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HAPPY SHOPPERS...Visitors to the special Thanksgiving farmers' market, held last Saturday at the South Avenue train station in Westfield, spent pleased with the selection of foods they have found. The Greater Westfield Area Chamber of Commerce sponsored the event.

Local Towns Announce Holiday Celebrations

AREA — Local towns will hold Christmas tree and holiday celebrations beginning this weekend.

Westfield will kick off its annual Welcome Home to Westfield holiday events, sponsored by the Downtown Westfield Corporation, this Saturday, November 29, with Santa and Mrs. Claus strolling downtown between 10 a.m. and noon. Also, music will be provided by The Harmonics from 4 to 6 p.m. and by the New Jersey Workshop for the Arts Brass Quartet from 1 to 3 p.m.

The annual Christmas tree lighting will take place this Sunday, November 30, at 5:30 p.m., at the North Avenue, West, train station.

Cranford will have a host of activities concluding with the Christmas tree lighting tomorrow, Friday, November 28. Morning events, held at the North Union and Springfield Avenue Gazebo, will begin at 11 a.m. with the Daisy Girl Scouts tree decorating and will continue at 11:30 a.m. with the Brownies tree decorating and at noon with the Junior and Senior Cadet Girl Scouts tree decorating.

Afternoon holiday events at Parking Lot No. 7 on Miln Street will include: 1 to 4 p.m., petting zoo, moon walk, and free horse-drawn wagon rides.

Events at the North Union and Springfield Avenue Gazebo: 4:30 to 5 p.m., Cindy Smith Dancers; 5 to 6 p.m., concert by Cranford High School Madrigal and Brass Ensemble, and 6 p.m., Santa arrives to light the Christmas tree.

Garwood will hold its Christmas tree lighting on Saturday, November 29, at 5 p.m., in the parking lot at Borough Hall, located at 403 South Avenue. Santa will arrive for a visit and pictures. Refreshments will be served.

The Scotch Plains Holiday Celebration, sponsored by the Scotch Plains Recreation Department and

the Scotch Plains Business and Professional Association, will be held on Sunday, December 7, from 2 to 5 p.m., at the Alan Augustine Village Green at 430 Park Avenue.

Activities will include: horse-drawn carriage rides, Christmas tree lighting at 5 p.m., and free hot chocolate and pastries from the Scotch Plains Volunteer Firefighters Association.

Santa will arrive at 3 p.m. and visit children until 5 p.m. in the Gazebo.

Fanwood's annual holiday party also will be on December 7, starting at 3 p.m. Everyone is invited to meet Santa under the big tent on the lawn in front of the North Avenue Train Station. The event will include seasonal music, holiday crafts and refreshments — all for free.

The celebration will conclude at 5 p.m. when Mayor Colleen Mahr lights the Fanwood Christmas tree on the train station lawn. The holiday party is sponsored by the Fanwood Recreation Commission.

In Mountainside, the Historic Committee will hold its annual Holiday Craft and Gift Boutique on Saturday, December 6, from 3 to 6 p.m. and on Sunday, December 14, from 1 to 4 p.m., during the annual Gingerbread Open House, at the historic Deacon Andrew Hetfield House. The Hetfield House is located on Constitution Plaza.

The borough tree lighting will take place on December 6 beginning at 4:30 p.m., near Mountain-side Borough Hall. Visitors also are invited to come to the rescue squad building that day for the annual "Cookies and Hot Cocoa" sale benefiting the maintenance and restoration of the Hetfield House and the Levi Cory House.

Historic Pres.

historic, homes within the district would be subject to various restrictions. A certificate of appropriateness would have to be obtained from the commission before a permit would be issued by the applicable municipal official for the following activities: 1, demolition or relocation or any improvement; 2, changes in the exterior appearance or any improvement by addition, alteration, replacement, rehabilitation, restoration, reconstruction or painting; 3, changes in or addition of new signs or exterior lighting, subject to certain exceptions; 4, any new construction in the district, and 5, certain changes in the exterior appearance of the district. Exceptions to the above requirements may include emergency repairs and interior work. Other standards are specifically outlined in the ordinance.

The commission is required to obtain the written consent of the owners of at least 75 percent of the properties in the district before taking action. Town Attorney Russ Finstein said 75 percent of the owners signed notarized copies of their consent to be included in the district. The proposed ordinance does have a provision which states that if a protest petition against a proposed historic district is signed by the owners of 20 percent or more of the area of either the lots or land included in the proposed designated area, or of the lots or land extending 200 feet in all directions there from, inclusive of street space, it may be filed with the town clerk. If such an event took place, the proposed designation would become effective only if two-thirds of all members of the town council supported the measure.

The avenue for the individual home owner who does not wish to be included in the district will be better defined at the next meeting, said Mr. Finstein. He admitted the issue, in that case, is property rights.

The designation process is as follows: If the commission votes to support the ordinance, it then goes to the planning board for approval and then to the town council for its approval of the designation. Robert Burslem, a resident of the Kimball historic district and a proponent of the Walnut Street designation, during the public portion of the meeting, said that the commission has nothing to do with the Westfield Historical Society, which is a separate organization. The commission, he said, is a municipal entity with members appointed by the mayor.

