



Courtesy of Michelle Stavrou/cranfordnj.org
SHOPPING CRANFORD...Shoppers enjoy Cranford's Sip & Shop event held Friday night in downtown Cranford. Proceeds from the event benefitted the Cranford Woman's Club's Philanthropic and Scholarship Fund.

BOE Reappoints Personnel, Hears Strategic Plan Update

By ROBYN ORR-GIOFFRE
Specially Written for The Westfield Leader

CRANFORD — The board of education (BOE) approved the reappointment of several positions district-wide at its meeting Monday night.

The board reappointed 23 administrative/supervisory personnel, 253 tenured-teaching personnel, 93 non-tenured teaching personnel, 36 building service personnel and 37 office and clerical personnel.

Additional tenured certified staff reappointments include two guidance counselors, six nurses, four occupational therapists, three psychologists, two academic coaches, four social workers, four media specialists, three faculty members in charge of Pathways to Excellence and two learning disabilities teacher consultants.

In other board business, Superintendent of Schools Scott Rubin, Ed.D., reported to the board that an update on the strategic planning process went out to the community two to three weeks ago.

The Cranford Public School District successfully launched its 2018-2023 Strategic Planning Initiative in February.

The purpose of the strategic planning is to come together as a community for a three-fold purpose. The first is to examine and identify current strengths, challenges and opportunities; the second is to determine a desired future for the district, and the third is to formulate goals and actionable steps to achieve goals and, ultimately, realize a vision for the district.

According to Superintendent Rubin, the Strategic Council has put together a draft of a mission/vision and four goal statements. This information was sent out to the community for feedback, and while feedback has been "overwhelmingly positive," some suggestions were made.

As the district moves forward with the process, the Council is "engaging in the action planning part" and the administrative team is starting to create an action plan, according to the superintendent.

The retirement of Barbara Narus, teacher of Family Consumer Sciences at Cranford High School, was approved by the board. Superintendent Rubin thanked Ms. Narus for her years of service and commented, "it takes a special teacher" to motivate students the way she has.

The next board of education meeting will take place on Monday, May 21, at 7:30 p.m.

Artwork

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
at Lincoln School to discuss the demolition process along with any risks it may impose.

Councilwoman Sara Todisco said she had received correspondence from Russo Development attorney Christopher Minks that the demolition will be suspended until after the school year. Ms. Todisco said Mr. Minks had mentioned the gesture was done "to be a good neighbor" and not because the air "will be hazardous."

Ms. Todisco said she felt compelled to share the information with the board. More information will be available to the board and the public at the May 30 meeting, she said. Ms. Todisco said she was representing herself as a resident and a councilwoman at the school board meeting and not all the specific opinions of Mayor Lombardo or the borough council.

School fundraisers are something the board finds to be a positive for the students and the community, stated Ms. Roland. However, a procedure when proposing or leading a fundraiser must be followed, she stated. The procedure includes proposing the idea to Principal Mary Emmons and she then will follow procedure by notifying Superintendent Quigley. The superintendent will have the fundraiser approved by the board of education, stated Ms. Roland.

Ms. Roland said she understands how impassioned parents and students who care "a lot about others and the community" can get "excited and lost in the process."



Paul Lachenauer for The Westfield Leader
TRY IT, YOU'LL LIKE IT ...These women sample the appetizers at Spice Bazaar during Westfield's Girls' Day And Night out last Thursday. The event was sponsored by the Downtown Westfield Corporation.

Board of Adjustment

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

two-and-a-half-story requirement was created to limit "McMansion-type homes" with overdeveloped third-story peaks.

David and Anne-Marie Mora, of 649 Maple Street, were unanimously approved to construct an addition and a new front porch. Variances were required as ordinance allows a building coverage with a deck and porch of 24 percent. The applicant proposed a deck and porch with a 24.6-percent building coverage.

Mr. Benacchio said he would support the application with an agreement the porch must remain open.

