

Demographic Study

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and changes in economic conditions, according to the report.

The Fanwood Downtown Development project, as well as some other proposed housing developments, have the potential to erect at least 50 townhouses and 60 to 70 two- and three-bedroom apartments, the report stated.

The consultant said he does not believe that future residential construction will largely affect enrollment projections, due to "absence of large-scale subdivisions with single-family homes."

According to the report, historically, enrollment has grown at an average rate of 2.9 percent per year. Enrollment in the district has been fairly consistent, with an overall number of 5,212 students, which represents a gain of 941.5 students over the previous seven years.

Two enrollment projection methods

were utilized in the study, the Cohort-Survival Ratio (CSR) method and the Modified Regression Technique (MRT).

Data from the fall survey conducted by the BOE, as well as data obtained from the New Jersey Department of Education, was used to carry out this report.

The report concluded that the "Scotch Plains-Fanwood Public Schools should continue to keep abreast of planned residential development and revise the enrollment projections every other year so that the district can make the necessary modifications to accommodate its school facility planning needs."

A copy of the entire report is available from Business Administrator and Board Secretary Anthony DelSordi's office, located at the Administration Building at Evergreen Avenue and Cedar Street, or by calling (908) 232-6161.

SP Council Budget

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next two weeks.

At the start of the council's meeting, Antonio Inacio was sworn in as the new municipal judge. He replaces Brian Levine, who was named township attorney in January, succeeding Douglas Hansen, who died in December. Mayor Marks called the post "the most important position in town" because "to some, it's the only impression they get of the town." Judge Inacio has been municipal judge in Clark for 12 years.

In other business, the council adopted a resolution opposing a proposal from the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) to redesign the airspace in the New York-Philadelphia metropolitan area. Councilwoman Paulette Coronato said such a redesign would "dramatically increase" noise levels from airplanes taking off from or landing at Newark Liberty International Airport.

"We've gone through this since the late 1980s," she said. The FAA has issued a draft environmental impact statement containing the new airspace proposals, which Mrs. Coronato said would lead to more jetliners being routed away from non-inhabited industrial areas south of Newark Airport and directed toward more heavily populated areas of New Jersey.

Two weeks ago, several representatives from the local youth soccer league spoke to the council about the need for additional fields for the growing number of soccer players. On Tuesday, Rick Sands, president of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Youth Baseball League Association, made a similar plea on behalf of the 900-plus players in his league.

"We're having a very difficult time getting all the kids on the various fields," he said as he pledged his league's support for any new field development projects.

Saying the council was "painfully aware" that more needs to be done, Mayor Marks reiterated what he has said in recent weeks about the need to "be creative" in expanding playing time on existing fields through the use of lighting and artificial turf. He said the renovation and eventual lighting of the fields at the Union County Vocational-Technical Schools would begin this year so the fields are ready for play in 2007. The ballfields on Route 22 are also being renovated, and the mayor said he anticipates new fields

projects in 2007 and 2008.

The council approved a bid from Omnipoint, which makes the T-Mobile cell phone brand, to lease the fourth spot on the new communications tower being constructed at the southside firehouse.

The company will pay the township \$21,800 annually, with the fee rising with inflation each year. Mr. Atkins said the four cell antenna leases that have been secured would result in about \$116,000 in township revenue in the first year. In a related move, the council approved a bond ordinance appropriating an additional \$197,000 to pay for additional costs associated with the tower's construction.

Councilwoman Carolyn Sorge said that once construction on the tower started last year, developers "ran into unexpected setbacks," including having to drill into bedrock that wasn't expected, something that required the use of different equipment.

Noting the new Omnipoint lease, Ms. Sorge said that within four or five years, the revenue from the four leases will have paid for the cost of the tower.

