

## HPC Favors Applications On Kimball, Lawrence

By MICHAEL BONACCORSO  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD — The Westfield Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) on Monday night gave its approval to proposed minor site plan and major site plan applications. The major site plan application is subject to planning board review. In addition, HPC members discussed “appropriate policy initiatives” to safeguard historic buildings and homes. HPC Chairwoman Kelly Kessler said active communication with residents is vital to achieve the commission’s historic preservation goals.

Architect Gregory Blasi presented the garage re-envisioning for a ma-

major site plan application proposed at 249 Kimball Avenue. Mr. Blasi said the pre-existing garage was added in the property’s rear yard as a stand-alone building. The home was built in the 1890s with the garage constructed in the 1920s, Mr. Blasi stated.

Mr. Blasi said the existing garage was built at a time when people first started purchasing cars and so garages were not developed into the existing home structure, but as a separate building on the property.

The proposed garage is designed into the home, allowing increased garage space as requested by the applicant, Mr. Blasi said. He said the new garage is “more fitting with

the neighborhood” in terms of height and architectural detail.

Mr. Blasi said he achieved architectural complements utilizing dormers and windows, noting that the homeowners will have easier access to their home.

The HPC favored a minor site-plan application at 322 Lawrence Avenue. The applicant is seeking to replace existing roof shingles with a new “patriot slate” color design, Ms. Kessler said. The existing shingles are “reddish” with the proposed roofing a “more grayish, blackish tinge,” Ms. Kessler explained.

“It is an improvement,” said Ms. Kessler in describing the impact the new roof will have on the neighborhood’s aesthetics.

The HPC is finalizing a 100 additional property list as per its community outreach goals and historic preservation goals, HPC Commissioner Neil Acito said. The list does not include every property, but allows the commission to address many homeowners in a reasonable time frame.

The HPC will review town ordinances “to foster the best policy initiatives governing historic preservation,” Ms. Kessler said. New Jersey state standards or legislative guidelines “may guide” the commission towards an autonomous designation process when designating historic districts, Ms. Kessler said. She added that the current governing ordinance allows 75 percent of residents to agree or propose their neighborhood be designated as a historic district.

Ms. Kessler said any finalized ordinance changes have not been made or officially proposed.

“I almost lost my breakfast when I heard the scratch of the bulldozer,”

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## Garwood BOE Adopts \$10.1-Mil. School Budget

By MICHAEL BONACCORSO  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

GARWOOD — Board of Education Business Administrator Eric Larson presented the 2018 school budget at a special budget meeting on Tuesday night. The school-year tax increase will be half of 1 percent, the lowest in 11 years, Mr. Larson said. The total budget is \$10,106,562 with \$8,209,455 to be raised in school taxes, an increase of \$40,843 from the previous year.

The total tax levy will be .08 of 1 percent higher when considering a calendar year time frame versus a nine-month school-year time frame, stated Mr. Larson. Assuming a \$100,000 assessed value on a property, the total school tax levy will be an \$82 increase per household from the prior year.

Mr. Larson said a metric he uses to compare the board’s budget practices is the budgetary per-pupil cost. He said the cost is the year-to-year change in cost per student in the district.

Garwood’s 2016-2017 per-pupil budgeted cost was the ninth lowest of 75 kindergarten through eighth grade districts (K-8) with 0 to 400 students, stated Mr. Larson. The 2017-2018 year per-pupil cost is not available until mid-summer, stated Mr. Larson, as per state calculations and data collection.

Mr. Larson said for 2016-2017 the state median per-pupil cost for K-8 districts was \$16,331. The 2016-2017 Garwood student per-pupil cost was \$14,021, or \$2,359 below the state average.

Two major expenditures are \$623,000 being used to replace a boiler system and \$118,000 to pay existing debt, stated Mr. Larson.

The district received an increase in state aid from \$516,933 the previous year to \$556,490 for the 2018-2019 budget, stated Mr. Larson. The district received



FLAG RAISING...After Congressman Leonard Lance donated a flag that had flown over the Capitol in Washington, D.C., Boy Scout Troop 72 raises the flag at Fairview Cemetery’s 150th Anniversary last Sunday. At the celebration, Founding Fathers were named amid a ceremony that included words from Mayor Shelley Brindle, who read a proclamation for the cemetery that is also a recognized arboretum. Music and carriage rides followed the ceremony.

