

## FW Planning Board Raises Concerns About TDR

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

FANWOOD — In a special meeting of the borough planning board on Monday, Stanley Slachetka of T&M Associates responded to board members' questions about the Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) program.

TDR will allow property owners in the receiving district, the South Avenue Corridor, to purchase development rights from property owners in the sending district, the Historic District. The goal of the program is to preserve the Historic District while promoting the revitalization of the South Avenue Corridor.

In the program, each development right is allocated a specific number of credits, whose monetary value is determined by a real-estate market analysis. Mr. Slachetka provided information in response to questions previously submitted by the board members. One question asked him to outline the process for property owners in the sending district. Mr. Slachetka described it as a "two-tier process," the first of which is to accept a no-teardown deed restriction. There are no restrictions for how the money from this transaction may be used.

The second option for a property owner in the sending district is to sell additional credits for preservation and maintenance. All money from this transaction must be used to help maintain the historical characteristics of the structure.

Board chairman Gregory Cummings asked whether property owners are required to sell both development rights. Mr. Slachetka explained that while they can do both, they are not required to. However, he said, a property owner cannot receive credits for preservation and maintenance unless they have already agreed to the no-teardown deed restriction.

Mr. Cummings suggested that it might be better to require both items at once, to insure not only the survival of the historical homes but also their upkeep. Mr. Slachetka replied that the committee discussed it but decided against it.

## SP Council

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planning expertise to a subcommittee formed to examine various Master Plan issues as well as preparing new ordinances and ordinance amendments and reviewing other matters.

Councilwoman Paulette Coronato, a board member and a member of the subcommittee, said she had discussed Ms. Moody's proposal with township Construction Official Robert LaCosta, who also serves on the planning board. They agreed that township employees at the municipal building could perform many of the tasks identified in Ms. Moody's proposal.

"There's no reason why we can't accomplish this in-house this year and accomplish our goals," Mrs. Coronato said. She added that Ms. Moody's assistance in crafting any needed new ordinances will still be required, but "the legwork, the research, the discussions can be done in-house."

Mr. Glover also said Township Attorney Brian Levine and Assistant Township Attorney Lawrence Woodruff, who served as the board's attorney for 20 years, could assist in drafting ordinances and ordinance amendments.

The council also spent some time on Tuesday discussing the municipal budget, and will hold what is expected to be its final budget meeting tonight, Thursday, March 22, at 6 p.m. to finalize appropriations levels and revenue projections for 2007. If there is no need for any further discussions, the township budget will be introduced next Tuesday.

## Nat'l Newspaper Website Quotes Times Reporter

SCOTCH PLAINS — USA Today's "On Deadline" weblog quoted Westfield Leader and Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times reporter Nordette Adams on March 19 regarding a video that has sparked national political debate. Under breaking news, the paper's website referred to Ms. Adams' "Confessions of a Jersey Goddess" weblog post about the renegade political Internet video ad at YouTube.com called "Hillary 1984."

The video appears to promote Presidential candidate Barack Obama, bashes Hillary Clinton and has received more than 350,000 views since being posted in early March. Its creator remains anonymous.

"I was surprised to be quoted with two experts," said Ms. Adams. "I think of myself as a highly opinionated writer, which is why I blog."

The YouTube video alters Apple computer's 1984 famous Super Bowl commercial and paints Hillary Clinton as a Big Brother-type figure from George Orwell's novel "1984." It ends with an advertisement for Mr. Obama's website. Mr. Obama's campaign denies any connection to the video.

Ms. Adams said she believes USA Today quoted her post because she was one of few bloggers early on who explained why she didn't think Obama supporters produced the unofficial political ad, and she backed up her thoughts with references. Mega-technology websites like CNET.com and iWire.com also quoted the reporter because her post discussed how the Internet impacts political messaging.

Read Ms. Adams' weblog at jerseygoddess.blogspot.com.

"Our feeling was that it might be a bit of a turn-off to property owners in the sending district," he said.

The next issue Mr. Slachetka addressed was the enforcement of preservation and restoration. At the program's adoption, the TDR committee will keep photographic records of the homes in the sending district. Monies issued for preservation and maintenance will be deposited into an interest-bearing escrow account, which will only be released to the property owners once contractors are engaged.

