

Board Oks 2nd Application Under Downtown Develop.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

of the sidewalk was sufficient to incorporate outdoor dining, without an additional 10-foot setback required by the RDRP. Mr. Campanella also said that the developers did not have any retail establishments slated for the space yet, other than their own store, Enchantments.

Parking requirements were discussed at length, with a vigorous debate over various calculation methods. The proposal will provide 28 spaces, while the RDRP requires between 30 and 35 spaces depending on which methods are used to calculate the requirement.

Traffic expert Gary Dean testified that on-street parking, available spaces in the train station lot across the street, as well as shared parking made up for the entire deficit of two, three or seven spaces. He told the board that the RDRP permitted a shared parking arrangement between retail and residential use as each type of use peaked at different hours.

Signage, drainage, lighting, utilities, storm water management and landscaping were also discussed during the hearing.

In other business, during the board's monthly agenda meeting, Engineering Consultant Dave Roberts of Schorr DePalma briefed the board on many of the latest revisions to the RDRP. Mr. DePalma reported that many of the questions and concerns discussed during the two downtown redevelopment applications, such as parking

calculations, alleyway requirements, building heights and set backs were revised to clarify and simplify the application process.

Several members of the public expressed their concern that major revisions were being made to the RDRP without notifying all borough residents of such changes.

Mayor Colleen Mahr assured the residents that these revisions were minor details being clarified to simplify the process and not major changes. Mr. DePalma also informed the public that they would have an opportunity to address their concerns to the board and to the borough council before the revisions were finalized at upcoming public hearings for these revisions.

Board engineering consultant Paul Ricci of T & M Associates informed the board that he would have a report on the rezoning of Staggard Place ready by the next regular meeting. He will also prepare a report on a proposed McMansion ordinance within 60 days. The ordinance committee will be considering ordinance changes on these issues after receiving Mr. Ricci's reports.

The next regular meeting of the planning and zoning board of adjustment will be on Wednesday, September 28. The next agenda meeting will be held on Monday, October 17, which will be immediately followed by a special meeting. All meetings are held in Borough Hall at 7:30 p.m.



GETTING DIRTY...Master Gardeners of Rutgers were busy at work building the new rain garden at the Fanwood library yesterday. This garden will be able to absorb and clean the rainwater that falls throughout the year.

Benjamin B. Corbin for The Times

Difficult Mun. Budget Year Forecast In Scotch Plains

By FRED ROSSI

Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — More than four months before he will submit the 2006 municipal budget to the township council, Township Manager Thomas Atkins warned on Tuesday of "a very, very difficult budget year," primarily as a result of increased costs mandated by the state.

Mr. Atkins usually submits his spending proposals in late January to the council, which then typically spends the following six to eight weeks holding budget hearings during which expenditures are tweaked and the municipal property tax rate is set. Afterwards, the budget is then formally introduced in early spring, with a vote held in late April or early May.

This year's \$20.5 million municipal budget is being financed by a 4.7 percent, or six-point increase in the municipal portion of property taxes. Most of the 3.9 percent increase in the 2005 budget was due to higher mandated expenditures, including health insurance costs, contracts with local unions, sewer fees, fire hydrant and utility fees and pension contributions, and Mr. Atkins said earlier this year that the 2006 budget discussions would be similarly dominated by mandated costs beyond the control of the local government.

As a result, if "anybody proposes new services or programs or the ex-

pansion of services or programs, it is "going to be extremely difficult" to accomplish, Mr. Atkins told the council at its conference meeting on Tuesday evening. He will spend the next few months meeting with municipal department heads and others as he formulates his 2006 budget proposals.

In other business, the council may award a bid at its meeting next week for construction of a five-bay storage facility at the public works facility on Plainfield Avenue that will house recently-purchased equipment that is shared by Scotch Plains, Fanwood and the joint board of education.

The bid, which Mr. Atkins said totaled about \$99,000, is about 15 percent higher than first estimated, but he said this was due to recently rising steel prices.

At its Tuesday, September 27 meeting, the council will also hold a public hearing on a \$109,000 bond ordinance to finance the facility's construction.

Mr. Atkins also informed the council that police officer Art Bruschetti, a 10-year veteran and a member of the Union County Emergency Response Team, was assigned to assist in the post-Katrina efforts in the Gulf Coast region. Officer Bruschetti, who "was excited about going," according to Mr. Atkins, left for the region last Saturday and is expected to return in early October.

McWilliams Party Switch

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tion Day. Assemblyman Jerry Green (D-22nd), who resides in Plainfield, said he wants Mayor McWilliams out of office. To this end, he engaged Union County Democratic Committee Chairwoman Charlotte DeFilippo, in an attempt to unseat Mayor McWilliams, and ousted the mayor from his seat on the county party's Executive Committee days before the deadline for inclusion on the ballot.

Assemblyman Green lent financial support to Sharon Robinson-Briggs in her campaign against Mayor McWilliams in the June mayoral primary. When reached Tuesday afternoon, Assemblyman Green said, "We have a law on the local level for someone doing this. He (McWilliams) has no respect for the law." He said the mayor has not supported the national Republican Party and should be an independent candidate.

