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SIXTY CENTS

SP-F BOE, Parents Discuss Superintendent Hiring Process

By JENNIFER SINCLAIR
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS -- The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education (BOE) hosted a public meeting at Evergreen Elementary School in Scotch Plains Monday night to begin community and staff input for hiring a new schools superintendent to replace Carol Choye who is retiring.

Superintendent Choye will end her 13 years with the district in August, and the BOE has said wants to make sure that the hiring process is an effort of the community as a whole.

Carole Larsen, a field service representative for the New Jersey School Boards Association, presided over the meeting. "Tonight's discussion will help me to create a rating form to measure the candidates against and a list of interview questions."

She told the audience of about 15 that every candidate would be asked the same questions to ensure fairness during the interview process.

Ms. Larsen said that the BOE was not willing to settle for less than the ideal candidate. "This is a selection process, not a settlement process," she said. "We will find a qualified person."

If the board does not reach a decision by the July 27 hiring goal, the search will be put on hold until September, and an interim superintendent will be utilized.

In the discussion part of the meeting, Ms. Larsen asked the audience four questions, which fueled an hour-long brainstorming session about the kind of superintendent the community is seeking.

First, she asked, "What are the special strengths of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood schools and the communities they serve?" The audience's answers cited involved parents, support from taxpayers and community members and the high quality of instruction as assets.

Ms. Larsen then wanted to know what critical issues the townspeople felt the school system would be facing in the next several years. Audience members raised concerns about budget cuts, increased class sizes, increasing

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Caleb Zimmerman for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times
PRE-PROM...A group of Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School seniors poses outside Pines Manor in Edison on June 2 before the start of the annual senior prom.

Fanwood Begins Brush Collection Program

By TED RITTER
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

FANWOOD -- Crews from the borough's Department of Public Works (DPW) will fan out again on Monday as part of Fanwood's brush collection program. Monday's brush pick-up in the borough's southeast and southwest quadrants follows the June 5 pickup in the rest of the municipality.

DPW Director Clint Dickson said the borough conducts residential curbside pickup of tree branches and similar brush four times annually: June, September, January and April.

Mr. Dickson said that crews will not pick up grass clippings and landscape cleanup materials other than branches smaller than six feet in length and 12 inches in diameter. He said that residents have to make their own arrangements with their private garbage company to properly dispose of grass or other material, as the borough's recycling center on North Avenue will also not accept them.

Due to recently updated state stormwater management regulations, Mr. Dickson noted that any brush piles set out at curbside (not on sidewalks or obstructing traffic) must be placed at least 10 feet away from storm drains.

In addition, he said the new law specifies that residents are not permitted to put brush out at the curb until seven days or less before scheduled collection.

Mr. Dickson said the borough plans

to enforce a new local ordinance that was passed to ensure compliance with the updated state regulations, especially since "there has been an ongoing problem with residents leaving brush in the street for long periods of time."

"Once we pick up, if anybody places stuff in the street after the program has been completed, we're going to be giving notices to residents telling them to get their material off the street," Mr. Dickson said.

After the fallen branches and pruned brush that residents put out at the curb are collected, the material is prepared for an environmentally friendly second life.

"We bring everything to our recycling facility where we have a tub grinder that comes in; we grind the material up, and then we offer it back to residents who can use it as ground-

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Fred K. Lecomte for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times
LAST MOMENTS...Members of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School senior class gather for a photo at Senior Day on Tuesday.

Zoning Board of Adjustment Denies Elizabethtown Water Co. Application

By FRED T. ROSSI
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS -- Last week, the Zoning Board of Adjustment unanimously turned down an application by Elizabethtown Water Co. to subdivide its Jerusalem Road property so that half of that tract of land could be sold.

Winding up a hearing that began in April, board members expressed their concern about two chlorine pump fa-

cilities on the property that are used to purify water being stored in the utility's water tower. Under the subdivision proposal -- which would cut the 16-acre property into two eight-acre tracts, with the northern half being sold off -- the pumps located on the northern half of the property would likely remain in place and be part of any residential properties that may be developed.

Elizabethtown Water, which said

that it is selling the land because it no longer needs it, would require an easement to provide its personnel with access to the pumping facilities.

Several board members asked why the utility is selling land that it does still need to need. Board member Ken Anderson said he was "not comfortable with the concept of a pump in someone's back yard or side yard that isn't owned by [Elizabethtown Water]."

Board member Tim Livolsi asked how much property an easement would encompass, saying that "perhaps the proposal should have been to split the property into three," with the third, smallest piece including the pumping facilities.

When he asked for examples of other properties where the type of situation as laid out in the subdivision application exists, Robert Schaefer with Elizabethtown Water Co. provided examples of pumping facilities on commercial properties adjacent to residential lots.

Several neighborhood residents also expressed concern about the application, saying that developing half the property would negatively affect them because the trees presently blocking their view of the water tower would likely be taken down as part of any residential development on the eight-acre lot. They also cited potential flood risks and a "decreasing amount of open space" in Scotch Plains.

Board Chairman Jim Fawcett said it would be "unfair" to residents currently residing near the property to possibly lose existing tree buffers if the property were to be developed and, instead, be exposed to direct views of the water tower and other related buildings.