In addition, all preservation and restoration work must meet the guidelines established by the Historic Preservation Committee, which would provide guidance to the board when approving applications.

Board member Peter Sayles asked how long compliance with the restrictions would be required. For instance, he questioned what would happen if a future property owner tore down anyway.

"We can't eliminate criminality," Mr. Slachetka. "If a property owner did that, it would be a break of the law."

Board member Jack Molenaar said the board would take the owner to court, like any other violation, and the decision would be in the hands of the judge.

Mr. Sayles asked whether the preservation and restoration requirements only apply to the exterior of the structure. Mr. Slachetka said that the money might be used for interior improvements, provided the improvements adhere to Historic Preservation Committee guidelines.

John Celardo, board member and liaison to the Historic Preservation Committee, said their guidelines pertaining to interiors were designed to be as non-restrictive as possible.

"We don't want TDR to be a policing situation," Mr. Slachetka said. "We want the property owners to voluntarily participate."

With regards to the receiving district, the South Avenue Corridor, the board asked Mr. Slachetka to quantify more specifically the "interest" he referred to during his previous presentation. Mr. Slachetka said while he could not assign it a numerical value, multiple property owners expressed the interest during the meetings held. In addition, multiple property owners have already contacted the clerk's office for additional information.

Board member Kevin St. Onge asked whether consideration was given for expanding the program to encompass the entire borough, to be fair to all residents. Mr. Slachetka said that the program is designed to achieve a balance between sending and receiving districts, not just fiscally, but also aesthetically.

"We can't allow the receiving district to grow beyond the community's expectations," Mr. Slachetka said. "The intent of the program is to protect a resource — in this case, the Historic District."

Mr. Sayles asked how the committee could justify the inclusion of non-contributing properties — structures that do not exhibit historical characteristics but lie within the boundaries of the Historic District — in the program.

Mr. Slachetka said these homes are not eligible for the same number of credits as contributing properties. He also said that, in this case, the no-teardown clause is a misnomer. If a non-contributing structure is torn down, it must be rebuilt in a fashion consistent with the Historic Preservation Committee's guidelines.

"Ideally, this acts as a potential incentive to a property owner to rebuild in this fashion," he said.

The board raised questions about the necessity of variances and posting notices when property owners in the receiving district are developing their properties. Mr. Slachetka said property owners in the receiving district would be subject to all of the board's current procedures and requirements under the master plan.

The board discussed the next steps in the TDR process and scheduled a special meeting for Monday, May 14, at which a public hearing will be held and the board will hear the presentation of the real estate market analysis.

The board's next regular meeting will be held on Wednesday, March 28.

## Scotch Plains Budget

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surplus was the highest since 1998, when \$2.7 million was regenerated and led to calls from the two Republicans on the council in 1999 to use more of the surplus to offset what they felt was too high a tax increase.

A year later, with Republicans in control of the council, a zero tax increase was approved despite a lower surplus figure. The following several years saw lower surplus levels, which Mr. Atkins said were responsible in part for the 18-percent tax increase in 2003.

Mr. Atkins told the council to be careful in using the present surplus to offset tax hikes, saying that while "our 2006 financial picture was good," it was also important to retain enough for use in coming years. In coming years, he said, significant increases are expected in, among other areas, state pension contributions.

The town manager said the Heather Glen development is being developed under a Payment-in-Lieu-of-Taxes or PILOT, an agreement that is regulated by the state government. Under the program, property tax monies from the 55 units being built in the



SWEARING TO PROTECT...Steven Freedman is sworn in as a captain in the Scotch Plains Police Department. The swearing-in ceremonies took place in front of family members and members of the police department at last week's township council meeting.

## SP-F BOE Budget

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to consolidate middle-school sports teams remains unchanged.

Regarding ROTC, the district has started negotiations with the Air Force to retain the program, Ms. Hayes said. She said that SP-F is not the only district experiencing decreased enrollment in the program, and she "hopes the Air Force will be sympathetic" to the district's funding challenge and allow it to keep ROTC despite not having the required 100 students and not being able to add another staff member next year, as the Air Force requires.

According to board officials, the Air Force pays half the salary expense for its current ROTC instructor. If the Air Force allows the district to keep the program, then the administration will comb the budget for the other half of the salary.

