



UPDATE ON DEVELOPMENT...South Urban Renewal LLC (Russo Development) attorney Christopher Minks presents an update Tuesday at a community meeting at Lincoln School on the South Avenue development's progression, with vertical construction beginning next winter. The development's brick façade should be completed by the summer of 2020.

750 Walnut Avenue

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school district's planner, Ross Haber's, analysis of school-aged children that would be generated by the application. He gave his reasons why he believes Mr. Haber's report is invalid.

Mr. Haber projects 353 school-aged students would be added to the district if the proposal by Hartz is built and fully occupied. Mr. Hughes data projects 152 school-aged children, and of that total, a range of 110 to 135 public-school students would be added to the school district.

Mr. Hughes said in Mr. Haber's testimony given at a previous board meeting that he said he "based his analysis on new, comparable developments." Mr. Hughes said, "it turns out that was not a true statement."

"Haber indicated his method for estimating the number of school children generated in a two-bedroom apartment was based on looking at the entire universe in a number of communities and dividing that by the number of students in a school district," Mr. Hughes said.

He also did not adjust for a number of other "relevant factors." Also, the list of communities Mr. Haber looked at have 74-percent single-family homes and have 4-percent multi-family rental residences, Mr. Hughes said.

Mr. Haber's overall average is 0.56 as a multiplier of school-aged children used for two-bedroom units. Mr.

Hughes said there is no empirical evidence in those multipliers. The data by Public Use Microdata Area (PUMA) utilized by Mr. Hughes in his last report uses a multiplier of 0.131 public-school children, Mr. Hughes said. He said PUMA has the best available Census data, last updated in 2017.

"His analysis has no basis in empirical data in respects to characteristics of the housing proposed as part of this application and for those reasons it's a flawed analysis," Mr. Hughes said.

Mr. Hughes called Mr. Haber's projection of 353 school-aged children "wildly exaggerated."

Hartz also had Jeff Martell, of Stonefield Engineering and Design, a professional engineer in civil site engineering, give rebuttals to testimony provided by the board's expert on traffic circulation on the site at a previously held meeting. Mr. Martell affirmed that school buses, large moving trucks and fire trucks "all can be accommodated by the site design."

The planning board's next meeting was to take place Wednesday, May 15, at 8 p.m., after press deadline, when the public would be given the opportunity to make comments on the entire application. A subsequent meeting will be held on Wednesday, June 5.

PSE&G Looking at Alter. Routes for Upgraded Lines

By MICHAEL BONACCORSO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

CRANFORD – PSE&G is investigating alternative routes for upgraded power lines, which would allow the lines to "run along" the Conrail railroad line, Mayor Patrick Giblin said at Monday's township committee workshop meeting. The alternative route would prevent the lines from running along the existing route through Westfield, Garwood and Cranford, the mayor said, noting that the township committee unanimously supports the Conrail alternative route.

According to Mayor Giblin, Conrail representatives have stated that the PSE&G upgraded power lines being installed along the railway will be predicated on "their (Conrail's) rail activity in the proposed area." He said the rail activity is considered of "higher occurrence" for the proposed thoroughway.

PSE&G is "doing what they can" based on resident feedback from last Wednesday's public meeting, stated Mayor Giblin, relaying sentiment from PSE&G representatives he spoke with.

PSE&G representative Rebecca Mazzarella said it is important to listen to resident concerns and answer any questions residents may have.

"PSE&G is employed with providing for their customers, while working with township officials and con-

tingent entity representatives (Conrail)," said Ms. Mazzarella.

In other business, Township Commissioner Mary O'Connor proposed a community garden at Roosevelt Park at Monday's workshop agenda meeting. She said community gardens are a concept where a "land parcel" (depending on garden size) is divided into different sections, which are gardened for fresh vegetables by participating residents.

Ms. O'Connor said the "garden section" would be a "small section within the park."

Each gardener is tasked with taking care of his or her garden, stated Ms. O'Connor.

Mayor Giblin asked Ms. O'Connor to prepare a proposal for township committee review.

Cranford Police Chief Ryan Greco said a police substation will be implemented at the Cranford Community Center. Chief Greco said the substation was brought to his attention from another department as a method of providing increased "community policing presence."

The substation will utilize "closet-type space" at the community center where an officer will be located, stated Chief Greco.