Mr. Masciale stated that often when additions are made to homes and porches are added, the board is most concerned with neighbors' streetscape views. In this particular application, he said there was no hindrance to neighbors' views.

Applicants Kyungsuk Bae and Peilin Wu, of 708 Boulevard, were unanimously approved to construct an addition with a variance needed allowing a 27-foot continuous wall when ordinance allows a 25-foot continuous wall.

Mr. Benacchio said he realized the continuous side wall is two feet over what is allowed. The applicants have attempted an addition to work with the prevailing architecture and "not necessarily succeeding it further" than "what they were given to work with."

Matthew Quinn and Virginia Quinn, of 914 Mountain View Circle, were approved to construct a one-story addition. The addition would allow direct access from the backyard into the kitchen, stated Mr. Quinn.

Their architect, Carol C. Hewitt, stated that the addition would have little impact on the neighborhood, but would have a big impact for the Quinns. Ms. Hewitt stated that the addition would cover up some shrubs and an existing outdoor patio.

Mr. Masciale said the addition is adding 114 square feet into the rear yard.

Mr. Fortino said when discussing an addition for approval or disapproval, one must consider how aesthetically altered a structure will become. He stated that in this application, "the difference is not even noticeable."

Mark Dow, of 247 Prospect Street, was unanimously approved to construct a new two-car garage and two dormer additions.

Clark Qiang Zhu, of 931 Grandview Avenue, was unanimously denied permission to construct a new single-family dwelling utilizing a portion of the existing structure. Mr. Zhu sought 12 variances to complete the project.

Mr. Zhu said he "wants to do right for his son" and continue to live in Westfield. He said economically the addition makes sense versus purchasing a separate home.

Mr. Masciale said the applicant would be able to reappear with a new application provided the new petition is "drastically different" than the one that was denied.

"I'm shocked," said board member James Kelly. Mr. Kelly stated that a licensed architect should not suggest Mr. Zhu appear in front of the board with "the application as it was proposed."

Lawsuit

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

vices, Mayor Mirabelli said. The council also agreed to increase the 2017 budget by \$30,000 to pay for removal of debris caused by recent snowstorm activity.

A \$5,380,350 Bond Anticipation Note was extended another year, and increased from last year by about just under a million dollars to pay for further infrastructure costs such as road resurfacing, manhole repairs, and repairs to retaining walls at the brook, Mayor Mirabelli told The Leader.

The borough also is going to request bids for a snow and ice removal contract. Parties interested in bidding can contact the Department of Public Works for the equipment needed to fulfill the work, Councilman Robert Messlers said.

A section of Partridge Run Road is to be resurfaced as part of a grant by the state Department of Transportation. The cost, \$240,000, was appropriated by the adoption of an ordinance.

The borough also has received a \$50,000 grant from the County of Union. Additionally, the board of education received a Level The Playing Field Grant for \$25,000 from the county, Mayor Mirabelli announced.

The Mountainside Rescue Squad is celebrating its 80th anniversary, and the borough has proclaimed the week of May 20 to 26 Emergency Medical Services Week in Mountainside.

Pastor Christopher Belden of the Community Presbyterian Church of Mountainside has announced his retirement as pastor after serving the church for 32 years. The mayor gave the pastor a proclamation.

The developer of the area known as the Barnes Tract has run into some "issues with the sewer connections" in its site plan and is improving the water mains on Mountain Avenue, Mayor Mirabelli told the public. The developer is expected to present its site plan to the planning board once the issues are corrected. The property is to be developed for minimum of 32 units of which six will be affordable.

Following the public meeting, the council entered into a closed session to discuss litigation, contracts and personnel matters.

Garwood Mayor Schedules Town Meeting On Redevelopment

While a resident has recently raised concerns about air quality at the Petro/Casale cleanup site, I assure you the developer has complied with all state and federal regulations and there are no air quality issues. I understand the concerns about this matter, however, they need to be addressed by licensed professionals who are qualified to answer them, not by me or members of the Council. I have arranged for a Town Hall meeting at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, May 30, at the Lincoln School, to alleviate your concerns.

