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PSE&G Community Meeting On 69kV Lines Attracts 240

By **MICHAEL BONACCORSO**
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

CRANFORD – At a community meeting held at the Cranford Community Center last Wednesday, PSE&G representatives answered questions from 240 residents about a planned 69kV electrical wire route.

The route will replace existing utility poles along Walnut Avenue, Lincoln Avenue, Lexington Avenue, Chester Lang Place and South Avenue, stated PSE&G public relations representative Rebecca Mazzarella. The project is a “pole-for-pole” replacement of 73 poles, meaning that the intended total pole count will not increase, stated Ms. Mazzarella.

PSE&G would be upgrading the 50-year-old 26kV lines with “standard 21st century 69kV electric lines,” Ms. Mazzarella said.

“As populations have increased, consumer electronic needs have evolved. The additional 69kV network will alleviate demands on the remaining 26kV network,” said Ms. Mazzarella.

She said the upgrade is required to provide “safe, adequate and reliable” service throughout the utility’s service territory.

PSE&G representatives were placed at several different tables based on resident concern areas to “de-mystify” any rumors, misunderstandings, or fallacies surrounding the project, stated Ms. Mazzarella.

She said the project will be

both underground and above ground based on practicality, considering surrounding infrastructure independent of PSE&G equipment and property. Ms. Mazzarella said constructing the entire project underground would be six to seven times more expensive than above-ground utility pole construction.

“Additional costs unfortunately flow through to customers. That is why we safely reduce project costs making rational installation decisions while planning our routes,” said Ms. Mazzarella.

She said line voltage has no effect on the surrounding electromagnetic field and the new lines will be comparable in “existing background levels.”

Ms. Mazzarella said all trees removed on public or private property can be replaced at the owner’s discretion at a rate of two trees planted per one removed. Should homeowners choose not to replant a tree on their private property, PSE&G will plant the tree on public property to help in flood reduction, stated Ms. Mazzarella.

Resident Justin Quinn said PSE&G is utilizing the wood preservative pentachlorophenol (penta) on the power line poles, which he said is a “known carcinogen.” Mr. Quinn stated that penta was banned in over 26 countries throughout the world, which was acknowledged at the Stockholm Convention in 2015.

Mr. Quinn said the poles will be

placed into the soil, degrading over time, releasing penta into Cranford’s high-water table, which can come in contact with children, adults and family pets.

He said other utility companies settled class-action lawsuits because penta contaminated a bay.

Mike Freeman, a leading expert in the United States on penta, said penta “can be hazardous to

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Cranford BOE Recognizes Staff

nel, and 36 office and clerical personnel.

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

moved 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.”

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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