The council also gave final approval to a \$3.86 million bond ordinance to fund improvements to the 33-year-old municipal building. "This is a long time coming," said Councilman Rossi. "Some might say it's way overdue." Mr. Rossi said that among the "substantial repairs" will be the replacement of the building's flat roof, which has been increasingly prone to leaks, with a slanted roof; the installing of a new heating and air conditioning system; the addition of a second floor above the police station at the rear of the building to provide the now-cramped facility with additional office and storage space, and improvements to the building's facade so that it blends in better with the colonial décor of other downtown buildings.

It's expected that the project will be completed by early 2007. Mr. Rossi pointed out that the new debt is being approved in conjunction with the retirement of \$4.4 million in township debt, meaning that little new debt is actually being taken on.

Mr. Atkins announced that the township's leaf and gumball pickup will begin on Monday, April 17, and that the branch and limb pickup will start on Monday, May 22.

Zoning Board Rejects Gulf Station Expansion Proposal

By FRED T. ROSSI

Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — The township's zoning board of adjustment last week voted to reject an application from Cumberland Farms to expand and upgrade the Gulf gasoline station it owns on Route 22.

After its initial application, which faced opposition from neighborhood residents, was rejected last June, Cumberland Farms submitted a new application that it said addressed the concerns raised a year ago. The board began its hearings on the new application in February, with Cumberland Farms representatives presenting new site plans that called for an end to vehicular access to the gas station from Mountain Avenue.

The new plans also called for the entrance to be replaced with fencing and tree and shrub plantings that would have run the length of the property along Mountain Avenue. In addition, the proposed 71-foot by 40-foot canopy above the six new gas pumps was to have been reduced in height from just over 17 feet to slightly more than 16 feet.

When expert testimony and questions were completed at the board's March 2 hearing, it was noted that, of the seven board members in attendance at last month's meeting, six had attended the February hearing. With at least five affirmative votes needed for an application to be approved, Gary Rosensweig, Cumberland Farms' attorney, was given the option of going forward with an immediate vote on March 2 — meaning five of the six board members would have to cast a favorable vote for his client to prevail — or allowing the two absent board members to first read the transcript of the March 2 meeting and then being available to cast a

vote at last week's meeting. Mr. Rosensweig chose the latter option.

At last week's meeting, however, Board Chairman Jim Fawcett was absent, and Mr. Rosensweig requested another delay until the board's May 4 meeting so that Mr. Fawcett could take part in a vote. With eight board members present at last Thursday's meeting, and board member Tim Livolsi saying that he may not be present at the May 4 meeting, the board voted to proceed with a final decision.

Board member Rich Duthie was the only member to speak in favor of the application, saying that if an opportunity to improve the site was not seized, those living in the vicinity of the Gulf station would instead be looking at an eyesore. He stated he had a list of numerous conditions he was prepared to include in a resolution of approval, including removing the proposed canopy that had met with a good deal of neighborhood objection.

Mr. Livolsi said the proposed expansion was too intense for the site, adding that the buffering was inadequate. Board member Brian Doyle said it was unfortunate that the manager of the Gulf station had not testified during any of the hearings.

In other business, the board will put off, at least until its May meeting, consideration of a subdivision application by Elizabethtown Water Co., which wants to utilize its 16-acre lot off Jerusalem Road, where its water tower facility is located. The utility wants to then sell an eight-acre tract for residential development, pending approval from the state Board of Public Utilities (BPU). Before the zoning board begins hearings on the application, a professional planner will investigate to what degree the application meets certain conditional use and pre-existing, non-conforming use criteria.

Mini Golf Course

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and in the evenings.

It's expected the new course will be open until 10 p.m. during the summer months and 8 p.m. during the spring and early fall months. Mr. Poerio said the fees have not yet been established.

About \$300,000 of the project's total \$525,000 cost will be for the golf course, while \$200,000 will fund expansion of the parking lot. The remaining \$25,000 will be used for bond counsel and other miscellaneous expenses, officials said.

Mr. Poerio predicted that, via fees, the course would pay for itself and then begin serving as a township revenue source within five to seven years.

During the public comment portion of the hearing, however, several residents expressed concerns about safety, increased traffic and the effects of the new course on their property values.

