

Roosevelt Park Plans Underway in Cranford

By CHRISTINA M. HINKE
Specialty Written for The Westfield Leader and The Times

CRANFORD — Plans for Roosevelt Park on Orange Avenue are underway after the township committee approved resolutions Tuesday night for the purchase of playground equipment and playground safety surfacing for the park. The land was once home to Roosevelt School and Solomon Schechter Day School.

The committee also approved resolutions for new playground equipment and playground safety surfacing for Lincoln Park to replace the some 20-year-old equipment that is there currently.

The committee passed resolutions that would prohibit parking on Buchanan Street from 4 to 11 p.m., except to those who live on Buchanan Street. This resolution was a result of resident of Buchanan Street Derek Brooks' request for stricter parking rules on the street, which he said experiences congested parking.

The United Way of Greater Union County will hold a fundraiser at Pairings restaurant on Sunday, September 21, with three seatings at 4, 6 and 8 p.m., Mayor Andis Kalnins announced.

Sailer Street and Scherer Street, which are off of North Avenue, have experienced a problem with rats, said Joanne Pulaski, a resident of Scherer Street. She said an abandoned home on Sailer Street has an infestation, and the property has not been maintained.

Resident Mary Sullivan said the abandoned home has trash strewn around the perimeter that neighbors have taken up themselves to clean up. Also, she said the front door was ajar and she could see dogs are living inside and a pungent odor from inside is detectable from the front entry.

Two homes in the area have been identified as having burrows and have been baited by a pest control specialist from the Westfield Regional Health Department, Township Administrator Terrence Wall said.

Abandoned properties issues are being looked into by the township committee, Mr. D'Ambola said. He said the state recently passed a law that would allow imposing fines of \$1,500 per day on the property owner. The committee is working on writing an ordinance with stricter rules for abandoned homes.

Mr. Wall said he would contact the Westfield Regional Health Department and set up a meeting with the residents who have concerns about rats in the area.

Paving projects in the township are planned to begin Monday, September 15 and run through March 2015.

Commissioner Robert D'Ambola said.

The Mayor's Wellness Campaign will be held Sunday, October 5 from 3 to 7 p.m. at Memorial Field.

The township website is being redesigned, Commissioner Mary O'Connor said. While the kinks are being worked out, the links to the township files can be found at cranford.com.

Mayor Kalnins announced that a military veterans' job fair on Wednesday, September 17 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the New Jersey Department of Protection (NJDEP) headquarters, 401 East State Street, Trenton, will hold a military veteran's job fair.

Mayor Kalnins urged the public to sign the petition at change.org to support the Army Corp's recommendation for floodwater management along the Rahway River. He along with other public officials had traveled to Washington Wednesday to ask Congress for its support.

At the start of Tuesday's meeting, the Cranford Police Department held a ceremony for the promotion of five police officers. Guy Patterson was promoted to captain; Christopher Polito was promoted to lieutenant; and John Swandrak, Ryan Greco and Steven Toy were promoted to sergeant.

"I am proud of you all," Chief James Wozniak said following the ceremony.

FW Produces First Citizens' Report

FANWOOD — Mayor Colleen Mahr and members of the Fanwood Borough Council have announced that residents have received copies of the first annual Citizens' Report, an innovative publication designed to give residents an easy-to-understand explanation of the borough's finances, progress on key initiatives and plans for the future.

"Fanwood is proud to be the first municipality in New Jersey to prepare a report of this kind for its residents," Mayor Mahr said. "The Council and I work closely with all borough departments to craft a fat-free budget each year and still provide the quality services residents are accustomed to. We want to make sure that our residents are given the details."

The Association of Government Accountants (AGA) developed guidance on producing this standardized reporting method to demonstrate accountability to residents. The Citizens' Report can be found on the borough's website at www.fanwoodnj.org. Further details about the Citizen Centric reporting model can be found at the AGA website, www.agacgfm.org/citizen.



Peyton's Peek at the Week In Politics

By Paul Peyton of The Leader/Times

County Dems Select Cryan As Candidate for Sheriff

Members of the Union County Democratic Committee (UCDC) unanimously nominated Assemblyman Joe Cryan (D-20th, Union) as candidate for Union County sheriff at a candidate screening last Thursday, politicickernj.com has reported. No other candidates screened for sheriff.

