

Scotch Plains Council to Vote on Ordinances for Afford. Housing

By FRED T. ROSSI

Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS – The township council is expected to vote on several ordinances for passage at its meeting next Tuesday that are required to be enacted before a compliance hearing the following day where a judge will gauge how Scotch Plains is progressing in meeting its affordable-housing obligations that were agreed to with developers earlier this year.

The three ordinances include an updated affordable-housing ordinance, one related to development fees and a third related to mandatory affordable-housing set-asides. Earlier, the council passed two resolutions pertaining to the township's afford-

able-housing spending plan and another related to the township's marketing plan for affordable units.

Robert Renaud, who is advising the township on affordable-housing matters, said recently that the affordable-housing ordinance will incorporate all the affordability regulations in the Fair Share Plan and the court settlement. The aim of the Wednesday, December 12 hearing, he said, is to give the court a projection of the status of the ordinances and when other tasks will be completed.

The court hearing will cap off a busy year, one that saw the council endorse a redevelopment plan for the public properties in the central business district, formally launching an endeavor that will result in about

48,000 square feet of new retail and office space, more than 1,400 new parking spots and 177 new housing units, 35 of which will be set aside as affordable-housing units. Proposals from interested developers are due by February 1 and will ultimately require approval by the township council.

In addition, the planning board last month endorsed and sent to the council a report that concluded that the Snuffy's Pantagis property met the criteria to be declared an Area in Need of Redevelopment, a move that, if endorsed by the council next week, will give the township government more control over how that property will be redeveloped in coming years.

"It's been a long haul," Mayor Alexander Smith said this week, adding that he was eager to start receiving "great submissions" from developers in the coming weeks. Speaking to *The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times*, he thanked the members of the redevelopment committee, as well as residents and business owners for their support and efforts this year. The mayor also said he does not foresee any "sticky items" to worry about at next Wednesday's court hearing.

The downtown redevelopment committee will hold its monthly meeting on Wednesday, December 12, but decisions on when to move on to the next phase of redevelopment — specifically the area extending from Park Avenue at Front Street north to Route 22 — will wait until the 2019 township council is in place, according to redevelopment coordinator Thomas Strowe. The mayor said he expects that attention will be paid to the next phase in the early months of next year, adding that the study of the Snuffy's property, which "makes up a good portion" of the second phase, was "significant."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

Freeholders, Dept. Heads To Get Raises In January

By PAUL J. PEYTON

Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

COUNTY — For the third time in the last four years, the Union County Freeholder Board approved raises for themselves and department heads. The board introduced the ordinance last Wednesday and has scheduled a public hearing and board vote on Thursday, December 13.

Effective January 1, the freeholder chairman's salary will go from \$34,096 to \$35,034, the vice-chairman's from \$33,014 to \$33,922, and the seven remaining freeholders will see a salary increase from \$31,931 to \$32,810. Board salaries were \$30,090 in January of 2015, \$30,691 in 2016, \$31,305 in 2017, and \$31,931 in 2018. During that time frame the chairman's salary went from \$32,130 in January of 2015, to \$32,772 in 2016, \$33,428 in 2017 and \$34,096 in 2018.

The county counsel's salary will go from \$171,744 to \$176,467 in 2019; the county manager from \$169,000 to \$173,648; director of administrative services from \$135,498 to \$139,224; director of corrections from \$124,746 to \$133,000; director of economic development/deputy county manager from \$149,683 to \$157,396; director of engineering, public works and facilities from \$143,632 to \$150,151; director of finance and county treasurer/chief financial officer from \$145,441 to \$153,551; director of human services from \$130,000 to \$136,658; director of parks and recreation from \$128,382 to \$137,051, and director of public safety from \$133,249 to \$139,483.

County Manager Ed Oatman, who previously served as chief of staff for Senator Nick Scutari (D-22nd, Linden), succeeded county manager Alfred Faella, who retired, in March 2018. Mr. Faella was making \$179,757 at the time of his retirement.

In other business, the board ap-



SANTA ARRIVES IN FANWOOD...The Fanwood Recreation Commission, volunteers and Recreation Director Bob Budiansky, left front in red sweater, pose with Santa Claus at Sunday's Christmas tree-lighting ceremony in the borough.

SP-F Board of Education's Fund Balance Up \$1.3 Million

By JESSE WINTER

Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — The Scotch Plains-Fanwood (SP-F) Board of Education was met with good news last Thursday night when auditor Kathi Mantell announced the district fund balance rose by \$1.3 million.

"That's very good fiscal responsibility," said Ms. Mantell, of Nisivocca and Co., the firm executing the district's audit. "This occurs when you have more revenue than anticipated."

Ms. Mantell went on to state, "at

the end of the year there was about \$4 million left over, which is about 4 percent of the budget, which really wasn't a big margin."

"That helps you perpetuate into the future," she noted.

