

Westfield Traffic Hot Spots

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nal and make a 90-degree right turn. Mr. Ciarrocca also noted that the sidewalk on Scotch Plains Avenue should have a "narrowing effect, thereby slowing traffic down."

The second hot spot, near Rahway Avenue and Lamberts Mill Road, faces issues from the difficulty of Westfield-bound cars making left turns from Lamberts Mill onto Rahway Avenue, the lack of a crosswalk for those attending St. Helen's Roman Catholic Church and speed on Summit Court, which runs perpendicular to Rahway.

Mr. Meth proposed placing a traffic signal at the county-controlled Lamberts Mill/Rahway intersection, which would get tied into the railroad signal.

Mr. Ciarrocca said, "Requesting installation of that light won't delay the quiet-zone work at all."

Mr. Ciarrocca and Mr. Meth also proposed a "small neighborhood roundabout"—a "traffic-control measure that should slow traffic by putting an obstacle in a driver's line of sight and causing traffic to deflect and slow," according to Mr. Ciarrocca — at Summit Court and Arthur Place.

"[Summit Court is] a 35-foot wide road that's two blocks long, and there's nothing between you and St. Helen's when you're driving down that road, so people just drive faster than they should. You get a lot of cut-through traffic when the train comes, and a lot of people who go to the conservation center," Mr. Foerst said.

"I think there's a problem on Summit Court because the traffic is very heavy. What I'm hearing tonight would help solve some of the problems on Summit Court," Bell Drive resident Gene Koederitz said.

Mr. Ciarrocca said it was "heartening" to hear the neighborhood's consensus for the roundabout. "I think it's the perfect place to do it," he said.

"We would install a temporary neighborhood roundabout and, after a year, discuss how it's been working. It's an incremental approach; for example, roundabouts deflect traffic and are inexpensive," the Third-Ward councilman and Public Safety, Transportation and Parking Committee chairman added.

Mr. Meth concurred with Mr. Ciarrocca's assessment, saying that roundabouts result in slower speeds and that all traffic yields on entry. In addition, the traffic-control measures can be decorated with "low plantings" to blend in aesthetically.

"This is the only area we've come to a complete consensus on," Mr. Ciarrocca said.

At the Lenox and Stanley Avenues intersection, issues surround speeding at night, the existing all-way stop and the use of those streets as "cut-throughs."

Second Ward Councilwoman Vicki Kimmins told *The Leader*, "There are two cut-throughs. One is the cut-through all the way up Stanley, and they jump up Hillcrest to go to North Avenue, so we're trying to slow down the traffic on Stanley."

In addition, the town "has always had the cut-through near the post office," as traffic traveling north on Central Avenue chooses to avoid the Central Avenue/East Broad Street light and turns right on Lenox, she said.

Mr. Meth said there is a low accident history in these areas. The solutions he proposed would put islands on Lenox — keeping the stop signs where they are at present — to slow traffic and "flipping" the stop signs on St. Marks and Stanley Avenues.

"Instead of stopping on St. Marks to cross Stanley, traffic would stop on Stanley at the intersection of St. Marks," Ms. Kimmins noted.

"Originally, it was Stanley and Lenox, but because of the input from the people in the neighborhood, we expanded to the next intersection

also," Mr. Ciarrocca said.

"On Stanley...it's not until St. Marks where people have built up speed, so we want to stop them at St. Marks," Ms. Kimmins said. "Also, there's a school crossing there. Most kids walk down St. Marks to go to Washington (School) because of the crossing guard. We felt that was just double safety to have cars stop at the school crossing."

The group discussed the intersections of Boulevard and South Avenue and Boulevard and Park Avenue.

During a previous feedback session in June, residents in the area noted that speeding and visibility were issues for drivers on South Avenue, in addition to people disregarding stop signs.