"How many of you would want this across from your home?" asked Plainfield Avenue resident Bernard Johnson as he gestured to Mr. Woodruff, Mr. Poerio and Mr. Zazzali as well as board members. He said the mini-golf course would result in additional vehicular traffic and more noise in general in the neighborhood, adding that he was concerned about pedestrian safety at the corner of Jerusalem Road and Plainfield Avenue.

Donna Grybowski of Everts Avenue, noting that the posted speed limits on both

Jerusalem Road and Plainfield Avenue is 40 miles per hour, expressed concerns about the safety of pedestrians walking to and from the new course and crossing either of the two streets, and urged that the speed limits be lowered. She also said that, at present, overflow parking from events at the country club often ends up on her street and in front of her house.

She warned of the possibility that additional cars resulting from the new course would further exacerbate the situation. Ms. Grybowski also was concerned that the club's parking lot and the surrounding streets could turn into a "hangout" for teenagers late into the night.

Mr. Poerio assured her that "we will work diligently with the police to ensure" that teenagers don't congregate in the neighborhood after the mini-golf course closes for the night.

Trudi Karpel, who also lives on Everts Avenue, warned of young people "hanging out" all day at the mini-golf facility, especially during the summer months, without any supervision. She said township officials "need to think hard and fast about what we're committing to," adding that, if the course is built, "we're asking for trouble."

Mr. Woodruff told the residents that the council "certainly will be discussing all of the issues that were raised."

POLICE BLOTTER

Westfield

Tuesday, April 4, after being stopped for a motor vehicle violation, Robert A. Roguso, 24, of Maplewood was arrested at Lenox and Central Avenues on an outstanding Garwood traffic warrant. He was released after posting \$125 bail.

Tuesday, April 4, a resident of the 700 block of Grandview Avenue reported being the victim of identity theft after it was discovered someone in Colorado had used his name and Social Security number to open up an account.

Wednesday, April 5, Christopher Merrick, 43, of Somerville was arrested at the south side Westfield train station on a contempt of court warrant from Bound Brook for \$270. The Bound Brook Court recalled the \$270 warrant and substituted one for \$20 that Merrick posted.

Wednesday, April 5, Major Montgomery, 35, of Scotch Plains was arrested in the south side Westfield train station parking lot and charged with possession of less than 50 grams of suspected marijuana and possession of drug paraphernalia. Montgomery was issued a summons and released.

Saturday, April 8, the Westfield Post Office on Central Avenue reported that three of its vehicles were damaged while parked in the post office lot. The windshield on one vehicle was broken, the right side mirror and a windshield wiper were damaged on a second vehicle and the left side mirror was damaged on a third.

Monday, April 10, an 82-year-old Watching woman had her purse stolen during a strong-arm robbery that occurred in the parking lot of a North Avenue store.

Police received a report at 12:44 p.m. that a black male in his 20s, about six feet tall with a medium build and short hair had approached the victim as she exited the store and grabbed her purse, which she was carrying over her shoulder.

According to Captain Clifford Aucher of the Westfield Police Department, the victim fought back momentarily — tearing the suspect's white T-shirt during the struggle — but he was able to pull the purse out of her hands. The suspect then fled the scene in a waiting vehicle, described as a red or maroon colored Honda, of which he was the driver. There was a passenger in his vehicle, described only as a black male.

The victim sustained a small cut on one of her fingers and was treated by Westfield Rescue Squad personnel.

Based on a partial license plate number obtained during the incident, police believe the vehicle used by the suspects had been stolen in Piscataway within 24 hours prior to the robbery having occurred. Anyone with information is asked to call (908) 789-6086. All calls will be kept confidential.

Scotch Plains

Tuesday, April 4, an incident of theft was reported at a Route 22 gas station. An employee stated that an individual drove into the station and obtained \$10 worth of gas, then fled without paying for it.

Wednesday, April 5, a student at Union County Vocational-Technical Schools reported the theft of her digital camera from her unlocked locker. The camera was valued at approximately \$300.

