



NEW UNDERSHERIFF... Union County Freeholders Vernell Wright and Bruce Bergen congratulate newly sworn-in Undersheriff Michael Frank of the Union County Sheriff's Office (UCSO) during a ceremony in Elizabeth. Undersheriff Frank is a 27-year veteran of the UCSO.

Zoning Bd. OKs Expansion Of Yoga Studio on Lincoln

BY DELL SIMEONE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

CRANFORD – The zoning board, on Monday evening, heard two applications. One was for permission to construct a new two-car garage requiring two variances. The other was to legitimize the expansion of a Yoga studio on Lincoln Avenue East, which was done two years ago without seeking board approval.

Alex and Deb Palaccio, of 320 Casino Avenue, in a R-1 zone, sought approval to construct a new two-car garage with variances for less than the minimum distance from any side and rear lot line and to exceed the maximum allowable height for an accessory structure.

Mr. Palaccio told the board that he and his wife had purchased a Southern Revival colonial home, which dates back to 1895. The home has already been restored and improved by them, he said. Mr. Palaccio further stated that they were trying to restore the garage (which dates to the 1920s), move it forward a foot and make it compatible with the architecture of the house. He also said they would like to add a second floor to the garage to use for storage, since the basement of the home was small and damp and could not be used for storage.

"We're looking for relief because the roof would be six inches over what the code allowed," he said. Pictures of the home and the property were distributed to the board.

The board complimented the Palaccio's on the restoration. Board Vice-Chairman Jeffrey Pistol, said, "Looking at the rear lot line, moving

the garage would be an improvement. It would improve the neighborhood."

Allium Yoga L.L.C., 347 Lincoln Avenue East in a R-2 zone was approved to legitimize the expansion of a non-conforming use. The yoga studio is in the historic 1737 William Thesher "Old Mill," which is adjacent to the Rahway River.

Laura LoGiudice, attorney for yoga studio owner Gina Pachkowski, explained that the owner just took over a 517-square-foot space in the building which had previously been used by another tenant. Ms. LoGiudice said at the time (two years ago) her client did not realize that zoning board approval was required. She said that half of the space is used as a reception area and the other half for the yoga classes.

Ms. Pachkowski testified that classes run for one hour with a 15-minute transitional period for clients to come and go between classes. Her planner, Peter Steck, testified that parking would not be a problem with 19 spaces in the lot and other parking available on High Street and Centennial Avenue. Most of her clients are from Cranford who either walk or ride bikes, he said. He said that there was one space for every 150 square feet in the building. He also said there is a relaxed standard for a non-conforming structure. Mr. Steck pointed out that the Yoga studio was an enhancement to the neighborhood and in compliance with the township's Master Plan.

About 50 people showed up to support Ms. Pachkowski, her commitment to the neighborhood, the town, and to the philosophy of Yoga. Twelve of her clients testified before the board.

CF Business Park OK'd to Lease Bld. for Mixed-Use

By CHRISTINA M. HINKE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

CRANFORD — After purchasing the industrial building a year-and-a-half ago, applicant Cranford Business Park, LLC, owner of 570 South Avenue East, was approved 6 to 0 by the planning board last Wednesday to move ahead with its plan to lease the property as a mixed-use building. Vanguard Medical Group, currently residing in Cleveland Plaza, has plans to lease space and move its practice.

The applicant sought a minor site plan approval with the following variances and waivers: less than the minimum required number of parking spaces, less than the minimum required foot candles in the parking area, not providing granite block curbing, and wheels stops not provided.

The application hearing mostly had concerns with supplying sufficient parking. The plan included 385 parking spaces. The applicant asked for a waiver, to what they said was a deficiency of 20 spaces, which is less than 2 percent.

Planning Board Secretary Kevin Illing said since the site had previously been granted a parking waiver, the actual number of spaces being asked for a waiver was 86.

The board upon its approval made a condition to add lighting to the rear parking lot should its use expand beyond the trucking company, which is currently only utilizing the spaces, and to add more handicapped spots to be compliant with federal law.

Since there is no new construction planned for the site, the foot candles, granite block curbing and wheel stops were previously approved by the planning board in an older application, said John De Massi, an attorney with Schiller and Pittenger, representing the applicant.

The pre-existing parking lot has three parking areas, as explained by

Victor Vinegra, principal with the firm Harbor Consultants, who is the applicant's expert in planning and engineering. The front parking lot is for commercial use or doctor's offices and another lot for Strength and Fitness. The rear lot is used for the trucking company located in the rear.

