

## Board Rejects Third Garage For Raritan Road Residence

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

SCOTCH PLAINS — The zoning board of adjustment, citing concerns about proposed setbacks, unanimously rejected an application last week from a Raritan Road resident seeking to add a third garage to his home.

Cinmayan Sivaneri of 1086 Raritan Road told the board he needed a third attached garage, the second floor of which would include an expanded bedroom, to park additional cars for the extended family living at his home.

Mr. Sivaneri's architect, Jim Hurtato, said the edge of the new garage would be seven and a half feet from the property line of neighbor Carl Orr, who resides at 1086 Raritan Road. The existing sideyard setbacks for Mr. Sivaneri's home are currently less than the minimum 30 feet required in the R-1 zone.

When Chairman Jim Fawcett asked if other plans had been developed or considered that didn't require variances, Mr. Hurtato said no definitive alternatives had been looked at.

Robert Kraus, an attorney representing Mr. Orr in his objection to the application, said the proposed seven-and-a-half-foot sideyard setback "doesn't cut it," even if the property, given its size and shape, was looked

at as approximating one located in an R-2 zone, which has less restrictive sideyard setback standards.

Mr. Orr presented a series of photographs, which he said showed that an additional garage on Mr. Sivaneri's property would result in significant drainage problems in his yard, but Mr. Fawcett said several times that the application had nothing to do with drainage issues.

"The expectation is that any construction will alleviate any drainage problem," he said.

Board member Ken Anderson called Mr. Sivaneri's house, which is presently being added onto, "already overmassive," and noted that existing sideyard setbacks are "well below" the minimum requirements. Mr. Fawcett agreed, saying the proposed setback is "really pushing the envelope."

He said there were different ways the plans could have been designed so that the new garage stayed within the setback requirements.

"This is too much," he said, adding that "if we grant this, then I'd say, 'what are we doing here? Why do we have a zoning board of adjustment?'"

The board granted a variance to John Simpson of 2031 Prospect Avenue allowing him to erect a six-foot fence on a corner of his property.



CROSSING PATHS...Franklin Elementary School fourth grader Erin Fox donates and dedicates a library book to Harold Snell of Scotch Plains, who is retiring from his crossing guard position at 90. He has been a crossing guard in the Franklin School area for the past 12 years and crossed Erin's high-school and college-aged siblings when they went to Franklin. Pictured, from left to right, are Mr. Snell, Erin, Franklin School librarian Debra Stern and Mr. Snell's wife, Gloria.

## SP-F Board of Education

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begin when students were asked to take part in "Project Citizen," which encourages younger people to take a more active role in the community. Students initially wanted to work with a school-wide issue but then saw that there was more interest in global issues.

After noticing that high-school students had more programs geared toward community service, they decided to make that their global issue. As stated in a handout written by TIB students, their goals will not only be to incorporate community service into school curriculum, but to "help students feel that they are making a difference and impacting the world."

In the same handout, they noted organizations such as Smile Train and Sight Savers as groups whose work impressed and encouraged them.

"In TIB, we spent the year bringing the Constitution to life," said Varshini Nayayanan. "We had to create a public policy that we felt strongly about."

While board members did not discuss exact ways in which they could implement community service, several asked the students to continue their work and follow-up with the group so they could work together in the future.

"Whatever goals you set for next year I'm sure will be equally impressive," board member Nancy Bauer said.

"Students, I am so impressed. Not only did you use your brains, you used your hearts," said board member Betty Anne Woerner. "It really was moving, and I thank you for doing this."

Board Vice President Linda Nelson said that the board would look into ways to "infuse this into the curriculum on a permanent basis."

TIB is a "pull-out program for academically talented students in the district elementary and middle schools (grades 3 to 8)" with goals that include "promoting creative thinking skills, higher cognitive operations, problem solving skills and to increase knowledge, comprehension and application in content areas," stated an explanatory handout from Madeline Meyer, assistant superintendent of schools, and Hope Swarts, a gifted and talented teacher.

