

Christina Hinke for *The Westfield Leader*

**NEW CLASSROOMS...**The Cranford Planning Board hears a courtesy presentation of Union County College's project to construct a new addition to student services and classroom space at its meeting on July 16.

## CF Concerned Over Impact Of UCC Expansion

By **CHRISTINA M. HINKE**  
*Specially Written for The Westfield Leader*

**CRANFORD** — With flooding concerns at the forefront of members' minds, the planning board urged Union County College (UCC) last Wednesday to work with Cranford's township engineer to ensure its stormwater management system for a new expansion would comply with the township's stormwater management ordinance.

The Union County Improvement Authority (UCIA) presented UCC's plans to the planning board at the meeting to build a 39,842-square-foot, two-story addition at the college's Nomahegan Hall, to include a student center on the ground floor and classrooms, labs and faculty offices on the second floor. The township planning board cannot approve or deny the plans; rather this presentation was a courtesy to the township. The project will increase impervious surface by .16

acres, which equates to almost 7,000 square feet.

To address stormwater management, the engineer on the project, Robert Pasqual, said there will be an underground detention system that will hold stormwater for about 24 hours and then slowly disperse it into the township's storm pipes.

"We designed it in accordance with the township ordinance as well as the NJ DEP (New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection) best practices of stormwater management," Mr. Pasqual said.

The municipality has had large storms that have resulted in its waterways not receding within a 24-hour period, Township Commissioner Tom Hannen, Jr. said. "So this project does add [stormwater] into an already overburdened system," Mr. Hannen said.

Mr. Pasqual said the detention

*CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE*

By **BRIAN TRUSDELL**  
*Specially Written for The Westfield Leader*

**GARWOOD** — Borough Council members will engage Cranford officials regarding widening the Orchard Brook to address flooding concerns of Garwood residents, who said water approached their homes twice in as many days during June storms.

About a dozen south side residents, including three from Spruce Avenue who spoke, attended Tuesday's council meeting at Borough Hall to complain about the flooding, all blaming the still uncompleted Athletic Field Complex (AFC) at the east end of the street.

Spruce Avenue homeowner Ed Melka, who said he was a lifelong Garwood resident, not only complained of a rodent problem caused by the AFC, including rats, opossums, raccoons and mice, but also said that flood waters came out of the storm drains and flowed west from the complex toward East Street.

"Something went wrong with the field down there, whether the drainage system that they put in for the ball field might have affected it, I don't know," he said.

But Borough Engineer Don Guarriello insisted that the Athletic Field Complex was not the cause of the flooding.

He said the AFC includes a detention basin at the end of the soccer field that is 30 feet wide by 80 feet long and three feet deep to handle storm runoff.

"There is nothing that the Little League field complex did to cause the flooding," Mr. Guarriello said, noting that the baseball field itself was flooded. "I can say that emphatically."

Instead, Mr. Guarriello said the culverts, or the pipes and tunnels, are undersized along the Garwood Brook under the

Pathmark entryway, the railroad that crosses under the Raritan Valley NJ Transit line behind the Pathmark and Frosty Freeze properties and also the one that goes under the intersection at North and Lincoln Avenues.

The culverts constrict the water flow, but the borough cannot widen them until Cranford similarly widens the Orchard Brook. The stream is a continuation of the Garwood Brook and runs northeast from the edge of Dittrick's Wines and Liquors property to the Rahway River across from McConnell Park between Orchard and Eastman Streets.

Mr. Guarriello claimed that the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), which has jurisdiction over the stream, proposed widening the culverts and the Orchard Brook 10 years ago. But when Cranford residents along the waterway refused to grant easements for the project, Garwood chose not to condemn the properties for the right-of-way and the NJDEP shelved the plan.

Both Mr. Guarriello and Councilman Bill Nierstedt blamed the extreme nature of the storms, that they say dumped a large volume of water in a very short time, for the flash flooding. They buttressed their claim by pointing out that the flood waters receded almost as quickly as they formed.

Council members said they would bring the matter to the attention of Cranford officials either in the form of a letter or formal resolution, would attend a Cranford Township Committee meeting to bring the issue up and encouraged the residents to accompany them to lend volume to the cause.

While the flooding issue occupied more than a third of the approximately hour-and-a-half-hour work session, the council

also questioned Department of Public Works (DPW) Supervisor Fred Corbitt regarding a proposal to rescind the year-old ordinance requiring residents to bag fallen leaves in autumn.

Mr. Corbitt said the ordinance was about an \$1,800 net gain for his department, the difference between the approximate \$5,000 in overtime saved by not using the old truck vacuum system and the \$3,200 in bags the department purchased for residents' use.

He also said an advantage of bagging was fewer clogs caused by leaves in the storm sewers.

Mr. Nierstedt voice his continued support for the measure, but the most passionate defense came from Third Avenue resident and DPW worker Glenn Lewis, who said he was surprised rescinding the resolution was even being considered.

While saying he is worked for the borough for 31 years, Mr. Lewis said the biggest benefit was not for himself and his fellow DPW workers, who had noted debris in the loose piles and seen the piles dumped in any number of illegal ways prior to the use of bags. He said the borough just looks better.

"I think it's a huge mistake to go back," he said. "Putting them in the bags is for the betterment of the borough."

In other action, the council approved a \$300,000-bond ordinance for road and drainage projects in the borough. The measure, in which the town will actually spend \$75,000 and receive \$225,000 from the state, passed unanimously.

Council members generally agreed that the borough would not spray the Garwood Brook with herbicide to address complaints of rats. Through the Board

*CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE*