

Board OKs Redevelopment Studies of East Second Street

By FRED T. ROSSI

Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — The planning board on Monday authorized investigations of several properties and neighborhoods as possible areas in need of redevelopment as township officials race to meet court-imposed deadlines to comply with various aspects of its affordable-housing settlement reached a year ago with builders.

At its meeting on Monday, the board authorized its planner, Harbor Consultants, to undertake a preliminary investigation of the East Second Street corridor as well as the

former Jade Isle property on Terrill Road. The study will follow the same course as was taken during the first phase of downtown redevelopment when Harbor Consultants studied public and private properties in the central business district and then made recommendations to the planning board and township council about which properties qualified as areas in need of redevelopment.

A town-hall meeting will be held at Scotch Plains-Fanwood High School on Thursday, March 28, so that East Second Street property owners can get an idea of the township's plans and ask questions of township rede-

velopment professionals.

The downtown redevelopment committee last month voted to designate the East Second Street corridor — instead of Terrill Road — as the next phase of redevelopment. The township's redevelopment plans will be moving faster than anticipated thanks to a December court order requesting the township examine the remaining six phases of the downtown redevelopment plan and identify additional properties where higher-density housing units could be built. Those plans must be in place by the end of June 2020.

After the planning board completes its investigation of the 49 East Second Street properties along with the Jade Isle lot, it will send its report and recommendations to the township council, which could adopt the planning board report and then ask the downtown redevelopment committee to finalize a formal plan for any affected properties, much the same process as was followed in the first phase.

A separate study will be done on a nearly three-acre piece of undeveloped property situated near the intersection of Mountain Avenue and east-bound Route 22, adjacent to the Westfield border. Michael Mistretta, the board's planner, said if his study finds the property to be suitable for a housing development, such a development — if it amounts to more than five units — could include one designated as affordable.

The planning board also gave its formal approval to the Bowcraft Amusement Park redevelopment plan, which the township council will introduce as an ordinance at its meeting next week. Mr. Mistretta reviewed the plans for the 12.6-acre site, which will include the construction of 190 apartments and 10 townhomes, with 35 of those units being designated as affordable housing.

Zoning Board OKs Yoga Studio, New Parking Lot

By FRED T. ROSSI

Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — The zoning board of adjustment last week approved plans to convert an empty storefront on Westfield Avenue into a yoga studio and wellness center and also backed the development of an empty lot several blocks away.

The Joseph's Group LLC will convert the first floor at 2015 Westfield Avenue — which housed a florist shop until several years ago — into a wellness center. Co-owner Samantha Kowalczyk told the board at its March 7 meeting that the plan is to hold yoga classes on the premises and also cook and sell healthy foods such as soups, salads and baked goods as well as coffee, tea and water. A small kitchen also is planned. The building's basement will be used only for storage, she said, and the two apartments on the second floor will remain.

It is expected that two employees and, possibly, a yoga instructor will work at the new establishment. Parking will be provided in an existing parking lot that is accessible from Montague Avenue. Engineer William Hollows told the board that 11 spaces — including a single stall located next to the building that is used by one of the apartment tenants — will be provided in the lot, including two in an existing garage. New fencing will be installed along the western edge of the property.

When Zoning Board Chairman Ken Anderson asked about possible overlap in the parking lot from yoga clients exiting after a class while others are arriving for the next class, Vice-Chairman Rich Duthie pointed out that on-street parking is permitted on Montague Avenue if the lot was full.



PACKED HOUSE... Commuters and public officials pack the Westfield Train Station last Wednesday night to express their opinions and complaints to NJ Transit officials. NJ Transit Executive Director Patrick Corbett and New Jersey Department of Transportation Commissioner Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti heard from municipal officials, Union County Freeholders and state representatives who demanded answers on the restoration of the one-seat ride service and train service improvements.

Twenty-four Hour Marathon Proposed by Soccer Assoc.

By LAUREN A. SILVA

Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

SCOTCH PLAINS — The recreation commission will consider some requests from the local soccer association in regard to its 24-hour soccer marathon at the south-side field in the spring. There also was discussion at Monday's commission meeting about previous requests from the soccer association concerning new storage units at its fields and more enforcement

of non-permitted players using the fields.

At Monday's meeting, Frank Conley, president of the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Soccer Association, spoke about the association's desire to host the soccer marathon. The commission accepted a motion to allow the Scotch Plains-Fanwood Soccer Association to host this event from Friday, June 14, at 7 p.m., to Saturday, June 15, at 7 p.m. Mr. Conley said there would be different age-based games every hour. He is hoping to host this event every spring, in addition to the fall marathon, to promote team spirit for the sport.