Following the meeting, Mr. Finstein said the ordinance will be reviewed and refined by the next meeting, which will be Monday, December 29, at 7:30 p.m., at the municipal building, located at 425 East Broad Street.



WHAT SHOULD WE BID?... Westfield Mayor Andy Skibitsky and his wife, Debbie, and Westfield Downtown Corp. Executive Director Sherry Cronin, left, look over the gifts at the silent auction table during the Support Our Troops Casino & Auction held Saturday at the Westfield Armory.

MS Council OKs Land Use Ordinance Amendment

By KATE BROWNE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

MOUNTAIN-SIDE — The borough council unanimously voted to approve an amendment to the borough's land use ordinance, which will increase the allowable Floor Area Ratio (FAR) from 2.25 to 2.40. A FAR is the ratio of a home's total floor area to the size of the piece of land on which it is built.

The ordinance has been the subject of extensive debate for several months and the decision to increase it was

made after consultation with legal counsel, planning experts and the engineering and building departments. Throughout the discussions, Mayor Paul Mirabelli repeatedly emphasized that he and the council shared a common goal of ensuring that homes in the community "fit" their lot and the new ordinance supports this goal.

The council also voted to authorize Acting Police Chief Allan Attanasio to apply for a New Jersey Department of Transportation Safe Corridor grant. The Safe Corridor program was created in 2003 and distributes resources to 10-mile segments of highways that see high crash rates. Grants distributed from the program can be used to buy enforcement equipment such as police vehicles and radars.

In other business, the council approved the appointment of Patrick Kleba as a volunteer firefighter and voted in favor of approving applications from the Our Lady of Peace Church in New Providence for two off-premises raffle drawings and a 50/50 off-premises draw.

During the public comment portion of the meeting, a resident of Poplar Avenue, Frances Bellak, who has resided in the community for more than 50 years, spoke to the council regarding the impact that storm and rainwater runoff is having on the residents in her area. According to Mrs. Bellak, the situation has deteriorated to the point that she feels her property is "being washed away."

Mayor Mirabelli advised Mrs. Bellak that members of the borough's engineering department were investigating the situation and consulting with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP), but because of increasing environmental regulations and a strict permitting process, options to control runoff, which were used decades ago, were likely no longer going to be considered feasible by the DEP.

Mayor Mirabelli and the council urged the public to join the community at its annual tree lighting festivities on Saturday, December 6.

DWC

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stations. Town Administrator Jim Gildea encouraged residents to download the phone app, located at mpay2park.com or at the iTunes app store.

More information may be found under the metered parking section on the town's website, located at westfieldnj.gov/.

The next DWC board of directors meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 26, at 7:30 p.m. The DWC office is located at 105 Elm Street, basement level.



ANNUAL CONFERENCE...Westfield Town Council members, from left to right, Keith Loughlin, Sam Della Fera, Mayor Andy Skibitsky, Mark LoGrippo, David Oliveira, and Scotch Plains Councilman Llewellyn Jones attended the New Jersey League of Municipalities 99th annual conference in Atlantic City on November 19.

Westfield Town Council

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from New Jersey American Water, we learned that usage among apartment dwellers, condo dwellers and townhouse dwellers was largely similar."

Mr. Della Fera stated that those users will now be in the same category and will be charged the same rate, which was \$125 last year. Single-family dwellings were charged \$170 last year.

He further explained that in the future, a consumption model may be applied to commercial structures in town, as different businesses consume water at different rates.

Mr. Della Fera added that "90-plus percent" of Westfield's water consumers are single-family dwellers, which is why the rate will remain flat for non-commercial users and not be shifted into a consumption model.

During the public comments section of the meeting three Chatham residents, Katey DePinto, Brendan Keating and Paul Sanderson, addressed the council regarding the proposed Pilgrim Pipeline.

If constructed, the pipeline will consist of 278-mile crude oil pipelines connecting Albany, N.Y. to Linden, N.J., in order to facilitate the refining

process.

The Chatham residents requested that the town council investigate the matter and issue a resolution condemning the pipeline, as several other towns have done. They also wished to make the public aware of how they can oppose the construction of the pipeline and referred interested parties to their website, stoppilgrimpipeline.com. Mayor Andy Skibitsky instructed Councilman Jim Foerst to investigate the matter and to report his findings to the council.

In other news, the council approved the demolition of single-family dwellings located at 205 Ayliffe Avenue, 746 Hyslip Avenue, 1212 Prospect Street, 712 Scotch Plains Avenue, 14 Tamaques Way, 30 Tamaques Way and 207 West Grove Street, as well as a single-family dwelling and detached garage located at 610 Cumberland Street.

The next town council conference session is scheduled for Tuesday, December 16, at 7 p.m., at the municipal building, located at 425 East Broad Street. The conference session will be immediately followed by the council's regular public meeting at 7:45 p.m.

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