

Economy Dominates Holt's SPFHS Town Hall Meeting

By KATE BROWNE
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — A lively discussion on the federal budget deficit, the future of Social Security, trade pacts and the Affordable Care Act (ACA) took place on Saturday as hundreds of Central Jersey voters attended a town hall meeting at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School with Rep. Rush Holt (D-12th).

In response to citizens' questions regarding the budget deficit and unemployment, Mr. Holt advised that

he considered it critical that the nation stop "fixating on the debt" and make "smart" investments in education, technology and infrastructure, which will lead to long-term economic growth. He urged the audience to recall the positive impact the GI Bill had on the economy after World War II and noted that the country was presently enjoying record low inflation rates.

The Congressman reiterated his strong support for preserving Social Security and Medicare benefits, pro-

grams which he characterized as "among the most successful government" programs in history. Rep. Holt reminded the audience that Social Security's recipients include millions of the disabled, as well as widows and widowers with children, and explained his support for the Social Security Equality Act, which if enacted, would remove the current Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) cap.

Mr. Holt tackled several questions regarding the Affordable Care Act/Obamacare. He acknowledged there were still mechanical issues with the enrollment system, but encouraged the audience to keep in mind the millions of Americans with preexisting conditions who were now able to obtain affordable health insurance as well as the tens of millions of poor Americans who were now eligible for Medicaid.

In response to an inquiry from Daniel Johnson, a Scotch Plains resident and member of the Communications Workers of America union, the Congressman explained his position on the Transpacific Partnership Agreement (TPA). The TPA is a proposed trade agreement that presently is under negotiation between Pacific Rim countries such as Malaysia, Japan, Australia and Vietnam and the United States. The goal of the TPA is to increase trade and investment between nations. While Rep. Holt explained he fully supported all efforts to spur worldwide economic growth, he intended to vote against the trade agreement unless it includes appropriate provisions to protect workers' rights, prohibit child labor and safeguard the environment.

Mr. Holt reminded residents that he and his staff will conduct community office hours on Wednesday, January 22, at the Scotch Plains Public Library, located at 1927 Bartle Avenue, and can provide information and answer questions on issues such as veterans' benefits, Social Security and immigration.

Historic Crane-Phillips House Is Designated Landmark

By CHRISTINA M. HINKE
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

CRANFORD — During its meeting Tuesday, the Cranford Township Committee designated the Crane-Phillips House as a historic landmark, discussed the renewal of Comcast's contract and made appointments.

The Cranford Historic Preservation Advisory Board had sought the distinction of the Crane-Phillips House as a historic landmark, discussed the renewal of Comcast's contract and made appointments.

The Crane-Phillips House is already on the National and State Registers of Historic Places. It is a historical museum open to the public on Sundays from 2 to 4 p.m. Henry Phillips, of Phillips Milk of Magnesia, purchased the property in 1867 from the Crane family, the founding family of Cranford, and had the house built by Andrew Jackson Downing.

Comcast went before the township committee to present the municipal consent public hearing for the application of Comcast of New Jersey II, LLC for renewal of its municipal consent to own, operate, extend and maintain a cable television and cable communications system in the Township of Cranford.

Charles Smith, director of public affairs for Comcast, said the committee must base its franchise renewal decision on four questions: has the cable operator substantially complied with existing franchise laws; has the quality



NEW LEADERSHIP...The Scotch Plains Planning Board chose Paulette Coronato as chairwoman and Joseph Doyle as vice-chairman at its reorganization meeting on Monday.

Scotch Plains Planning Board Chooses New Chair and Vice-Chair

By FRED T. ROSSI
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

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

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Westfield Zoning Board Okays Applications

By DELL SIMEONE
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

WESTFIELD — On Monday evening the board of adjustment approved four applications and rescheduled six others to its Monday, February 10 agenda.

The board approved an application for a six-foot vinyl fence contrary to code for Sally Susan Heyder of 491 Otisco Drive. The ordinance only allows a four-foot fence. Ms. Heyder said she needs more privacy because the yard contains a hot tub. The fence would be at the rear of the property, which is adjacent to a neighbor's driveway and is across the street from a playground.

The board approved an application by Lawrence and Gretchen Laguna of 865 Boulevard to construct a two-car garage contrary to code. The ordinance requires a side-yard setback for accessory structures of five feet; proposed is 1.22 feet. The ordinance also requires a rear-yard setback of five feet for accessory structures where the proposed is 2.94 feet.

The board approved the application of Jeffrey and Melanie Singer of 1149 Tice Place to convert 190 square feet of unfinished second-floor space to a laundry room and closet contrary to code. The ordinance allows a maximum floor area ratio of 32 percent/

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



FUTURE OF NEW JERSEY...Hundreds of Central Jersey voters attended a town hall meeting held at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School on Saturday led by Rep. Rush Holt (D-12th). Pictured, left to right, are: Fanwood Mayor Colleen Mahr, Congressman Holt and Scotch Plains Mayor Kevin Glover.

SP Rec. Votes to Proceed With Brookside Pavilion

By SARA MAGNOLA-TANER
Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — During its meeting on January 13, the Scotch Plains Recreation Commission approved the building of an A-frame pavilion at Brookside Park. Commission members also discussed the 2014 fee schedule, including multi-child discounts for the summer day-camp program, and the implementation of new safety measures for sleigh riding at Scotch Hills Golf Course.

In 2013, the township council had approved \$60,000 for the commission to install a standard metal A-frame pavilion at Brookside Park to give the children attending day camp a place to eat during the day. Per a request by a council member at the commission's last meeting, Director of Parks and Recreation Ray Poerio looked into "jazzing up" the aesthetics and obtained quotes for upgraded roof and shingle options.

"With a standard A-frame pavilion we are right on budget for this project," Mr. Poerio said. "The other options would be over budget by \$23,000 to \$34,000."

Additionally, Mr. Poerio explained that the installation costs for the upgraded pavilion options would exceed the \$17,500 threshold above which the contract would need to be put out to bid, which could prolong the process.

"It's a lot of money," stated Commissioner Andy Weber, before making a motion to proceed with the installation of the standard pavilion, which was unanimously approved by the commission.

Mr. Poerio also updated the commission on the progress being made to implement sleigh riding safety rules and regulations at Scotch Hills Golf Course at the recommendation of the town's risk manager.

"Hay bales and safety fences are already in place and signs are in the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



NEW PAVILION...The Scotch Hills Recreation Commission voted to proceed with the installation of a standard A-frame pavilion at Brookside Park. The new pavilion will be a larger version of the pavilion located at Scotch Hills Golf Course, above.



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 Rhyss, 6, and mom, Bridget.

PAGE INDEX

Regional	2, 3	Education	9, 18
Editorial	4-5	Sports	11-17
Police	6	Real Estate	11-15
Community ...	6-8	Classifieds	17
Obituary	8	A&E	19-20



CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

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