Thursday, April 6, a burglary was reported at a Route 22 gas station. One or more unknown persons pried open the

attendant's booth and removed cash.

Sunday, April 9, a resident of Country Club reported that one or more unknown individuals entered his motor vehicle and removed several items.

Sunday, April 9, a disorderly person was reported on the premises of a Terrill Road church. Police asked the individual to leave and she complied without further incident.

Mountainside

Thursday, April 6, Altarese Wilson, 30, of Irvington was arrested in Mountainside Municipal Court on an outstanding warrant for \$350 out of Newark. Mountainside police also charged him with possession of suspected Ecstasy. Wilson had been in court for sentencing on a charge of possession of less than 50 grams of suspected marijuana. A search pursuant to the warrant arrest revealed the suspected Ecstasy concealed in a Tic Tac container in Wilson's front left pants pocket.

A New Providence Road resident reported that her five-month-old Golden Retriever was stolen from her yard. The owner reported that the day before the dog disappeared, a black male and two white males had been playing with the dog, named Suede, through her side-yard fence and she suspected they took her dog. Police said Suede is equipped with a micro chip which, when scanned by a vet, would help locate the owner.

Friday, April 7, Jonathan N. Jimenez, 22, of Perth Amboy was arrested at Perth Amboy police headquarters on an outstanding warrant for \$464 out of Mountainside. He was transported to the Union County jail.

Saturday, April 8, police reported that someone attempted to steal a 2003 BMW wagon from a parking lot on Route 22, East. A side passenger window was shattered. No items were reported removed from the vehicle. Police said the crime occurred between 7 and 10 p.m. and there are no suspects at this time.

Sunday, April 9, Keith P. Stewart, 27, of Fanwood was arrested on Route 22 at Sheffield Street and charged with being under the influence. The arrest occurred following a motorcycle accident. Police said Stewart was transported to Overlook Hospital in Summit for evaluation.

Monday, April 10, Diego J. Quirios, 26, of Newark was arrested on Route 22, East near the Springfield line and charged with driving while intoxicated and being an unlicensed driver. He was given a breathalyzer test and released.

Police reported that someone attempted to steal a 1997 Toyota Corolla from the parking lot of a New Providence Road hospital. Police said it is believed the suspect inserted a metal object in the ignition switch. Molding under the steering wheel was pried and wiring exposed. Nothing from the vehicle was removed, police said.

Area Votes Tuesday

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According to BOE figures, the average taxpayer would experience an increase of \$392 in school taxes. The property tax levy represents 81 percent of the total tax revenue to support the school budget, with another 12 percent, or \$1,659,804, coming from dissolution of the now defunct Union County High School Regional District. Business Administrator Roderic McLaughlin said at a meeting in March that the dissolution funds have kept the school taxes from rising more for the average assessed home in the borough by \$2,016 over the past few years.

Mountainside residents will vote for two school board members out of a slate of four candidates. BOE incumbent Marybeth Schaumburg, a local realtor, is seeking reelection. Also seeking election are Cathy Jakositz, Geraldene Duswalt and Joseph Tinnirella.

In Garwood, voters will cast ballots on a \$5.2 million tax levy that will decrease taxes for the average assessed home by \$13. The total tax levy is down \$87,075. Unlike Mountainside, Garwood taxes are going down due to funds received through the breakup several years ago of the regional school district. The total school budget this year is \$7,408,099.

Garwood residents will select two board members from among five candidates, including incumbent Adele Lewis, board president and secretary for the Garwood and Maplewood planning boards; board member Barbara Greet and Susan Groning, a lifelong borough resident. Running for a one-year unexpired seat are incumbent James Matheson and challenger Lisa Marano, a member of the Parent-Teacher Association.

Mr. Matheson filed Monday as a candidate for borough council. Borough Clerk Christine Ariemma said if Mr. Matheson is elected to both positions he would only be able to serve in one position.

18 Vehicle Burglaries Reported In Spree

By SUZETTE F. STALKER

Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

WESTFIELD — Eighteen motor vehicle break-ins were reported on Westfield's south side between early Friday evening and Saturday morning, authorities confirmed.

