

UCC Postpones Athletic Field Plans

to working with Dr. McMenamin and Union County College in securing the appropriate athletic facilities and finding a solution that is mutually beneficial to both the community and student athletes at the college," the statement said. "While the County of Union does not involve itself in the operations of the college, the Freeholder Board expressed its concerns at the onset of this issue and those of the community to the college administration. The board also said it would not fund the proposed UCC athletic facility.

"At the same time, we believe it is imperative to provide access to the athletic facilities that are needed for the college's soccer, lacrosse and track teams. With this in mind, we thank Dr. McMenamin for her willingness to find alternatives and for her outstanding leadership and vision that is continuing to transform Union County College," according to the statement.

As previously reported, UCC's plans included a 100-yard by 65-yard soccer/lacrosse field, 400-meter track with high and long jump facilities, 104-seat grandstand area and lighting. A resolution from the Cranford Township Committee opposing the project stated that some 700 trees would be removed to make room for the field which would be constructed at the rear of the campus on the Cranford/Westfield border.

"...Opponents (see related story on page 10) of the college's proposed Cranford campus field location have cited concerns about flooding and the environment, in spite of the fact that the proposed plan would actually improve ground water and drainage at our location," Dr. McMenamin said.

CR Residents Urge Freeholders to Oppose UCC Field

By PAUL J. PEYTON
Specially Written for *The Westfield Leader*

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,

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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"

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Christina M. Hinke for *The Westfield Leader*

EAGLE SCOUT...Dan Hannen, the son of Cranford Commissioner Tom Hannen, Jr., was honored on receiving his Eagle Scout Award on April 8 at the township committee meeting. Patrick Lynch and Richard Barry also received Eagle Scout Awards.