

## Bids for SP Municipal Building Upgrades to Be Awarded Sept. 12

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

SCOTCH PLAINS —The township council expects to award a bid next week for the refurbishing of the municipal building. Township Manager Thomas Atkins told the council at its conference meeting Tuesday that six bids were received last month for the project.

Improvements will include the replacement of the building's flat roof, which has been prone to leaks in recent years, with a slanted roof, the installation 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 department with additional office and storage space and improvements to the building's façade to blend in with the colonial décor of other downtown buildings.

The bids received ranged from \$2.79 to \$3.48 million, officials said. In the spring, the council approved a \$3.86-million bond ordinance to fund improvements to the 33-year-old building on Park Avenue.

In other business, at its first meet-

ing since early August, the council agreed to send a letter to state Department of Transportation (DOT) officials requesting that the sidewalk replacement component of the Route 22 bridge-refurbishment project be done in accordance with the brick-paver specifications that govern the downtown business district.

Officials said actual work on the bridge is to begin in 2008 and will result in a new, widened overpass in the same location. Plans also call for a widening of the intersection at New Providence and Bonnie Burn Roads, as well as an expansion of the area where the south side of the bridge intersects with Park Avenue.

A new traffic light would also be installed at the latter location. The plans call for dedicated left-turn lanes and separate right-turn lanes at both intersections to create a "smoother" flowing traffic pattern north of Route 22 and less congestion on Route 22, Park Avenue and some of the secondary roads leading into the central business district, officials have said. A wide sidewalk would also be included in the new bridge.

The planning board, which is presently re-examining the township's master plan, asked the council to contact DOT about coordinating the new bridge sidewalks. The DOT will also be asked to plant street trees in the vicinity of the new bridge, which officials said would be completed by 2010.

The council introduced an ordinance that is required to ensure that Scotch Plains continues in the Federal Emergency Management Agency's flood-insurance program. A vote on the ordinance is expected at the council's Tuesday, September 19, conference meeting.

At next week's meeting, seven ordinances will be introduced to bring the township further in compliance with state Department of Environmental Protection stormwater management regulations. The proposed ordinances will address illicit stormwater sewer connections, the disposal of yard waste, litter control and pet waste.



Horace Corbin for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times  
**NO ONE HURT...**Don Wussler of Coles Avenue in Scotch Plains examines the tree limb that crushed his Ford Explorer at 3 a.m. last Sunday morning. Squalls struck randomly throughout the region as tropical storm Ernesto exited the area.

## 'Working' TDR Program To Be Ready By End of '06

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

FANWOOD — Mayor Colleen Mahr and the borough council on Tuesday evening received updates on efforts to establish a local Transfer Development Rights (TDR) program. The update came during the governing body's monthly agenda meeting.

Stan Slachetka from T&M Associates of Middletown (the borough's TDR consultant) presented the update at the request of Mayor Mahr. Mr. Slachetka brought the borough council up to speed on developments over the summer, as well as the next steps and "a tentative schedule for reaching an end goal, which is a [TDR] ordinance."

sign plans for properties intended for mixed commercial and residential use.

Mr. Slachetka said a TDR "build-out" analysis has been completed and an informational meeting will be held on Thursday, October 12, with a focus on how the "sending and receiving" credit mechanism will work.

After that, a final TDR plan will be prepared for review by the local planning board and the state for endorsement prior to drawing up a formal ordinance and holding a public hearing.

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## SP to Purchase Cooper Rd. Lot on Island for \$350,000

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

SCOTCH PLAINS —The township government intends to purchase the western half of the Cooper Road island this fall and eventually rezone it so that the entire two-acre lot will be off-limits to development, officials said.

The \$350,000 purchase of the property would settle a lawsuit filed in March against the township's zoning board of adjustment by HUB Realty LLC, whose application to build a single-family home on the property was unanimously denied by the board late last year. Mayor Martin Marks said this week that after the suit was filed, the township's legal advisors raised concerns that a judge could overturn the zoning board's decision and allow the house to be built.

At its regular meeting next Tuesday, the township council will consider a resolution approving a settlement of the lawsuit and will introduce a bond ordinance to finance the purchase of the lot, which is presently owned by AT&T. The township already owns the eastern half of the island, which has been designated a conservation zone, preserving the property in its existing state. Mayor Marks said after the purchase of the other half of the island is completed,

he would push to re-zone the property so the entire island section of Cooper Road becomes a conservation zone.

The board's December 2005 rejection of the HUB application came after hearings that lasted nearly a year and saw several dozen neighborhood residents raise objections to the proposal. The council intends to send residents in the area a letter next week outlining some of the details of the intended purchase, which will be the township's second purchase of a privately owned property using money from the local open space trust fund.

Mayor Marks said while he "would have preferred to leave the property as is" without having to make a purchase, given the possibility of a court allowing development of the property to go forward, such an option was not possible.

## Fanwood Board Continues Talk on 'Oversized Homes'

By SARA MAGNOLA  
*Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*

FANWOOD —The Fanwood planning board continued its discussion regarding the implementation of an oversized-home ordinance at its August 30 regular meeting. Board chairman Gregory Cummings asked his fellow board members to "zero in on what it is we want, so (the ordinance) can be voted on at the next meeting."

