parking spaces being rented to commuters when residents are away.

Mr. Ward told Ms. Urso that a homeowners' association would not likely allow such a provision.

Another special meeting will be held in order to finish the proposal and reach a final action by the board.

Westfield Traffic Mtg. Yields Speeding Issues

By DAVID GIALANELLA
Specially Written for The Times

WESTFIELD — "We really have to be in the habit of driving slower in Westfield," said Town Council Public Safety, Transportation & Parking Committee Chairman Mark Ciarrocca Monday night, at the first of two community outreach meetings. The meetings are being sponsored by the committee as well as the Citizens Traffic Advisory Committee.

The open public meetings are aimed at eight traffic and safety hotspots throughout Westfield. Monday's meeting was split into three 45-minute segments, the first focusing on Woodland Avenue, the second on the McKinley School area, and the third on the Central Avenue and Clover Street and Ayliffe Avenue intersection.

Traffic Engineer Gordon Meth of Keller & Kirkpatrick conducted the forum.

He identified Woodland Avenue as a "cut-through route" between Mountain Avenue and East Broad Street that sees as many as 500 to 600 cars per hour during peak hours.

Residents of the area said that drivers travel at excessive speeds, and that traffic volumes are too great. They cited the intersection of Kimball Avenue and Woodland as especially hazardous.

Rich Kender of Kimball Avenue told the committee that statistically, Woodland Avenue pushes more vehicles than does Lawrence Avenue. He also said that because of a lack of stop signs and lights between East Broad and Mountain Avenue, drivers are able to "build up a good head of steam" while traversing Woodland.

"That street needs sidewalks for safety," said Woodland Avenue resident Paula Adams, saying children are particularly at-risk of being struck by a vehicle.

Some residents would prefer to keep attractive hedges and lawns by avoiding curbs and sidewalks. Resident Mercedes Fol-Okamoto highlighted the importance of "keeping the town residential" and avoiding a "very ugly urban look."

Mr. Meth named speed bumps and better signage as two possible cures for speeding. He mentioned turn prohibitions and one-way streets as possible volume reducers, but said that such measures "can make it very inconvenient to live there."

Councilman Ciarrocca interjected, saying that the speed monitor Westfield has used has been beneficial, and that two more are being

purchased. "The data has been really good," he said.

Residents of the McKinley School area — which includes West Broad Street, Osborn Avenue, First Street and Pierson Street — said that roads are literally blocked by double-parked cars during school drop-off and pickup.

"I'm concerned for the safety of the children — concerned with traffic and keeping everybody safe," said McKinley Elementary School Principal Claudia Andreski, who was in attendance. She also mentioned that there is trouble with bus circulation due to congestion.

Several residents said that Westfield High School students drive through the area at excessive speeds before and after school, and during open lunch periods.

Mr. Meth said streets could be made one-way streets, in a circular pattern around the school, during drop-off and pickup hours.

Centraland Clover and Ayliffe Avenue were the final areas discussed. Many residents who live on the east side of Central would like to see a traffic light put in that would allow safe crossing for children accessing Jefferson School. "Let's face it — Central Avenue is a highway," said Josephine Both of Boynton Court.

Others, who live on the west side of Central Avenue are worried that such a light would defer even more traffic down their side streets that lead to Summit Avenue and Boulevard.

Several residents suggested lowering Central Avenue's speed limit to 25 miles per hour, as is the case in Clark and further north, towards downtown. Another resident suggested constricting the width of the road.

"There are no magic bullets," said committee member and First Ward Councilman Sal Caruana. The committee reminded audience members that compromises must be made in order to come up with the best course of action.

Councilman Ciarrocca, who represents the second ward, promoted "Citizen Radar," one of the initiatives aimed at getting residents involved in traffic safety. Citizens who participate in the program are trained to use radar equipment and asked to report unsafe drivers for notification by the Westfield Police Department.

