



FUTURE LEADERS...Declan, R.J., Aiden and Christopher, pictured from left to right, hold *The Westfield Leader* on Point Pleasant Beach after touring Jenkinson's Aquarium last Wednesday with their Brookside Place Elementary School, Cranford, kindergarten classmates. They learned about sharks, seals, and other aquatic creatures and had a chance to touch a live horseshoe crab, sea urchin, and sea star.

Garwood Hears Review Of School District Goals

By MICHAEL BONACCORSO
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

GARWOOD — New Jersey School Boards Association representative Gwen Thornton presented the Garwood school district's four broad strategic goals, derived over three strategic planning meetings on September 24, October 9 and December 12, 2018, at Tuesday's Garwood Board of Education meeting. The strategic categories include providing 21st-century curriculum instruction, protecting school climate and culture, and enhancing community engagement, while considering district financial costs and facilities.

"Dreams become a goal when written down. Goals broken down become a plan. Action makes dreams a reality," Ms. Thornton said.

Garwood residents, board of education members and Lincoln School educators developed the categories, discussing the district's "strengths and weaknesses," Ms. Thornton stated.

"You did everything you needed to be done to begin making your dream a reality," said Ms. Thornton, addressing district representatives and strategic planning participants.

Garwood Superintendent of Schools Teresa Scpekowski inquired about whether the district should put its goals on the district's website along with updates over time. Ms. Thornton said the district should display its goals on the website to educate the public on the overarching focuses influencing policy and action. She said the board, annually or over several years, will want to check to make sure action is being taken to achieve specific category objectives.

An "action plan step or specific objective" within a goal category can be evaluated based on a simple determination process, Ms. Thornton explained.

"Who is involved? Was a proposed event held? Was it successful? Did an action step serve its initial purpose?" said Ms. Thornton in detailing areas the board will want to address.

Superintendent Quigley honored numerous volunteers who participated in the strategic planning meetings, providing input at the beginning with Tuesday's meeting.

She said the categories will allow district leaders to prioritize issues based on

short-term circumstances, but not permanently disregard the long-term objectives.

"You will address the problem, then return back to the plan," Ms. Thornton said.

She said outlining goals creates priority focuses for the board of education and Lincoln School leadership to return their focus, too, after an unexpected short-term issue is addressed.

Superintendent Quigley said the goal of addressing school climate and culture protects the students' social and emotional learning environment.

"We're always looking to engage more parents, and encourage more volunteers and parent participation," the superintendent said in addressing the community outreach and engagement goal category.

She said the district's finance and facilities goals will include board of education consideration for capital projects, school programs and curriculum funding.

"District leaders will always have to switch back and forth between goal categories to attain specific category objectives," Ms. Thornton said.

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LEADER IN ALGERIA...Robert and Carole Peyton of Westfield took *The Westfield Leader* with them during their visit to the Roman ruins on the Mediterranean in Tipasa, Algeria.

Westfield Council

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Councilman David Conrath said the town was given a \$2,000 grant to augment this program.

Town Administrator Jim Gildea said he has received some inquiries about the bulky waste program, and the town is looking at a fall program again and will have to go out to bid. The town also offers residents the option of bringing bulky waste to the conservation center for a fee year-round. Residents have so far purchased 260 permits at a rate of \$30 per carload to bring items to the conservation center, Mr. Gildea said.

PSE&G is considering moving the route of its 69kV lines proposed through Westfield. The utility is considering a route to run alongside the Conrail line and is in talks with Conrail, Councilman Doug Stokes said. Members of the town council are to meet with PSE&G again on the morning of Thursday, May 30, he said.

The town's Memorial Day Parade is set to begin at 9 a.m. this Monday, May 27, with opening ceremonies. Mayor Brindle said American Legion Martin Wallberg Post 3 is honoring the late Westfield High School Principal Derrick Nelson as honorary grand marshal of the parade.

During the conference session held prior to the regular meeting, there was discussion of recent burglaries in town. Last Sunday morning, between the hours of 5 and 6 a.m., between 10 and 13 cars were burglarized and one was stolen in Ward 4, Police Chief Christopher Battiloro said. All but one car was unlocked at the time the incidents occurred, while the one locked vehicle had its windows rolled down, the chief said. The car that was stolen from West Broad Street had a set of keys inside, he said.

