

RAHWAY News Record

New Jersey's Oldest Weekly Newspaper—Established 1822

FREE PUBLIC LIBRARY
RAHWAY, NEW JERSEY

VOL. 167 NO. 34

RAHWAY, NEW JERSEY, THURSDAY, AUGUST 24, 1989

USPS 454-160

25 CENTS

Heated debate erupts over quality of city's public housing

Esposito cites tenant complaints; McGrath bristles in defense of 'one of the best housing programs in N.J.'

by Pat Di Maggio

An attempt by a councilman to censure Rahway's Housing Authority met with heated debate by other members of the council and the executive director of the authority.

Michael Esposito introduced a resolution at the August 14 meeting of Rahway's Municipal Council asking the Rahway Housing Authority (RHA) to satisfy complaints of tenants at 224 and 250 West Grand Avenue. Esposito said he has been

receiving calls from tenants of the senior citizen housing project complaining of conditions.

The resolution included a list of 37 different areas marked for improvement, including the inspection of apartments for cleanliness, more efficient supervision of maintenance operations, the installation of wheelchair ramps and handrails for handicapped residents, as well as suggestions for aesthetic improvements such as the planting of grass in the courtyard and the sweeping of sidewalks.

The list also contained re-

quests for a more proper screening of tenants and asked for a show of more respect towards senior citizens.

Jack McGrath, executive director of Rahway's Housing Authority, was incensed over Esposito's charges. "I admit I'm angry," said McGrath. "We've put in the position of defending one of the best housing programs in New Jersey, perhaps in the nation."

McGrath said the authority has recently submitted an application for a grant of \$640,000 to be used for

repairs, including new roofing and handicapped access, the rehabilitation of the community room, new bathrooms, a new boiler plant and new lighting. He said the Department of Housing and Urban Development is expected to make the award soon.

"We provide housing for

nearly 10 percent of the population," said McGrath, "and not one cent comes from the tax bill. I admit we are not running a country club, but we provide the best in public housing. We have been accused of not respecting our tenants. We take out their garbage and hang their curtains. The only thing we don't do is whistle 'Dixie.'"

Councilman James Cadigan introduced a substitute resolution commending the Housing Authority for its outstanding record of service to the community and condemning exploitation of housing services and programs by anyone at the federal or local level for personal or political gain.

In the face of the substitute resolution, Esposito defended his position. "I follow through on every complaint that comes into my office," he said. "I am against this commendation. My questions have not been answered, and I've met with profanity. I am trying to make life more pleasant in one of our older complexes, and I've met with resistance from everyone I've had to deal with."

The substitute resolution commending the authority was approved on a vote of five in favor, with Council members Michael Esposito, Katherine Fulcomer and William Wuick opposed. Council President Walter McLeod was absent.

Mayor warns of outside agitators spreading misinformation

Mayor Daniel L. Martin has issued a warning to Rahway citizens to "be on the alert" for outside agitators descending on our community spreading a lot of misinformation about resource recovery.

Martin said that now that the official public hearing date for permits for the Rahway resource recovery facility has been set, "there are professional foes of resource recovery who travel all over the state and country to try to stir up opposition to resource recovery as a way of raising money for themselves."

"One group which has come into Rahway is the N.J. Environmental Federation, which has taken out a permit to solicit donations door-to-door," the Mayor said. "The citizens of Rahway have a right to know that many leading N.J. environmentalists have discredited this group and the misinformation tactics they use, including Phyllis Elston, who resigned as Executive Director of the N.J. Environmental Lobby in protest over the

misinformation tactics of the Federation, which is a member of the Lobby; Ian Walker, former head of the Sierra Club and a Director of the Environmental Lobby, who resigned for the same reason; and noted environmentalists Assemblywoman Maureen Ogden and John Bennett, who went so far as to disavow this group's endorsement because of its tactics."

"In short," Martin said, "I'm alerting the people of Rahway to be skeptical about anything this group says and about their requests for donations. They're here to exploit our community and our citizens, pure and simple."

Martin indicated "there will be other groups coming into Rahway also, because we are now the focus of attention. While I respect everyone's right to an opinion on resource recovery or anything else, I intend to be vigilant in alerting the citizens of Rahway whenever I see improper tactics being used or misinformation being spread," the Mayor said.



Frank McSweeney

McSweeney succumbs to cancer

Frank McSweeney, the jolly school bus driver and charitable entertainer who qualified almost as a living legend among school children and others in our area, died Monday (Aug. 21) at Union Hospital after a bout with cancer. He was 66.

