

Hist. Preserv. Panel Postpones Vote on Walnut Designation

By DELL SIMEONE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD—The Historic Preservation Commission, on Monday evening, held a public hearing on designating Walnut Street, between Elm Street and Mountain Avenue, as a historic district. The meeting lasted almost two hours with testimony by residents from the 26 homes affected by the proposed change.

Some residents welcomed the designation, some did not. Of the 26 homes, 10 are condos in the Park Edge development that borders Bicentennial Park, which used to be called Triangle Park. When one resident said, "I want to opt out," Com-

mission member Bob Algarin demanded of the panel, "I want a clarification on this point." The other members and the committee's attorney were not able to define the situation vis-à-vis the proposed ordinance. The meeting was then abruptly adjourned.

The meeting began with a presentation by Margaret Hickey, of Connolly and Hickey Historical Architects of Cranford. Ms. Hickey outlined the rationale for the area to be designated historic. She said that the homes were on property in the Dudley Park section of town, which had been owned by John and Helen Dudley, and then subdivided around

1890. Ms. Hickey said most of the homes were Queen Anne Victorians with front porches or Dutch Colonials. The homes, she said, were two-and-a-half story wood frame houses with gables, shingles, and dormers with wrap-around porches. Other homes in the area were deemed conforming or harmonious. The Park Edge condos, built in 1949, are considered non-contributing.

A section of Kimball Avenue, the street just north of it, is already designated a historic district. Commission Chairwoman Kelly Kessler said Walnut Street should be added as a separate district because of the architectural styles. A commission member asked if there is a consistency, or level of integrity, to the homes, to which Ms. Hickey replied, "yes."

When she finished her presentation, area residents weighed in on the topic. James White, who said he and his brother own 225 Walnut Street, asked, "This came up in 2013, but was tabled. Why are we here now?" Ms. Kessler replied, "It was never tabled; it is a long process and can be time-consuming."

Mr. White's brother, R. Thomas White, said, "Some residents who are here never got the packet. When I came here, I wasn't sure what would happen tonight." James White added, "I don't see the benefit of it. I don't see the need for it."

A resident who lives at 303 Walnut Street asked, "What is the legal avenue? Is there a waiting period? What if I wanted to demolish my home?"

Ms. Kessler responded, "You'd have to get a permit." He also asked if property values would go up. Ms. Hickey said, "yes."

According to the proposed ordinance, once the area is designated as

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Sgt. Luedecker Advanced; Vacant Prop. Code Introduced

By CHRISTINA M. HINKE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

CRANFORD—An amendment to an ordinance that specifies a new property maintenance code - The International Property Maintenance Code - was passed unanimously on first reading Tuesday at the township committee official meeting. The purpose of the code is to regulate the care, maintenance, security and upkeep of the exterior of vacant and abandoned residential properties that are under foreclosure.

The International Property Maintenance Code has been uniformly accepted in about six municipalities so far, Township Attorney Diane Dabulas said Monday at the workshop meeting. "I think it has some good teeth to it," Deputy Mayor Lisa Adubato said at Monday's workshop meeting. Each violation will be attributed a fine of \$1,500 a day. A fine of \$2,500 per day will be accrued should an out-of-state creditor fail to appoint an in-state representative.

The committee passed, 4 to 1, on first reading, an ordinance that outlays the powers and duties of the township administrator. Commissioner Tom Hannen, Jr. voted against the ordinance. Mr. Hannen has said in previous workshop meetings that he felt the ordinance was not in line with the township's committee form of government.

A resolution requesting an extension of time from the New Jersey Department of Transportation for the North Avenue Train Station Plaza Pedestrian Improvements Project was passed by the committee. The committee's deadline to award the project is Friday, May 1, 2015. The township received a Municipal Aid 2011 Transit Village Program grant, in the amount of \$500,000, and the township is to bond for the remainder of the cost. The total cost of the project is estimated at \$813,000.



COLONIAL FEAST...Miller-Cory House Museum volunteers demonstrate the preparation of an early American Thanksgiving dinner during a program last Sunday at the 1740 farmhouse in Westfield. Members of the museum's Cooking Committee prepared the feast over an open-hearth fire, using colonial recipes and seasonal ingredients. Visitors also learned about colonial table manners and other customs.

Paul Lachenauer for The Westfield Leader

DWC Proposes One Event For Girls' Night Out in '15

By DOMINIC A. LAGANO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD—The Downtown Westfield Corporation (DWC), the management entity of Westfield's Special Improvement District (SID), held its last monthly board of directors meeting for 2014 this past Monday night.