"There is no ward that is immune to crime," Chief Battiloro said. "It's occurring all over town and towns around us."

He urged residents to "make our targets harder" by locking their cars, as well as to report suspicious activity. Burglars "will continue to come to Westfield if we make us an easy target," Chief Battiloro said.

He said the thefts in the town "is not one group."

The police department, he said, has been "fortunate to identify suspects and make arrests quickly."

The arrests involving the recent string of burglaries, he said, were aided by a witness who was someone

out jogging.

Councilman Stokes had requested that the town notify residents more quickly, commenting that outside sources such as social media and online news sites were reporting the crimes before the town had notified residents.

"As soon as I verify facts, the information goes out via Nixle," Chief Battiloro said.

The car robberies are under active investigation, the chief said. The car that was stolen went to Newark, he added.

There also was a residential burglary on Cottage Place between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. last Thursday via forced entry of the front door, the chief said.

Councilwoman Dawn Mackey announced that the town will hold a cultural festival Sunday, June 23, at Mindowaskin Park. She said that there are interested sponsors to fund the event, which will feature performances, crafts and food.

Councilman Mike Dardia said the public safety, transportation and parking committee is discussing revising an ordinance for traffic fines, which are "below (those of) surrounding communities," and fines for illegal parking in handicapped-parking spaces and over-limit of two-hour parking.

WF BOE

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Westfield High School to register through the Alumni Outreach located under the District Information link. Once registered, alumni will receive the *Blue Devil Bulletin*, an electronic newsletter. Ms. Dolan said that the district hopes to incorporate a networking component in the future.

In other business, the board also recognized intermediate-school and high-school music students and teachers for their outstanding accomplishments this year.

There will be five open board seats in November. Westfield residents considering a run should submit a nomination petition to the county clerk's office in Elizabeth by Monday, July 29, at 4 p.m.

The next board of education meeting is a reorganization meeting and will take place on Tuesday, June 11, at 7 p.m., at 302 Elm Street.

Opioid Crisis Addressed by Public Safety Committee

By ROBYN ORR-GIOFFRE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

LINDEN — A town hall meeting was held this past Tuesday night at McManus Middle School in Linden, addressing the Opioid Crisis in Union County.

The Union County Public Safety Committee hosted the town meeting, called "The Opioid Epidemic: Silently Affecting Our Community."

Opioids, which Union County Freeholder Christopher Hudak, described as "a silent killer in our community," are drugs that work with opioid receptors in a person's brain cells to block pain and increase feelings of pleasure.

Made from a poppy plant, like morphine, or produced in a laboratory, like Fentanyl, other types of opioids include heroin and prescription drugs like oxycodone, hydrocodone and codeine.

Last year, there were 133 deaths in Union County connected to opioid use, more than double than what was reported before 2015, according to Mr. Hudak.

Union County Assistant Prosecutor Julie Peterman spoke about programs established in Union County to combat this epidemic, like Operation Helping Hand.

This program makes recovery coaches available for individuals who have just been arrested for drug use, "with the goal of getting them treatment," according to Ms. Peterman.

This May, in Union County, there were 148 contacts made with people struggling with drugs through Operation Helping Hands. Of those 148 individuals, 29 went into medically assisted treatment and 43 took part in intensive outpatient treatment or a became involved with some other community-based support system.

Union County Department of Public Safety Director Andrew Moran spoke about increased emphasis on public safety and community wellness through various

changes made in Union County, including public access to Narcan.

Narcan is an opioid antagonist that reverses the effects of an opioid overdose. Increased public access means more victims could have the opportunity to survive an opioid overdose.

Additionally, Mr. Moran mentioned a new protocol used for 911 calls related to a drug overdose that involves giving the caller instruction on how to administer Narcan.

"The goal is to administer Narcan before the police even arrive," Mr. Moran commented.

Executive Director of Prevention Links, Morgan Thompson said an opioid addiction is something that can happen to anyone and does not discriminate by age, gender or race spoke about prevention, treatment and recovery for opioid abuse.

Describing herself a recovering opioid addict, she explained that addiction is a "chronic" condition and stressed the importance of a recovery oriented system of care to meet the needs of those struggling.

"We want to get the experts there with those struggling" at the right place, at the right time," Ms. Thompson explained.

She spoke specifically about Recovery High School, which utilizes a peer recovery support system.