Earlier this year, McSweeney, a Linden resident, had been evicted from his apartment because of alleged damage done by his animals. He drove a school bus for the Rahway Bus Company. His mother died just last month.

While in the hospital McSweeney had been deeply concerned about the fate of the trained animals he used in his entertainment routines, including his famous blind dog, "Keller."

So far, the animals are in safe hands in the Elizabeth apartment McSweeney rented just before entering the hospital. Members of the Telephone Pioneers of America are caring for them. [Watch for obit in next week's paper.]

Special Board of Ed meeting rescheduled

A Special Meeting of the Rahway Board of Education will be held Tuesday, September 5 at 7 p.m. in the Louis R. Rizzo Board Meeting Room in the Intermediate School. The meeting had originally been scheduled for August 22.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss personnel matters, which will be done in closed session.

Any action regarding discussion will take place in public session at the conclusion of the closed session, or at a later date.

Y Schedules Softball Marathon

The 5th annual Rahway YMCA Softball Marathon will be held at Madden Field in Rahway starting at noon on Saturday, September 9 and running through noon on Sunday, September 10.

Forty-eight teams are needed to play softball and help raise funds to assist the YMCA to continue to serve the community and improve its facilities. For further information, call the Rahway Y at 388-0057.

Roundtree publicly lauded for heroism

Mayor, council hail Rahway man's life-saving action

by Pat Di Maggio

A Rahway resident was commended by the Municipal Council last week for his quick action in a life-threatening situation.

On January 4 of this year, Walter Roundtree was on a routine service call at a residence on East Scott Avenue. While there, a 13-month-old child stopped breathing and the mother was unsuccessful in her attempts to revive the child. Roundtree quickly took command of the situation, applied pressure to the child's back and dislodged a penny. His actions resulted

in restoring the child's breathing.

Mr. Roundtree's actions reflected the highest standards of human compassion and concern, according to a resolution awarded in his honor. Rahway's mayor and City Council commended Walter Roundtree for his courage, skill and quick action in a life-threatening situation and publicly honored him on behalf of the community.

Recycle Schedule

The following dates for recyclable items only. Regular garbage collections will continue on the present schedule.

If recyclable items are not picked up on the scheduled date, you may call the "Recycling Hotline": 753-7276.

Please put recyclable items at curbside on the following dates:

West of Railroad Tracks
Mondays
September 18; October 2, 16, 30; November 13 & 27; December 11.

East of Railroad Tracks
Tuesdays
September 5 & 19; October 3, 17, 31; November 14 & 28; December 12 & 26.

There will be no pick-up on Labor Day, September 4, or Christmas Day, December 25.



FOOD DISTRIBUTION of government commodities to the needy took place at Rahway's JFK Center on Saturday, August 19. The packages consisted of canned pork, butter, flour, honey, cornmeal, split peas, peanut butter and a variety of beans. The distribution was made by the Rahway Community Action Food Bank Committee. Pictured from the left are recipient Fred West; David Brown, Board Chairman of the Community Action Organization; and Chairpersons Dillard Laffitte and Lillian Wilder.

Board of Ed accepts grant, gift

Cassio memorial gift to benefit deserving athlete

by Pat Di Maggio

Rahway's Board of Education accepted a grant, awarded a contract for school brochures, and accepted a gift in memory of a former student at the regular board meeting held on August 15.

The board accepted a grant from the State Dept. of Education, Drug-Free Schools & Communities Act, in the amount of \$12,816, for the 1989-90 school year.

A contract was awarded to Shore News, Rahway, in the amount of \$4750 to print and mail Adult School brochures per their low bid received August 8.

The board also accepted a \$500 gift in memory of Michael Cassio, a graduate of Rahway High School who passed away five years ago, to be awarded to a deserving athlete who will be pursuing a college education.

In other business the board:

- Reappointed James Ladley as assistant girls basketball coach at \$3687.

- Rescinded the appointments of Claudia Ahlstrom and Kerri Kober as basic skills math teachers at the High School.

- Accepted the resignation of Lauri Karakanas, special education teacher at Roosevelt School, and Debra Melao, math teacher at the High School.

- Appointed Mary Ellen Montini as a special education teacher at Roosevelt School at \$25,039.

- Appointed Joan Anderson as a basic skills-math teacher at the High School at \$24,770.

