



Paul Lachenauer for The Westfield Leader  
**OPENING DAY...A batter looks for a good pitch to hit during Saturday's opening day games of the Westfield Baseball League at Gumbert Field.**

## Cranford Committee

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and which roads are planned for "flood mitigation improvements" or "restoration."

The "aggressive replacement process" of natural gas lines has been underway for roughly 10 years throughout Union County, stated Mr. Scacifero. He said Elizabethtown's gas main and pipeline project will not structurally interfere with the New Jersey American Water company's water main replacement project.

Elizabethtown will canvass each neighborhood before each project commences, he said, saying door knockers will be placed on each door with project information and company contact information.

PSE&G's regional public affairs manager Michael G. Coyle addressed the township committee regarding a separate utility project. The 69,000-volt power lines would be placed on poles along South Avenue, Lexington Avenue, Chester Lang Drive, Walnut Avenue and Lincoln Avenue, according to a map shown by PSE&G. There would also be lines underground that would follow under the train tracks to meet up with the proposed substation at 750 Walnut Avenue.

"The new lines will provide reliability, capability, and resiliency in providing power to residents," Mr. Coyle said.

The lines will connect power substations in various towns and run along the public-right-of-way, stated Mr. Coyle. A proposed substation will be located at 750 Walnut Avenue, stated Mr. Coyle.

An agreement has not been finalized for the 750 Walnut Avenue site, and PSE&G is doing its due diligence, Mr. Coyle said. Should PSE&G and Hartz Mountain not be able to come to terms for a purchase of about 6 acres of land at the 30.5 acre site, PSE&G would probably rebuild the Clark substation located by the ShopRite in Clark on Central Avenue, Mr. Coyle said. This could mean a new route for the high-voltage transmission wires to connect to that Clark substation would need to be created, Mr. Coyle said. Also, Mr. Coyle said PSE&G is look-

ing to place the substation at 750 Walnut Avenue near Hyatt Hills Golf Course and the Conrail line.

The project is a "pole-for-pole" replacement, stated Mr. Coyle.

Any trees on public property or private property which must be compromised for the pole installation will be replaced at a 2-to-1 ratio, stated Mr. Coyle. PSE&G will pay for the tree to be cut down and the two new trees, which are planted to replace the old tree.

"Often homeowners may ask for the tree to be removed only. We may need to cut the tree down, but the homeowner does not want a new one planted," said Mr. Coyle.

Mayor Giblin said trees, which are not replanted on private property's could be replanted elsewhere to assist flood mitigation.

PSE&G's vegetation manager Jay Kaplan said the proposition could be "worked out."

Deputy Mayor Ann Dooley honored four Green Team members with an Earth Day proclamation at Tuesday's meeting. Green Team co-chair Donna Bacich, member Riona Wilson, alongside new members Rosario Fico and Mary Fernanda received the proclamation.

Ms. Dooley said Earth Day is a reminder for the "need to maintain biodiversity while understanding the ecological impacts of expanding urban areas."

"It is more important than ever to defend environmental progress," said Ms. Dooley, while reading the proclamation.



## Soccer Association Gives Feedback on Parks Plan

By MICHAEL BONACCORSO  
 Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

WESTFIELD – Residents provided feedback on Westfield's public parks and recreation at last Wednesday's public information feedback session for the town's master plan re-examination and strategic parks plan. Mayor Shelley Brindle said the feedback sessions allow residents who participate in town programs including structured athletic programs and general community programs to provide feedback on current facilities and programming.

Attendees were given stickers to select park features and programs which peak their interests the most or they are concerned about, Mayor Brindle said.

Brandstetter Carroll Principal Patrick Hoagland said his firm will review the conditions of all Westfield's public parks in the coming months. Resident feedback through an online survey and at Wednesday's information session will help the firm put together a summary for the master plan, Mr. Hoagland said.

The summary will allow Mayor Brindle and the town council to address timelines for any capital projects to improve parks or public open space and enhance desired programming, Mr. Hoagland said.

According to resident feedback at Wednesday's meeting, the parks features which received the most stickers or which are considered the highest priority were "a turf multi-purpose field installation, maintaining natural areas and park restroom maintenance," Mr. Hoagland explained.

Westfield Soccer Association Field and Operations Vice-President Eric Judka said a multi-purpose turf field would allow for a more usable athletic space. He said turf fields are often lined for up to

five separate sports.

He said a turf soccer field would benefit the soccer program as the youth league would not have to travel to other towns for games, stated Mr. Judka.

"You are seeing Westfield money and athletes leave town to attain open field time," Mr. Judka told *The Westfield Leader*.

The soccer association will pay for field time in Garwood and other municipalities, stated Mr. Judka. While the towns have been "very accommodating," money could be saved in the long run for the soccer association including recreation, travel, and club teams, stated Mr. Judka.

Mr. Judka said the association is "expressing the need" for a turf field, but he estimates other recreation sport teams would benefit to the same degree the soccer association would from a cost savings and increased field time perspective.