Mr. Cryan, who is serving as acting sheriff, served as one of three undersheriffs under the late Sheriff Ralph Froehlich, who passed away in July.

Mr. Cryan's father, John Cryan, had been sheriff in neighboring Essex County. Joseph Cryan previously served as Assembly majority leader and Democratic State Committee chairman.

He will now face Republican candidate Michael Ince of Garwood, an ex-FBI special agent and former Clark police officer.

Cassio Takes Shot At Dems In Race for Rahway Mayor

Patrick Cassio, the Republican candidate for mayor, took a shot at Democrats this week, saying, in 2000 "career Democrat politicians created a taxpayer-funded Redevelopment zone and later an Arts district. They promised property tax relief would come after they built it. In the 14 years since they took us down this path, the city debt has tripled to almost \$60 million and property taxes are up 140 percent."

"Instead of the promised tax relief, politicians like the former mayor and others have received no bid contracts and several jobs in the arts, with zero qualifications. Large connected firms received generous land deals, expensive contracts, and tax abatements. Other officials have received ridiculous retirement settlements and continue to work in redevelopment and the arts. It seems our downtown was sold to the highest bidders," Mr. Cassio said.

Fitch Downgrades State's Bond Rating Again

Fitch Ratings has downgraded New Jersey's bond rating for the second time this year, citing the state's poor economic performance, *The Star-Ledger* has reported.

Fitch said Governor Chris Christie's decision to cut the pension payments this year marked a "reputation" of a bipartisan plan he signed to fix the beleaguered pension system, which is underfunded by nearly \$40 billion, according to state estimates, *The Ledger* reported.

"The downgrade to 'A' of New

Jersey's (general obligation) bonds incorporates the absence of long-term, fiscally sustainable solutions to close identified budget gaps in fiscal years 2014 and 2015," according to Fitch as reported by the Associated Press.

Fitch had downgraded New Jersey's bonds in May, while Gov. Christie was negotiating the new \$32.5-billion budget with Democrats who have the majority in the State Legislature.

Fitch added that they still have a "negative outlook" for New Jersey, meaning an upgrade of the state's credit rating is unlikely. Moody's Investors Service and Standard & Poor's also downgraded the state in the spring.

Bombing Suspect's Lawyers Want Trial Moved to D.C.

Lawyers for Boston Marathon bombing suspect want to move the trial outside Massachusetts to Washington, D.C., according to an Associated Press report.

Prosecutors say Tsarnaev and his older brother, Tamerlan, placed two homemade bombs near the finish line of the 2013 marathon. The blasts killed three people and injured more than 260. Tsarnaev has pleaded not guilty and faces a November trial. Tamerlan Tsarnaev died in a gun battle with police.

Tsarnaev's lawyers say a survey of potential voters in Washington, D.C. shows fewer people there have made up their minds.

Garwood Dem Club Announces Trip To Monmouth Racetrack

GARWOOD — The Garwood Democratic Club is scheduling "A Day at The Races at Monmouth Park Racetrack" on Saturday, September 27, at noon.

The event will be a fun-filled day of horseracing and barbeque in a private picnic area along the side of the racetrack. Watch your horse run by to win, place or show. Tickets are \$25 each and include racetrack admission, a program, food, water and soda. Attendees can BYOB if you wish. There are typically 10 races a day at Monmouth Park with the last race concluding around 5:30 p.m. Horseracing does not require any previous knowledge of horses or racing. Place bets on the horse's names or number combinations if you want, and there's a winner in every race.

Contact Ann Tarantino at (908) 868-6129 or Sara Todisco at (908) 377-7890 by Monday, September 22 to purchase tickets.

9/11 Services Planned In WF, CF, SP, County

COUNTY — Local events will take place tonight in memory of those who lost their lives in terrorist attacks in New York City on September 11, 2001.