Susan M. Dougherty for The Westfield Leader

## Garwood Planning Bd. Hears Lincoln Ave. Site Application

By MICHAEL BONACCORSO  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

GARWOOD — The planning board heard initial testimony April 25 on the application for 3 Lincoln Avenue. Business owner and property owner David Busch stated that he operates his business, General Automotive Repair, LLC, at the site. However, the applicant filing for the hardship variances was legally recognized as DBJ Holdings, LLC, the legal entity or “property owner” controlled by Mr. Busch.

The applicant’s attorney, Gary Goodman, stated that the applicant recognizes that Lincoln Avenue, including the property, are “gateways to the community.” Mr. Goodman said the applicant is “looking for” the planning board’s “guidance” on how to make the location “attractive.”

Mr. Busch stated that he purchased the property in 2014. He said he uses the space for his business, which focuses on automotive repair and truck repair. The roof on the building will be replaced and “a new HVAC” will be installed, stated Mr. Busch.

In addition, Mr. Busch stated that he will repaint the entire building and install needed windows.

The applicant will resurface the parking lot, stated Mr. Goodman. The parking lot is “triangular shaped” and undersized, stated engineer Cathy Mueller. Ms. Mueller said the applicant is willing to compromise with planning board requests to add some shrubs and plantings alongside the streetscape.

Mr. Busch said he understands the property is in a flood zone. The discussed plantings and possibility of a drainage trench beneath the surface is to reduce flooding, Mr. Busch told The Westfield Leader.

The plantings reduce the possibil-

ity of lights reflecting off the building, blinding drivers during rush hours and at dusk, stated planning board member Bill Nierstedt.

Mr. Busch said he was concerned too many plantings could prevent passing traffic from noticing his business.

Mr. Nierstedt said he recognized the property’s irregularities. He said he is “very excited the applicant purchased it (the property) and is here to improve it.”

Mr. Busch said if the property has 10 feet of easement creating room for plantings and drainage, because the property is triangular he loses “half his parking lot.”

Board engineer Victor Vinegra said when board members consider a compromise between the planning board and the applicant, often five feet is needed for plantings to grow and survive.

Mr. Nierstedt said a monument sign is compliant with borough ordinance and suggested the business owner use that sign type to advertise the business.

Mr. Busch said he has agreed “to looking into a monument-type sign” for a business sign along the streetscape.

The agreed upon plantings, drainage development and easement from

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ENJOYING THE RIDE...The Passante boys of Westfield enjoy sitting in the cab of the fire truck during Sunday’s JCC of Central N.J.’s Touch A Truck event.

Susan M. Dougherty for The Westfield Leader

## Borough Has Completed Storm Debris Removal

By KATE BROWNE  
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

MOUNTAINSIDE — Public Works Director Ron Romak advised the public Tuesday night that the borough has completed debris cleanup from multiple winter storms. The storms caused widespread damage to trees and properties in the community. The borough has incurred more than \$100,000 in debris removal expenses, and residents who need woodchips are encouraged to contact the DPW.

On behalf of all residents, Mayor Paul N. Mirabelli thanked Mr. Romak and all the members of the Department of Public Works (DPW) for the hundreds of hours of work they did, often in inclement weather, to remove fallen limbs, branches and trees from local roads in what was an unprecedented storm season. He also thanked Union County for its support in removing the piles of brush and

tree limbs from New Providence Road and expressed disappointment and frustration over the number of residents who took advantage of the free debris removal program by using it as a way to dispose of spring cleanup waste.

Mr. Romak recommended that the community seek bids for snow and ice removal. He explained that the three-year contract will include the use of four salt trucks, a minimum of 12 plows and an increase in the number of four-wheel-drive vehicles that are necessary because of the increasingly erratic weather and the deeper snowfalls have made it harder to navigate the hills in towns. The bid specifications will be released later this month and the new contract will likely be awarded in July after review by Borough Attorney John Post.

Mayor Mirabelli thanked all residents who contributed to the inaugu-

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GOING, GOING, GONE...This older home at 309 Walnut Street in Westfield is torn down to make way for new construction.



A SUNNY OUTING...This family enjoys a carriage ride at Fairview Cemetery’s 150th Anniversary on Sunday afternoon.

Susan M. Dougherty for The Westfield Leader

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