

Mitchell, Kranz Sworn In Along With Appointees

By CATHERINE WATSON

Specialty Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

FANWOOD — Fanwood's Borough Hall was packed as people gathered for the January 1 reorganization meeting, at which council members Kathy Mitchell and Tom Kranz were sworn into office.

Pat Plante, chairwoman of the Fanwood Democratic Committee, congratulated Councilwoman Mitchell on being the "longest-serving council person" in Fanwood, as well as on her long career in nursing and her history of volunteering. She also praised new Councilman Kranz for his service to Fanwood, particularly for his volunteer work for the rescue squad.

Following Ms. Plante, Assemblywoman Linda Stender (D-22, Scotch Plains) also praised the incoming council members. She noted that it was "30 years ago today" that former mayor Patricia Kuran, the first woman and Democrat to serve in Fanwood, was sworn in. Asw. Stender declared that the appointment of council members Mitchell and Kranz continued the good changes that Ms. Kuran's tenure had ushered in.

Asw. Stender also thanked outgoing councilman and former police chief Tony Parenti for his many years of commitment to Fanwood.

Freeholder Al Mirabella, a Fanwood resident, also honored Mr. Parenti. He then congratulated Councilwoman Mitchell, saying, "As someone who's been elected to office six times, too, I know that's not always easy!" Freeholder Mirabella also congratulated Councilman Kranz and thanked him for teaching the Mirabella family CPR.

Next, the freeholder thanked the various public representatives in the room, especially those from the Fanwood Memorial Library, for their pres-

ence and their work in the borough. He closed his remarks by noting Fanwood's initiative to partner with the county on dispatching. Ten to 15 municipalities now do the same, "but Fanwood led the trail on that," he said.

Mayor Colleen Mahr swore in Susan MacMullen as municipal court judge. She lauded Judge MacMullen for her competence in administering the court, saying, "There's something very satisfying, as a mayor, when you know you don't have to worry about the court system." The mayor also swore in Erik Frins as public defender, Jennifer Coppock-Huegel as a library board member, and Amy Boroff as a recreation commission member. She additionally swore in rescue squad and fire department personnel, noting that the rescue squad will have a new president, Steve Siegal, and a new captain, Patty Buckridee, now that Councilman Kranz will be focusing on council work.

The meeting closed with comments from council members and remarks from Mayor Mahr. Mayor Mahr highlighted the borough's technological advances and progress on roadwork and revitalization projects. She also mentioned the challenges ahead.

"2014 — For me it's about sustainability. We want to sustain our resources, our businesses, our infrastructure, and the quality of life for our community. To do that we need to keep reinventing ourselves," she said. She mentioned her desire to "complete the lengthy discussion on merging the police department [with Scotch Plains]" in 2014 and the need to keep focusing on the needs of the Fanwood library.

The meeting adjourned and all participants were invited to regroup for a celebratory reception at The Chelsea.



NEW LEADER... Andis Kalnins, who was appointed Cranford Township mayor, was sworn into office by Senator Tom Kean, Jr., while his wife, Joanne; sons, Michael and Patrick, and daughter, Caitlin, look on.

Kalnins Appointed Mayor at Cranford Township Reorg.

By CHRISTINA M. HINKE

Specialty Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

CANFORD — Commissioner Andis Kalnins was appointed township mayor, and Commissioner Lisa Aduabato was appointed deputy mayor, Wednesday during the township committee's reorganization meeting. In addition, newly elected Commissioners Robert D'Ambola and Mary O'Connor took their oath of office, replacing commissioners Ed O'Malley and Kevin Campbell. With their November victory, Republicans now hold a 4-1 majority on the governing body this year.

"We have made a lot of progress over the last two years. We have many challenges ahead of us and we need to continue to balance the services we need and want with the cost to provide them," Mayor Kalnins said. "We need to ensure that our community is safe through healthy police and fire departments," Mayor Kalnins said in his remarks. "We need to improve our roads, our downtown and Centennial Village, and public buildings, while at the same time, not creating unbearable debt. We will get to where we want to be through planning and implementing plans in a responsible manner. We will implement and codify a master plan, which was approved in 2009; we will put together a five-year road maintenance program, as well as a longer term debt management sys-

tem." He also spoke about continuing to appeal the Birchwood development and working to gain federal funding for flood control.

Ms. Aduabato was appointed commissioner of finance, Ms. O'Connor was appointed commissioner of public safety, Mr. D'Ambola was named commissioner of public works/engineering, and Thomas H. Hannen, Jr., who was mayor last year and is now the lone Democrat on the committee, was appointed commissioner of public affairs.