After paying off the last year's encumbrances and other district costs, the board found itself with that additional \$1.3-million surplus. Ms. Mantell and the board said the audit is not finalized yet as the district is still waiting on more information to be submitted from the state. However, both the auditor and board were confident this would not change the district's surplus or overall budget numbers.

During the committee reports section of the meeting, the finance and facilities committees discussed the outcomes of their meeting on November 5. The facilities committee stated its plan to transition to other projects now that the Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School lock-down emergency notification system is "fully operational" and with the buzzer system to be installed "shortly."

Also commanding the facilities committee's attention, is the state of the two turf fields. During a meeting held on November 5, Assistant Principal of Athletics Ryan Miller discussed the need to replace the turf. Replacing Tyson and Wexler Fields at the high school, and also the surrounding track and fencing, could potentially amount to \$1.4 million.

Later in the meeting, the board approved a \$219,000 contract with Potter Architects. The breakdown includes \$97,000 for the turf field at the high school, an additional \$52,000 for the track, and the remaining amount of \$68,800 allocated for windows at School One.

The next meeting of the facilities committee is Monday, December 10. The board also approved new curriculum items with an emphasis on the sciences. In addition to standard biology, chemistry and physics courses, the curriculum now includes a focus on Food Science. These courses include Introduction to Food, Advanced Foods and Nutrition Science.

The SP-F district also will benefit from a \$12,900 grant from the Margaret and Peter Chang Foundation. The board moved to accept funds from the grant, designed to "enhance and develop life skills in third-grade students," according to the description of the grant's mission on the agenda. The Margaret and Peter Chang Foundation, "was established as a 501(c)(3) Foundation to improve the health and well-being of children in the Scotch Plains (NJ) area," as stated on the foundation's website.

The board's shared-services committee reported on preventive programs being delivered at the high school including the Safety Bug Simulator, a program that simulates the experience of driving impaired,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



HAPPY HANUKKAH...A crowd of a few hundred attend the menorah-lighting ceremony on Monday night at Alan Augustine Village Green in Scotch Plains to mark the start of Hanukkah.

Council Gets Update on Downtown, Aff. Housing

By KIMBERLY A. BROADWELL

Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

FANWOOD — A brief discussion regarding affordable-housing units within the borough was part of Monday's borough council meeting. According to Mayor Colleen Mahr and council members, there are seven affordable units that will be available through a lottery system.

Members of the governing body, Councilman Anthony Carter and Mayor Mahr, wanted to know the exact procedure for interested candidates to be part of the possible selection.

It was reported that as of yet there is no application for interested parties to fill out.

Council members and Mayor Mahr wanted to see a clear explanation about affordable housing and about the upcoming available housing units in the downtown Fanwood area.

In addition, Director of Economic Development for the borough Elizabeth Jeffery reported that there was a possible interested party to take over

the business site formerly known as The Rice Inn, which also would be a food vendor in the downtown area.

Also, the former Bathworks shop was recently listed by a realtor. Additionally, Small Business Saturday, which is always the Saturday after Thanksgiving, was reported as a "successful" day by Fanwood shops and other businesses, Ms. Jeffery said.

In other business, it was reported that there is a discussion of updating the current employee handbook for the borough. It was noted that the handbook had not been updated since 2006, which was done by a committee headed by then Councilwoman Donna Dolce.

It was noted that on Saturday, December 15, the borough will hold its annual Santa Parade, when the big jolly icon will deliver presents to children within the borough with the help of members of the fire department, rescue squad and police department. To participate, residents had to have dropped off their presents to Bor-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



MAYOR'S GALA...Honoring the first responders of the community, Mayor Al Smith thanked each of the three groups being feted at the annual fund-raising event held at Shackamaxon Country Club on Saturday night. Members of the Scotch Plains Firefighters Association, shown above, the Scotch Plains Police Foundation, Scotch Plains Rescue Squad and Municipal Alliance Committee were on hand to accept thanks from the sponsors and donors. Geraldine Keogh, co-chair of the Gala Committee, helped present the plaques of recognition.



SANTA CLAUS IS COMING...Santa will be making a special visit at the "Christmas House" in Fanwood at 83 Paterson Road this Saturday, December 8 from 4:30 to 6 p.m. All are welcome and a gift will be provided for each child. There is no charge for this event and donations will be accepted to benefit the children at the New Jersey Institute for Disabilities.

PAGE INDEX

Regional	2-3	Education	14-16
Editorial	4-5	Sports	9-13
Police	8	Real Estate	9, 13
Community ...	6-7	Classifieds	14
Obituary	6	A&E	17-18



CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

WESTFIELD WEST
COLDWELL BANKER
RESIDENTIAL BROKERAGE

Extraordinary Professionals.
Whether Your Real Estate Needs are Local, National, or International
Your Move Is Our Move and We're Ready to Assist You
Every Step of the Way.

#600NORTH

Westfield West Office • 600 North Avenue West, Westfield, NJ 07090 • 908-233-0065 • ColdwellBankerHomes.com

© 2018 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.