According to Ms. Thompson, the school is important because most addicts report their first experience with drugs in high school, therefore an opportunity for early intervention is possible.

With so much attention recently being drawn to the opioid crisis, all involved are hoping available resources will be utilized and the situation will improve.

According to Mr. Hudak, there have been less deaths in 2019 caused by opioid abuse than in 2018.

There have been 23 deaths reported as of March of 2019, but "one night can change that statistic," said Mr. Hudak.

750 Walnut Avenue

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Also, referring to PSE&G's desire to build a substation in the back corner of 750 Walnut Avenue, Ms. Allen said, "What more can we have there? It's ridiculous. You can't keep building...it's a dangerous situation."

She also rebuffed Hartz's testimony that the property is no longer viable for office use. She said an office building at 67 Walnut Avenue in Clark recently sold for \$10.5 million. Another resident, Susan Malanka, came up later and said the same.

Mark Zucker, of Virginia Avenue, said he felt the reports provided by Hartz Mountain's experts were inaccurate, calling it "poor business practice at best and deceitful at worst."

He said he spoke to a councilwoman in Clark about the Clark Commons' developer's proposals in that township, and she told him the "town has received no financial benefits from that project."

Mr. Zucker said the project will cause an "unmanageable burden" to schools and the police and fire departments.

Christine Esposito, of Behnert Place, said Hartz has not provided "compelling reasons to recommend this application to rezone"...and that the plan is in "stark contrast to the township's master plan."

Zoning Board of Adjustment Vice-President Jeffrey Pistol, speaking as a resident, also said he is opposed to the rezoning, and that the high-density apartment buildings go against the master plan. Mr. Pistol gave the planning board an alternative to what Hartz has proposed to develop the property.

"If you feel you can't because of the town's affordable-housing obligation...economic arguments that

have been made...that the township can't go against for whatever reason, I want to suggest a possible alternative," Mr. Pistol said. He suggested the property be divided "into three parts accommodating different types of housing. One part with apartments with affordable housing...and the other two thirds divided between one third age-restricted apartments...and another third age-restricted clustered townhouses..." His proposal would provide a total of about 400 housing units, and include approximately 175 age-restricted units, providing 13 to 14 units per acre.

Resident Robert Pipchick, of Lincoln Avenue, affirmed that the master plan is against expanding multi-family developments and encourages additional age-restricted land use. Mr. Pipchick stated that the public schools are at "100 percent (capacity), from what I hear from the board of education...Will they (Hartz) build a school for us?"

Don Smith, of Oneida Place, talked about the traffic impacts of new housing developments being built throughout the county and how traffic is "growing exponentially." He also discussed the impact on the school district. "Your own planners and school experts came up with 353 school kids...larger than any grade schools now," said Mr. Smith, referring to the number of school-age children estimated to be added to the district if the proposed 900 apartments are built. He said, "the volume of kids would create another school."

"I hope when you get to your bottom line on your decision that you vote no on 750," Mr. Smith said.

Freeholders Back Residents Opposing PSE&G Proposal

By JESSE WINTER
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

COUNTY — The Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders passed a resolution last Thursday supporting municipalities and residents affected by a proposal by Public Service Electric and Gas (PSE&G) to run high-voltage 69kV power lines through various residential and business areas throughout the municipalities of Westfield, Cranford and Garwood.

The resolution received a yes vote from all present Freeholders and supports "the efforts by the County of Union's municipal officials to relocate PSE&G's high-voltage power lines to areas outside of residential areas; and further recommending a period of public comment and investigation before increasing the voltage in the lines through Union County."

Freeholder Chair Bette Jane Kowalski communicated the Freeholders' support during her comments before impassioned public comment would begin from residents of Cranford, Westfield and Garwood.

"Union County has limited authority in this matter. The courts have allowed the state's Board of Public Utilities to supersede local control when a project is deemed necessary for service, convenience and welfare of the public," said Freeholder Kowalski. "In this case, PSE&G has failed to make the case that the project will improve the health and safety of our residents and the environment in which we all live."

"And therefore, the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders stands strong with our municipal leaders and concerned residents," she added.

Freeholder Kowalski would then go on to state that the Freeholders' expectations from PSE&G include justifying "its reasons for not running its power lines more safely and effectively underground and in different locations, such as along existing rail lines, and to explore any other options to keep the lines away from residences and businesses."