The board discussed reducing the biannual Girls Night Out from two events a year to one a year and promoted the "Welcome Home to

Westfield" events for the holiday season.

Executive Director Sherry Cronin first reported on the most recent Girls Night Out, which was held last month. "Girls Night Out was October 18. It was a successful night. We had about 2,000 (women) who registered. It was well done."

Ms. Cronin then discussed the possibility of making Girls Night Out a one-time event during the year to enhance its uniqueness. "We need to scale it back...to make it special as a one-time event because April's (event) was far better in terms of entertainment value, kinds of special events, trunk shows, things like that. "Next year, we'd like to propose that we only have it once and just see if it works better as a result of making it a little bit more special...I'm not saying we shouldn't do that again (having two Girls Night Out events a year). I just think for next year we scale it back one time and see what happens," Ms. Cronin stated.

The board next discussed the "Welcome Home to Westfield" events that are scheduled during the holiday season.

The events will begin the weekend following Thanksgiving, Ms. Cronin stated. "This weekend is a marathon weekend with photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus" at Lord & Taylor on

Friday and Saturday from 1 to 7 p.m. and on Sunday from 1 to 4 p.m.

"Then we get Santa ready and put him on the fire truck and bring him over to the tree (for the annual tree lighting located on the lawn next to the fire house). He'll throw the switch at 5:30 p.m....Santa and Mrs. (Claus) also will be roaming around downtown from 10 to 12 in the morning," Ms. Cronin added.

Ms. Cronin also promoted the annual food drive that occurs at this time of year. "We also collect a lot of food when we do photos with Santa. We have a food drive that goes to the Holy Trinity Food Pantry. Typically, my van is packed three times over which we drop off for this event."

More information and a full schedule of events may be found at the DWC's website, located at WestfieldToday.com.

The board next approved a grant for Brownie Points Bakery, a "classic American desserts" shop that will be located at 339 South Avenue, West. The board also discussed the new smart phone application for paying for parking in downtown Westfield. The application allows residents to either initially pay for a parking spot or continue to pay for a parking spot without having to pay from their car's location at one of the town's pay

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GIVING THANKS...More than a century ago, this Westfield family gathered to share their joy in being together and to give thanks for their many blessings. Happy Thanksgiving everyone, from the staff of The Westfield Leader.

Courtesy of the Westfield Historical Society

WF Passes 2015 Sewer Tax; Citizens Oppose Pipeline

By DOMINIC A. LAGANO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD—At its regular public meeting Tuesday evening, the town council passed a resolution authorizing the 2015 sewer tax.

Created in 2012, Westfield's sewer tax accounts for approximately half of the revenue owed to the Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority (RVSA) by the municipality. The town is responsible for the payment of the other half of the bill.

Revenue is collected from taxpayers through a fixed rate that is applied to the type of structure for which the taxpayer is responsible. Last year, those structures were divided into four categories: single-family dwellings, apartments, townhouses/condos and commercial buildings.

Council Finance Committee Chairman Sam Della Fera briefly commented on the sewer tax and explained changes to the structure of the tax for 2015. "As everyone may recall, in order to include this revenue in our budget next year, we need to have an ordinance on the books before the end of this year.

Notwithstanding that we don't receive the bill from the Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority until the first quarter of the following year.

"In the past we have charged a fixed, flat rate per these categories. So rather than limit ourselves to a flat number that may or may not coincide with the actual cost that we will learn about next year, you'll notice that the ordinance now provides for a not to exceed number."

Mr. Della Fera continued, "Another change is we eliminated reference to the year 2015. So it's that this ordinance can remain in place, we don't necessarily continue to do this year after year, and will remain in place until we need to change it."

Mr. Della Fera next spoke about the categories of structures and how the rates will change. "We did review data and did determine that our prior categories—apartment users versus condo and townhouse users—we have them separated at reduced rates from single-family users although different from each other. When we analyzed the data

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TALENTED COLLIE... Zack, whose registered name is CH Dunhill Steeler Nation, a 4-year-old Bearded Collie owned by Kathy and Ray Harrington and Scott and Valerie Shafer of Scotch Plains, won "First in Group" for the Herding Group at "The National Dog Show Presented by Purina" on November 15. The show will be broadcast on Thanksgiving Day on NBC following the Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade.



FOR A GOOD CAUSE... Community members have fun at one of the gaming tables at the annual Support Our Troops Casino & Auction, held Saturday at the Westfield Armory.

Paul Lachenauer for The Westfield Leader

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Congratulations to the **#1 Agent** for October!



Congrats! Julie Murphy

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