Mr. Russo said that he is "optimistic" that some of the remaining cut items "may be restored to the budget."

Throughout the meeting, board members tossed around ideas for alternate funding sources and questioned other expenditures in the budget. Board member Betty Anne Woerner discussed the feasibility of moving more capital projects out of the regular operating budget and onto bond referendums. She also wanted the district to consider charging athletes participation fees, a concept called "pay-to-play."

Mr. DeSordi said the board could consider bonding major capital outlay projects at a later date, but he recommended that the board always keep funds in its budget for capital projects and routine maintenance.

Mr. Russo said he doubted whether a pay-to-play policy could generate enough money to save the middle-school sports teams.

After Mr. DeSordi said that pay-to-play would apply to more activities than just sports, and Ms. Hayes reminded board members that the district would need to accommodate students who have financial "hardships" under such a policy, board member Linda Nelson said, "It would be foolish not to look into it."

About 15 ROTC students comprised the majority of speakers who addressed the board. Program members such as Nick Kosciolk, Shanik Gilmore, Michael Lubinski, Anthony Osterman and John Gutierrez spoke of how the program helped build confidence, leadership skills, gave them an advantage in applying for college, a sense of respect for others and a sense of family.

Weeping, SPFHS and ROTC alumni Alexandra Kuck told how she felt when she heard the ROTC program may be abolished, "Heartbroken, that's what I was. The only reason I went to school was because of this program."

She said she wanted the program to continue so it could make a difference in her sister's life as it had in hers. Her sister, Erica, also spoke on behalf of the program.

Concerned citizen Jules Shapiro said that people think ROTC is a military program, but "it's not. It's a leadership program."

Others applauded the district's decision to "save German." Park Middle School student Carolyn Cook recommended that should the board need to eliminate a world language, it cut one of the romance languages, such as

French or Italian, not German. "If you know one (of those)," she said, "you can understand the others."

Fanwood parent Henry Lubinski questioned teachers' raises. "My salary didn't go up four percent," he said. "It only went up two and half percent." He wondered whether the teachers union would sympathize with the district's state-induced cuts and not demand higher teacher salaries.

Mr. Del Sordi said the union may have to consider that budget constraints would have a "significant impact on teachers, who could lose their positions over the next three or four years."

SP-F Music Boosters Association Co-President Kate Reilly, who spoke at the previous meeting, returned to thank the board for restoring Choral Director John Brzozowski's position and suggested the board consider corporate sponsorships to help offset expenses.

Scotch Plains parent Jean White recommended the board look into alternative revenue sources such as leasing land for cell towers, using solar panels to save utility cost and doing a work study to evaluate its use of classroom aides.

The district's SAC, Liz Knodel-Gordon, spoke regarding her proposal's reduction to half time. She said unlike the members of other groups such as the band or ROTC, students and families who benefit from substance abuse counseling could not come forward. Neither would it be ethical to ask them to come forward, she said.

She asked the board to consider the service the SAC position provided and to not reduce its effectiveness by reducing its hours.



TAKING THE OATH...Albert Sellinger is sworn in as a sergeant in the Scotch Plains Police Department in a ceremony at last week's township council meeting.

## Jury Finds Plf. Man Guilty Of Eluding WF, MS Police

AREA — A 62-year-old Plainfield man faces up to 30 years in prison after a jury found him guilty last Wednesday of eluding the police, possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose, two counts of aggravated assault and two counts of simple assault.

The jury returned the verdict on March 13 against Adewale Idowu of Plainfield after a four-day trial in State Superior Court judge James Heimlich's courtroom at the Union County Courthouse in which Idowu refused the assistance of counsel and represented himself at trial, according to the Union County Prosecutor's Office.

Idowu, who lives on West Front Street, led police on a chase that started and ended in Westfield on January 27, 2006.

According to Union County assistant prosecutor Jillian Reyes, who tried the case, Westfield police officer Jason Rodger was on patrol at about 1 p.m. at the intersection of West South Avenue and Crossway Place in Westfield when he witnessed a brown Mercedes-Benz narrowly avoid causing an accident. Rodger followed the car as it abruptly turned right onto Crossway Place and continued following the car as the driver ran a series of red lights and stop signs.

