



Mayor's Message

First, on behalf of the Council and Fanwood residents, I want to thank Councilman Bill Populus for his six years of dedicated service while serving as a member of the Borough Council. Bill retired from the Council on March 1. He was Council President last year, and most notably in recent years was Chairman of the Administration and Finance Committee. Bill was an excellent Councilman. We will miss his wise counsel and his ability to work well with everyone.

We will also remember his motto of "Let's do what's best for Fanwood." We wish Bill and his wife Marilyn good health and nothing but the best in their future endeavors.

When you read this, Spring will have arrived! Be on the lookout for capital projects also springing forth! We are presently going out to bid on the Hetfield Avenue bridge and approach improvements, replacement of sidewalks damaged by Borough trees, lining of the most critical sanitary sewers, and drainage and paving improvements behind the stores on the west side of Martine Avenue. We fully expect to go out for bids very soon for street lamps, sidewalk and streetscaping on Martine and South Avenues. This work will be funded by County and State grants received last year. In February we received notice from NJDOT that Fanwood was among the 35 municipalities to receive grants for bikeways. Our grant will be used for a bike and pedestrian bridge adjacent to Sheelen's Crossing bridge, and for an internal Fanwood bikeway system.

Spring also brings our 11th annual April Earth Day in Fanwood. Director of Public Works Ray Manfra and his Clean Community Committee are busy making plans for this year's event on Saturday, April 15. Volunteers should assemble at 8:30 a.m. in the south train station parking lot. Earth Day T-shirts, work gloves, and garbage bags will be furnished to the volunteers who will be divided into teams and assigned specific public areas to clean up. Some of our merchants will furnish refreshments afterwards. The event is funded by a NJDEP grant. This is an excellent opportunity for families and groups to spend some quality time together while helping the environment. Hope to see you there!

Louis C. Jung

Watson Road Pocket Park Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

What do you do with a piece of borough-owned property a little less than an acre, having some local historical significance, and positioned almost entirely in the backyards of a neighborhood?

That was the question and the challenge posed to several Councils from the Borough of Fanwood.

The property located at 130 Watson Road was the site of the old Fanwood Fire House built in 1897. According

to the *Fanwood Fire Company & Borough of Fanwood: A Pictorial History*, the land was purchased for \$250 from Henry E. Hall and a firehouse was built for the community. This building housed (at different times in Fanwood's history) not only the Fire Company but also the Rescue Squad and Police Department. Meetings of the Mayor and Council were conducted in this

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

The Carriage House

One of the structures of historical importance in the Borough is the building housing the Patricia Kuran Cultural Arts Center which previously had been called the Carriage House. The structure once housed the carriages, the sleighs and the horses which served The Homestead, a popular country resort for as many as fifty guests before the turn of the twentieth century. The Homestead had spacious porches and verandas, tennis and croquet courts, and tidy gardens in its five acres of



grass and lush foliage. A graceful horseshoe-shaped driveway lined with majestic trees provided access from Martine Ave. Our Municipal Headquarters, our firehouse, and our rescue squad facilities now occupy the site of The Homestead. The Carriage house is its only surviving remains.

For more than fifteen years the Philathalians theater group had used the structure as a theater for their annual productions. With the recent disbanding of the Philathalians whose origins date back to the mid 1930s, the potential uses of the facility are undergoing a reassessment. Its designation as the Patricia Kuran Cultural Arts Center envisions a wider range of uses. Last year it was the site of poetry readings, a cultural festival, and on Valentine's Day 2000 it was the site of a concert by a New Jersey vocalist.

In recent years over one

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Watson Road Pocket Park Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

building. When the present Borough Hall was built in the 1970s and the Fire Company was added to the complex in the 1980s, the old Fire House was demolished because it was in desperate need of repair.

Several proposals were considered for this vacant property. A study for possible use for senior citizen housing was conducted. It was determined that the property was not large enough to be economically feasible. Next, NJ Transit studied the site for possible expansion of parking facilities for the train station. The idea was rejected for a number of reasons particularly the daily invasiveness of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. The next proposal was for the subdivision of the property into lots for development. The unusual configuration of the property would have necessitated the creation of a flag lot. Flag lots are not permitted by Fanwood zoning, thus it would have required a variance from the Zoning Board with no guarantee of approval.

Finally, in 1998, the Borough secured the assistance of the Union County Board of Chosen Freeholders who had set aside grant money for the purpose of acquiring and/or improving parks. Fanwood applied for and received a \$25,000 grant that was matched with Borough funds.

In order to learn how this property could be beautified, students from Union County College were invited to submit suggestions and designs for the park. The ideas and the visions of these students were invaluable in demonstrating the myriad of possibilities that existed for this .97 acre of land. It also highlighted unanticipated costs of renovating and landscaping the area.