This redevelopment project has been in the works for about 10 years. The contamination issue at this site was known and previously disclosed as required by New Jersey law. The Borough Council declared the area in need of redevelopment and adopted a redevelopment plan. Our Planning Board approved a site plan after extensive public hearings, conditioned on the developer obtaining all proper state and federal approvals. Neither the Council nor the Planning Board has oversight of, or authority over, environmental cleanups as state and federal authorities preempt local government. Russo Development dis-

closed all required information about site contaminants to the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection (NJ DEP) and the federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) during an extensive four-phase application process, found on the EPA website and previously linked on Garwood's website.

The party responsible for ensuring proper environmental cleanup occurs is the Licensed Site Remediation Professional (LSRP), who is licensed by NJDEP, and who can face criminal and civil penalties if false findings are made. The LSRP is on site, submits reports to NJDEP and may require procedural changes or additional testing during cleanup to comply with safety regulations.

The work Russo is currently undertaking is asbestos remediation, along with utility disconnections, not demolition. While there is a local permit required for this remediation of removing asbestos it is not part of the Uniform Construction Code enforced at the local level. Cranford must simply ensure that all the required paperwork is submitted. An air quality monitor is on site at all times that asbestos removal is ongoing.

Russo Development submitted applications for required permits to the Cranford Building Department, however, these will not be issued until asbestos remediation is complete. Russo has projected actual demolition to begin in late June or early July. Because of contamination embedded in the steel structure of the Casale/Petro buildings, demolition will be done "by hand." This does not mean literally by hand, but that all demolition will be controlled with smaller equipment (no wrecking ball) as required by NJ DEP and EPA to control dust.

While neither the EPA, DEP or the developer is required by law to notify adjacent property owners, I understand resident concerns on this issue. I am in discussions with Russo personnel about additional measures that they can take during this process to inform Garwoodians of the cleanup actions being taken on site. We will also discuss communication plans and updating the borough website with our department heads to keep our residents informed.

Again, I appreciate your concerns about this matter. Please come to the town hall meeting set for May 30 at the Lincoln School at 7 p.m. to address all concerns.

Charles Lombardo,
Mayor of Garwood

Ice Rink

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

said during the week the rink will begin operation at 3:15 p.m., ceasing operation at 9 p.m.

On weekends, the rink will begin operations at 8 a.m., remaining open until 9 p.m. on Saturdays and closing at 8 p.m. on Sundays, stated Mr. Anderson.

Ms. Mackey said neighboring residents "voiced concerns" with overflow parking on residential streets, idling buses, and decreased pedestrian safety with more traffic created by the rink.

Mr. Anderson said improvements will be made to the "smaller parking lot," noting that the lot will remain designated for handicapped parking. The "larger parking lot" with 48 current parking spaces used for baseball league games in the summer will be utilized for hockey parking, stated Mr. Anderson.

Mr. Anderson stated he believes buses will be minimal, but if they are used for transportation the buses will park in the same 48-space parking lot as other guests. Bus companies and the school district's bus drivers must be notified idling is not permitted, stated Mr. Anderson.

Mr. Anderson said the outdoor rink was originally going to be open on all sides; however, concessions were made to enclose several sides.

Ms. Mackey stated that the oppor-

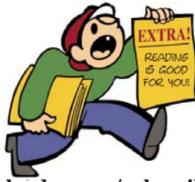
tunity helps leverage the community's assets by bringing new opportunities at "little or no costs to residents."

Union Sports will bear responsibility for all utility costs, garbage removal and snow removal, stated Mr. Anderson. Other benefits to the surrounding community include crosswalks being added and repairs to sidewalks on both sides of Chestnut Street.

"The improvements to these areas will benefit the community in perpetuity; the residents are really going to welcome the improvements once everything is laid out," Ms. Mackey said.

Ms. Mackey said the discussion "remains a fluid process," meaning continued resident feedback is welcome with details being finalized to be the most beneficial and resourceful to the community.

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