



Christina M. Hinke for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times
OPPOSED...Colby Lane resident Felicia Van Ostenbridge asks the Cranford Township Committee for its support in motivating the community to oppose the turf field proposed by Union County College.

Residents Urge Freeholders To Oppose UCC Field

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

COUNTY — Cranford residents living near Union County College (UCC) in the township urged the Union County Freeholder Board last Thursday to do all it could to stop the college from proceeding with constructing a sports complex at the rear of the campus on the Cranford/Westfield border, saying the project would only make matters worse in the flood-prone township.

Plans call for a 100-yard by 65-yard soccer/lacrosse field, 400-meter track with high and long jump facilities, 104-seat grandstand area and lighting. It has been estimated that 700 trees would be removed in a wooded area consisting of 4.3 acres to make room for the complex.

Cranford Committeeman Thomas Hannen, Jr. said the college has sent out a solicitation mailing seeking donations for the project just a week after the freeholders decided to include the \$2-million project in the county's capital budget.

"It's a concern of the township and its residents to prevent a bad situation as regards flooding from becoming worse. The removal of the 700 trees will make that bad situation in Cranford worse," Mr. Hannen said.

He said the towns along the watershed sustained \$60 million in damages from Hurricane Irene. Mr. Hannen said construction of the field would "discharge additional water into Nomahegan Lake (located across the street from the college) and into the Rahway River."

Mr. Hannen asked the freeholders to work with Cranford to find alternative locations for the field, "that will not adversely impact flooding in the Township of Cranford."

Westfield resident John McCormack, who resides on Coolidge Street within 300 yards of the proposed field on the UCC campus, said the project would "over stress the infrastructure and reduce the quality of life in both Cranford and Westfield."

He said removal of 700 trees would "considerably increase the water runoff of this area."

Mr. McCormack also said that his street is "monopolized by student parking." He said students sleep and eat in the cars and throw fast-food waste in the street.

"If this project goes through, you're not only going to have daytime parking and traffic, you're going to have evening traffic and parking. You're going to have it on the weekends," Mr. McCormack said.

He said the project would also produce noise, stadium lighting and displacement of wildlife.

"I hope you take this under consideration and look at the downside. There's got to be another alternative," Mr. McCormack said.

Several Colby Lane residents, who live directly behind the campus where the field is proposed, also spoke at the meeting.

Chemda "Mindy" Kipness said 1,600 homes in Cranford were under water from Hurricane Irene, noting rafts were needed to remove residents from homes.

She said Union County College's plan has rain water "piped into Nomahegan Lake," resulting in an additional seven million gallons of water going into the lake as the 700 trees will no longer be absorbing rain water.

Randy Lowe added that, "it has been one storm after another" impacting Cranford. He said the UCC plan "doesn't make sense." He also asked the board to go on record with a resolution opposing the project.

"Cranford has always been a good neighbor to the college. They are not being a good neighbor to Cranford," Mr. Lowe said.

Freeholder Angel Estrada said the freeholders are not a reactive board, noting that the proposed field is a "difficult issue" for the board. He and other freeholders said they have to get all the facts on the project before taking a position, although Freeholder Bette Jane Kowalski, a Cranford resident, said she is opposed to the project.

Another resident, Mike Norman, said a petition opposing the project has already generated 900 signatures.

Freeholder Vice-Chairman Mohamed Jalloh said the board has to make sure the project is "sound," "makes sense" and to see if the board can provide any influence on the college regarding the project.

He said the college could construct the field regardless of whether the county opposes the project.



Courtesy of Grant and Linda Ashley
THE WESTFIELD RABBIT...WJ reads *The Westfield Leader*. WJ, an English spotted rabbit who traces his family lineage to Kate Middleton, jumps into and onto his *Leader* every Thursday evening. Rabbits are great year-round pets, not just Easter pets, says Safe Haven Rabbit Rescue, a great local organization.

SP-F Board of Education

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plete these projects. The combined cost for these professional services is not to exceed \$49,250.

The board approved the installation of air-conditioning for the kindergarten wing at Brunner for a cost of \$119,235. Kelvin Heating and Air Conditioning, Inc. will perform the work, which is expected to be completed this spring. The contract bid was awarded by Educational Data Services, Inc., a cooperative bidding service used by the district.

Funds were approved for the construction of a new science lab at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School. After the meeting, Ms. Saridaki told *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* she anticipates the total cost of the construction to be less than \$200,000.

The board also intends to refurbish the existing science labs at the high school by September 2015. Funds for refurbishing are included in the proposed 2014-2015 budget.

During the finance committee re-

port, Mrs. Woerner said funds were "left over" from a heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) project. She said the committee discussed at its April 1 meeting possibly deploying the remaining funds to other projects, including lighting and seating upgrades at Terrill or paving at Brunner. Mrs. Woerner added that the money could be spent to improve the high school cafeteria to help "reduce the long lines." Mrs. Woerner said the committee is also considering the option of "restoring funds back to capital reserves which have been depleted."

At the beginning of the meeting, the board recognized six students for their participation and achievement in the 2013 National Parent Teachers Association (PTA) Reflections Art Program. The program is designed to enhance the quality of in-school arts education by providing K-12 students an additional opportunity to express themselves. The theme for 2013 was "Dream, Believe, Inspire!" Students submitted their interpretation of the theme in six areas of creativity, including: dance choreography, film production, literature, music composition, photography and visual arts.