"Officer Rodger activated his lights and sirens and attempted to get the driver to pull over," Ms. Reyes said. "Mr. Idowu, who was driving the car, refused to stop and continued toward Scotch Plains. Along the way he narrowly missed a Fed-Ex truck at the intersection of Crestwood and Morse Avenue after running another stop sign."

According to the prosecutor's office, Officer Rodger continued the pursuit and saw Idowu driving down the middle of Ascot Road at over 50 miles per hour and heading north until, after more turns and missed stop signs, he drove down the wrong side of Westfield Road, nearly colliding with oncoming traffic.

The race down Westfield Road continued past the Brunner Elementary School, where Idowu again crossed the double yellow lines and drove on the wrong side of the road, forcing oncoming traffic onto the shoulder, authorities said.

Ms. Reyes said Officer Rodger watched

## POLICE BLOTTER

### Scotch Plains

Monday, March 12, Preston McCloud, 22, of Roselle was arrested for theft after he left a Route 22 gas station without paying. According to police, the attendant was able to identify the vehicle and McCloud was later apprehended.

Tuesday, March 13, a resident of Westfield Avenue reported someone entered his vehicle and removed his briefcase.

Wednesday, March 14, a Plainfield Avenue business owner reported that someone damaged his vehicle while it was parked in his driveway.

Thursday, March 15, a resident of Union Avenue reported that someone broke the rear wiper off his vehicle while it was parked in the driveway.

Friday, March 16, a Mantou Bay resident reported that he made a purchase on eBay using his credit card. According to police, when the victim went to pick up the item, there was a lien on it and he was unable to take it. The seller fraudulently represented the item he was selling, which was valued at \$4,000, police said.

Friday, March 16, a driver traveling on Route 22 reported that another driver cut him off and proceeded to get out of his vehicle and throw a brick at the victim's windshield, causing damage. It is unknown why the suspect caused the damage, police said.

### Fanwood

Tuesday, March 13, Kamil S. Matthews, 21, of Orange was arrested for an outstanding Mountinside warrant after a motor vehicle stop on North Avenue.

Wednesday, March 14, Carla Harris, 36, of Plainfield was arrested and charged with shoplifting at a South Avenue grocery store. According to police, a store employee notified authorities when the suspect was seen leaving the store with \$100 worth of shrimp without paying. Harris fled in a vehicle, but was later apprehended, police said.

Wednesday, March 14, Veronica K. Asuta, 28, of Franklin Park was arrested for an outstanding Greenbrook warrant after a motor vehicle stop.

Thursday, March 15, Robert M. Jacob, 39, of Montague was arrested on Terrill Road for outstanding warrants out of Newton after a field investigation.

### Westfield

Monday, M 12, Craig A. Coulter, 19, of Berkeley Heights was arrested at Westfield police headquarters on a traffic warrant issued by the Berkeley Heights Municipal Court. He was released after posting \$275 bail.

Monday, March 12, Damon Ross, 34, of Roselle was arrested at the Plainfield Police Department on three traffic warrants issued by the Westfield Municipal Court, with a total of \$530 bail, which he posted. Ross also posted \$50 bail on a traffic warrant issued by the Cranford Municipal Court. He was released after posting all bail.

Monday, March 12, after conducting a random license plate check, William Ravaioli, 3rd, 29, of Mountinside was arrested at Mountain and Kimball Avenues on three contempt-of-court traffic warrants from Westfield. He was released after posting a total of \$165 bail.

Tuesday, March 13, Ryan D. Loughnan, 30, of Wall was arrested at Westfield police headquarters for alleged violation of a restraining order, terroristic threats and public communication of obscenity. He later was released on \$450 cash bail.

Tuesday, March 13, Kimberly Sorrentino, 45, of Westfield was arrested at Westfield police headquarters on an outstanding traffic warrant issued by North Plainfield. She was released after posting \$750 bail.

Wednesday, March 14, Ricardo G. Porras, 24, of Elizabeth was arrested at Elizabeth police headquarters pursuant to a contempt-of-court traffic warrant that was issued by the Westfield Municipal Court. Porras was transported to Westfield police headquarters, processed and held on \$500 bail.

He also was processed on another contempt-of-court traffic warrant issued by the Newark Municipal Court and held on an additional \$500 bail. Porras was committed to the Union County jail on default of bail.