He said turf fields allow for numerous games to be played in various conditions disregarding "time consuming and costly field repairs" from frequent use, stated Mr. Judka.

Soccer teams who would benefit from a turf field would be "Fun of Soccer," the Westfield recreation league, Westfield's travel teams, and Union County Football Club, stated Mr. Judka.

"We're just happy to provide input. We're excited we can play apart in the re-examination process. With over 2,000 active members, we are one of the largest recreation organizations in New Jersey," Mr. Judka said.

Residents are encouraged to fill out the re-examination survey online at [www.publicinput.com/WestfieldMPP](http://www.publicinput.com/WestfieldMPP), Mayor Brindle said. The online survey will allow respondents to provide feedback on all aspects of the reexamination, stated Mayor Brindle.



**TOUCH A TRUCK...Garwood's first-ever Touch-a-Truck event was held Sunday across from Lincoln School on Second Avenue. Pictured, from left to right, are: Councilman Rich McCormack, Councilwoman Jen Blumenstock, Mayor Sara Todisco and Council President Marc Lazarow.**

## Freeholders Recognize April As Organ Transplant Month

By PAUL J. PEYTON  
 Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

COUNTY – In recognition of National Donate Life Month in Union County during April, the freeholder board last Thursday presented a resolution to Elisse Glennon, vice-president and chief administrative officer of the New Jersey Sharing Network. The board also recognized Eric Walano of Cranford for his decision to donate a kidney to an individual in need.

Freeholder Chris Hudak said the Sharing Network, the headquarters of which is in New Providence, is the state's organization for organ and tissue donation. He said the Network works to educate New Jerseyans about donating organs and tissue by checking the box on driver's licenses. The Network also works directly with families who have lost a loved one and want to become donors.

He said one donor "can impact eight lives with their organs and 75 with a tissue donation."

Ms. Glennon said organ donation has increased 35 percent over the last five years, "so the education and the awareness is certainly working." She said there are 115,000 people nationwide on the waiting list for a "life-saving organ transplant." She said 4,000 of those on the waiting list reside in New Jersey. Residents can visit [saveajives.com](http://saveajives.com) to find out how people in a particular town are on the list in need of a transplant.

"Chances are that you know someone whose life has been impacted by organ and tissue donation; either they are waiting or they received a transplant or their loved one passed away and gave that gift at the time of their

passing," Ms. Glennon said.

A review of the waiting list showed six people from Westfield, seven from Scotch Plains, six from Cranford and one from Garwood are on the list for a transplant.

Freeholder Alexander Mirabella said Eric attended an event in 2017 called "Hearts for Emma," based in Cranford. After attending the event he decided to become an altruistic kidney donor, where the donation is for anyone in need of a transplant rather than a family member.

Among the resolutions on tonight's regular meeting agenda will be the awarding of the county's \$1.5-million infrastructure and municipal grants for all 21 towns in the county. The grant is funded out of proceeds from the sale of Runnells Specialized Hospital in 2014.

Amy Wagner, director of the Department of Economic Development, said the amounts for municipalities will be based on a number of factors such as the town's population and the types of projects. She said the freeholders' fiscal committee will review all the applications.

The qualified management and concessionaire contracts for the Warinanco Sports Center in Roselle will continue under KemperSports Golf Group, LLC, which took over from Sports Facilities Management, LLC in November. Ron Zuber, director of parks and recreation, said the resolution is for a new contract.

Another resolution recognized John's Meat Market in Scotch Plains on its 80th anniversary. Also, Cranford residents Nicholas Ryan Macchi and Brendan Hanlon are being recognized on achieving the rank of Eagle Scout.

## Westfield Town Council PSE&G / Cell Tower

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erty values and unsightliness.

She said it is unusual for a tower to be "embedded in our beautiful residential neighborhoods."

The college's problems with cell service could be fixed with the distributed antennae system that UCC is to have up and running soon, and questioned a need for a cell tower if that fixes the cell-service issue.

"Why are my elected representatives not in support of the residents?" she asked. "Where is the collective advocacy?"

Mayor Brindle said the town has no jurisdiction over Cranford and that the Cranford mayor said that UCC is not governed by the Township of Cranford.

Councilwoman Neylan said, "I personally don't want to see it. We

have to be forceful." She proposed a resolution against the proposed tower. "It is within our power to present a unified front with people in Cranford," she said. No other council persons responded to her proposal for a resolution.

"We need you to step up," said Mindy Kipnis, a Cranford resident and a member of Union County Residents United, a group opposing the cell tower at UCC. She said it would affect 100 property values in Westfield and hundreds more in the county.

Mike Norman of Cranford asked the council to pass three resolutions that would request freeholder support and the support of the Cranford Planning Board to oppose the cell tower, and a resolution stating the town is opposing the cell tower.

## Derrick Nelson

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comments on Facebook on the principal's passing.

Councilman Mark LoGriprio said, "Westfield mourns the loss of Westfield High School Principal Dr. Derrick Nelson. He was a tremendous principal and made an impact on all that met him. Thoughts and prayers with the Nelson family."