Two mothers addressed the qualifications for the TIB program and whether they were too strict; they asked the board to reexamine the process. Christine Mahoney said that she has seen interested students, friends of her daughter, turned down from the program. The TIB program currently has two teachers, one at the middle-school level and one at the elementary level. This number of teachers, according to Superintendent Margaret Hayes, has no impact on the number of students. "No qualifying student is ever turned away because of staff size," she said.

Qualifications, according to the handout, include "a parent and teacher checklist, group ability test and a review of the New Jersey Proficiency Assessment of State Standards in second grade and the New Jersey Assessment of Skills and Knowledge in third through seventh grade."

As the meeting opened for public comment, an attendee expressed concern about the music program at McGinn Elementary School after hearing from her daughter that students were spending music classes watching movie musicals such as *Grease*, *High School Musical* and *Annie*.

The weekly half-hour class is spent watching movies "I wouldn't let my daughter watch at home," she said. Superintendent Hayes said that this was the first time the matter was brought up to her.

In a follow-up from the previous board meeting, Mr. Holloway and Park Middle School Principal Lisa Rebimbas discussed the addition of a weekly eighth period for middle-school students, which would act as an advisory activity program.

Mr. Holloway said the program would help forge closer relationships between students and teachers, as well as help students to develop team-building skills. Some focuses for sixth-grade students would be developing character and problem-solving skills, he said.

Ms. Rebimbas said seventh graders would concentrate on investigating career possibilities and interviewing skills; eighth graders would work on areas such as discovering their own goals and the common college application process. Different grade levels would sometimes mix for team building and activities.

"We want to build a school community where students work with one another," said Mr. Holloway. The information tech program in middle schools will also be adjusted next school year to incorporate writing skills into technology classes.

"We will be using the tools of technology to enhance their curriculum," said Ms. Meyer. "This will guarantee that students are getting their tech skills along with their curriculum, along with their writing skills."

The BOE will meet Thursday, June 28, for its next regular public meeting.

## FW Council

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Recreation and Fanwood's Channel 35. Additionally, the association awarded the Fanwood-Scotch Plains Rotary Club a \$500 grant for the Frazee House project.

The council confirmed the appointment of Clinton Dickson as the new public officer in the wake of Zoning Officer Nancy Koederitz's resignation.

A resolution has been passed to continue sharing the services of the tax collector with Scotch Plains under the shared-services agreement between the two communities.

There will be a public hearing on Tuesday, June 19, at Forest Road Park to discuss preliminary reports regarding a study conducted about street floodings. The Shady Lane area will be discussed beginning at 6:30 p.m., and the Glenwood, North Glenwood and Tillotson Roads area and the Midway Avenue area will be reviewed beginning at 8 p.m.

## Council Considers Options For Public Works Facility

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

SCOTCH PLAINS — The township council was expected to meet with architects this week to discuss options for substantially renovating or replacing the public works facility on Plainfield Avenue.

The building, which is more than 45 years old, has been plagued by a leaky roof that is "probably as bad as [the roof at] the municipal building ever was" before the ongoing renovations began late last year, said Township Manager Thomas Atkins.

The state's Public Employees Occupational Safety and Health Administration, which inspects public facilities annually, raised concerns recently about the condition of the public works building, officials said.

While options for the building are being considered, the council will review proposals to improve the roof's conditions, whether on a short- or long-term basis. At its conference meeting last week, the council met with two companies to discuss solutions; if it decides to renovate the existing building, a longer-term roof repair will be undertaken, officials said. If the building were to be replaced with a new facility, then the council would opt for a shorter-term solution for the leaking roof, officials said.

In other business, the council got an advance look at some of the templates for the revamped township website, which is expected to be operational in July. Earlier this year, the township signed a contract with CityConnections,

LLC to upgrade and manage the website, which is expected to eventually provide online applications for various licenses and permits that can be printed or filled out by residents from their home computers, registration forms for township programs that can be paid for online, meeting minutes and agendas of the council and various boards and commissions, emergency information, telephone and e-mail contact information for township personnel and other pertinent news.

The annual township audit conducted by Suplee, Clooney & Co., the township's auditing firm, found "our financial records and practices to be in very good condition," said Mr. Atkins. If any problems are discovered during an audit, the firm will list the areas needing to be addressed. Since the 2002 audit, Suplee, Clooney has, in effect, left the area in their report titled "recommendation" blank because nothing concerning the management of the township has needed to be addressed.

