

Scotch Plains Management Corp. To Hire Envoy For Businesses

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

SCOTCH PLAINS — The Scotch Plains Management Corp. (SPMC) will be seeking to hire an ambassador to serve as a liaison between the business community, the SPMC board of directors and the township government as well as to enhance SPMC's communications with its membership.

At the SPMC's board meeting on April 18, a committee was assigned to put together a formal job description for the position as well as a suitable salary level for what David

Biagini, president of FirsTEAM Management, SPMC's manager, said will be a part-time position. SPMC's 2012 budget includes a \$7,000 line item for such a position, although Mr. Biagini said that figure was not set in stone. SPMC expects to advertise for the position in the forthcoming edition of its *Simply Scotch Plains* magazine, which will be published in early May.

Mr. Biagini is putting the finishing touches on the magazine, which he told the board last week would be the biggest edition ever at 24 pages. He said the number of ads also would be

an all-time high. "It's growing," he told *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*. "We're pleased about that."

In other business at last week's meeting, the board voted to contribute \$1,500 to the township cultural arts committee's summer concert series, which takes place on Thursday evenings in July and August. SPMC has made similar contributions the previous two summers and also has sponsored a hospitality tent. The day before the SPMC board meeting, Mayor Nancy Malool announced that Investors Bank had agreed to contribute \$3,500 to the concert series.

The board will not meet in May. Instead, Mr. Biagini and another staff member from FirsTEAM Management will attend the International Council of Shopping Centers annual convention in Las Vegas from May 20-23. Some 1,500 retailers and 30,000 attendees are expected to attend the four-day show. This is part of SPMC's business recruitment effort that was approved at the board's meeting in March.

That strategy includes subscribing to a national online retail database that provides not only basic information on retailers and businesses interested in relocating to New Jersey, but also details on whether they might be interested in relocating or expanding to a particular town based on various criteria including desired demographics, location requirements, the type of lease being sought and the types of competitors located nearby. FirsTEAM Management will sponsor a booth in Las Vegas where printed marketing literature will be available to prospective retailers and FirsTEAM will be able to interact with interested retailers.

SPMC also will take part in a networking event at TD Bank Ballpark in Bridgewater during the Somerset Patriots baseball game on Thursday, May 17. The evening of "Baseball and Fireworks" will provide networking opportunities for local businesses from FirsTEAM's clients including not only Scotch Plains but also Irvington, Dover, East Orange, Plainfield and Roselle Park.



Brooks Crandall for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times
OPENING DAY...The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Youth Baseball Association kicked off its season on Saturday with opening ceremonies followed by games at Booth Field in Scotch Plains.

CF Committee Unveils Birchwood Ordinance

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

CRANFORD — The township committee, under protest, voted on Tuesday to introduce a court-ordered ordinance that will formally permit the Birchwood Avenue property to include multi-family affordable housing.

The ordinance, which will be voted on after a public hearing on Tuesday, May 22, is part of the township's compliance with a Superior Court Judge's December order allowing Paramus-based S. Hekemian Group, which owns the property, to move forward with its plans to build 360 housing units. Township Attorney Phil Morin said at the committee's meeting this week that the ordinance was being introduced "under protest," a formal designation allowing town governments "saddled" with what he said were "adverse" affordable-housing obligations to legally register their objections.

The four township committee members in attendance — Mayor

David Robinson was absent — did not speak in detail about the ordinance, with Commissioners Lisa Aduabato Nesi and Edward O'Malley both simply voting to approve the ordinance's introduction "under protest." Deputy Mayor Andis Kalnins, when asked for his vote, said, "Unfortunately, yes." Commissioner Kevin Campbell voted for its introduction, but said he had "serious doubts" if the ordinance is in compliance with the goals of the municipal land use laws.

The planning board early next month is set to adopt similar changes to the township master plan — again, under a court order, and again, according to Mr. Morin, under protest. He said that once the township committee formally passes the ordinance on May 22, the court would issue a formal judgment of compliance. Then, he said, the township can file an appeal of the court's decision. In the meantime, the township will continue to actively oppose Hekemian's permit applications with the state

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Courtesy of Tom Kranz
SPECIAL PERFORMANCE...Tom Berdos, music ministry director of the Fanwood Presbyterian Church, rehearses with a special chorus he has put together from throughout the region for a special Sunday, May 20, performance at the church to benefit the Fanwood and Scotch Plains Rescue Squads. Rehearsals are held Wednesdays at 7:30 p.m. at the church for anyone interested in joining the chorus. Members of the squads will be on hand for the concert and all are invited to attend. Admission will be free although donations will be accepted to benefit the two rescue squads.