"I have never seen anyone try to destroy a party and a city," Assemblyman Green said.

He accused Mayor McWilliams of mismanaging the city by reducing the police force by 12 officers, despite the fact there were 25 murders in the city over the past two years. Assemblyman Green also said the mayor wanted to float a \$17 million bond, nearly a third of which he said was to pay off city debt incurred during the mayor's administration.

The assemblyman said, "I'm just happy the truth (about Mayor McWilliams) has come out; the type of individual he happens to be."

In response to being ousted from his party, Mayor McWilliams and his supporters quickly regrouped to run on the New Democrats party line, which he formed in 2003. They were unsuccessful in their efforts, and, despite the work of Assemblyman Green, lost the election by only 300 votes.

The day after Mayor McWilliams

held his press conference announcing his decision to switch parties, Ms. Robinson-Briggs made a statement on the steps of Plainfield City Hall, in which she declared that she is "working hard this summer healing the city and uniting residents."

In her statement, Ms. Robinson-Briggs also referenced the boarded-up houses in Plainfield in her plan on reducing the tax burden by increasing the number of ratable properties. In fact, according to Mayor McWilliams, the number of boarded-up properties has decreased from approximately 450, when he took office, to only 50 today.

As Plainfield resident Julie Jerome told *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*, "For me, it's about doing what's right for Plainfield, not about political parties. I can certainly understand why Mayor McWilliams has made the switch; he is, and has always been, committed to Plainfield's growth and development. And he's simply not done. The bottom line is, we citizens of Plainfield need to cast our vote for our town, on whatever line we believe that vote is best represented."

Historic Commission Unveils Sign In FW

FANWOOD — The Fanwood Historic Preservation Commission is inviting Fanwood residents to the ceremony unveiling the sign marking the center of the Fanwood Historic District, a recent designee on the State and National Historic Registries. The event will be held on Sunday, September 25 at 3 p.m. in front of the Borough Hall of Fanwood. The hand-carved mahogany sign symbolically represents the core of Fanwood's history. Officiating at the ceremony will be Mayor Colleen Mahr. Light refreshments will be served at the Patricia Kuran Arts Center immediately following the unveiling.

POLICE BLOTTER

Scotch Plains

Saturday, September 17, a Ramapo Way resident reported being the victim of fraud. The victim reported that she had received a call from her credit card company stating that \$4,350 worth of unauthorized purchases had been made to her credit card. The victim had recently lost her wallet in another town.

Saturday, September 17, an individual at a local bank reported being the victim of harassment. She stated that an unknown caller has made several harassing telephone calls to her work and cell phone. There are no suspects at this time.

Saturday, September 17, Richard Thomas, 40, of Westfield was arrested and charged with possession of drug paraphernalia and obstruction after a motor vehicle stop.

The suspect allegedly gave a false name after being questioned by police. During a search, police recovered a glass pipe used to smoke cocaine.

Sunday, September 18, a resident of Jacobs Lane reported damage to his driveway lights. The victim stated he heard fireworks being set off in front of his house, and when he went outside to investigate, he noticed the damage. There are no suspects at this time.

Sunday, September 18, a Park Avenue business owner reported the theft of a sign from the front of his store. The sign, valued at \$450, was taken sometime overnight. Police said there are no suspects at this time.

Fanwood

Tuesday, September 13, Jaysy B. Hall, 29, of Edison was arrested and charged for having outstanding warrants following a motor vehicle stop on Terrill Road and Stewart Avenue. The subject was transferred to the Union County jail in Newark.

Tuesday, September 13, Toia Whitaker, 26, of Irvington was arrested and charged with outstanding warrants on Terrill Road following a motor vehicle stop.

Wednesday, September 14, Amanda Nicholson, 28, of North Plainfield was arrested and charged with driving while intoxicated (DWI).

Thursday, September 15, Wanda I. Morales, 26, of Long Branch was arrested and charged with driving while intoxicated.

Thursday, September 15, Shariyf Austin, 24, of Plainfield was arrested at the intersection of Morse Avenue and Westfield Road and charged with outstanding warrants following a motor vehicle stop.

Friday, September 16, Renee Rogers, 23, of Watauga, Tex., was arrested and charged with outstanding warrants following an investigation.

Saturday, September 17, Dia Harris, 23, of Plainfield was arrested and

Fanwood Dems to Host Pizza Event on Sept. 27

FANWOOD — Assemblywoman Linda Stender (D-22nd), Fanwood Mayor Colleen Mahr and the Committee to Elect Wheeler and Walsh will host an informal fundraiser to support Fanwood's 2005 Democratic candidates for borough council on Tuesday, September 27, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., upstairs at the Sun Tavern, located at 15 South Avenue in Fanwood.

The suggested donation is \$35 per person.