Mr. Kalnins also was appointed as a member to the planning board.

Diane Dabulas was appointed township attorney for one year at a yearly fee of \$60,000. She is a partner at Rogut McCarthy. At Monday's township committee workshop meeting, residents voiced their opinion against appointing attorney Phil Morin to the position.

Lavona Patterson was appointed chief financial officer for a four-year term.

The township committee approved a resolution offering employees the option to forego health insurance for a cash incentive. The employee would receive 25 percent or \$5,000, whichever is less, of the amount saved by the township because of the employee's waiver of health insurance.

The committee also authorized a temporary 2014 township budget of \$7.95 million, and a temporary Swim Utility Fund of \$456,000.

Residents Oppose Morin As Cranford Town Attorney

By CHRISTINA M. HINKE

Specialty Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

CANFORD — In advance of the township committee's vote at yesterday's reorganization meeting, residents spoke at a special committee meeting Monday night against the appointment of Phil Morin as township attorney, a position he held in 2012. Daniel McCarthy is the current township attorney.

Mr. Morin is a partner at Florio Perrucci Steinhardt & Fader LLC, and also serves as Union County Republican chairman, and is a former Cranford mayor. Republicans took over as the majority party on the five-member committee on January 1st.

"There is speculation Phil Morin will be appointed township attorney. I would like to voice my opposition to this move. I think he is too closely tied to the developers. I remind you that he was the attorney for Woodmont when they went to develop the Birchwood Avenue property a few years back and was also involved with them with 555 South Avenue," resident John Hrehbin said.

Request for proposals (RFPs) for a new township attorney were published at the end of November and there were three law firms that supplied credentials for the position, Mayor Thomas Hannen Jr. said. "Those three are in consideration," he said.

Resident Liz Sweeney also opposed Mr. Morin's appointment and asked the committee to "get an opinion from the local finance board" before making the appointment.

"He forced Cranford Crossing on us," resident Frank Krause said in his statement opposing Mr. Morin's potential appointment as township attorney. "He forced a \$7.5-million debt in a parking garage nobody wanted."

"I urge you not to hire Mr. Morin as our township attorney," Planning board member Rita LaBruto said.

She said Mr. Morin has pleaded guilty to four of five counts in an ethics violation in Bergen County.

"The town has spent over \$2 million on this lawsuit... If you hire Mr. Morin you are hiring the firm that financed the lawsuit against us at 555 (South Avenue)," planning board member Rita LaBruto said.

In other business, Kenneth DeRoberts, acting chief financial officer, went over a series of capital improvement authorizations that have balances that the township committee voted to cancel and be

returned to a general fund. The ordinances go back to 2000. Many were attached to matching grants that have since expired and are no longer available, Mr. DeRoberts said.

Mayor Hannen had expressed his reservations with canceling the authorizations. "My concern is once it is gone it isn't coming back," he said. He asked if the township committee in 2014 would look at this and re-appropriate the funds.

Downes Tree Service Co. was awarded the contract to de-sag the Rahway River in Cranford at the bid of \$200,600. T.R. Weniger was awarded the contract to de-silt the river at the bid of \$146,980.

The committee also approved \$9,000 for engineering services fee in connection with the inspection/repair of the Kanuska Passage Pedestrian Tunnel.

The township committee went into a closed session to discuss a legal matter with Cranford Development Associates, contractual matters in connection with 2014 professional services, and a collective bargaining matter and personnel matters involving the fire department and 2014 appointments to committees, boards and commissions.

Barbara Krause, a member of the tree preservation commission, said the township has a variety of trees available to plant on residents' front yard properties and interested residents can contact the public works department.

Ms. Krause also inquired about the upgrade of the PSE&G substation on North Avenue and construction to happen at Union County College.

Ms. Krause also inquired about the repair of the broken marble base of the flagpole at the Post Office plaza.

Man Injured Near Fanwood Train Station

FANWOOD — An unidentified man sustained serious injuries Wednesday night near the Fanwood Train Station, according to media reports. The incident is under investigation by NJ Transit.

According to reports, police responded to a call at 9:30 p.m. New Year's Day of a body near the Fanwood station. Medical personnel were able to stabilize the man and move him to Forest Road Park where he was than airlifted to University Hospital in Newark, according to mycentraljersey.com.



WELCOME ABOARD... Tom Kranz and Kathy Mitchell, second from left, were sworn in to their positions on the Fanwood council on New Year's Day. Pat Plante receives flowers for being Fanwood's Democratic Party chairperson.



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