



**PATIENCE PARTICIPATION...** Approximately 100 residents attended the Scotch Plains Board of Adjustment meeting last Thursday to hear deliberations on the proposed 120-foot high cell tower at the Willow Grove Swim Club property. Parents attending were concerned about the potential health effects of the cell tower as the proposed location is near McGinn Elementary School. The meeting was adjourned after midnight and will be continued in September.

## Zoning Bd. Hearing on Cell Tower to Resume in September

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

**SCOTCH PLAINS** — The zoning board of adjustment will continue a hearing in September to consider an application by Omni-Point Communications, Inc./T. Mobile to construct a 120-foot high wireless communication tower at Willow Grove Swim Club on Roosevelt Avenue.

The nearly 100 neighborhood residents who attended the board's July 12 meeting waited nearly four hours for the Omni-Point hearing to begin because five other applications were first on the board's agenda. By the time the Omni-Point hearing got underway at 11:20 p.m. in a sweltering meeting room, which was not air conditioned due to the renovations in progress at the municipal building, there was time for only one witness to appear.

Joseph Chiaravallo, a radio frequency expert, testified for Omni-Point and said the radio waves emitted from the six proposed cellular antennae would be lower than the maximum amount permitted by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) — 0.06 percent of the permitted federal levels. One resident then shouted, "Put it in your town!" before being admonished by board attorney Vincent Loughlin.

Richard Samuel, an attorney representing one opposing resident, briefly questioned Mr. Chiaravallo about particular aspects of his report on the radio wave emissions.

While officials said several times during the hearing that federal regulations and court rulings forbid municipal land use boards from using the possible health risk factor as a reason for denying applications for placement of such antennas, several residents brought up health concerns as a reason for opposing the application, especially since the swim club is located next to McGinn Elementary School.

Floyd Fox, a Fenimore Drive resident, said, "We don't have a choice where to send [our children]." He raised concerns that students could be exposed to "excessive amounts of radiation" over time since they are in school eight hours a day, five days a week, nine months out of the year.

Other residents also tried to bring up health concerns, but board member Chris Abeel said they could not ask questions of that regard. Instead, they would "need to dispute the legitimacy" of Mr. Chiaravallo's emissions report, which states that the proposed tower would comply with FCC requirements.

When the meeting finally adjourned at 12:10 a.m., the board was told that when the hearing resumes at its September 6 meeting, Omni-Point would be calling several additional witnesses, including a radio frequency engineer, a professional engineer and a professional planner.

Mr. Samuel said he intends to call several witnesses of his own, includ-

ing a radio frequency engineer, a wetlands expert and a civil engineer.

Several residents told *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* they plan to raise objections to the tower in September, citing wetlands concerns as well as the proposed height of the tower, its effect on wildlife in the area and possible liability issues due to youngsters trying to climb the tower.

In other business prior to the Omni-Point hearing, the board asked Anna Fabiano to return in September with more detailed construction plans before granting her permission to live in her existing house at 1040 Raritan Road while a new home is constructed on the same property. Mr. Loughlin, the board attorney, urged the board to be cautious before granting such per-

mission, saying it was important to first have detailed plans for the new home, along with a timeframe for that construction and plans for the disposition of the existing house and other secondary buildings, in hand before giving approval. Saying that Mrs. Fabiano's request was rare, he said, "Nobody has a right to have two houses on their property."

In addition, despite concerns about an adequate number of on-site parking spaces, the zoning board approved an application from Antonio Rascionato to build an auto repair shop at 1927 Route 22 West. While 15 parking spaces are required, Mr. Rascionato will have seven spaces plus four repair bay spaces for cars at the property.



**LEGISLATION SIGNED...** Governor Jon Corzine, center, signs the Global Response Act during a bill-signing ceremony held at the Meadowlands on July 6. The bill signing culminated with the kickoff of the worldwide Live Earth concert; the regional event was held at Giants Stadium. At right is Assemblywoman Linda Stender of Fanwood, the primary sponsor of the legislation in the Assembly.

