

Glover, Strauss Join SP Council; Fireworks Over Appointments

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

SCOTCH PLAINS — Two Democrats joined the township council on Tuesday as Mayor Martin Marks called for continued progress on ballfield development, the designation of a site for a senior citizens center and the "resurrection" of efforts to revitalize the central business district.

At the council's reorganization meeting, Kevin Glover and Jeffrey Strauss, who were elected in November, were sworn into office. They became the first Democrats on the five-member governing body in four years. Mr. Glover told the standing-room-only audience that the 2006 election "was about you and your desire to have a better community," and pledged to "be a representative of all our neighbors." Mr. Strauss called Scotch Plains "a wonderful town that could be made a lot better."

U.S. Attorney Christopher Christie swore in Councilwoman Nancy Malool, who was re-elected to a second term in November. Councilwoman Paulette Coronato was unanimously chosen to be deputy mayor for 2007.

In his remarks, Mayor Marks, after summing up the accomplishments of 2006, enumerated priorities for the new year and the new council. He said upgrades to the southside firehouse field and to Brookside Park "are definitely on the radar," and he promised that neighborhood input will be taken into consideration before actual development occurs. He asked those residents "to be cognizant of the recreational upgrades that their families now enjoy in neighborhoods other than their own. We also ask our citizens to take the altruistic approach and also keep in mind what is best for Scotch Plains as a whole."

The mayor said establishing a site for a senior citizens center needs to take precedence over further ballfield development. He backed the idea of a center at the former Sevell/Ponderosa property, which was purchased by Union County.

Calling his 2004 vote against the establishment of a Special Improvement District (SID) for the downtown business district "one of my biggest regrets," Mayor Marks called for a "resurrection" of an initiative to

spur downtown development. "Perhaps with a new configuration of our township council, we will be able to overcome previous obstacles and work together with businesses and landlords for the betterment of our entire township, whether it takes the

fall election campaign, would remain in his position "for many years to come. However, when it is time for you to leave, it is my steadfast desire that it will be on your terms." The mayor added that he would "also do everything in my power, and I do mean everything," to ensure that whenever Mr. Atkins decides to retire, "that it will be on your terms."

Brian Levine was reappointed as township attorney, while Thomas Russo was named municipal prosecutor and Casey Woodruff was appointed public defender. Councilmen Glover and Strauss said they would vote against the reappointment of Lawrence Woodruff as assistant township attorney. Mr. Strauss said he felt "the appointment process should be more inclusive with regard to certain appointments." Mayor Marks, noting that "we are not building a government from scratch," said those being appointed were named "because they have served remarkably well."

Mr. Strauss said he did not have any specific nominees in mind for the assistant township attorney post. But Mr. Glover said that, in an effort "to bring further bipartisanship to our township," he had suggested last month that Ken Lipstein, the Democratic Party chairman, and Richard Samuel, the former Democratic campaign manager, be considered for the position.

form of a SID or not."

Addressing the coming municipal budget deliberations, the mayor noted that most local costs are mandated by higher levels of government or by employee contracts. The "relatively small" amount of discretionary spending, he said, needs to be used judiciously "to provide the things that the citizens of Scotch Plains ought to have. Our children should have ample recreational facilities in which to play. Our seniors should have a quality venue for meetings and other activities. Our residents should desire that their local government acquire and protect open spaces whenever possible. Our library should be a state-of-the-art facility available to citizens of all ages for discovery and exploration."

The mayor singled out Township Manager Thomas Atkins for praise, calling him "perhaps the pre-eminent municipal manager in this state." He said he hoped Mr. Atkins, who was criticized by Democrats during the



OATH OF OFFICE...Above, new Scotch Plains Councilman Jeffrey Strauss takes the oath of office at Tuesday's reorganization meeting, with son, Benjamin, and wife, Angelique, right. Below, U.S. Attorney for New Jersey Chris Christie, right, swears in returning Councilwoman Nancy Malool, pictured with daughters Amanda and Emily. Her husband, Paul, is not pictured.



U.S. Attorney Christopher Christie swears in Councilwoman Nancy Malool, who was re-elected to a second term in November. Councilwoman Paulette Coronato was unanimously chosen to be deputy mayor for 2007.



PROUD MOMENT...New Scotch Plains Councilman Kevin Glover, center, poses with his son, Kenneth, and wife, Joanne, after his swearing-in at Tuesday night's council reorganization meeting.

MS Reorganizes; Mayor Outlines Goals for 2007

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

MOUNTAINSIDE — Continuing a tradition that now spans 111 years, Mayor Robert Vigilanti and the borough council held the governing body's annual reorganization meeting Tuesday night.

The meeting, which drew a crowd that overflowed into the hallway of the municipal building, included appearances by Assemblyman Jon Bramnick and State Senator Tom Kean, Jr., (both LD-22, Westfield). Police, fire and borough officials were also on hand.

In his annual address, Mayor Vigilanti criticized state-level tax in-

creases implemented in 2006, saying, "We are not seeing any reduction in state spending."

The mayor said the state's recent emphasis on sharing municipal services to cut costs is nothing new in the borough. "Mountainside has been sharing services for over 25 years," he said, noting that many borough officials also work part-time. "These are major tax savings with no loss of oversight or services. Another major tax savings is that no member of [the] governing body or any board member receives health coverage, pensions or a salary."

Mr. Kean later told *The Scotch*

GW Mayor Begins Second Term; Sluka Takes Office

By KATHY MARQUES
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

GARWOOD — Borough Mayor Dennis McCarthy was sworn in New Year's Day by Municipal Clerk Christina Ariemma for a second four-year term. Councilwoman Kathleen Villaggio was sworn in for another three-year term and Keith Sluka took the oath for his first three-year term as a councilman.