At Boulevard/South, Mr. Meth proposed eliminating one South Avenue on-street parking space to create a more clear sight triangle for those making a left from Boulevard onto South and traveling towards Scotch Plains. Mr. Meth also proposed "creating gaps" in traffic by coordinating the traffic signals at South and Summit Avenues and South and Central Avenues in order to make that left turn easier.

However, Mr. Ciarrocca said, "The neighborhood didn't want it to be easier to make a left onto South," feeling this would encourage more drivers to use Boulevard when heading westbound because no traffic signal exists. "They would rather not have that type of volume, so we will focus on improvements to pedestrian safety in the area."

One suggestion for Boulevard/Park included installing a modern roundabout, but "you couldn't do that on an interim basis because of the amount of traffic, as well as the size of that intersection. You'd have to do a permanent one right off the bat. That goes against our tenets because you'd spend a couple hundred thousand dollars to do it," Mr. Ciarrocca said.

The group decided on a proposal that would seek to designate that intersection as needing a multi-way (four-way) stop, with the possibility of temporary islands.

Mr. Ciarrocca said the state has to approve any multi-way. The town will resubmit its traffic counts for the area, noting that a study completed in August would not take into account the "considerable" volume of traffic during periods when school is in session and drivers more frequently use the South Avenue parking lot.

"Residents can still e-mail the town with their comments and concerns because nothing is set in stone, and feedback is key," Mr. Ciarrocca said. *Sonia Owchariw contributed to this report.*



Linda B. Condillo for *The Westfield Leader*
MUMS' THE WORD...The Deacon Andrew Hettfield House in Mountainside displays mums and pumpkins for sale. Proceeds support the historical site, which dates back to 1760. The public will have the opportunity to tour the Hettfield House and other Union County historic sites during the annual "Four Centuries in a Weekend" open-house event on October 21 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and October 22 from noon until 5 p.m.



SPEAKING OUT...More than 100 students and staff from Redeemer Lutheran School in Westfield participated in a Mission Walk on September 26, raising \$800 for autism research. Autism Speaks, an organization dedicated to funding research on this neurological disorder, is currently sponsoring local educational and fundraising efforts. Redeemer students regularly adopt hands-on community and global projects. The generosity of students and families enabled the school to more than double its initial goal.

GOP Freeholder Candidates

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companies that they were buying supplies from for their computers. So, they need to consolidate their spending," she said.

When asked to assess the county's government's role, Mr. Russitano said the county "pretty much umbrellas the towns" in the services it offers. He said he does not understand why he pays 18 cents on the dollar in taxes for municipal services but 20 cents for county services. He said the county's role is to provide services in emergencies, such as snowstorms.

"The county should not be so involved and should not be taking so

much of your tax money," he said.

Mr. Russitano said the county is responsible for "the health, safety and welfare of the residents of the county," such as maintaining roads and homeland security, including the Port of Newark/Elizabeth.

"What we really need to take a look at [are] the things that the county is doing that have created unprecedented growth in the county government," she said.

On shared services, Mr. Russitano, employed by the Westfield Department of Public Works, said he would like to see the county help towns in paving roadways in order to save money.

"The county absolutely could come in and help towns pave their roads for the cost of what it would cost the county," he said. "The county makes a little bit of money. We [would] pay the bare minimum for the workers, materials and for the use of the equipment," thus eliminating the need for private contractors. "I think it would save individual towns a lot of money."

He said that currently, contractors pave the roads, "and three or four years later, the roads are split. They're not working out."

Mrs. Quattrocchi said she wants the county to produce "an actual plan" with the recently garnered \$300,000 state grant for shared-services initiatives.

She said small-town residents "are afraid that they are going to be lost in the shuffle [if these bigger towns get too involved [in taking over some services]]."

Mr. Russitano said the county could help with smaller police departments by patrolling additional streets, while municipal police could do the same on some of the county roads.