Westfield will observe the 13th anniversary of the September 11 terrorist attacks with a community gathering at the September 11th Memorial site on North Avenue at East Broad Street. The commemoration ceremony will begin at 6:30 p.m. with opening remarks from Mayor Andrew Skibitsky. Local clergy will offer prayers of commemoration followed by the presentation of the ceremonial wreath by an honor guard.

Each year, the ceremony concludes with a period of silent reflection and show of community support.

"The events of 9/11 affected so many people in so many different ways, and continues to do so. It has been my observation that many people do not grieve or reflect the same way each year—some reflect on the loss, some reflect on the healing and recovery since, some reflect on the resolve of the American people—it depends on where they are personally in the process," Mayor Skibitsky said. "By offering the opportunity for silent reflection, this part of the ceremony allows people to reflect

privately, but not be alone, and it also affords those who want or need to reach out to others to do so." The ceremony will be held rain or shine.

Scotch Plains will mark the anniversary of the terrorist attacks with a remembrance service at 7 p.m. at the Alan Augustine Village Green on Park Avenue.

The Cranford WTC Memorial Committee along with the Interfaith Human Relations Committee of Cranford Clergy Council and the Cranford Interfaith Committee will host its 9/11 memorial service at the WTC Memorial Park, located at Springfield and North Union Avenues, at 7 p.m.

The community is also invited to honor the memory of the 60 Union County residents who perished in the 9/11 attacks by visiting the Union County September 11th Memorial from the morning hours until 9 p.m. at Echo Lake Park in Mountainside. Members of the Union County Prosecutor's Office and Sheriff's Office, in conjunction with other law enforcement members throughout the county, will provide a uniformed Honor Guard standing watch at the memorial from 6 to 9 p.m. and the public will be able to light candles in memory of those lost in the attacks.

Transit Development Topic for Raritan Coalition

SOMERVILLE — Elected officials, transportation professionals and the public are invited to the next meeting of the Raritan Valley Rail Coalition on Monday, September 15 in Somerville.

The featured presentations will be Colin Driver, director of economic development for Somerville Borough, and Carlos Rodrigues, an urban designer. Both speakers will discuss Bound Brook and Somerville Borough's transit-oriented developments leading to an increase in residential developments near the Bound Brook and Somerville train stations.

Both newly constructed, under construction, and proposed new residential housing developments located within one mile of the both train stations will be discussed.

The Bound Brook and Somerville Boroughs are prime examples of transit-oriented development or the linking of residential development with a transit hub in a mixed-use, walkable, vibrant downtown setting. The land use and transit linkage offered by transit-oriented development (TOD) has resulted in a renaissance of new residential construction in downtowns along New Jersey Transit's Raritan Valley Line.

The Rail Coalition trustees will also provide an update on one-seat ride service on the Raritan Valley line including the initiative's website, www.raritanvalleyrail.com, social-media campaign, upcoming Wednesday, October 8 briefing with New Jersey Transit and about on a special October meeting in Cranford on the status of one-seat ride service and the need for increased public support.

The September 15th meeting will

begin at 8:30 a.m. in the Somerset County Administration Building, 3rd Floor Freeholder Meeting room, located at 20 Grove Street Somerville. Free parking is available in the Bernie Field Parking Deck located adjacent to the county administration building off East High Street.

For questions, driving directions or more information, contact the Raritan Valley Rail Coalition at (908) 231-7021, by fax at (908) 707-1749 or by e-mail at rvrc@co.somerset.nj.us

Holt Report on Survey Of Vets on VA Experience

REGION — Rep. Rush Holt released the following statement last Friday regarding medical facilities run by the Veterans Administration.

"When reports surfaced in March that dozens of veterans had died while awaiting medical attention in other states, I wanted to know what kind of experience veterans in New Jersey were having," Rep. Holt said. "I sent surveys to more than 2,500 veterans in my district, asking them very straightforward questions about the scheduling process, wait times, and the quality of care they have been receiving at New Jersey VA medical facilities. Of the 140 responses I received, 95 said that they were happy with the care they had received, and 45 reported dissatisfaction with delays and with the state of facilities."

"While the positive response reaffirms that the VA system in New Jersey often provides excellent, compassionate, and skilled care, the negative responses demonstrate that there is still work to be done," the Congressman said.

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