

## Architect, Real Estate Expert Testify About 750 Walnut

By **CHRISTINA M. HINKE**  
*Specialty Written for The Westfield Leader*

**CRANFORD** – The planning board heard further testimony from the architect and the real estate expert employed by Hartz Mountain Industries LLC for the rezoning application for 750 Walnut Avenue last Wednesday. Hartz is seeking to rezone the commercial property to residential.

Vice-President of Sales and Leasing, Hartz Mountain Industries, Charles Reese, who also testified earlier this year as a fact witness for Hartz Mountain on the viability of the commercial and industrial market, came back for further testimony Wednesday.

In talks regarding Hartz Mountain's marketing and advertising of the vacant commercial buildings, planning board member Bobbi Anderson said the marketing cites the property is in tree-lined suburbia and near a golf community, and asked if he was aware of Clark Commons, a

strip mall with a grocery store, a fitness center and other shops and restaurants. Mr. Reese said yes. Ms. Anderson said it could be "quite attractive" to a potential lessor. When asked if it was considered to change the marketing scheme to see if it could attract buyers, Mr. Reese said, "We believe our marketing efforts are where they should be."

Also, when asked how many inquiries were seen, Mr. Reese

said about three or four "serious" inquiries since 2016, when Hartz started to market the property. Later, in response, resident Rita La Brutto said, "That's pretty good. I think you are doing a bang-up job."

In response to Mr. Reese saying that Hartz has not disclosed to its potential lessors that Hartz is in the middle of an application to rezone the property, both planning board member Peter Taylor and resident and licensed broker Gerry Grillo asked if it is illegal to not disclose to a prospective tenant that there is a pending application to rezone to residential.

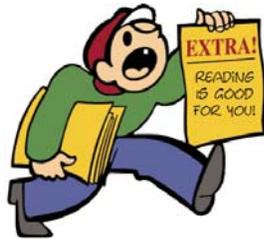
Mr. Grillo said, "It's a serious violation of the real-estate ethics."

PSE&G has notified Hartz that it will not renew its lease for a call center in about 21,000 square feet, and another tenant, LabCorps, also has opted not to renew, Mr. Reese said. Both leases expire next year. A trucking operation there has a lease to expire next year as well. Mr. Reese was asked if the trucking company plans to stay. "We are keeping in contact with them. Depending upon what happens with the rest of the site. There really is no change in their status right now," Mr. Reese said.

Also, PSE&G has come to Hartz to purchase land there to erect a substation to provide electricity to its customers, and Mr. Reese said he is not involved in the discussions, when asked by the board and residents.

Renderings of the proposed new driveways and the entrance into the 30.5-acre property showing the proposed apartment buildings, as well as a rendering of a ladder truck erecting a ladder to one of the five-story buildings, were provided by architect Bruce

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## Cranford Rec. Announces Home Decorating Contest

**CRANFORD** — The Cranford Recreation and Parks Department invites residents to take part in the township's Fourth Annual Holiday Decorating Contest.

Participants are asked to fill out the registration form letting the department know their house will be entered in the contest. Forms can be found online on the recreation department's website, Facebook, Instagram or at the Cranford Community Center, located at 220 Walnut Avenue.

Prizes will be awarded in the following categories: Most Out-

rageous, Most Traditional and All-Around Favorite.

Prizes will consist of a gift certificate to a local establishment, as well as a lawn sign to let everyone know the house is a winner. A committee will be put together to vote. Winners will be announced on the evening of Thursday, December 20.

Registration must be entered by Friday, December 14. Registration forms can be e-mailed to: [recreation@cranfordnj.org](mailto:recreation@cranfordnj.org) or dropped off at the Cranford Community Center. For more information, call (908) 709-7283.



Paul Lachenauer for The Westfield Leader

**FESTIVAL OF LIGHTS...Rabbi Abrohom Blesofsky of the Scotch Plains Chabad and Andy Blumenstock light the menorah during Garwood's first annual Hanukkah menorah lighting on Sunday night.**

## Garwood Library Posts Further December Events

**GARWOOD** — The Garwood Public Library has announced additional events that will be held there during December. Patrons are advised that the library will be closed Monday and Tuesday, December 24 and 25, for Christmas and again on Monday and Tuesday, December 31 and January 1, for the New Year holiday.

Adult Craft will be presented on Tuesday, December 11, at 6 p.m., and is limited to 10 people. Participants will be able to make a holiday craft to bring home. Registration is required.

Kid's Craft will be featured on Wednesday, December 12, at 3 p.m., for children in second grade and up. Participation is limited to 20 and registration is required.

Aging Services Kiosk will be available on Thursday, December 13, from 10 a.m. to noon. Union County Division on Aging staff will be on hand to assist senior citizens, age 60 and older, or their caregivers

with information on services such as meal delivery, respite care, adult day care and support services for caregivers.

Additionally on December 13, the Thursday Night Book Club will meet at 7 p.m. to discuss "The Winter Sisters" by Robin Oliveira. No registration is required.

The Monday Afternoon Book Club will meet at 1 p.m. on December 17 to discuss "And Then There Were None" by Agatha Christie. No registration is required.

The library is open Monday through Thursday, from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m.; Fridays, 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and Saturdays, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

The Garwood Public Library is located at 411 Third Avenue. For more information and to register for programs, call (908) 789-1670. Further information also is available at [yousemore.com/garwood](http://yousemore.com/garwood).