Captain Clifford Aucher of the Westfield Police Department told *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* the incidents occurred between 6 p.m. on April 7 and 8 a.m. on April 8.

The overnight spree included seven vehicles on Ayliffe Avenue, two each on Bell Drive, Connecticut Street and Faulkner Drive and one apiece on Rahway Avenue, Belmar Place, Boulevard, Central Avenue and Washington Street.

Captain Aucher said the vehicles were parked in front of their owners' residences when the break-ins occurred. He believed that "most, if not all, were unlocked" at the time. The captain noted that items of small value were removed from almost all of the vehicles.

"We presume they're related," he observed, saying that all of the incidents occurred within close proximity to one another.

Fanwood Council Meeting

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of the project to be.

Mayor Mahr announced that borough representatives are working on design guides to bring and restore one of three remaining cabooses that ran on the Jersey Central Railroad to Fanwood as a museum and learning center. The cost is estimated at \$14,000 and could be funded by a living community grant for \$55,000.

The borough is repairing sidewalks that have been damaged by trees. There is a list of residents who have their names placed on it if they would like their sidewalks to be fixed. The town also has finished collecting leaves for the season and will now only collect shrubs and branches.

The council approved several motions at the meeting, including an emergency appropriation for the municipal budget in case it does not pass, according to Councilwoman Katherine Mitchell.

The council rejected a bid from Trenton Avenue Sidewalks because the cost is too high. It accepted a bid for traffic light maintenance from Keveco to supervise the borough's traffic signals.

The governing body recognized local resident and author Dr. Lawrence Hogan, leader of the Negro Leagues Researchers/Authors Group research team, for his achievement in recognizing African-Americans' accomplishments in baseball with his book "Shades of Glory."

"Dr. Hogan has resided in Fanwood for 30 years," said Councilman Joseph Higgins. "His accomplishment resulted in the recognition of 17 of 94 African-American players inducted into the Baseball Hall of Fame. As gratitude for his recognition, Mr. Hogan autographed a copy of his publication for the public library."

After 16 years in business, Janet Bridal Ensembles/Song Wedding Gallery will shut its doors due to competition, officials said. Janet Song and her mother, Wook Ha "Sunny" Song, opened the business in 1990. The duo was presented with a merchant's award by the council. "We have amazing memories of everyone in this community," Janet Song said.

Fanwood Council President Donna

Dolce was presented with the Woman of Excellence Award by Union County for her leadership role within the community. Ms. Dolce is chief operating officer for the Washington Rock Girl Scout Council.

The council recognized Adrienne Robertiello, who is fighting for autism support in Fanwood. Ms. Robertiello, the mother of a five-year-old with autism, says that 1.5 million Americans suffer from the disability. The council named April as National Autism Awareness month to help create community awareness.

April also is National Poetry Month and there will be a poetry reading on Saturday, April 22, at 7:30 p.m. in the Patricia M. Kuran Cultural Arts Center. Poetry readers will dress up in period costumes. Free refreshments will be provided.

For his 16 years of commitment to the community, Greg Cummings was presented with the Volunteer-of-the-Month Award and an enlarged photograph of the Fanwood train station.

"He has been on the historic preservation committee, has been responsible for the holiday wreaths at the train station and even was in charge of the first holiday celebration in 1996," Councilman Jack Molenaar said. "He has played a vital role in the redevelopment of the downtown."

Mr. Cummings also is in charge of Clean Community Day, which will take place on Saturday, April 22. "We should have pride in living in a clean municipality," Mr. Cummings said.

Keith Griesting, a Fanwood resident, complained that smoke from a neighbor's yard is damaging the health of his three children and wife. He said his neighbor burns green wood in an open fire in his backyard, which affects his children's asthma and pollutes the environment.

Mr. Griesting said, "My goal is not to infringe on someone else's enjoyment of their yard, but rather that he appreciate that my family and I should be able to enjoy our own yard without health complications." The mayor and council said they are investigating the matter.

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