Additionally, Ms. Kowalski and the other Freeholders expect PSE&G to "maintain an open dialogue with the body and its municipal partners," along with considering other preservatives for the power poles. She also implored PSE&G to inform citizens of any potential hazard posed by the project and said a copy of this resolution would be distributed to the Board of Public Utilities, their state Senate and Assembly delegation, their municipal partners and PSE&G.

The utility or power line at the center of the issue is the high-voltage 69kV. According to PSE&G's website, the high-voltage power line in question is a part of the "69kV Statewide Initiative" and has the purpose of delivering "safe, reliable electric service to its customers." The webpage continues, "New Jersey has experienced tremendous commercial

and residential growth. As businesses and residents use more electricity, it is our responsibility to reinforce, upgrade, and in many cases replace, our electric transmission infrastructure to keep up with that demand."

In addition to the Freeholder support communicated by Ms. Kowalski, Thursday's meeting included an outpouring of concern from residents who do not want these high-voltage power lines running through their neighborhoods and business areas.

Richard Hurley of Cranford was among those in attendance who addressed the Freeholders and the public Thursday night.

"PSE&G expects us to accept significantly-reduced safety and property values so they can provide cheap electricity and enhance their own profits. In reality, we are the ones who are going to be bearing the costs of cheaper electricity for everyone else," said Mr. Hurley.

"The rest of the county and the state get a free ride as those of us who are impacted pay the cost," Mr. Hurley said. "This board needs to do anything it can within its power to make sure the cost is spread fairly among all your constituents."

David Krieger, a Westfield resident, also took the opportunity to speak to the Freeholders.

"PSE&G's initial and now scrapped 69kV route was set to run past my house. That route, which zig-zagged through a wholly residential neighborhood, made no sense," said Mr. Krieger. "It went directly past Edison Middle School, our town pool and our football stadium."

"An impassioned group of concerned citizens formed No Monster Power Lines Westfield," he added. "We did everything we could in opposition, including gathering 2,500 signatures in an online petition and encouraging everyone to speak out at the Westfield Town Council (meeting)," said Mr. Krieger.

"While I'm grateful the initial route in Westfield has been put to rest, I believe, like our friends in No High Voltage Cranford, the most harm these projects cause are in residential neighborhoods," Mr. Krieger said.

Commissioner Mary O'Connor, a member of the Cranford Township Committee, also spoke to the Freeholders, joining many Cranford residents she represents on her township's five-person governing body.

"I believe there is strength in numbers, and I think the municipalities joining with the Freeholder Board increases our chances of cautiously optimistic change in the route and process with PSE&G," said Commissioner O'Connor. "When people come together and make their voices heard, they have a larger chance of affecting change than by staying quiet. This is a really good example of the government process at work."

Bramnick Town Hall

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"Garwood is a Democratic majority township with Democratic leaders. So is Cranford. Why do these leaders not press Democratic legislators?" Mountain-side resident J.D. Bryden asked.

Mr. Bramnick responded that the reason these local officials do not press state leaders in their party is because of the threat of having one's political career limited for going against senior Democratic leaders.

Mr. Bramnick discussed 10 pieces of legislation limiting high-density housing that the "Democratic Trenton majority" has not supported, making the bills "Dracula bills."

"Dracula bills never see the light of day," the Assemblyman said, referring to the Democratic majority or committees not letting the alternative affordable-housing bills be discussed, voted upon or approved.

Mr. Bramnick has proposed legislation, A-1648, that he said "forces the state and courts to give primary consideration to a municipality's current population size, infrastructure, water and

sewer capacities, school class sizes and school services, impact on municipal services such as ambulance services, fire departments, police departments, public transportation and traffic."

Mr. Bramnick said many proposed "bills, discussions and committee work" reframing affordable-housing obligations have "never seen the light of day."

The assemblyman also said A-1650/AC-R79 would eliminate builder's remedy lawsuits that allow developers to sue a municipality, paving the way for them to build numerous units on a small parcel of land.

"Builder's remedy lawsuits have prompted numerous municipalities to agree to high-density builds," Mr. Bramnick said.

He also said that the "Ensure municipal zoning sovereignty" bill, A-1646, "provides municipalities with a defense against the unfunded housing mandates to stop additional development by focusing on redevelopment of existing properties."

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