He said the substation promotes officer accessibility for Cranford's youth, while presenting role models, building youth-officer relationships, and serving as an overall law enforcement resource.

Russo Gives Update on South Ave. Development

By MICHAEL BONACCORSO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

GARWOOD — South Urban Renewal LLC (Russo Development) attorney Christopher Minks provided an update Tuesday at a community meeting at Lincoln School on the South Avenue development's progression, with vertical construction beginning next winter.

The development's brick façade should be completed by the summer of 2020. Mr. Minks stated that "realtor buzz" surrounding the South Avenue development has increased since the demolition and site excavation has started.

He estimated that the development will be fully operational and rented by late spring of 2021. Day-to-day operations consist of contractors excavating the contaminated soil.

"We (Russo subcontractors and employees) are at the site eight hours a day. We certainly want to make sure contaminants are handled properly," Mr. Minks said.

Under New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJDEP) standards, all excavated soil which can remain on site will be used as the building's foundation, stated Mr. Minks. Green space or open areas to the public will be established with new topsoil.

"To date, 5,000 tons of contami-

Bramnick Calls for Hearing on PSE&G Poles in Cranford

TRENTON – Assembly Republican Minority Leader Jon Bramnick (R-21st, Westfield) has called on PSE&G to hold a public hearing before running high-voltage electric poles through residential neighborhoods in Cranford.

"The citizens deserve open discussion on the risks," said Mr. Bramnick. "PSE&G needs to be up-front with residents and discuss the project in a public hearing."

nated soil has been removed from the Casale (Petro) site," Mr. Minks said.

Russo wants to "attract quality retail business" such as a pharmacy, stated Mr. Minks.

He said establishing a "destination restaurant" is a top priority for the development company right now.

Mr. Minks said Russo representatives are reviewing "possible" eateries that would fit the Garwood downtown landscape.

The South Avenue development bedroom count will be reduced, stated Mr. Minks. He said Russo has decided to reduce the unit count to 296 while "attempting to maintain" the same parking space number.

The parking space count will be reduced by one, but "we (Russo) are trying to keep it (total spaces) the same," stated Mr. Minks.

Councilman Richard McCormack stated that "it would be appreciated" if Russo could provide colored "imaging" for the restaurant or building's interior. Mr. Minks said updated "computer model images" can be provided depicting the restaurant and pedestrian entrances.

Mr. Minks replied that the development's three-bedroom mixes have been minimized.

He said Garwood Planning Board Vice-Chairwoman Kathleen Villaggio has been working alongside himself asking local legislators and applicable NJ Transit leadership to allow "Garwood more one-seat rides to New York City."

Mr. Minks stated Russo believes the development will be recognized as a quintessential "transit village development."

Email Your Vacay Pics

The Westfield Leader and The Scotch Plains-Fanwood Times invites our readers to send in high-resolution vacation pictures holding our newspaper. Please email pictures to editor@goleader.com.



FAIRVIEW FOLIAGE...The community is invited to Fairview Cemetery and arboretum for a springtime walking tour of its flourishing foliage. Fairview Cemetery, located at 1100 East Broad Street, Westfield, will host its first spring tour, highlighting some of the 99 cataloged species of trees that reside within the cemetery grounds, while the spring blossoms are at their peak. The tour will be led by Tom Ombrello, professor of biology at Union County College, and is scheduled for this Sunday, May 19, at 2 p.m. Those interested in participating should arrive at the Gallows Hill Road entrance. The tour is free to the public, and parking is available on the premises.

Ladder Truck

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other various concerns were "answered to my satisfaction."

Mr. Graham said the need for a ladder truck was clear to him after attending the presentations by fire officials.

Councilman Richard McCormack said the ladder truck will update the fire department's fleet with needed equipment.

"Put yourself in their shoes," said Mr. McCormack, referring to the volunteer firefighters who could lose their lives, or their family members, "who may lose a loved one."

Councilman Marc Lazarow said "public safety and a public vote" is a difficult concept. Mr. Lazarow said every resident is entitled to an opinion. However, those opinions are inherently biased to one's world view.

He said borough leadership must decipher what is the solution that will protect the most residents.

Councilman Sean Benoit said his fellow council members voiced his feelings articulately. Mr. Benoit said he supports the council overseeing the truck's purchase while receiving professional insight from fire department representatives.

