

UNION COUNTY COLLEGE is a SMART education choice



SPRING 2014 CLASSES BEGIN JAN. 22



WWW.UCC.EDU/WL

REGISTER NOW FOR SPRING COURSES

SP PD Seeking Information Regarding Home Burglary

SCOTCH PLAINS – The Scotch Plains Police Department is seeking information from the public regarding a home burglary that took place sometime on New Year's Eve or New Year's Day.

At approximately 2 p.m. on January 1, officers responded to the scene of the burglary, a residential home on Sterling Place. It was determined that the incident likely took place sometime between 9:30 a.m. on December 31, 2013 and the time at which it was reported.

The burglary victim, a senior citizen, came home to find that an unknown suspect or suspects had entered the residence and removed undetermined quantities of cash and jewelry, according to the investigation. Most of the jewelry constituted

family heirlooms with sentimental value to the victim.

The Scotch Plains Police Department is urging anyone who might have information about this incident to contact Detective Brian Hayeck at (908) 322-7100, Ext. 131. All calls will be kept confidential and any caller may remain anonymous.

A reward of up to \$5,000 for information leading to an arrest and indictment in connection with this burglary also is being offered by the Union County Crime Stoppers; tips can be given anonymously by phone at (908) 654-TIPS (8477), via text message by texting "UCTIP" and a message to 274637 (CRIMES), or online at www.uctip.org. The victim's family is additionally offering an identical reward of their own.



WELCOME TO THE WORLD...Scotch Plains Councilman Llewellyn Jones and newborn son, Eamon, catch up on the week's events by reading *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times* at Overlook Medical Center in Summit. After all, Eamon needed to catch up on what he missed in 2013. Eamon joins his sister, Maeve, 3, brother Rhys, 6, and mom, Bridget.

Fanwood Man Hit by Train Succumbs to Injuries

By BETSEY BURGDOFF
Specially Written for *The Westfield Leader*

FANWOOD — The incident involving the death of Edward Byron, III, 23, of Fanwood, who was fatally injured when he was struck by a train on New Year's Day, remains under investigation, Fanwood Police Chief Richard Trigo told *The Westfield Leader*.

The victim, who was a graduate of Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School, Class of 2009, where he was an Honor Roll student, died at UMDNJ on January 5 from his injuries, which included the loss of an arm.

NJ Transit spokesman John Durso told *The Leader* that NJ Transit police were called to the scene at about 9:30 p.m. on New Year's Day after an NJ Transit engineer on a westbound train alerted authorities that he saw a body on the eastbound tracks approximately a half mile past the Fanwood station towards Plainfield. Mr. Durso stated that Mr. Byron was alive and conscious when police arrived, although seriously injured. He was transported to Forest Road Park, where he was stabilized and eventually airlifted to UMDNJ in Newark, where he succumbed to his injuries days later.

SP Planning Board Chooses New Chair and Vice-Chair

By FRED T. ROSSI
Specially Written for *The Westfield Leader*

SCOTCH PLAINS — The planning board on Monday selected two veteran members to lead the panel in 2014.

Paulette Coronato, a former chairwoman, was returned to that post at the board's reorganization meeting. She defeated John Thompson, who had served as chairman in 2013 after defeating Mrs. Coronato a year ago. Mrs. Coronato, who had served as board chairwoman from 2009 through 2012, was nominated for the position this week by Councilman William Vastine. Former councilman Jeffrey Strauss seconded her nomination. Theresa Flood nominated Mr. Thompson for a second term, a move seconded by 2013 vice-chairman Michael Graziano.

Six members voted in favor of Mrs. Coronato—Richard Polhamus, Mr. Strauss, Robert LaCosta, Mr. Vastine, Joseph Doyle and Mrs. Coronato—while four members—Mr. Graziano, Mr. Thompson, Mayor Kevin Glover and Mrs. Flood—favored Mr. Thompson.

Mrs. Coronato thanked Mr. Thompson for his "leadership last year," and then nominated Joseph Doyle—a long-time planning board member and former chairman who was not reappointed a year ago but was then named to the board by the council last week—to serve as

vice-chairman. She cited his "extensive experience in town and with planning on a local and state level." Mayor Glover nominated Mr. Thompson. The vote in favor of Mr. Doyle was identical to the vote for chairman.

