

Committee Established to Look Into SP Downtown Revitalization

By FRED T. ROSSI

Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — In the latest effort to jumpstart the downtown business district revitalization, the Scotch Plains Township Council on Tuesday voted to establish a Business District Development Committee that will seek to develop business-friendly practices and opportunities to attract new businesses and retain existing ones.

The new group, which will be composed of citizens appointed by the council, calls into question the future of the Scotch Plains Management Corp. (SPMC), which was created in 2008 to manage and oversee the business district and to recruit new busi-

nesses. But the SPMC has been met with resistance from property owners skeptical of the group's prospects and resistant to paying the annual \$400 assessment fee that funded SPMC's activities. Last year, the council voted to suspend the assessment, meaning that the SPMC's 2013 budget was made up of unspent funds from the prior year. There will be no assessment on business property owners this year, meaning that the SPMC, down to its final dollars, will likely be unable to mount much of an effort to foster downtown revitalization.

Councilman William Vastine, who has pushed for the establishment of the new committee, said the new

group will "remove politicians from the process and remove the financial burden" on property owners. He said he hoped the new group will look at previous downtown studies and see if they have any relevance to the present time. He wants group members to work with the township planner, attorney and engineers to develop a plan for the downtown. Mr. Vastine said he hoped the new committee will "eliminate political interference and eliminate resistance from property owners." He expressed hope that "this will allow for a more cooperative solution."

Deputy Mayor Michael Marcus said that while he was "not entirely sure how the group will function," he said it was "good to get the ball rolling." Mayor Kevin Glover, however, appeared skeptical, saying the new group "sounds like another committee," pointing to two other entities — the SPMC and the Scotch Plains Business and Professional Association — that also have the business district as their focus. "I look forward to hearing what this group has to say," he stated.

In other business at its regular meeting, the council approved a contract not to exceed \$25,000 to Maffey's Security Group for electronic locks and deadbolt systems for restrooms at township parks. The council also backed a resolution calling on the state legislature to make permanent the 2-percent cap on arbitration awards. Township Manager Jerry Giaimis said the cap would help municipalities better manage salaries, especially amidst the state's property tax and spending caps.

Mr. Giaimis also said that the council will hold another budget meeting on Tuesday, April 1, to review a bond ordinance he currently is drafting as well as to speak with any department heads about final budget requests or questions. Mr. Giaimis has provided the council with his revenue projections for this year. He anticipates

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Public Safety, Parks Depts. Present County Budgets

By LANCE TUPPER

Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

COUNTY — The second of four scheduled budget meetings proceeded on Tuesday. The board's fiscal affairs committee reviewed the spending requests of the public safety and parks and recreation departments. Most of the 90-minute meeting, held at the Trailside Nature and Science Center in Mountainside, centered on public safety revenues and expenses.

During the public safety discussion, Public Safety Director Andrew Moran said revenues in the consumer affairs division increased last year to \$421,500, up from \$85,100 in 2012. He said the division issued \$30,000 in fines to businesses that violated the Consumer Fraud Act. Mr. Moran said the division will continue to educate businesses about changes in regulations in order to help promote voluntary compliance with the laws.

Mr. Moran said last year the weights and measures division cited commercial businesses for 2,716 violations. He said by fines and registration fees generated revenues of \$206.6 million, up from \$73.7 million in 2012. Mr. Moran said his employees "Go out and scan to supermarkets and stores" using a Universal Product Code scanner to monitor the accuracy of pricing and labeling of consumer packages.

Freeholder Linda Carter asked Mr. Moran about the division's increase in overtime. Mr. Moran replied that he adjusted employee hours to a 40-hour work week from 35 hours and added an additional employee to help mitigate overtime costs. He said he expects more man-power hours will continue to bring in more revenue.

By PAUL PEYTON

Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

WESTFIELD — Municipal and county public works crews have been out trying to fill the large volume of potholes caused by the high number of snowstorms this winter.

Jim Gildea, Westfield town administrator, said two- to three-man pothole repair crews have been out filling potholes with hot asphalt.

"We have been trying to keep up with that (pothole reports) and will continue to do that," Mr. Gildea said, noting that residents have been reporting potholes to the town's pothole hotline, (908) 789-4100, option 3.

He said some roads are in such bad shape that additional work besides

patching will be necessary. In that regard, he said the town is looking to add sections of streets to its list of roadways to be paved this year as part of Westfield's capital budget.

"Sometimes it is beyond patching," Mr. Gildea said.

Scotch Plains Township Manager Jerry Giaimis said the Public Works

Department has been working on "temporary fixes" to some of the more significant potholes amidst the winter season. He acknowledged a recent shortage of patching materials but hoped that the supply was now back to normal.