## Township Municipal Building To Be Complete by Labor Day

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

**SCOTCH PLAINS**—Renovations to the township municipal building are expected to be completed by the end of August, according to Township Manager Thomas Atkins, who also said he has concerns about the number of workers involved in the project that began last November.

Mr. Atkins told *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* this week that the most recent timetable provided by Paley Construction Co., the general contractor, and Potter Architects calls for the \$3.9-million project to be finished the week of August 27. There remains significant work to be done between now and then. Mr. Atkins said the next few weeks are "very key" to completing the project, which was supposed to have been done by the end of June.

While admitting that "I'm not a contractor and I don't have a lot of experience in construction projects," Mr. Atkins said he has "had some questions about the staffing of this project" and whether an adequate number of workers have been utilized. He said he and other township officials have talked with the Paley and Potter personnel about the town's concerns.

The building's central air system is expected to be connected and running within the next two or three

weeks while the window air conditioners, which run independently of the central system, are scheduled to be replaced by August 10.

In addition, all second-floor windows still need to be replaced; this task should be completed by the end of the month, said Mr. Atkins. Work on the new second-floor addition above the police station has also begun. The steel frame was put into place a few weeks ago. Mr. Atkins said he hopes the addition can be enclosed soon so that workers can work inside and not be hampered by inclement weather during the remainder of the summer.

Periodic spells of bad weather, from cold and icy conditions in February and March to heavy rains in more recent weeks, have been a factor in the construction delays, along with what Mr. Atkins termed the contractor's "differences of interpretation" of some aspects of the architect's drawings. As for future change orders that might require the expenditure of additional funds for the project, Mr. Atkins says he doesn't know if this will be necessary.

"The architects are monitoring it," he said, adding that township officials will have a better grasp on that issue in the next few weeks.

The 33-year-old building's flat roof has already been replaced with a



**FULL SPEED AHEAD...** Workers add a new facade and a second floor to the Scotch Plains Municipal Building on Park Avenue. Township employees and government services will continue building and hope to complete renovations in the next couple of months.

## FW Borough Abandons Discussion on TDR Program

By MICHELLE BUCCOLA  
 Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

**FANWOOD** — "We heard your concerns and realized the impact of this program did not fit the community's vision," said Mayor Colleen Mahr, as she explained to both the planning board and the public why the borough council has decided to withdraw the public discussion of the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program from a special meeting Monday night.

This reflection came after the June 18 board meeting, during which resi-

dents were given the opportunity to voice their opinions on the specific details of the program. Many residents spoke out against the program, citing increased traffic, lack of parking and overcrowding of the school system as imminent consequences based upon the amount of potential development of the South Avenue Corridor sparked by TDR.

The goal of the TDR program was to protect the Historic District while simultaneously sparking the redevelopment of the South Avenue corridor. The program would have allowed

property owners in the Fanwood Historic District, the sending area, to relinquish development rights, like tearing down or altering the facade of their homes, in order to receive credits. Proceeds of these transactions would be used to restore and/or maintain the historic characteristics of the property.

Property owners in the receiving area, the South Avenue Corridor, could use the credits purchased to further develop their property in ways that are otherwise outside of current allowances. For instance, the current ordinance only allows for residential units on the second floor of buildings in the receiving area, but a property owner could use credits to build residential units on a third floor.

At the June 18 meeting, board chairman Gregory Cummings estimated that if all opportunity for the purchase of credits was exhausted, this could result in an additional 242 housing units in the South Avenue Corridor, a number that many borough residents were uncomfortable with.

As she continued to explain the council's decision to indefinitely suspend further discussion on this matter, Mayor Mahr said that the borough would pursue other ways to both preserve the Historic District and promote development of the downtown area.

She referred to the visioning meetings held early on in the TDR process, in which all borough residents were invited to participate through numerous mailings and both print and television notices.

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## Carbon Monoxide Poisons Three Workers in Westfield

ALLISON GIBBONS, EBONY MCQUEEN and FRED K. LECOMTE  
 Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

**WESTFIELD** — The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) has launched an investigation into an incident on South Avenue last week that sent at least three men to the hospital with carbon monoxide poisoning. The men were workers at a South Ave. medical supply company.

Robert Kulick, the area director for OSHA's Avenel office, confirmed that the agency is investigating the incident.

OSHA was present at the scene, Mr. Kulick said, but could not comment on the status of the investigation.

Mr. Kulick said that, should it be determined that the workers were in the country illegally, the agency would direct that information to the US Immigration and Naturalization Service. However, he said, "our mission is not to determine whether or not employees are illegal" but rather to ensure that OSHA laws are properly followed.

OSHA law protects employees regardless of their status, Mr. Kulick said.

Local police and fire departments have concluded their investigations. While the Westfield Police Depart-

ment has determined that there was no criminal activity involved in the poisoning of the three workers, OSHA will be responsible for determining if any workplace violations occurred, according to Westfield Police Chief John Parizeau.

"There was nothing criminal done. So we're done (with the police investigation) as far as we are concerned," the chief said, noting that OSHA will handle questions pertaining workplace safety.

Traffic officer Chris Donovan, who reported a man down and foaming from the mouth, contacted the Westfield police at 12:53 p.m.

The men were using a gasoline-operated power washer in order to remove mold from the basement of the medical supply store. The machine emitted a lethal amount of carbon monoxide, officials said.

"When you utilize gas-powered equipment in a dwelling, the exhaust from the engine is not vented properly," Westfield Deputy Fire Chief David Kelly said.

The first victim, Edwin Vasquez, 20, of Trenton, was transported to Overlook Hospital at 1:12 p.m. Mr. Vasquez was later transferred to Jacobi Medical Center in the Bronx and released on July 13. While the hospital does not release patient information,

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## Scotch Plains, Fanwood Consider Merging Libraries

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

**SCOTCH PLAINS** — Scotch Plains and Fanwood library officials expect to decide next month on hiring consultants to study the feasibility of merging the two towns' libraries, said Meg Kolaya, Scotch Plains library director.

This past week, Ms. Kolaya said she and Dan Weiss, director of the Fanwood Memorial Library, are still interviewing architects, library consultants and fundraising consultants, who will be paid with a \$149,700 state SHARE (Sharing Available Resources Efficiently) grant. In an interview with *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*, Ms. Kolaya said that the Fanwood borough council, acting as the lead agency in administering the grant funds, is expected to award the contracts at its August meeting.

The SHARE grant, Ms. Kolaya said, is "not a grant to actually merge the two libraries." A merger would require both towns' voters to pass referendums dissolving the two present library boards and creating a new, single board.

The two facilities are facing increasingly limited space in which to house their collections and provide adequate room for their growing number of programs and patrons. Both libraries are already involved in a numbers of shared services initiatives, most notably a partnership that allows residents to reserve and check

out books from either library via a combined catalog that now numbers more than 120,000 items.

The architect and library consultant would examine issues such as an appropriate, centrally located site for a joint library, parking and traffic issues and the libraries' present needs. The architect and consultant would also anticipate what the library might require 30 to 40 years from now, officials said.

The fundraising consultant would consider the level of funding needed to implement a merger and what type of capital campaign and grant application efforts would be needed.

Ms. Kolaya said a "large number of proposals" have been received for the consulting services, which would study the feasibility of a merger.

Ms. Kolaya said it is important, given the complexity of the idea, to make sure residents know exactly what the consultants would be looking at.

"People have a lot of misconceptions," she said, adding that she has even heard that some people believe the two towns are studying an outright merger.

The 6,000-square-foot Fanwood Library was built in the 1950s, with an addition constructed in 1980, while the 14,000-square-foot Scotch Plains facility was built in the 1960s.

The Scotch Plains library system is about 200 years old, while Fanwood's is about a century old.



**NICE WEATHER...** The band After The Reign entertains the public at the Summer Concert series last Thursday evening at the Village Green on Park Avenue in Scotch Plains.

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