Westfield Board of Education member Brendan Galligan said, "Dr. Nelson was a transformative leader who inspired everyone that had the pleasure of working with him to strive to be their best self. While his loss creates an immense void, his lasting impact on the entire Westfield Public School system will never be forgotten."

School board member Michael Bielen said, "No words can truly reflect the positive impact he had on everyone. Whether it was to celebrate our successes or mourn with us during tragedy, he was the positive role model that we wanted our children to follow. He will be greatly missed, but we are all better people as he inspired our students, teachers and community as a whole."

Assemblyman Jon Bramnick, in a statement released yesterday, said the Westfield principal will always be remembered as a hero. "He died helping others just as he had lived his whole life. He will always be remembered as a hero. My thoughts and prayers are with his family."

Dr. Nelson was WHS principal since February 2017, having served as acting principal beginning in August 2016 after being appointed assistant principal in July 2012. He began his administrative role in Westfield as assistant principal of Roosevelt Intermediate School in 2010. Prior to coming to Westfield, he was an assistant principal with the Orange, N.J. Public Schools from 2007 to 2010. He also taught for six years in the Orange Public Schools prior to that.

He had been a CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear) officer in the United States Army for over 25 years as a member

of the Reserves.

According to his LinkedIn account, he received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Mass Communication and Media Studies from Delaware State University, a Master of Arts degree in Educational Leadership and Administration from St. Peter's College, and a Doctorate in Educational Leadership and Administration.

A candlelight vigil for Dr. Nelson was to be held Wednesday night, at 8:15 p.m., in front of the high school at 550 Dorian Road. The vigil was organized by the WHS Student Government Association (SGA) with the assistance of the WHS Parent-Teacher-Student Organization (PTSO).

Funeral arrangements were also announced yesterday. Visitation will take place on Monday, April 15, from 5 to 9 p.m., and Tuesday, April 16, from 10 to 11 a.m. at St. John's Baptist Church, 2387 Morse Avenue, Scotch Plains. Dr. Nelson's funeral will be held Tuesday, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., at the church. Arrangements are by the Plinton Curry Funeral Home in Westfield.

A petition has been circulating online seeking to rename the high school after Dr. Nelson.

*Hi's Eye News* Editor Avery Conrad said the staff "has been completely humbled by the responsibility of commemorating Dr. Nelson" in the paper's Friday, April 12, issue, available at [hiseye.org](http://hiseye.org).

"This man meant so much to the community," said Adam Holtzman, one of the paper's sports editors. "Even if you never spoke a word with him, his impact was felt the moment you walked in as a freshman," he said. "We wanted to commemorate him and honor his legacy."

Avery added that she hopes the paper's coverage, "shines a light on how much he meant to everybody." Dr. Nelson, a Plainfield resident, is survived by his fiancée, Sherond, their 6-year-old daughter, and his parents.



Susan M. Dougherty for The Westfield Leader  
**YOUTH ART MONTH...Art work from Westfield Public Schools students is featured at Lord & Taylor as part of Youth Art Month**

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## 750 Walnut Avenue

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He presented a zoning exhibit dated April 2019 that depicted a zoning map of the township highlighting all the multifamily zones in the township since this application for a multifamily zone. He said the actual density per acre in the multifamily complexes in the downtown area along South Avenue are between 32 and 47 units per acre. Cranford Crossing and Riverfront Station are both within 1,000 feet of the Cranford Train Station in the downtown core, while Woodmont Station, Lincoln Apartments and Edward K. Gill Apartments are within 3,000 feet of the train station. 750 Walnut Avenue is more than 6,000 feet away from the train station and downtown core, the map depicted, and is proposing 30 units per acre. He said in comparison the Birchwood Avenue development currently in development is further away from the downtown is at 15 units per acre.

He referred to the master plan adopted in 2009, and detailed the goals of the plan that would not be furthered by rezoning 750 Walnut Avenue, which included to implement sensible land use policies to

avoid adversely impacting the school district, preserve small town character and historical architecture, and concentrate density in downtown core.

The "proposed density is largely out of character with the neighborhood and area where this site is located," Mr. Liotta said of the proposed 905 apartments to be located on the 30.5 acres of land at 750 Walnut Avenue. The "density is not consistent with the master plan vision and goals where multi-family should be," he said. Also, the buildings proposed, some of which are five stories and 67 feet high, Mr. Liotta said, "that volume and height is inconsistent with the surrounding neighborhood and master plan" and is not permitted in the zone.

Mr. Liotta said the site is large enough to prove a variety of multifamily structures, including townhomes, that could address a goal of the master plan.

He also said the loss of close to 400 jobs would be lost and would not achieve a goal of the master plan.

The impact to the surrounding neighborhood would be a "substantial detriment," Mr. Liotta said.



**UPDATING MASTER PLAN...Westfield Councilwoman Linda Habgood and planning board member Matthew Ceberio review the town's zoning during last Wednesday's public information feedback session on the reexamination of the town's master plan.**