- Appointed Paul Yacyk as teacher-coordinator marketing education at the High School at \$26,702.

- Appointed Karen Kaslusky as a special education CORE teacher at the High School at \$26,050.

- Appointed Patricia Evanik as a special education teacher at the High School at \$26,016.

- Appointed Janet Rose as a science teacher at the High School at \$26,016.

- Reappointed Denise Addona as an elementary librarian at \$25,333.

- Appointed the following teaching staff members to extra service positions: Joseph Caggiano, junior class co-advisor, \$300; Angela Altillo, assistant band director, \$1400; Mary Moraes, freshman class co-advisor, \$300; Fred Kaczorowski, Intermediate School central detention, \$1650.

- Adjusted the salary of Victoria Robertson to \$27,253.

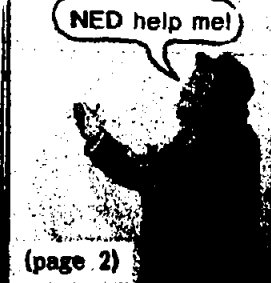
- Added Lena DeBenedetto to the substitute teachers list.

- Approved the participation of William Roesch in a training session for applied economics teachers on August 22 and 23 at a compensation of \$85 per day.
- Rescinded the appointment of Joseph Caggiano to the extra service position of High School freshman class co-advisor.

- Awarded transportation contracts to Breza Bus Service, Rahway.

- Approved the attendance of board members, the superintendent, assistant superintendent and the business administrator at the N.J. School Board Association Conference in Atlantic City on October 31 through November 3, including room expenses, and \$45 per diem for meals and other miscellaneous expenses.

- Approved the following tuition costs for the 1989-90 school year: K-8, \$5560; 9-12, \$5700; P.I., \$5600; E.D., \$6050; M.H., \$7540; Preschool Handicapped, \$5860.



(page 2)

DEP and opposition groups both distribute literature at incineration open house

by Pat Di Maggio

The City hosted an informational open house Tuesday to afford residents the opportunity to learn more about the proposed resource recovery facility to be built in Rahway.

Representatives of the Dept. of Environmental Protection (DEP) offered printed materials and charts and graphs to the public, and answered concerned residents' questions about the reliability and safety of the facility.

The Union County Utilities Authority made an application to the DEP proposing the construction and operation of a solid waste, mass-burning water-wal incinerator on a 22-acre site located on U.S. Route 1. The facility will service only communities in Union County, and will generate high pressure steam from the incineration of municipal and industrial wastes.

The facility will consist of three independent processing lines for the incineration of waste, the generation of steam, and the handling of process by-products.

The facility will operate 24 hours per day, 7 days per week.

Before the proposed realignment of Route 1 by the Dept. of Transportation, truck traffic will be routed through Inman Avenue and West Grand Avenue to Routes 1 and 9. Trucks will return via Patterson Street to Routes 1 and 9 to either Inman Avenue or Grand Avenue.

The proposed facility, designed by the Ogden Martin Company, has a maximum design capacity, on a continuous waste processing rate basis, of approximately 1440 tons per day. The following waste types are permitted for disposal: municipal waste (household

commercial and institutional); vegetative waste; animal and food processing waste; dry industrial waste (except for certain prohibited sub-categories).

The facility will use an average approximately 166,500 gallons per day of water from the City's water supply. Approximately 16,200 gallons per day of wastewater will be discharged to the Rahway Valley Sewerage Authority system.

Operations will result in the production of 440 tons-per-day of combined ash residue. Ash found to be non-hazardous is to be disposed of at the landfill in Elizabeth (to be constructed) or at a Linden landfill. If found to be hazardous, the residue will be disposed of at a facility licensed to accept hazardous materials.

The DEP says emissions from the proposed facility will not be in violation of any National Ambient Air Quality standards. "There will be on-line continuous emission monitoring," said Yogesh Dashi, of the Division of Solid Waste Management.

Members of the Concerned Citizens for the Environment, vocal opponents of the incinerator, also passed out informational materials to interested residents.

"Mass burn is the costliest and most polluting way to get rid of solid waste," stated a letter handed to residents. It was also indicated that Ogden Martin Company is responsible for the proposed facility.

Residents are encouraged to attend the open house on Tuesday, August 24, from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. at the City of Rahway, 1175 St. George Avenue, Rahway, N.J. 07065. For more information, call the City of Rahway at 388-0057.