"What do I know about firefighting?" asked Mr. McCormack rhetorically to the public.

Mr. McCormack said discussion over several months with accredited fire department leaders and personnel and demonstrations of ladder pre-

sentations helped in his understanding of how under equipped the department had been for over a decade.

"This job (councilman) keeps me up until 10:30 at night. What about this? What about that?," said Mr. McCormack, describing how well read council members become before "decisions are made."

Mr. McCormack said he emphasizes the decision-making process so residents understand their safety and tax dollars are considered in every decision he supports.

At the start of the meeting, Mayor Todisco read a proclamation honoring Scotch Plains residents Tami Eagle Bowling and Lauren O'Brien, who co-founded the METAvivors of New Jersey, a Facebook group.

Ms. Bowling is a stage-4 breast cancer survivor. Stage 4 breast cancer has a 3 to 6 percent survival rate, Mayor Todisco said.

Ms. Bowling has dedicated her survival to promoting breast cancer awareness, the mayor said. Ms. Bowling has raised \$50,000 per year since 2015 for the cancer research and advocacy group MetAvivor.

The next Breakfast with the Mayor will take place this Saturday, May 18, at Lincoln School from 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Superintendent of Schools Teresa Quigley, Ed.D., and Garwood Board of Education President Christine Guerriero will be in attendance, stated Mayor Todisco.

Westfield Bd. of Adj.

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questioned a 10-foot-wide planting easement related to the Amy Drive property and the rear abutting properties on Max Place, stumping the board and presenters.

Jeff Bash, an Amy Drive resident for 35 years, who had previously asked for clarification about the possible changes to his neighbor's house, stepped back to the microphone. Mr. Bash said a large stretch of woods once occupied Max Place. He said when lots were sold to be-

come separate dwellings, residents raised concerns about the loss of trees.

Mr. Bash said Westfield's tree commission and residents banded together to create a space that "would help promote a woody area" between Max Place and Amy Drive.

The next board of adjustment meeting will take place on June 10 at the Municipal Building, located at 425 East Broad Street.

Cranford BOE Recognizes Faculty, Reappoints Staff

By ROBYN ORR-GIOFFRE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

CRANFORD — Ten Cranford faculty members were acknowledged as recipients of the 2018-2019 Governor's Educator of the Year (GEOY) Award at the Cranford Board of Education (BOE) meeting on Monday night.

Michelle Balseiro, Cindy Ciampo, Karen Ferraioli, Anne Marie Francis, Valerie Gormely, Paul Maloney, Diana Niemyk, Kerri Ann O'Hare, Gina Peterpaul and Breanne Timm were selected by the GEOY committee.

These professionals were chosen for their ability to inspire students of all backgrounds, for their outstanding qualities as teachers/educational service professionals in the Cranford Public Schools and for their high caliber of service.

"We're only as good as our teachers," Superintendent of Schools Scott Rubin, Ed.D., told the board, and further commented, "we're very proud of them."

In other board business, the board reappointed 21 administrative/supervisory personnel, 245 tenured-teaching personnel, 95 non-tenured teaching personnel, 38 building service personnel, and 36 office and clerical personnel.

Additional tenured certified staff reappointments include two guidance counselors, six nurses, three occupa-

tion therapists, two psychologists, two academic coaches, five social workers, three media specialists, three faculty members in charge of Pathways to Excellence and four learning disabilities teacher consultants.

The board expressed support for a resolution put forth by the Township of Cranford to object to the PSE&G proposal to improve the power grid along the public right-of-way.

In regards to the Reimagining of Cranford Schools, a survey went out to residents of Cranford and feedback will be provided from that collected data towards the end of June. Ten different plans are under consideration that would bring full-day kindergarten to Cranford. The plans would redistrict a number of schools.

The board approved the resignations of Isabel Wagner, Melissa Brause, Scott Steiner, Lauren Jung, Victoria Smutek and Mary Kate Santulli.

The board accepted a donation from the Livingston Avenue School Parent Teacher Association (PTA), in the amount of \$10,000, to support the Elementary STEAM/Makerspace development in the Livingston Avenue School Library.

The board approved additional assignments for Hillside Avenue School (HAS), funded by the HAS PTA, which include board game activities, an environmental club, arts and crafts and gardening.



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