The board is still mulling over candidates to serve as attorney, consulting planner and consulting engineer. Appointees to most of the planning board's various subcommittees also were held off, with Mrs. Coronato asking members to look at which of the nine committees—architectural review, environmental, issues and objectives, master plan review, personnel, rules and procedures, site plan review and subdivision review—they might be interested in serving on. She did name Mr. Doyle to head the master plan review committee because of his "extensive experience with master plan reviews." She noted that the township must, by 2017, file a master plan review with state officials and said the process should start this year. There is "a lot to review," she said, and "it will take some time."

At the start of the meeting, Mayor Glover, Councilman Vastine, Mrs. Coronato, Mr. LaCosta, Mr. Doyle and Mr. Polhamus were sworn in as members of the board.

The planning board meets next on Monday, January 27.

Cranford Township

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The committee, he said, had asked about installing a fire sprinkler system. He said it would be "expensive and disruptive" to the construction process.

Committee member Thomas Hannen, Jr. suggested having the elevator reach the third level to allow the movement of archival files there in order to free up space and get the files out of the ground level so they are not at risk to be ruined by floodwaters.

During construction, Mr. LaCorte said the computer server would be moved, and recommended it be relocated to the police department. It currently is housed in the mailroom, where asbestos tiles need to be removed. Also, he said there is a "remote chance there is asbestos in the plaster." He said there was asbestos testing completed in the lower level, and it was negative for asbestos there.

Phases one and two of the plan are being funded through insurance, Mayor Andis Kalnins said. The committee expects a final architectural proposal on Monday, February 10.

In other business, Police Chief Eric Mason announced a vacancy in the records division and asked to fill the vacancy with a starting salary of \$30,000.

Mayor Kalnins discussed the allocation of grant funds from the Kids Recreational Trust Grant Program. The Memorial Field bathrooms have yet to be rehabbed, he said. The Roosevelt Park and Sherman Park grounds are to be re-graded and resurfaced with the grant money.

Also, there was discussion about adding a playground to Sherman Field, which Mr. Hannen said would take away from field space for sports. He said other sports leagues have said there is limited space to practice as it is. "If we put playground equipment there, there are limits to what we can do there," Mr. Hannen said.

The roof above the indoor Orange Avenue pool and exercise area is leaking and Mr. Hannen said that needs to be a priority.

The committee also discussed the Roads and Resurfacing five-year plan. "There is a more immediate need for pothole repairs," committee member Lisa Adubato said.

Some resurfacing is not to start

until April. "To tell people you have to wait until April and it was supposed to be done last year is unacceptable," Mr. Hannen said.

Township Administrator Terrence Wall suggested a software program that will track reported potholes and road damage and their subsequent repair.

Committee member Mary O'Connor asked about revising the residential garbage hauling ordinance. She said that while she was campaigning, senior citizens asked to have it be allowed they get once a week pickup instead of twice a week. "It might be a help for some people to offset their costs," Ms. O'Connor said.

Residents Albert and Rachael Watson voiced their aggravation with their neighbor, who has been playing music for hours at a time at a high volume that they can hear in their own home. The couple asked the township committee to revise its noise ordinance and revise it to phrase that the noise level on one's property cannot be heard beyond the property line.

The Watsons said they have called the police regarding the matter, but that the police have not been able to force the neighbor to lower the volume because there is no law in place that the neighbor is breaking.

Mr. Watson said the neighbor is playing the music at high levels as retaliation for Ms. Watson opposing his fence plan when he went for a variance at the last zoning board meeting. The neighbor was denied a variance to build a six-foot-high, closed fence.

Mayor Kalnins said the chief of police, who was in attendance at this meeting, is looking into the matter personally.

Maureen Strazdon, chairwoman of the historic advisory board, said the board has been promised a \$2,000 grant from FEMA to reshoot its video architectural tour of Cranford, *A Cruise Through Cranford*. She said the release of funds has been held up due to the plan for elevation of some homes in the historic district. Mayor Kalnins said the committee will look into seeing if it can front the money and be reimbursed by the grant later.