"With just over six weeks to go before Election Day, this is a great opportunity for Fanwood residents to meet and talk with Joan Wheeler and Bruce Walsh, our candidates for Fanwood Borough Council," said Assemblywoman Stender, a former mayor of Fanwood who is running for re-election to the State Assembly on November 8.

Mr. Walsh is an attorney and former three-term councilman, who currently serves on the Fanwood Planning Board. Ms. Wheeler is an administrator at Runnells Specialized Hospital and serves on the Fanwood Board of Health. "Bruce Walsh and Joan Wheeler will bring exceptional skills and experience to the borough council," said Mayor Mahr.

For further information about the Committee to Elect Wheeler and Walsh, call Bill Populus at (908) 789-7577, or log on to www.fanwooddems.com.

Mountainside

Monday, September 12, Luther Lewis was stopped for driving with tinted windows, police said. Police said a check of his driver's license revealed him to be suspended with a warrant in Lacey Township. The suspect was held in lieu of the \$195 payment.

Monday, September 12, John Kamara, 24, of Irvington was stopped and charged with speeding. Police said Kamara could not produce valid identification and was being evasive. He was arrested and brought back to headquarters where he confirmed his identity.

Thursday, September 15, the manager at Loews Theatre on Route 22 reported that a black male, approximately six feet tall with a medium build, wearing a tan shirt and tan baseball cap, presented the cashier with a \$100 bill. Police said a test revealed it to be counterfeit. The suspect fled the scene before police arrived, and the counterfeit bill was confiscated.

Tuesday, September 13, Jonathan Jimenez, 21, of Perth Amboy was arrested and charged with an active Mountainside warrant in the amount of \$400.

Tuesday, September 13, Wilson Vacazumba, 39, of Newark was charged with contempt of court in the amount of \$500.

Westfield

Thursday, September 15, Kelly Marshman, 27, of Jersey City was arrested and charged with contempt of court at Westfield Police Headquarters. He was released after posting \$500 bail.

Friday, September 16, Chivueze Ebere, 19, of Plainfield was arrested at Elm and East Broad Streets and charged with an outstanding motor vehicle warrant out of Watchung for \$106. Ebere was released after posting bail.

Saturday, September 17, an employee of an East Broad Street restaurant reported being assaulted by a co-worker at their place of business. No arrests had been made in the case at press time.

The victim, who was reportedly struck in the head with a wine bottle opener, required three stitches. He was treated at Muhlenberg Regional Medical Center in Plainfield and released.

Saturday, September 17, a wallet containing personal identification was reported stolen from an employee of a religious facility on East Broad Street.

Sunday, September 18, Matthew Tibbals, 37, of Scotch Plains was arrested at Dudley Avenue and Elm Street and charged with an outstanding traffic warrant issued by the Westfield Municipal Court. He was released after posting \$245 bail.

Fanwood GOP to Hold Wine, Cheese Fundraiser

FANWOOD — The Fanwood Republican Club will hold an international wine and cheese tasting fundraiser on Friday, September 23 at the home of Karen Paardcamp, located at 310 North Avenue. The selection of wines from around the world and complimentary cheese will be served starting at 7:30 p.m. by club members. There will be a history of each of the offerings and ideas as to how to choose which wine to go with what food.

The cost is \$35 by individual and \$50 per couple. Payment will be accepted at the event.

"This is one of the many events held by the club throughout the year," said Joel Stroz, club president. "The club has hosted this type of event through the years and everyone has had a great time. We expect a great turnout and a wonderful evening."

In attendance will be Michael D'Antuono and Maureen Mawby, the 2005 candidates for the Fanwood Borough Council as well as outgoing Councilmen Stuart Kline and Andrew Calamaris.

For additional information or directions, call Margarita Petro at (908) 889-1993 or Patricia Lindsey at (908) 322-8801.

Leadership Conference Set At SP-Fanwood HS

SCOTCH PLAINS — Assemblyman Jon Bramnick (R-21st) will address the Junior State of America at the 2005 Leadership Day Annual Conference at the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School on Saturday, September 24.

The Junior State of America (JSA) is the largest student-run organization in the nation and allows high school students to learn more about politics and get involved. This event will represent the Mid-Atlantic State, which encompasses the chapters of New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Washington, D.C. This annual conference invites its student members to participate in debate and workshops focusing on the skills of leadership.

The assemblyman will speak on his role as a leader in the community and the responsibility that an elected official has. He will also discuss state policy issues and possible reform of the state legislature.

Mr. Bramnick is an attorney with his office in Scotch Plains. He lives in Westfield.



Brooks Crandall for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

KID'S FRIEND...A young girl and pet piglet enjoy summer weather and each other's company last Saturday at Parker Gardens in Scotch Plains.



CAMPAIGN RELEASE...Union County Freeholder Chairman Rick Proctor, who is running for reelection, unveils a new television commercial on September 15, urging residents to participate in the county's health initiatives. Freeholder Bette Jane Kowalski, left, joins Jean Marra of Roselle Park at the unveiling. Mrs. Marra is a former patient at Runnells Specialized Hospital in Berkeley Heights where the press conference was held.

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