To voice specific concerns or for more information regarding Citizen Radar or other initiatives, residents are encouraged to call the traffic safety hotline at (908) 789-6039 or e-mail team@wpdnj.org.

Bond to Fund Improvements At Library Totals \$825,000

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problems. Mayor Marks pointed out that the board, not the council, has jurisdiction over the application and urged Mr. Kurtzman to attend the board's meeting on the application.

An ordinance was also introduced on Tuesday to restrict parking on Westfield Avenue at its intersection with Union Avenue. Parking would be prohibited on the northern side of Westfield Avenue from Union Avenue eastward 75 feet and westward 58 feet. The public hearing will also be held on April 12.

The council passed a resolution authorizing the purchase of new radio communications equipment for the fire department.

An \$80,000 federal grant will be used for what Councilwoman Carolyn Sorge, a member of the fire department, called "needed communica-

tions equipment." Another ordinance was introduced that vacates a sub-standard township-owned lot on Morse Avenue.

Councilwoman Malool explained that the 2,800-square-foot lot is too small to build on and that it is being offered to contiguous property owners, one of whom has expressed interest in purchasing the parcel of land known as Lot 25.02 in Block 7303.

The public hearing will also be held on April 12.

At the start of its meeting, the council passed a resolution congratulating the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Youth Baseball League Association on its 50th anniversary.

In addition, Recreation Director Ray Poirio led a tribute to Harry Tishman, who is retiring as a senior citizens bus driver.



GOOD SAMARITAN...The blood mobile was in Scotch Plains last Saturday morning and Kevin Schiller of Scotch Plains gave blood with assistance from donor specialist, Darlene, of New Jersey Blood Services.

Property Tax

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the proposed tax increase, saying it had been her impression that after the 18-point increase in 2003, the township would experience several years of what she thought would be "relatively steady" tax increases of around five points or less.

Mr. Atkins urged the council to increase revenues instead of cutting appropriations if it decides to make any changes.

He told the council he was satisfied with his appropriations projections, although he expressed his hope that there will not be another major snowstorm in the coming weeks before the warm weather months set in.

Mr. Atkins warned that the 2006 budget would contain several areas of significant, mandated spending increases, including Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority fees and a new police contract.

The council will hold final discussions on the budget at its Tuesday, April 5, conference meeting and introduce it on April 12. This timetable would result in a public hearing and vote on May 9.

Robbery

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diately taken into custody. The passenger of the vehicle fled on foot before being captured earlier this week, police said.

Sutton was transported to Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center in Plainfield where he was treated for a leg injury.

Police said they recovered several items of property from the vehicle including an undetermined amount of cash along with both loose packages and cartons of cigarettes believed to have been taken from the scene of the robbery.

Also recovered was a loaded .380 caliber handgun that contained Hollow Point bullets, police said.

Sutton was charged with armed robbery, aggravated assault, weapons possession, eluding police, resisting arrest and several motor vehicle violations.

Bail was set by Scotch Plains Municipal Court Judge Brian Levine at \$600,000.

The store manager was treated and released at Muhlenberg Hospital for the laceration to his head. There were no other patrons in the store at the time of the incident, police said.

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What's...

EASTER FLOWER HEADQUARTERS

...Hopping?

It's time to bring the family out to the Williams' Great Easter Egg Hunt, this Saturday at 2 pm. There will be over 4000 eggs filled with candy & toys. New for this year will be hidden 200 limited Edition 'Let it Grow' Elastic Bracelets only available at our Egg Hunt hidden in certain eggs. The Egg Hunt is only for Children 10 and under. Please arrive at least 30 minutes early since the Hunt starts at exactly 2pm.

While your here, why not choose an Easter flower or three? We have hundreds of pots of clematis, calla lilies, freesia, tulips, daffodils, hyacinths, Easter lilies, hydrangea, martha washington geraniums and about 307 other things in bloom.

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