Fred K. Lecomte for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times
CLASS OF 2006...Members of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School senior class spell out their graduating year at the school's annual Senior Day, held this Tuesday on the Soccer Field near the school.

Michael Chemidlin Court Hearing Begins; Proceedings 'Unclear' to Family Members

SCOTCH PLAINS -- The court hearing for Michael Chemidlin of Scotch Plains has been postponed to today, June 8, in Sierra Leone, Africa, according to family spokesman Anthony Cinelli of Los Angeles, Mr. Chemidlin's nephew.

Mr. Cinelli of Los Angeles said Monday that after speaking with family members this past weekend, "it is unclear what is going on."

According to an email dated June 2 to the family from the United States Consulate's office in Sierra Leone, last Friday's hearing was delayed because the "director of public prosecutions is contemplating an action, but needs to get the attorney general's approval first."

Mr. Cinelli said that the family has heard that the hearing had been originally postponed to June 5 because officials were asking for more money from the family. "With suspicion, doubt and confusion growing, the family is beginning to become more fearful," Mr. Cinelli said.

Chemidlin's son, Andrew Chemidlin of Scotch Plains, said his father is in "good spirits, joking while on a break from the hearing, walking around outside the courthouse." He told his father to make sure to "put away his camera."

Michael Chemidlin is a 58-year-old veteran of the Vietnam and Iraq

wars, an Army National Guard staff sergeant, a Scotch Plains resident and father of three sons. He is being held by authorities in Sierra Leone, charged with photographing a United Nations courthouse in the country, an act that is considered illegal in the West-African nation.

After his recent tour of duty in Iraq, Mr. Chemidlin said he went to Sierra Leone looking "to spread goodwill, charity and God's love to those less fortunate." Upon arriving in Sierra Leone, he took pictures of a United Nations courthouse and on May 5, he and three Sierra Leoneans accompanying him were imprisoned for picture taking.

The family is in contact with the state department and local authorities to help defend their father and provide financial support. Regular status reports are provided on a website setup by Mr. Cinelli, freunclemike.com.

Kean, Menendez Win Primaries for U.S. Senate

By PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

MOUNTAINSIDE -- The New Jersey U.S. Senate race officially began Tuesday when Republican State Senator Tom Kean, Jr. of Westfield and incumbent Democratic U.S. Senator Robert Menendez defeated primary opponents John Ginty and James Kelly, respectively.

Mr. Kean told supporters at an election night gathering at L'Affaire in Mountainside that voters should ask themselves whether they want "a party boss or proven reformer." Mr. Menendez countered by saying, "The facts are clear. Tom Kean, Jr. and George Bush are perfect together. Perfectly wrong for New Jersey."

Republicans have not captured a U.S. Senate seat from New Jersey since 1972. Former Rep. Bob Franks garnered 48 percent of the popular vote but was defeated by now-Governor Jon Corzine in 2000.

Mr. Kean has served in the Legislature since 2001. He was elected to his state senate seat in 2003, replacing Richard Bagger, who retired. Governor Corzine named Mr. Menendez to fill the senate seat he vacated. He

represented the 13th District in the House of Representatives from Hudson County for 14 years. The district includes Elizabeth in Union County.

In other races, Rep. Michael Ferguson of New Providence and Assemblywoman Linda Stender of Fanwood ran unopposed in primaries and will face each other in November in the Seventh Congressional District race. Also, Union County Freeholders Deborah Scanlon of Union, Alexander Mirabella of Fanwood and Chester Holmes of Rahway won their party's nominations for reelection over challengers Michael Romano, Stanley Moskal and Joseph Aviles. They will face Republicans Diane Barabas of Westfield, Mountainside Councilman Glenn Mortimer and Patricia Quattrocchi of Garwood in November. Democrats have held the majority on the board since 1997 and all nine seats since 1998.

In Garwood, former Republican Bruce Paterson filed as an independent candidate for mayor and will face incumbent Mayor Dennis

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Chrissy Hamway for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times
EVERY VOTE COUNTS...State Senator Tom Kean, Jr. casts his vote Tuesday with his wife, Rhonda, and daughters by his side at the Westfield Memorial Library. Mr. Kean won Tuesday's primary to officially win the Republican nomination for U.S. Senate.

Car Strikes, Kills Scotch Plains Pedestrian at Route 22-Harding Road Intersection

By CASSIE LO
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS -- Police officials have concluded that there will be no charges filed against a motorist involved in a pedestrian-motorist accident. A pedestrian died after being hit by a car at the intersection of Route 22 and Harding Road in the township on May 28.

Tommy Oatman, 64, was killed as he walked across the street in a wooded area by the Watchung Reservation at 10:55 p.m. Police said the victim was wearing dark clothing and was walking in the street near his home on Harding Road. A driver traveling westbound on Rt. 22 hit Mr. Oatman with the right corner of his Hyundai.

Scotch Plains Police Lieutenant Brian Donnelly said speed and alcohol were not factors in the accident.

"This was an unfortunate incident. There will be no criminal charges, because it was just an accident," Lieutenant Donnelly told The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times last week.

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Don Williams for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times
ACCIDENT...A car struck and killed a pedestrian at the intersection of Route 22 and Harding Road in Scotch Plains on the evening of May 28. Police have determined the incident was an accident and have not pressed charges against the driver.

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