At February's meeting and again on Monday, Mr. Conley urged the commission to approve food trucks and live music on the far side of the field near Martine Avenue for the event. He said he would like the music to be played by a live band or DJ on Friday night and most of the day on Saturday. Commission members expressed some concerns about the food trucks and the music.

"There is shared concern about the music with the residents that live near the south-side field. Those residents had problems with noise in the past," Commission Chairman Mike Walsh said.

Township Recreation Director DJ Salvante responded that, "the

town ordinance is broken down by time and decibel." Mr. Salvante said residents who live near the field should be approached and asked how they feel about live music during the times proposed.

Although the township council accepted the motion to allow the soccer association to host the event on the dates proposed, governing body members decided to table the issues of food trucks and live music until a later date. Mr. Walsh said he would like the commission to compile a list of questions for Mr. Conley about the additional requests he is making before a motion is made.

At last month's meeting, Mr. Conley also requested new storage units for the soccer association at its fields, more enforcement of non-permitted players using the fields and a water fountain for water bottles at the south-side field. Mr. Salvante said township zoning laws allow a 10-foot by 20-foot shed space and that it could be placed at the field. Mr. Salvante said the soccer association may have to pay for the shed.

Mr. Walsh said a motion cannot be presented until after a policy is drafted by the commission in regard to what sport organizations can use the storage space. He is

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



CONCERNED COMMUTERS... Commuters and public officials pack the Westfield Train Station last Wednesday night to express their opinions and complaints to NJ Transit officials. NJ Transit Executive Director Patrick Corbett and New Jersey Department of Transportation Commissioner Diane Gutierrez-Scaccetti were on hand to hear from riders as part of NJ Transit's Listening Tour.

PSE&G Power Grid Upgrade Prompts Residents' Concerns

By PAUL J. PEYTON

Specially Written for The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times

WESTFIELD — PSE&G has put its power grid project for the south side of Westfield on hold. The project is part of a statewide initiative.

According to documents published on the Westfield website, PSE&G says it will be replacing 26kV utility lines with 69kV transmission lines throughout its coverage areas.

"PSE&G and its contractors will be upgrading the electric system in your neighborhood to continue to provide safe, reliable service. Construction crews will be actively working on the PSE&G and public rights-of-way in Westfield, as well as surrounding communities, to install taller, sturdier utility poles and run new electric wires along an existing pole line. There are no planned service interruptions associated with this work," according to a letter sent to residents by PSE&G.

The utility's work will start with tree trimming and tree removal in preparation for replacement of utility poles. That work is expected to start "on or about" Monday, March 18, along Scotch Plains Avenue, Shackamaxon

Drive, Rahway Avenue, Grove Street, Central Avenue and Sycamore Street. Resident James Foerst, a former town councilman, said the new power grid would stretch 2.1 miles.

"In accordance with the Board of Public Utilities' (BPU) Vegetation Management Rules, we are required to trim and remove trees, where necessary. If applicable, trees that have been removed will be replaced with smaller, utility compatible trees," according to a letter sent to residents on the streets impacted.

"These upgrades are needed to address the increased demand for electric reliability throughout PSE&G service territory. As populations have increased and consumer electronic needs have evolved, the 26kV legacy networks of the last century have been taxed. The addition of a 69kV network will alleviate the demands on the existing 26kV network," according to a PSE&G fact sheet on the project.

Councilman Doug Stokes, who represents the fourth ward where the upgrades are to occur, said in an email obtained by The Scotch Plains-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 10



UNITED RESIDENTS... A group of concerned citizens and local government officials gather Monday at a private residence on Scotch Plains Avenue to discuss the PSE&G pole project. Assemblyman Jon Bramnick (R-21st, Westfield) led the discussion and took questions from the residents. Among the concerns are public safety from high-powered lines, as well as removal of trees. Mr. Bramnick advised that he had been in contact with PSE&G and that the project currently is on "hold."



BOOKWORMS... The annual book sale sponsored by the Friends of the Scotch Plains Library got underway last Saturday and continues through March 16.

PAGE INDEX

Regional	2-3, 18	Education	9
Editorial	4-5	Sports	11-15
Police	18	Real Estate	11-20
Community ...	6-8	Classifieds	18
Obituary	8	A&E	19-20



Happy St. Pat's Day

Congratulations to the Top 10 Sales Associates for February!



Sharon Steele



Julie Murphy



Janice Good-Piga



Jocelyne Holden



Jill Skibinsky



Cynthia Alexander



Beth Sullivan



Cathy Splinter



Patty Panner



Patrick Manfra

Westfield West

(Across from Lord & Taylor)
600 North Avenue West
Westfield, NJ 07090
908.233.0065

ColdwellBankerHomes.com



RESIDENTIAL BROKERAGE