Mrs. Quattrocchi said Cranford now operates the Garwood building department, while Westfield runs the borough's health department. She said

planning downtown Westfield had in mind for their wonderful downtown."

Mr. Russitano said he feels no-bid contracts have gotten "so out of control," whereby the costs have jumped due to overpricing and additional costs.

Mrs. Quattrocchi said campaign-finance reports as published on the state's ELEC webpage show "significant" amounts of donations "by the guys who are actually getting the contracts." She called this practice "mind-boggling" and "blatant" by the firms getting county contracts.

"I think sometimes some of these people who have been awarded some of these contracts get too comfortable. Their work gets sloppy...because they know they are going to get the contract regardless of whether they turn it in on time," she said.

She said she would like county contracts evaluated with "some new faces being awarded."

On the education front, Mrs. Quattrocchi said the county needs to develop more secondary-education options for students not attending four-year colleges. She said the county is concentrating more on the Magnet High School and a new medical-training program than on vocational-technical programs such as carpentry, dry-wall and auto mechanics.

"I mean when your car breaks down, who are you going to call? Are you going to call your accountant?" she asked. "Somebody has to prepare the kids for the future in these areas."

Mr. Russitano said lowering the school-tax burden would be a big help to towns in reducing school taxes.

Mrs. Quattrocchi said she would "like just once" for the county to not increase its budget. "Here in New Jersey, we are taxed to death," she said.

She said the Democratic freeholders should have gone after additional grants, such as ones for homeland security, and gone on record as disagreeing with Governor Jon Corzine on his plans to lease or sell state assets and his 2006 sales-tax increase.

Freeholder hopeful Robert Reilly of Winfield Park and county sheriff candidate Peter Lijoi of Summit join Mrs. Quattrocchi and Mr. Russitano on the GOP's county ticket.

For full interviews and candidate bios, visit goleader.com/07election.



COUNTY LINE...John Russitano of Westfield, center, and Patricia Quattrocchi, Republican candidates for Union County freeholder seats, discuss county spending and major campaign issues with *Westfield Leader* assignment editor Paul Peyton.

POLICE BLOTTER

Westfield

Wednesday, September 26, a Bennett Place resident reported the theft of a Passport brand radar detector from a motor vehicle parked in the owner's driveway.

Thursday, September 27, Patrick Hughes, 18, of Rahway was arrested for alleged possession of less than 50 grams of marijuana following an investigation on the 200 block of North Avenue, East. He was released on his own recognizance with a summons.

Thursday, September 27, Thomas W. Mealer, 60, of the Bronx, N.Y., was arrested on multiple charges after a motor vehicle stop on North Avenue in Fanwood. He was charged with driving while intoxicated; possession of cocaine; possession of more than 50 grams of marijuana; possession with intent to distribute cocaine; possession with intent to distribute hydrocodone; possession with intent to distribute Xanax; possession of a weapon, identified by police as a switchblade knife; possession of a weapon for unlawful purpose and possession of a weapon with intent to distribute narcotics.

Mealer also was arrested on an outstanding no-bail warrant from the Hudson County Sheriff's Office. He was held at the Union County jail in lieu of \$500,000 bail on the Westfield charges.

Friday, September 28, Norman Dillon, 3rd, 48, of Edison was arrested at the Middlesex County jail on an outstanding Westfield motor vehicle warrant with bail of \$200. He was transported to the Union County jail where he was held on default of bail pending a future court date.

Saturday, September 29, Shaun Mason, 19, of Plainfield was arrested on the 900 block of North Avenue, West, following a police investigation into a disturbance. Mason was charged with obstructing the administration of law for allegedly disobeying verbal commands by police and fleeing the scene. He was released on his own recognizance with a summons.

Saturday, September 29, a Westfield resident reported that her motor vehicle was burglarized on the 900 block of Sycamore Street. The passenger side window was smashed and the victim's purse, containing cash and credit cards, was removed. The total value of the theft was approximately \$267.