The board congratulated the following six students for receiving merit awards: Sophie Gannon, third grade at McGinn, dance choreography; Billie Rose Sherratt, second grade at School One, dance choreography; Ryan Agnello, fifth grade at Terrill, film production; Sara Wollman, second grade at School One, film production; Kayla Fiore, second grade at McGinn, music composition, and Jennifer Schug, seventh grade at Terrill, music composition.

The board also noted the leadership of Scotch Plains-Fanwood PTA Council President Marci Bowman and commended PTA Liaison Jon Zogg for his enthusiastic support and guidance. Several board members thanked Mr. Zogg and urged him to continue to promote the program within the district.

The board's next regular meeting, on April 24, will begin at 7:30 p.m. in the administration building on Evergreen Avenue and Cedar Street in Scotch Plains.



Photo courtesy of Brian Horton
EGG HUNT...A little girl dressed in bunny ears examines an egg she gathered during the annual Fanwood Easter Egg Hunt held Saturday morning in Forest Road Park.



Brian Price for The Times
FURRY FRIEND...A little girl cozies up to the Easter Bunny at the annual Fanwood Easter Egg Hunt held Saturday morning in Forest Road Park.

Watson Coleman

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rights, pay equality rights, civil rights [and] even issues on gun safety. We're still fighting those battles," she said.

On gun safety, she said more needs to be done to ensure there are less dangerous guns in the country, that background checks are done on gun buyers and the capacity on magazine clips is reduced.

Asw. Watson Coleman also listed keeping Social Security and Medicare solvent as a key issue.

"Not only do we need to ensure that they are not privatized, but that they evolve based upon the needs of people living longer — much longer than was originally anticipated," she said.

She said Congress needs to look at the "fairness of one's income that goes towards Social Security." She said she does not know if the cap should be \$300,000, \$500,000 or \$1 million. The current cap is \$114,000.

"If we're going to support one another in our golden years, that's a reflection of what type of society we are. And so we need to make sure the benefits that exist now are protected and then we need to examine where we need to go in the future," she said.

On Medicare, she believes people need to have "access to affordable and quality medical care."

"I believe that government has a role on issues of preserving and protecting the rights and the quality of life of individuals. I don't think government should be overly intrusive, but it most assuredly has a role in preserving and protecting those rights," she said.

On the Affordability Act/Obamacare, she said the law was designed to provide "affordable and ac-

cessible healthcare."

"That is a huge, huge public policy initiative that needs a lot of tweaking to ensure that the intended consequences are reached and that any sort of unintended consequences are examined," she said.

She said that by "driving" New Jerseyans to primary care physicians and preventive care, "we are eliminating the burden of charity care and emergency room visits, which are highly expensive and not effective."

"We needed the Affordable Care Act. It is a magnificent blessing to the people of the State of New Jersey and this country. Over seven million people now have health care," Asw. Watson Coleman said. "Nothing is perfect. We need to work on it, not dismantle it."

Asked about foreign affairs, she said the United States "has always been the big brother in pursuit of peace and I think that that's who we still should be," Asw. Watson Coleman said.

She said she has been reaching out to all counties in the district, including Union County. "I'm not taking anything for granted," she said.

Other Democrats in the race are State Senator Linda Greenstein (D-14th, Middlesex), Assemblyman Upendra J. Chivukula (D-17th, Somerset) and plasma physicist Andrew Zwicker of Kingston, N.J. Alieta Eck of Somerset County, a medical doctor, is the Republican candidate for the seat.

SP Zone Bd.

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nearby homes, but also to keep its facilities secure. The utility will plant a number of trees along its property line as well.

The transmission lines running through Scotch Plains have been in place since 1928, and are part of a network that extends southward from Chatham Township over Route 78 and then extends through Scotch Plains and Fanwood, then through the Ashbrook Reservation and into Edison Township down to Route 1.

During her presentation, Ms. Meraina noted that the facility presently serves about 1,400 customers including the commercial properties in the downtown business district. She said the upgraded facility would serve a "public benefit" by providing more reliable electricity service. PSE&G's attorney, Glenn Kienz, said the newer and more powerful substation would help to ensure against blackouts and brownouts during times of peak electric usage such as occurring during summer heat waves. It is expected that there will be one to two visits to the site per month by PSE&G personnel, according to Ms. Meraina.

At the start of its meeting, the board gave approval to Vincent Tittel to demolish an existing home and build a new single-family dwelling on a non-conforming lot on Martine Avenue. The lot size is 12,500 square feet in a zone requiring 13,500-square-foot lot minimums. Mr. Tittel told the board he plans to sell the planned 3,000-square-foot home after it is built.

SP Rec.

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that federal community development grant money is available to fund any necessary repairs or upgrades that may result from the compliance audit.

Scotch Plains will join the TryCan organization, which is made up of several area towns and sets up various recreation events specifically for handicapped persons. Mr. Paoerio said the group organizes "a ton of fantastic programs." Information on the program will be available soon on the recreation department's website and in the recreation newsletter.

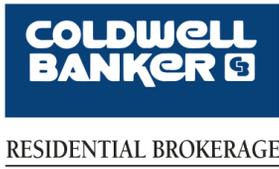
The recreation department will soon install GPS systems in all of its vehicles, allowing the tracking and monitoring of those vehicles during the work day and also during weather emergencies. Mr. Paoerio also said an automated time-card system for workers will be put into place. Both of these upgrades will help to verify whether township vehicles are being used properly and will also aid greatly in verifying township activities and clean-up efforts when federal or state money is available to help defray the costs of storm recovery.

On Sunday, April 27, the recreation commission, in conjunction with the Girl Scouts, will sponsor a tree-give-away for the Plant-A-Tree campaign. Free trees will be distributed to residents in front of the municipal building from 3 to 5 p.m.



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