Mr. Atkins commended Chief Financial Officer Lori Majeski and Municipal Court Administrator Yvonne Rude for their efforts.

With renovations to the municipal building expected to continue into the summer and the resulting lack of air conditioning in the building, the facility's operating hours will be revised. The building will be open on Mondays, Tuesdays and Wednesdays from 8 a.m. to 3:30 p.m., on Thursdays from 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. and on Fridays from 8 a.m. to 11:30 p.m.

a picture's worth a thousand words.  
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## POLICE BLOTTER

### Scotch Plains

Monday, June 4, a student at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School reported that someone removed his unlocked bicycle from the outside rack. The bicycle was valued at approximately \$200, police said.

Tuesday, June 5, a resident of Jerusalem Road reported that she received numerous harassing phone calls during the night asking about her furniture.

Tuesday, June 5, Anthony Mercado, 22, of Plainfield was arrested for an outstanding warrant after a motor vehicle stop. Mercado was transported to headquarters, where he posted bail and was released.

Wednesday, June 6, a resident of Hamlette Place reported that someone obtained a credit card in his name and made several thousand dollars worth of unauthorized purchases.

Thursday, June 7, Craig Currie, 41, of Scotch Plains was arrested for an outstanding warrant following a motor vehicle stop. He was processed and released after posting bail, police said.

Friday, June 8, David Dolby, 28, of Plainfield was arrested and charged with possession of a controlled dangerous substance (CDS). According to police, Dolby was stopped for a motor vehicle violation, and the drugs were subsequently discovered in his possession. He was processed and released with a summons, police said.

Saturday, June 9, Henry Sanchez-Delores, 26, of Newark was arrested following a motor vehicle stop for an outstanding warrant. He was processed and released after posting bail, police said.

Sunday, June 10, Anthony Derrico, 22, of Lawrence Avenue was arrested for driving while intoxicated (DWI) after being stopped for a motor vehicle violation. He was processed and released with a summons, police said.

### Fanwood

Tuesday, June 5, Dwayne K. Dennard, 41, of Newark was arrested on an outstanding Fanwood warrant following a field investigation. He was processed and transported to the Union County jail after failing to post bail, police said.

Tuesday, June 5, Carla Harris, 37, of Plainfield was arrested on an outstanding Fanwood warrant after a field investigation. She was transported to the Union County jail after failing to post bail, police said.

Wednesday, June 6, Tony M. Walker, 23, of Plainfield was arrested for an outstanding Flemington warrant after a motor vehicle stop on North Avenue. He posted bail and was released, police said.

Sunday, June 10, Raleigh Cobb II, 32, of Cranford was arrested and charged with DWI after a motor vehicle stop on North Avenue at 3:17 a.m. He was processed and released to a responsible adult, police said.

Monday, June 11, Arturo Rosales, 39, of Plainfield was arrested and charged for driving with a suspended license after a motor vehicle stop on North Avenue. He was also charged with driving while on an out-of-state revoked list, police said. Juan C. Vasquez, 28, of Plainfield, a passenger in the vehicle was charged with providing false documents to police.

Monday, June 11, Matthew J. Laird, 39, of Fanwood was arrested on an outstanding Union County Sheriff's Department no-bail warrant after a field investigation.

### Westfield

Monday, June 4, Preston McCloud, 21, of Roselle was arrested during a motor vehicle stop at North Avenue West and Charles Street on an outstanding Plainfield traffic warrant. He was released after posting \$133 bail.

Monday, June 4, Charlene Abeny, 38, of Linden was arrested at South and Westfield Avenues on a fugitive no-bail Essex County Sheriff's Department warrant. She was turned over to the sheriff's department.

Wednesday, June 6, Terrence Benjamin, 19, of Roselle was arrested on South Avenue in Garwood on outstanding traffic warrants from Chesterfield and Piscataway, with bail amounts of \$114 and \$145, respectively. He was released after posting bail.

Wednesday, June 6, Stanley Paul, 19, of Roselle was arrested at Plainfield police headquarters on an outstanding Westfield criminal warrant. He was released after posting \$250 bail.