Wednesday, March 14, Jerold W. Ireland, Jr., 18, of Scotch Plains was arrested during a motor vehicle stop at South Avenue and Crossway Place for contempt of court on a traffic warrant issued by East Windsor. He was released after posting \$394 bail.

Thursday, March 15, Tyfees Hamler, 21, of Newark was arrested on the 400 block of East Broad Street on a no-bail warrant issued by State Superior Court and on a \$500 Newark traffic warrant. He was committed on default of bail to the Union County jail.

Friday, March 16, George Pacheco, 55, of Manasquan was arrested at Westfield police headquarters on a contempt of court warrant issued by Ocean Township. He was being held in lieu of \$500 bail.

Friday, March 16, Anthony Mazzilli, 18, of Mountinside was arrested on an active traffic warrant issued by Mountinside during a motor vehicle stop at South Avenue and Elmer Street. He was released after posting \$650 bail.

Friday, March 16, Callie Meserole, 18, of Westfield was arrested with shoplifting at a business in the 600 block of North Avenue, West. She was released on her own recognizance.

Friday, March 16, Joseph Kabutu, 32, of Fords was arrested at the Somerset County jail on an active Westfield traffic warrant. He was held in lieu of \$250 bail.

Saturday, March 17, an entry on the 1100 block of West South Avenue was forcibly entered during the overnight hours, police said. Entry was gained through the front door, which was locked at the time the incident occurred, police said. Approximately \$2,000 was reported missing.

Sunday, March 18, Brian Dempsey, 27, of Plainfield was arrested at South Avenue and Boulevard for allegedly driving while intoxicated. He was released to a responsible individual.

### Mountinside

Tuesday, March 13, Warren L. Toney, 41, of Newark was arrested at the Monmouth County jail for an outstanding warrant in the amount of \$999.

Wednesday, March 14, Mario L. Rosa, 36, of Wayne was arrested by the New Jersey State Police on an outstanding Mountinside warrant. He was also charged with outstanding warrants out of Morristown and Bernardsville.

Thursday, March 15, Jeffrey M. Padovano, 29, of Springfield was arrested after a motor vehicle stop for speeding and charged with driving with a suspended license.

Thursday, March 15, a resident of Friar Lane reported that someone obtained her credit card information and paid college tuition with it. Police said it is unknown how the card information was obtained.

Saturday, March 17, Natasha C. McCall, 26, of Irvington was arrested following a motor vehicle stop for a loud muffler and charged with driving with a suspended license. She was also charged with an active warrant out of Maplewood in the amount of \$229.

Monday, March 19, Greg L. Rollins, 44, of Plainfield was arrested after a motor vehicle stop for failure to maintain a lane, which revealed he was driving with a suspended license.

## Residents Report Property Damage

By SUZETTE F. STALKER

Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

WESTFIELD — More than half a dozen incidents of property damage were reported to police on March 17, involving homes on Boulevard and Summit Avenue in Westfield.

Sergeant Scott Rodger of the Westfield Police Department confirmed to The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times Tuesday that six of the incidents took place in the 600 block of Boulevard, while one was reported on the 600 block of Summit Avenue.

All of the incidents of apparent criminal mischief occurred during the overnight hours and were reported to police between 8:45 a.m. and 9:25 a.m. last Saturday, Sgt. Rodger said.

Homeowners on Boulevard reported damage to a mailbox, the glass to a rear storm door, two porch lights and multiple light poles. In the incident on Summit Avenue, the homeowner reported a ladder to a swing set located in the rear yard of his property was damaged.

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said the council's various committees (eg. public safety, public works, health and senior services, recreation and community services) met with their corresponding borough departments individually and then had "one large meeting with the overall council" to tie everything together.

"It was better, I think, this year," he said. "We didn't end up wasting a lot of time. The departments met with the [council] committees...that oversee them, and they're the ones that are more familiar with [department] operations anyway, so it made more sense to do it that way. I think we used our time better and it was more fruitful."

With nearly "flat" departmental budgets and a proposed 3-percent salary increase for municipal employees, Mr. Tomkins said Fanwood's budget is "relatively stable [and] there's not a lot that changes from year to year."

On the flip side, he said, drafting the budget becomes increasingly difficult.

"We're trying to provide the same service that we always did with the same amount of money; it is a challenge," he said.