Paul Ricci of T&M Associates in Middletown, a civil engineering company, asked the board if they were looking to make changes to their existing building code or create a more "controlling ordinance" based on square footage of a property. The board agreed to the latter. In this case "as a lot increases in size, the residential building coverage gets smaller," he said.

Board member Andrew McDonald asked what was wrong with granting variances based on the current building code. Mayor Colleen Mahr, who also sits on the board, pointed out that two of the new three-story houses constructed on Estelle Lane, which could have been built taller, adhere to the present code. These houses were



Sara Magnola for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times  
**DON'T OVERSIZE IT...**New homes built on Estelle Lane in Fanwood are three stories high. They are examples of what Fanwood planning board members said last week are "oversized." The board is reviewing a proposed building ordinance to limit the height of homes in the borough.

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Horace Corbin for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times  
**ALL SMILES...**Last Sunday and Monday, residents enjoy the weather, family fun, rides for the kids and food at the annual Italian Festival held at St. Bartholomew the Apostle Roman Catholic Church in Scotch Plains. See goleader.com/photos.

## Hayes: 'Teachers Will Adjust Program to Get Off Warning List'

By MARIA WOEHR  
*Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*

SCOTCH PLAINS —Terrill Middle School is still on the No Child Left Behind Early Warning List, Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education (BOE) officials revealed at Thursday night's meeting.

The school scored 39 out of 40 points — falling short in special education mathematics. The report is based on both in- and out-of-district special education students in grades 6, 7 and 8.

"We are working with the teachers to adjust the program for our students," Superintendent of Schools Margaret Hayes said. "It is hard to be perfect all the time and I am still proud of our teachers at Terrill. Our goal is to be off of that list."

"We have three dozen children not meeting the benchmark. It is unacceptable for one child to not meet requirements," BOE member Donald Parisi said.

Director of Special Services Thomas Beese said, "We endorse high standards to help our students meet their potential. The test scores indicate that they failed by one or two points and by next year we will surely be off that list."

Even though Park Middle School met all 40 requirements this school year it will appear on the No Child Left Behind List because a school must meet the requirements two years in a row to be taken off the list. Park Middle fell short in the 2004-2005 year due to special education mathematics as well.

Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School met all 40 indicators and will not be on the list at all this year, officials said. "The good news is that we have achieved accurate progress during this school year," Ms. Hayes said.

In other business, the BOE approved revisions to the curriculum and new textbooks for courses. Subject supervisors Carol Senff and Brad Siegel presented revised programs for language arts and social studies. Most of the language arts program will remain the same, but there will be added focus on writing to help students prepare for

the new SAT writing sample. World Literature will expand to include more women and multicultural writers.

The curriculum for the 12th grade will also allow students to take classes on debate and discussion, identity and self, film, the nature of evil and the night's meeting.

BOE member Carol Senff explained the revised language arts program.

Director of Special Services Thomas Beese said, "We endorse high standards to help our students meet their potential. The test scores indicate that they failed by one or two points and by next year we will surely be off that list."

## Linden Man Indicted In SP Accident That Killed Friend

SCOTCH PLAINS —A 20-year-old Linden man was indicted by a Union County grand jury on Friday in connection with a fatal motor vehicle accident that claimed the life of his friend in Scotch Plains on March 11.

County Prosecutor Theodore J. Romankow said Edward Hamilton was charged with second-degree vehicular homicide and third-degree assault by auto in connection with the death of Mark Costa, 21, of Clark.

Police told *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* in March that Hamilton's Dodge pickup truck and another vehicle sideswiped each other on the Martine Avenue extension at noontime. The pickup truck veered off the road, striking a tree on the passenger side where Mr. Costa was sitting, police said.

Hamilton was arrested in April following a Scotch Plains police investigation, which reported he was under the influence of narcotics at the time of the accident.

"He is charged with reckless conduct that resulted in the crash in that he was up all night, had used significant amounts of cocaine and marijuana, and was allegedly under the influence of narcotics when he lost control of his 1998 Dodge Ram pickup

member Sasha Slocum said.

The sixth-grade social studies program has been renamed world geography instead of geography. "We moved a lot of the U.S. geography to grade 4, so we reduced the U.S. geography in grade 6, allowing our students more time to learn about society, civilizations and religions," Mr. Siegel said.

Because grade 8 social studies was a difficult course for teachers to cover because it included all world history and cultures, teachers are now going to focus on teaching large civilizations such as Greece to give students a better background and in-depth knowledge, according to Mr. Siegel. Added courses to the curriculum include sociology and philosophy.

The BOE also referred the ice hockey team-funding proposal back to the board's policy committee for revisions. The Scotch Plains-Fanwood ice hockey team and parents attended the meeting.

"I have two children in the ice hockey program. The games are great, but the costs are not," said parent Alan Kaufman.

Parents with children on the team said they have to pay out-of-pocket for the team's uniforms, coaches and

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David Samsky for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times  
**SPIN ME 'ROUND...**Local residents get an upside-down thrill at this weekend's festival at St. Bartholomew the Apostle Roman Catholic Church in Scotch Plains.