The Council applied for a second grant of \$100,000 which would be matched with in-kind services of public works and the efforts of the borough engineer. Happily, this second grant from the County was also secured.

With a budget not to exceed \$250,000, a Pocket Park Committee was formed by former Mayor Maryanne Connelly. Two representatives from Council, the borough engineer, the Director of Public Works, and a representative from the neighborhood all were part of this original group. A member of the Recreation Commission was later asked to join the committee.

After numerous meetings, the original concept of the students was simplified primarily due to prohibitive costs, a desire to have a minimal amount of maintenance and to maximize usefulness. The theme of the park design focused on passive enjoyment rather than an active recreational facility. It was seen as an extension of the cultural activities planned at the Patricia Kuran Cultural Arts Center: a place to have a picnic or read a book; a destination on a walk; a pastoral setting for small scale outdoor events.

Work began. The property was cleaned and cleared of dead trees and underbrush. The L-shaped lot was designed with a rectangular green area at the rear of the property and a parking lot that would accommodate seventeen vehicles. A black chain link fence surrounds the perimeter of the park to define its boundaries and protect the privacy of the surrounding homes. A buffer of shrubbery is planned for along the fence. The interior of the park will be an open and grassy meadow with a path around it. On the other side of the path will be areas for benches and lights. These design

accents will be Victorian and consistent with the rest of the anticipated lighting improvements in the community. Since the Carriage House dates to the 1880's, it seems appropriate that the benches and lights be reminiscent of this period. A sprinkler system is planned to preserve and maintain the plantings.

Currently, the Pocket Park Committee is in the final stages of project completion. In addition to the original members, Mayor Lou Jung will add a representative from the Shade Tree Commission to the group. Several items have yet to be finalized. These include the material for the walkway and the selection of the landscaping design. Since the grant money comes with a built-in deadline, completion of the project should be accomplished by the end of August. If all goes according to schedule, we hope to officially open and dedicate the Watson Road Pocket Park on Fanny Wood Day this September. It is our expectation that the vision of the original design will soon become the reality of this beautiful destination for present and future members of this community to enjoy.

This article was written by Karen M. Schurtz, the Chairwoman Pocket Park Committee Fanwood Borough Council

Expansion of South Side Parking Lot

In a commuter community such as Fanwood, assets must include railway access, station facilities, and adequate parking facilities. As more cars crowd our roads without commensurate increase in road capacity, more commuters are resorting to rail lines to get to their places of business. According to N.J. Transit official Bob Fitzpatrick, Fanwood has a daily average of 765 east bound boardings and 90 westbound. In recent years New Jersey communities with rail line access to metropolitan areas have seen



a sharp increase in real estate values.

Recently New Jersey Transit purchased property adjacent to the southside railroad parking lot. The property was purchased

with the expressed purpose of increasing the number of rental parking spaces which are fully subscribed for every month. The property has been vacated by its former occupant, Scotchwood Auto, and the structures on the site will be demolished to provide an additional 55 spaces to the 138 spaces now existing on the southside. The odd shape of the 15, 684 square foot property was caused by the arching railroad siding that once marked its eastern boundary.

In the existing parking area on the southside, fifty of the 138 spaces are on NJ Transit-owned property and 88 are on property belonging to Fanwood. The northside parking area, all of which is owned by Fanwood, has 99 monthly permit spaces and 34 daily

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

The Carriage House

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

hundred thousand dollars of grant money was spent on the construction of a rest room in the building, a new roof, window replacement, a new staircase to the upper level, some electrical upgrading, a fire suppression sprinkler system, and painting of the exterior. A kitchenette facility that was installed by the Philathalians has been removed to provide for handicap access to the rest room. A circulating hot air system provides heat for the building, but the board and batten exterior construction complicates the matter of installing insulation in the side walls.

With the completion of the pocket park, which is located directly across Watson Road, it is expected that the two facilities will play complimentary roles in some outdoor events. At the behest of the Mayor Jung a four person committee consisting of members from the Cultural Arts Committee and the Historic Preservation Committee will make recommendations to the Council on what the best practical uses of the building should be.

Mr. Mark Hewitt, an architect retained by the Borough with expertise in the preservation of historical structures, indicated that the lack of documentation on the structure's origins and its various stages of development might handicap an effort to include it in the register of national historic places. The Carriage House cannot be restored to its original status as a shelter for horses, carriages and sleighs that served The Homestead in a bygone era. Its rehabilitation as a public place with a range of uses still to be determined will be a constructive step to preserve an important piece of the Borough's historical legacy.

Expansion of South Side Parking Lot

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2

spaces for which the fee is \$2. There is a satellite parking lot with 40 additional spaces behind the stores on Martine Ave. on Borough owned property bordering on the former Dean Oil land. The town collects an \$18 a monthly permit fee from Fanwood residents and \$30 from non-residents who come from as many as nine neighboring communities. The Fanwood Police Department administers the collection of the fees and the issuance of the monthly permits. Acquisition of daily permits is accomplished with a vending device on the northside site.