Sunday, September 30, an Elizabeth resident reported the theft of two bank checks in the total amount of \$130 from an establishment on the 1000 block of North Avenue, West.

Tuesday, October 2, police questioned an 18-year-old Westfield resident on the grounds of Roosevelt Intermediate School on Clark Street. Police said the man had cut through some backyards and then attempted to use a bathroom at Roosevelt.

A resident had reported to police that the man resembled someone who had broken into cars on the other side of town several days earlier. After stopping the man near the entrance to the school, police performed a background check and released him within 10 minutes.

Clark

Monday, October 1, a man allegedly attempted to run down two police officers in Clark, prompting the officers to fire their weapons at the vehicle before the suspect was apprehended a near the entrance ramp to Garden State Parkway Exit 135.

The suspect, Donald Andrews, 41, already had been sought for allegedly attempting to run over two Newark police officers in September.

According to a report published in *The Star-Ledger*, Andrews stopped at the Clark home of an off-duty Plainfield police officer about 2:30 p.m. The officer apparently informed Andrews he was wanted in the Newark case, and when he attempted to arrest him, the suspect fled in his truck.

A 911 call brought two Clark police sergeants to the scene, who Andrews allegedly attempted to run down with his truck, the *Star-Ledger* report stated. Police fired several shots at Andrews' vehicle as he drove away en route to the northbound Garden State Parkway. He was apprehended as he reached the ramp when three police cruisers surrounded his truck.

Andrews was transported to University Hospital in Newark, where he was treated for minor injuries to his right arm and released, according to police. The *Star-Ledger* report said authorities do not believe any of the police officers' bullets struck the suspect, but that his arm injury may have been caused by shattered glass from the truck. The suspect was in the custody of Clark authorities.



CHALLENGER...Republican State Assembly candidate Bryan DesRochers (L.D.-22), right, discusses state issues with *Westfield Leader* assignment editor Paul Peyton last Friday. To view the interview and read up on local election candidates, visit goleader.com/07election.

Westfield Town Council

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about the Froehlich building is that I don't recall anyone on this council or in town government ever being invited. It tells you what the county thinks of Westfield. They come here and build and do what they want. We ask for improvements with regards to traffic lights and roads. We ask for snub their nose at us."

Mr. Caruana, following up on Mr. Foerst's comment, said, "When the building was opened, the mayor of Westfield didn't rate an invitation. That pretty much speaks to what the nature of their concern for our involvement in the issue."

Mr. Caruana implored the citizens-advisory group WeCare to get involved.

"This is a development issue in town. It is an issue that is lacking public debate and public participation...A representative of the group who was quoted in the paper said, 'We're going to add some landscaping.' That was the extent of what he took away from the meeting. Yeah, landscaping. You're building a monstrosity, but they think landscaping is the key to any development issue...We are powerless to control this."

When asked by Third Ward Councilman Mark Ciarrocca about previous efforts to bring Bette Jane Kowalski, freeholder chairman, and 2006 chairman Al Mirabella before that, to a conference meeting, the mayor said, "There's been no progress. I've made numerous offers. I want to talk about issues that are important to us and talk about shared services...I've reached out numerous times but have not been successful."

First Ward Councilman Peter Echausse said, "It's sad, Mr. Mayor, because some freeholders know how to get directions to *The Westfield Leader* office to toot their horn. I guarantee you they'll be here in a couple of weeks to hand out literature at the train station. Maybe we should be writing a letter to *The Leader* with directions to town hall...It's frustrating. It's really sad. All we're asking for is some dialogue."

In other business, Florence Avenue

resident Edward Orr, after being "awoken at 6 a.m. by concrete being dropped on a dump truck," spoke to the council about early construction at Memorial Pool.

With work routinely starting between 7 and 7:30 p.m., Mr. Orr spoke to residents who live contiguous to the pool and received 29 signatures asking that work begin at 8 a.m.