WAIT 'TIL NEXT YEAR...Steelers fans display their copy of *The Westfield Leader* while visiting the Pittsburgh Steeler Sports Training Center last week.

Garwood Council

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

firefighters and first aid responders and a possible additional police officer.

"Of course I would like taxes to be as low as possible, but at the same time we have bills to pay and we have services to keep up in the borough too," Ms. Todisco said. "So we'll see how it shakes out."

Councilman Jim Mathieu, who has been outspoken on budget issues, acknowledged the strain that the news will put on town's finances, but suggested its effects are avoidable.

"It definitely makes things more difficult," Mr. Mathieu said after the meeting. "This is a very, very mild increase that we had notice of, because we have a five-year rolling average, and [RVSA representative] Stephen Greet told us last year that we're having a low-year drop off. So we knew this was coming."

"And I think that's part of the problem here when we don't cut in other areas of our budget, we're less able to absorb shocks. So we're constantly surprised by things that happen regularly."

The council also was told by New Jersey American Water Company representative Michael Bange that the company will be replacing 300 feet of a two-inch main on Myrtle Avenue with an eight-inch wide pipe to service the area residents and the Athletic Field Complex. The company will also replace service lines to 113 homes. Those residents will be notified in advance that their water will be shut off for up to an hour, Mr. Bange said.

Mr. Bange's presentation dominated the work session, occupying approximately an hour of the meeting. In other meeting news, the council was informed that the Athletic Field Complex likely will not be ready in time for youth baseball's opening day in April, according to Councilman Louis Petruzzelli. The complex is nearly a year behind schedule.

Council members approved the introduction of a resolution increasing the salary range for the police chief from \$112,000 to \$125,000 to \$120,000 to \$132,000.

Councilman Bill Nierstedt is hoping to organize a volunteer crew to wash council chamber walls for Martin Luther King Day, considered a day of service. The work will start at 10

a.m. on Monday, January 20. Mr. Mathieu commented that he believes that kind of work cheapens the memory of a great civil rights leader. In a handwritten note given to *The Westfield Leader* after the workshop meeting, Mr. Nierstedt wrote "It is a shame that Councilman Mathieu continues to belittle jobs that don't satisfy his higher standards."

The Planning Board is considering asking council for a budget pool, which it will have discretion over to hire a firm for a redevelopment study of the North and South Avenue corridors. Mr. Nierstedt told council. Members also agreed to review the parking ordinance, which was written in the mid-1980s and does not require businesses downtown to provide parking.

"That was all well and good when we didn't have development," Mr. Nierstedt said. "But if we are going to talk about how do you develop downtown, we do need to provide parking."

Borough attorney Bob Renaud pointed out that there is no place for parking. "So if you say you can't have development unless you provide parking you're basically saying you can't have any development." He added that the existing parking could be "better managed" to allow for greater parking availability.

Mr. Nierstedt reminded residents that trash has to be put in cans. He said the Streets, Roads and Ecology committee is looking at requiring recyclables be placed in containers. He said 2013 leaf collection "worked well" for the Department of Public Works and "positively" for the borough—there was no overtime. "It was real savings," he said.

He mentioned a couple of possible tweaks to the 2014 Leaf Collection—requiring residents to put leaf bags in the area between curb and the sidewalk—not in the street—providing more pickups and extending leaf collection further into December.

Mr. Nierstedt suggested including money in the budget to hire a firm to assess the cost of certain services in the borough—such as trash pickup—in order to determine whether outsourcing would save the town money.

Editor's Note: Brian Trusdell contributed to this report.



HAPPY NEW YEAR...The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times traveled with Noelle and Justin Giacona to Punta Cana, Dominican Republic, to celebrate New Year 2014.

"Local Service at Highway Prices"

70 Years in Westfield

Kitchen and Laundry Appliances, TV's, Grills and A/C's

908-233-0400

220 ELMER STREET Westfield, NJ 07090

Elmer APPLIANCE