In a partnership agreement, the Borough is working with NJ Transit on a plan for integrating the former Scotchwood Automotive site with appropriate lighting and landscaping with the existing Southside facility. The plan, which will carry no cost to Fanwood tax payers, is expected to be compatible with the Fanwood long range master plan as well as with efforts being made for the revitalization plan for the downtown area. The completion date of the project awaits the finalization of a new agreement between N.J. Transit and the Borough.

Commuting via railroad in our area predates the official formation of the Borough in the nineteenth century, and while dependence on the railroad for long distance travel has practically vanished, the demand for rail line commuting continues increasing. The expansion of the Southside parking facility addresses this increase while complementing other Fanwood needs and plans.

Fanwood Plans Activities To Celebrate Earth Day

Under the direction of Chairman Raymond Manfra, the Fanwood Clean Community Committee has announced that the Borough's annual clean up will take place on Saturday, April 15, 2000. Volunteers will assemble at 8:30 a.m. at the south train station parking area and will be assigned to clean specific areas. The work should be completed by noon.

Earth day T-shirts, work gloves and garbage bags will be furnished to all participants. Generous merchants will supply refreshments at the conclusion of the work.

The Committee is working in conjunction with the Fanwood Department of Public Works and the program is funded

through a grant from the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

Volunteers are asked to notify DPW Director Raymond Manfra in advance by calling (908)-322-7404. Walk-ins are also welcomed.



Long Range Planning

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Leslie Cunningham, and Helen Ling. The committee is assisted by River Hills Consultant, Brenda VanderMuelen from Holland, MI.

The process of completing the long-range plan consists of three general steps. The first step involves information gathering. Since Fall, the committee has been gathering information related to Fanwood demographics, safety and crime, public works, education, volunteerism, strategic alliances and governmental administration. The committee will continue its data gathering looking at issues related to recreation, transportation, economic development, etc. Upon completion of the data-gathering phase, the committee will analyze the information and begin to draft governing assumptions.

These assumptions include how to address the growing demands of an aging population, how best to address the business needs of the both the residents and business owners to create a mutually compatible business district, the effects of the proposed additions of light rail transit, etc.

Preliminary results of the committee's work will be presented to Fanwood citizens through a series of focus groups to ensure that the committee is concentrating on the critical issues facing Fanwood. The finished plan will provide recommendations regarding Fanwood's future based on localized trends and available community resources.

The Fanwood Memorial Library

1999 was a real watershed year for the Fanwood Memorial Library. On September 18 the library joined the ranks of the fully computerized as we publicly "went live" with our new automated circulation system, becoming a full-circulating member of the Libraries of Middlesex Automation Consortium.



Kudos go to the staff and to all others involved for all their hard work and for a smooth and successful implementation of a long, large and complicated project. Along with the improvements to the outside of the building, this takes us one step closer to meeting the goals of the three-year plan to upgrade all aspects of the library operation.

The first phase focused on staff reorganization, the automation of all library services and providing Internet and computer access for the staff and the public. The final phase, undertaken in 2000 with an eye toward completion in the fall, will see some large scale interior renovation and a renewed and ongoing focus on service, collection development and programming.

In the meantime, we've unveiled our new Video collection in the adult department started with a generous donation from the Friends of the Library (who are always looking for new members). Our audio book collection is growing again with many new unabridged additions. The Young Adult collection is beginning to take shape under the direction of Kerry Maione and all three of these areas will continue to grow in our newly designed space.

Come on in and see what there is here for you and take advantage of one of your best community resources, and visit us on the web at www.lmxac.org/fanwood. – **Dan Weiss, Director**

Long Range Planning

The Long-Range Planning Committee in the Borough of Fanwood was one of three groups formed, along with the Downtown Revitalization Committee and the Volunteer and Communication Committee, as a result of work by the Citizens Advisory Committee created almost three years ago. The purpose of the Long Range Planning group is to create a Long-Range Plan for the Borough of Fanwood to help guide the decisions of our elected and administrative leaders for the next three to five years.

Comprised of diverse representation of community members the committee consists of Donna M. Dolce, Chair, Carol Wood, Co-Chair, Willie Green, Justin Green, Elaine McManus, Richard Bard, Ted Frankenbaugh, Randy Doliber,
CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

Fanwood Borough Hall
75 North Martine Avenue
Fanwood, NJ 07023

Fanwood Community News

BULK RATE
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
FANWOOD, NJ
PERMIT NO. 16

INSIDE

- Earth Day
- The Carriage House
- Pocket Park
- Commuter Parking Lot

Our Neighbors
Fanwood, NJ 07023