Mr. Vinegra described the property as "an older industrial complex," which "slowly has morphed into a mixed-use facility." He said there are 138 parking spaces by South Avenue, 139 spaces by the fitness center, and 108 spaces spread across the rear.

After monitoring parking, Mr. Vinegra said the maximum number of parking spaces used in July and August was 207 spaces. "My studies have shown this facility is using 35 to 60 percent of what the town says we need," Mr. Vinegra said.

Currently, 10 percent of the building is unoccupied. The building houses a trucking company, DYFUS, a home goods company, and Strength and Fitness, said Alexander Trezza, manager of Cranford Business Park. He said leases are in place with a minimum of five years. Vanguard Medical Group and a physical therapy company are also planning to lease space, he said.

Dr. Robert Eidus, owner of Vanguard Medical Group, testified on behalf of the applicant. He said he is moving his family physician practice because he "wanted to have a barrier-free entrance" that would provide "better access" to his office. The practice could up its physicians on board from two to three, Dr. Eidus said, considering the new space, at 5,600 square feet, would provide eight exam rooms. Vanguard Medical plans to open its new office in January 2015.

"Parking is already in place and I don't believe overflow will be a problem," said Andis Kalnins, planning board member and Cranford mayor.

Citizen' Drive Launched to Urge

CRANFORD — Westfield and Mountainside residents are urged to sign a citizen petition drive that urged the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to fully fund the study in 2014 and to implement flood control improvements in the Rahway River Watershed. The petition can be accessed on Cranford.com by clicking on the Cranford Township seal. Westfield and Mountainside drain into the Rahway River with significant runoff yet have no major flooding con-

cerns. Springfield, Union and Cranford have faced significant impacts and urge flood protection prior to next major storm.

The plan would modify the outlet structure at the South Mountain Orange reservoir to permit lowering the capacity of the reservoir prior to a peak storm so it had more capacity. That coupled with downstream channel improvements would lower water elevations by 2.6 feet in Millburn and 3.5 feet in Cranford. The petition seeks to urge Congress



A SUMMER WELL SPENT... Rep. Leonard Lance (R-7th) thanks the summer interns in his Westfield District Office for their public service. Pictured, from left to right, are: Justin Elbert of Westfield, Julianna Tobin of Basking Ridge, Kevin Deutsch of Short Hills, Thomas Abel of Mendham Twp., Ali Gutkin of Springfield, Adrianna Del Principe of Bridgewater, Jeremy Mahr of Raritan Twp., Joseph Russano of Kingwood Twp., Jake Wasserman of Westfield and Laura Watters of Red Bank. Mr. Lance's office has hosted more than 150 students in the internship program. To find out more, visit lance.house.gov.

CF BOE Funds SRO; Search Narrows for CHS Principal

By LISA HAGEN
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

CRANFORD — Along with the township, the Board of Education approved a proposal at its Monday night meeting to jointly fund a school resource officer (SRO) for the upcoming school year to improve safety and local community relationships.

The proposal explains that the officer's responsibilities include strengthening the partnership between the police department, schools, and township and interacting with K-12 students to establish familiarity and a friendly environment.

"Our school resource officer will be in attendance at all our back-to-school nights and the community will

get to meet them," Superintendent Gayle Carrick said.

The agreement describes the officer's safety priorities as analysis and coordination of school security drills, emergency plans, and school traffic. The officer will also plan school visitation schedules to reaffirm the presence of the police department throughout the district.

The SRO will also be involved in teaching students, staff, and parents about bicycle safety, conflict resolution, and drug and alcohol prevention including Project A.L.E.R.T., the two-year middle school program that will replace the current drug resistance program, D.A.R.E.

Robert Carfagno, business administrator and board secretary, said the finalized agreement includes a \$50,000 contribution and a three-year contract.

As the end of the summer approaches, Ms. Carrick said the search continues for a new principal at Cranford High School.

"We are narrowing that down, and hope to have a recommendation to the board very soon," she said.

The CHS principal for the past four years, Rui Dionisio, was hired in June as the new superintendent of schools for the Verona Board of Education, according to a report by northjersey.com. Cranford schools open for the new year on Thursday, September 4.

Flood Study

and U.S. Army Corps to finish the study and proceed to implementation.

On Wednesday, September 10 mayors and representatives of the 11 communities will present the petition to Congress and the Army Corps of Engineers in Washington, D.C.

See it all on the Web!
www.goleader.com



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