Mr. Foerst, who represents the pool area, asked, "Didn't we make it clear to the contractor that we wanted to lead by example? While we legally don't have to comply with our own code, didn't we tell them what we were expecting of them?"

Town Administrator Jim Gildea, while noting that workers are on a "tight timeline" to complete the project, expects that the noise should dissipate because the "heavy lifting" — so to speak — is over. The next phase is putting the pipes in. The recreation department is overseeing this. I'll make sure they're aware of it, and we'll take care of it right away."

During his Public Safety, Transportation and Parking Committee report, Mr. Ciarrocca spoke about the importance of an emergency text-message system, whereby residents would sign up to receive messages on their cell phones in situations where other forms of communication were compromised and/or an urgent message needed to be disseminated.

During an incident last week at St. John's University, the school used a text-message system to notify students and faculty.

"It helped what could have been a very serious situation," Mr. Ciarrocca said.

He noted that Police Chief John Parizeau has looked into the company St. John's used. Mr. Ciarrocca said the town would speak to the Westfield school system about sharing the cost of the endeavor.

Giving an update on parking, he said work on lots one and eight "should be done before Thanksgiving."

The committee also discussed two traffic- and pedestrian-safety improvements on town streets. The crossing guard at Central Avenue and Grove Street — noting that there is no turn on red from Grove onto Central — "requested that there be prohibitions of [making a] right turn on red from Central onto Grove at least during school drop-off and pick-up hours." He said the town would contact the county about moving forward on enacting that.

He also discussed streets that run perpendicular to Summit Avenue between Summit Court and Grove Street. Saying that the existing ordinance provides for those streets, save Clifton Avenue, to employ yield signs instead of stop signs, it "almost encourages people not to stop." The area in question surrounds Jefferson School, which Mr. Ciarrocca said experiences a high volume of traffic during school and weekend sporting events. "There's no reason for them to be yields," he said. "They should be stop signs. We will recommend an ordinance to make [all perpendicular T-intersections with Summit, including Clover Street and Faulkner Drive,] stop signs."

Avoiding traffic

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Planning Bd.

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front-yard setback is over by just over four feet, the street-side yard is proposed at 2.51 feet, where the town ordinance requires a minimum of 20 feet, and the side-yard setback is under the minimum allowed by more than two feet.

Ms. Marsella's attorney, Robert Kraus said, "The existing house will not be modified in its exterior."

He also brought in historic preservation consultant Stacy Spies to testify on the gatehouse's historic nature. She concluded that in her professional opinion, the gatehouse is not historic.

"It's lost its context," Ms. Spies said, since it does not exist in its original context as a gatehouse, as it is now a home. She said it was added on in 1972.

"It was substantially smaller in 1933," she said. "The integrity of the gatehouse is intact."

Even though the integrity is there, Ms. Spies said, the gatehouse is not significant in and of itself since it was intended to be a part of a residence when it was designed in the 1920s.

"I don't believe it was executed in a way [original developer Arthur Rule] would have liked," she said. "The integrity of the community is lost."

Resident Amy Jester, along with about four other residents, asked Ms. Spies questions about her viewpoints. Ms. Jester showed a book depicting Wychwood that Mr. Rule published to show his intentions of the community.

As Ms. Spies said earlier, there are homes in Wychwood that were torn down and built in 1960s style design, not the "idyllic" look Mr. Rule had meant for the area.

The hearing on the application will continue on December 3.



A RESCUE RECOGNIZED...Sherwin Williams honors workers involved in the July rescue of workers overcome with carbon monoxide in an adjacent South Avenue building. Pictured, left to right, are Gene Ronkiewicz of Sherwin Williams, Jay Tyree of Star Painting, Jim Rinaldi, Star Painting owner, and Jim Cooley, district sales manager for Sherwin Williams. Adrian Perez of Sherwin Williams was absent from the August ceremony but also received a plaque.