Mayor McCarthy swore in newly appointed Fire Chief Edward Silver, Jr., a Westfield firefighter and the son of former Fire Chief Edward Silver, Sr. This is the first father and son to both serve as fire chief in Garwood's history.

"[Mr. Silver] has served on the department since 1984, and his family has a long history of service with the borough. We anticipate the quality of his leadership to be outstanding," Mayor McCarthy said.

Mayor McCarthy asked audience members to "keep in your thoughts and prayers the men and women on our home land and overseas who are fighting to protect our freedom and advance the freedom of others."

Councilman William Schadewald congratulated Ms. Villaggio, the council president for 2006, stating, "Your strong leadership, commitment to Garwood and big heart is immeasurable."

The council named Charles Lombardo as council president for 2007.

He continued, "Let us not forget the recent passing of President Ford. I believe, as of today, the losses in



UNDER OATH...Garwood Municipal Clerk Christina Ariemma, right, swears in Mayor Dennis McCarthy for his second term in office.



SWEARING TO SERVE...Fanwood Mayor Colleen Mahr administers the oath of office to the members of the borough's volunteer fire department. From left, Chief Dave Ziegler, Assistant Chief John Piccola, Captain Steve Szanto, Lieutenant Frank Dieltl and Lieutenant Bruce Padulski, swear to serve the community.

FW Welcomes New Councilman; Mahr Looks to Senior Programs

By STEVEN REILLY
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

FANWOOD — Mayor Colleen Mahr swore new Councilman David Valian and returning Councilwoman Donna Dolce, who won election to a second three-year term in November, into office at Monday's borough council reorganization meeting.

Toni Dolce, Ms. Dolce's niece, opened the meeting with a strong performance of the "Star Spangled Banner." The classically trained singer came from her home in Manhattan to help welcome her aunt to a second term on the dais.

"My aunt was the one who encouraged me to go after a singing career," she said. "She will be a great member of this council."

Ms. Dolce said she sought a second term to continue the progress that was made in the downtown redevelopment program.

"We accomplished an extraordinary amount of work over the past three years and there are still a number of things I would like to see

through," Ms. Dolce said. "We are making progress and I would like to see more done."

Mr. Valian joined Ms. Dolce and the mayor and council on the dais for the first time at the special meeting.

"I have some learning to do," Mr. Valian said. "There is a routine to get used to. It will be a learning process, but I am proud to be here serving my community."

Mr. Valian began his community service as a youth coach with the Scotch Plains-Fanwood PAL football league, as well as with baseball and YMCA programs. His wife, Michele, and four children joined him at the podium as he took his oath of office. Fanwood resident and Union County Freeholder Al Mirabella was also in attendance to support his friend.

"Al (Mirabella) was one of the reasons I am here. He saw my yearning to serve my community," Mr. Valian said. "So, with my wife's permission, we pushed forward to get here today."

Mayor Mahr swore in members of the Fanwood Volunteer Fire Department and the Fanwood Rescue Squad during the meeting.

"Our police department works day in and day out on our behalf, making sure our quality of life in Fanwood remains what we expect it to be," the mayor said. "To our fire department and rescue squad — we thank you for volunteering all the hours you do."

She closed the meeting with her State of the Borough address, which touched on the past year's accomplishments and looked towards 2007.

"Great things, both large and small, have been happening all over Fanwood," she said. "Regardless of the size, I have tried to make sure that they all have a common goal — to continue to ensure Fanwood is a vibrant suburban community that respects its past while carefully creating its future."

Senior citizens took a leading role in community affairs last year with the opening of an improved Forest Road Park facility that hosts the 100-member Fanwood Senior Citizens Club.

"The time has come to do more for (local senior citizens), who represent

22 percent of our community," Mayor Mahr said. "We need to offer them programs that bring them out of the house and back into our community, a community that they helped define."

The mayor highlighted economic development as a significant issue in the improvement of the quality of life for Fanwood residents.

"Economic development is the engine that drives our ratable base and plays a significant role in our quality of life," she said. "This has been a real priority of mine and I am proud of the accomplishments we saw this past year."

The mayor pointed to the new construction on South Avenue and the improvements to Martine Avenue businesses.

"These initiatives have been done every step of the way by working with, not against, property owners," Mayor Mahr said. "I have said many times that Fanwood has taken the road less traveled with its approach to developing the downtown. It is an approach that works for us and the vision our community has for itself."

Property taxes are always an issue, the mayor said, and Fanwood has had the lowest municipal property tax increases in Union County.

"In these tough economic times, being a mayor is not always easy. I feel the burden of the property tax issue as we head into a new fiscal year," the mayor said. "This council will be very thorough and sensitive to you, the taxpayer, as we head into these discussions."

She said shared services with Scotch Plains and the county would be looked at as a way to keep municipal costs down. She said grants, county programs and state funds would be used to make improvements to the borough's roads and walkways in 2007.

She announced plans for the renovation of the Patricia M. Kuran Cultural Arts Center and the dedication of a Fanwood museum in the historic Community Center at the Fanwood Train Station.

"To have the history of our town



INAUGURAL TERM...Fanwood Mayor Colleen Mahr, left, swears in new councilman David Valian, as his wife Michele and four children, Rock, David, Jr., Jamie and Jack, look on.

PAGE INDEX

Regional	2-3	Obituary	8	Real Estate	11-16
Editorial	4	Education	9, 18	Classifieds	17
Community	6-7	Sports	11-16	A&E	19-20