Now that the weather is breaking,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

Major Water Pipe Repairs Planned For Fanwood

By CATHERINE WATSON

Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

FANWOOD — The borough council devoted the majority of Tuesday night's meeting to a presentation by American Water (AW) representatives detailing plans for a \$4.8-million infrastructure upgrade project.

Mike Bange, AW's manager of field operations, explained that many of the cast iron pipes currently serving Fanwood were installed in the early 1900s. Iron deposits (tubercules) have accumulated inside the pipes, decreasing the pipes' water flow and increasing the threat of cracks.

Mr. Bange laid out a two-phase plan. The first phase, slated for March

23 to May, involves completely replacing pipes along Martine Avenue from South Avenue to Trenton Avenue, as well as along sections of La Grande, Trenton and Saville Row.

Phase Two, to take place from April 7 to late September, calls for cleaning and re-lining pipes on several streets in Fanwood.

Mr. Bange assured residents and council that he would be fully committed to the project and available to address concerns. "My wife yells at me because I sleep with [my phone] next to my bed stand," he said.

According to Mr. Bange, residents will receive at least five days advance

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



Paul Lachnauer for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times
ST. PATTY'S DAY PARADE...The Union County Police and Fire Pipes and Drums entertain the crowd at the Union County St. Patrick's Day Parade held Saturday in Union.

SP Library Hopes To Resume Sunday Hours

By FRED T. ROSSI

Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — The township council looks set to approve the needed additional funding that will allow the Scotch Plains Public Library to resume normal Sunday operating hours. A year ago, amidst cuts to its budget, the library closed on Sundays and pared back its hours on Mondays.

At the council's budget meeting on Tuesday, Library Director Meg Kolaya said a slight increase of \$4,000 in the library's \$1.35-million funding request for 2014 would enable her to reopen on Sundays from September through December. When Councilman William Vastine asked how much funding would be needed to allow the library to open on Sundays immediately, Board of Trustees President Jeffrey Noonan estimated that another \$5,000 to \$6,000 would suffice.

When asked, Mrs. Kolaya was not sure how much added funding would

be required to allow the library to resume its normal Monday hours. Presently the library opens at 1 p.m. on Mondays instead of the 9 a.m. opening time in effect before last year's budget cuts.

Mayor Kevin Glover inquired as to whether a public fund-raising drive might be the route to the needed additional financing for Sunday hours. Mr. Noonan said he would ask the board and the Friends of the Library organization but cautioned that funds raised by the Friends group already supports a variety of library programs. He expressed some concern that financing for those programs could be at risk if money was redirected to paying for the expanded operating hours.

Councilman Llewellyn Jones then proposed that an additional \$10,000 be added to the library's budget request to allow Sunday hours as soon as possible. When Mr. Vastine proposed adding further funding to al-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



Photo courtesy of Brian Horton
GIRL SCOUT WEEK...Girl Scout Troop Nos. 40821 and 40279 from Brunner School attend the Fanwood Borough Council meeting, at which time Mayor Colleen Mahr read a proclamation in honor of Girl Scout Week, which was last week.



Susan M. Dougherty for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times
NOW HE'S THINKING...In the comic song, "It's Been A Long Day," Smitty (Lina Zikas), behind the couple, interprets the thoughts of Rosemary (Olivia Whitehouse) and J. Pierpont Finch (Jonathan Dawson) in the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School Repertory's production of *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying*. See page 22 for story.



Photo courtesy of Brian Horton
INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADE...At the Fanwood Borough Council meeting on Tuesday night, Mike Bange, American Water's manager of field operations, detailed plans for a \$4.8-million infrastructure upgrade project, explaining that many of the cast iron pipes currently serving Fanwood were installed in the early 1900s. Iron deposits/tubercules have accumulated inside the pipes, decreasing the pipes' water flow and increasing the threat of cracks.

PAGE INDEX

Regional	2-3	Education	9, 20
Editorial	4-5	Sports	11-19
Police	6	Real Estate	11-19, 22
Community ...	6-8, 20	Classifieds	20
Obituary	8	A&E	21-22



CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

For Listings
Julie Murphy

Congratulations to Our
February
Sales Associates of the Month!

For Sales
Jennifer Colamedici

Westfield-West | 600 North Avenue West, Westfield | 908-233-0065 | www.cbmoves.com/westfieldwest

© 2014 Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage. All Rights Reserved. Coldwell Banker Residential Brokerage fully supports the principles of the Fair Housing Act and the Equal Opportunity Act. Operated by a subsidiary of NRT LLC. Coldwell Banker® and the Coldwell Banker logo are registered service marks owned by Coldwell Banker Real Estate LLC.