Thursday, June 7, Sanjeong Lim, 26, of Monmouth Junction was arrested at Central Avenue and Connecticut Street and charged with DWI. She was later released to a responsible individual.

Sunday, June 10, after being stopped for a motor vehicle violation, Kristan Scardaville, 32, of Plainfield was arrested at Central Avenue and Belmar Terrace and charged with DWI. Scardaville was later released to a responsible individual.

Monday, June 11, after being stopped for a motor vehicle violation, Hamilton Beltran, 23, of Elizabeth was arrested at North and Fourth Avenues and charged with DWI. He was later released to a responsible individual.

### Mountainside

Monday, June 4, a homeowner on Hillside Avenue reported that someone has been knocking over and damaging a "slow down" sign she has been displaying in the street in front her house.

Wednesday, June 6, a man reported that someone charged \$240.95 to his AMEX card in December of 2005. The victim said he was contacted by a collection agency on the charge, which he thought had been settled earlier this year.

Thursday, June 7, Daniel J. Parente, 21, of Mountainside was arrested in Mountainside Municipal Court after it was determined that Parente was found in violation of his probation.

Thursday, June 7, Joseph A. Buontempo Jr., 20, of Westfield, was arrested at the Mountainside Community Pool and charged with possession of under 50 grams of marijuana and possession of a CDS in a motor vehicle. Police said Buontempo was arrested after being parked in the pool parking lot after hours. A 16-year-old male passenger was also arrested and released to his mother pending juvenile complaints.

Thursday, June 7, a 16-year-old Mountainside resident, who was a passenger in a vehicle, was arrested at the Mountainside Community Pool and charged with unlawful possession of a knife and under 50 grams of marijuana.

Thursday, June 7, an employee of a company on Global Avenue reported that he observed a black Ford F-150 Harley Davidson pickup truck pull into a parking lot near a dumpster and that it was about to start illegally dumping. The witness said the truck left the scene after the driver observed a car on the other side of the dumpster. The employee was able to provide police with a license number.

Saturday, June 9, Jose F. Ordonez-Quinter, 33, of Elizabeth was arrested at a muffler shop on Route 22 and charged with attempting to steal scrap metal. Also arrested was Giovanna Gutierrezzobarr, 34, of Elizabeth, the operator of the vehicle in which Ordonez-Quinter, her husband, was a passenger. Both were processed at police headquarters and issued summonses for receiving movable property.

Sunday, June 10, James J. Mays, 42, of Elizabeth, was arrested and charged with DWI after he was initially stopped for failing to maintain the lane. He was also charged with refusal to submit to a breath test, consumption of an alcoholic beverage in a vehicle and making an unsafe lane change.

Monday, June 11, a patron at a Route 22 movie theatre reported that someone smashed her car's side door window and stole a GPS unit valued at \$500. Damage to the car was \$250, police said.

Monday, June 11, a woman reported her purse missing after she left it in the ladies room of a theatre on Route 22 East. The victim reported that she saw a female with black hair and a black jacket with a white zipper enter the ladies room after the victim realized she had forgotten her purse. The suspect was gone when the victim returned to the ladies room, police said. The purse contained cash, a student ID card, bank debit and credit cards and the victim's driver's license.

## Fanwood TDR Program

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every single historic home. There would not be a choice, which is why we looked at transfer of development rights as a voluntary program for people versus big government mandating things," the mayor said.

She said the borough looked at the South Avenue business district as an area that "needed to be jump started" for economic development and the historic district as an area the borough wanted to protect.

Stan Slachetka of T&M Associates, the borough's consultant, said the borough could "put in place" the vision plan that was developed during informal meetings with residents on TDR. "But what you [wouldn't] get is the opportunity to preserve the historic resources within the community that would be included under the TDR program," Mr. Slachetka said.

He said that through the voluntary TDR program, the borough would be able to offer incentives for developers to revitalize South Avenue and, through a voluntary market-based mechanism, preserve the historic district "without putting in place any Draconian or real heavy-handed government mandates, regulations that would mandate certain things in the historic district."

As part of TDR, Mayor Mahr said property owners would voluntarily agree to restrictions on property deeds to preserve the district in exchange for compensation from developers on South Avenue.

Mr. Slachetka said the *Times* editorial was not correct in saying that historic district homeowners "would sell their development rights to a TDR bank."

"There is no selling of the rights to a bank. The TDR bank is there merely as an administrative mechanism for the program," Mr. Slachetka said.

The mayor said the TDR bank is more of a "TDR commission board" composed of five or six people consisting of professionals in the fields of finance, architecture, historic preservation, etc., all appointed by the mayor. She said the panel would "provide oversight for the program" and that the borough's planning board would not lose any of its powers to the TDR board.

Mayor Mahr disagreed with the editorial's statement that TDR would increase the borough's population by 10 percent. She said the 2000 U.S. Census shows the lowest number of residents per home in Fanwood are town homes and apartments along LaGrande Avenue. The highest population per household, she said, was in the historic district.

While not putting a number on how development will impact the borough's 7,000-plus population, Mr. Slachetka said he anticipates "relatively modest levels of growth."

"Three hundred of any residential unit down there (as reported in the *Times* editorial) is not what's going to happen. That was a maximum number when we did all the calculations. That number is going to be reduced. That's part of what we are going to be talking about at the public hearing," Mayor Mahr said.

She said if the borough deems the program unsuccessful, TDR contains a clause whereby the program could

be discontinued after three or five years. "It is a very exciting time in Fanwood," the mayor said, speaking on redevelopment projects. "I think at the end of the day the design of the buildings are crucial."

Down the road, the mayor said, she hopes TDR will help achieve development along South Avenue that "architecturally fits in like a nice glove on the hand of Fanwood."

On a related topic, the mayor said the borough expects to receive a report as early as this week from a state-certified engineer hired by the developer of The Station Mews development on South Avenue to determine whether a second fire wall was properly installed. This action follows the collapse of the other fire wall, which fell onto the neighboring Livingston-Wilbor building and trapped three workers last month. The business continues to operate in the back of the building, which was not damaged. The front of the structure will be demolished.

Mayor Mahr said the Occupation Safety And Health Administration (OSHA), the agency looking into the cause of the accident, has three months to submit its report to the borough. The mayor said the stop-work order by the borough remains in effect.

"If anything is found in that report, then there will be a corresponding fix to it," the mayor said.



COMMUNITY FOCUSED...Seventh-grade "Thinking Is basic" students from Terrill Middle School urged the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Board of Education last Thursday to incorporate community service into the middle school curriculum.

## Lacrosse Program

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Mr. Poerio said. Program administrators said usually 30 to 40 percent of games are played on turf. "Without the opportunity to play on turf fields, we may not have come this far. We are willing to play in parking lots, but turf is why we are here," said Sean Murphy, facilitator for the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Lacrosse Program.

Mr. Gordon said he hopes the lacrosse program will begin in March 2008, with registration taking place in December of this year. There would be no try-outs for the sport; everyone would be welcome to learn and play. He said the program would be self-funded and would have its own insurance.

The lacrosse program will present itself to the board of education in hopes of possibly creating a lacrosse team for the high school in the future

and potentially using its turf fields. The recreation department's programs have been a success so far this year, officials said. Their camps have been overflowing. Mr. Poerio said. "Although Fanwood may claim that we have \$1.2 million and they have less with more programs, we are not in the same ballpark. We have seven divisions that include the golf course, culture and arts, senior programs, the mayor's programs, 10 camps, 30 recreation programs every season and many others."

A new software program will allow residents to register for all recreation-commission programs using a credit card online within 60 days. The commission is redesigning its webpage to compliment the changes to its system.

Public notices will go out on June 25 to residents on the south side for the soccer field renovations. Demolition of a house to create a soccer field at Jerseyland Park will occur next Monday, June 18. Eight bids went out on the project.

## Lawsuit

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ist who supported an anti-black event."

The complaint, which seeks compensatory and punitive damages, accuses the mayor and Mr. O'Brien of "acting in concert" to make statements that were untrue and defamatory and cast Mr. LeStrange in a false light.

Neither Mr. LeStrange nor Mr. O'Brien could be reached for comment by press time yesterday.

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