Freeholders Intro. \$483-Mil Budget, \$11.8 Mil Tax Hike

By PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

COUNTY — The Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders introduced a \$483-million budget last Thursday with \$303 million to be raised in county taxes, an increase of \$11.9 million over last year. The freeholders are scheduled to vote to adopt the budget following a public hearing on Thursday, May 31.

As previously reported, in an effort to close a \$36-million budget hole, the county has sent out layoff notices to 280 employees, amounting to almost 10 percent of the county workforce. In addition, program cutbacks, including MusicFest, the elimination of the Division of Consumer Affairs have been approved. In addition, privatization for some or all operations at Rumlins Specialized Hospital and the Watchung Stables are being considered, officials have said.

While County Manager Al Faella said the average tax increase in the county will be \$93, Westfield homeowners will see an average increase of \$200, Scotch Plains \$170, Fanwood \$121, Cranford \$132, Garwood \$112 and Mountainside \$204.

"This was one of the most difficult fiscal years in recent history of the county," Freeholder Fiscal Affairs Committee Chairman Dan Sullivan said. "This has been a very long and painstaking process, with department directors going over their budgets numerous times, being asked to make



Fred T. Rossi for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times
FBPA HONOREE...John Crisafulli, third from left, stands with board members from the Fanwood Business and Professional Association at last Thursday's 17th Annual Spring Fling Dinner Dance at The Westwood in Garwood, co-sponsored with the Scotch Plains Business and Professional Association. Mr. Crisafulli was honored for his volunteer efforts.

Business Associations Honor Mr. Goldberg, Mr. Crisafulli

By SUZETTE F. STALKER
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS/FANWOOD — Members of the local business communities, elected officials and others turned out last Thursday for the 17th Annual Spring Fling Dinner Dance, hosted by the Scotch Plains Business and Professional Association (SPBPA) and the Fanwood Business and Professional Association, Inc. (FBPA).

Held at The Westwood in Garwood, the awards dinner and fund-raising event benefited the Scotch Plains Business and Professional Association Scholarship Fund. One hundred and one people attended the event, which featured a buffet, silent auction, Tricky Tray, dancing to music videos and singing by some of the

guests. There also was a running slide show featuring community highlights from Scotch Plains and Fanwood.

The two business organizations feted SPBPA Vice-President and Scholarship Chairman Steve Goldberg and former FBPA president John Crisafulli at the event in recognition of their years of service to the Township of Scotch Plains and the Borough of Fanwood.

Scotch Plains Mayor Nancy Malool, Fanwood Mayor Colleen Mahr, SPBPA President Lisa Mohn and FBPA President Louis Zambrio were among those who offered remarks at the dinner. They expressed appreciation to the two honorees — both also active members of the Rotary Club of Fanwood-Scotch Plains — for their volunteer efforts on behalf of their communities for many years.

Mayor Malool, who had announced two days earlier her intention to resign from her position in early May, lauded the two men's contributions to Fanwood and Scotch Plains, noting,

"I'm glad [the honor] was for them." Mayor Mahr, currently serving her third term as mayor, said she has come to know both men during her time on

Fanwood's governing body and also acknowledged their efforts. "We know the blood, sweat and tears that you put into your community," she told them.

In their own remarks, Mr. Goldberg and Mr. Crisafulli each acknowledged the SPBPA and the FBPA, their families and fellow members, as well as each other.

"I will never forget this day and I will cherish it my entire life," said Mr. Crisafulli. He said Scotch Plains and Fanwood have much in common and that "each town complements the other."

Mr. Goldberg told Mr. Crisafulli that he was honored to share the evening's recognition with him. He expressed appreciation to Ms. Mohn and poignantly recalled the role the late Ray Pardon, who had served as SPBPA president, had in getting him involved in the organization.



Steve Goldberg



Horace Corbin for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times
HELPING OVERLOOK...A reception and cocktail party for Friends of Overlook Hospital was held April 18 at the home of Assemblyman Jon Bramnick and his wife, Pat Brentano (speaking).

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