

Allamuchy farmland bought in preservation bid

By ART CHARLTON

A piece of Warren County will stay forever green, as county and state officials yesterday enacted the county's first farmland preservation purchase and retired the development rights on nearly 600 acres in Allamuchy.

Two dairy farms owned by brothers Frank and James Gibbs will never be the site of houses, factories or commercial buildings, after the two accepted \$2.45 million for what their land would be worth if developed.

State Agriculture Secretary Arthur R. Brown Jr. and numerous state, county and township officials were on hand to complete the purchase, making Warren the seventh county to permanently protect agricultural land through buying and retiring development rights.

Standing in the hayloft of the shingle- and slate-roofed dairy barn dating from the 1930s, Gibbs family members, friends and officials watched as the brothers signed the paperwork to conclude the deal that has been in the works for more than 18 months.

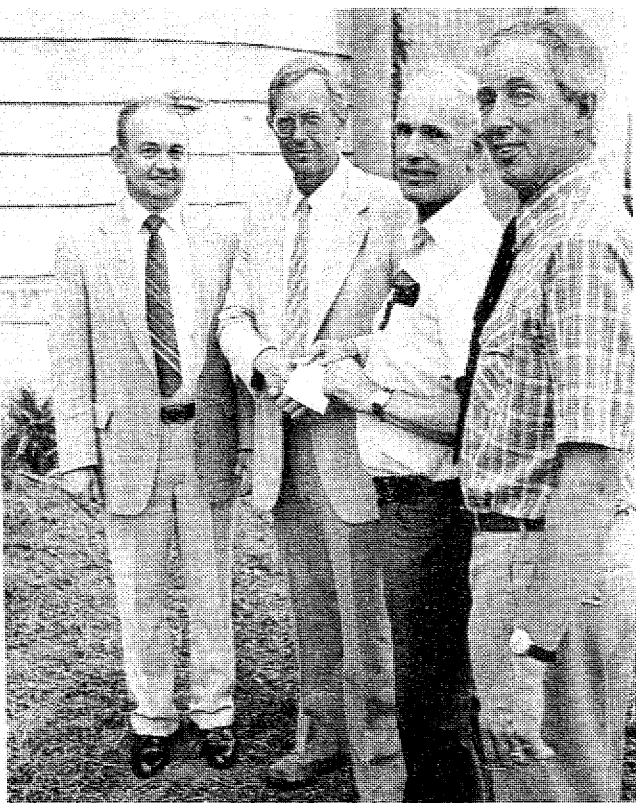
The state contributed \$1.33 million, or about 55 percent of the cost, while the rest came from money Warren freeholders have set aside in the county budget for farmland preservation.

Freeholder Director John Polhemus said it was important that land in Allamuchy, close to Route 80 and subject to development pressures, was protected for future agricultural use. Mayor Raymond Schroeder called for enrolling all Allamuchy farms in the program, adding, "We want to keep this state as green as we see it now."

The farm was selected by the county Agriculture Development Committee and state agriculture officials after the owners applied to the preservation program. In all, 35 other farms in New Jersey totaling more than 4,500 acres have been permanently protected through development easement purchases.

In the dairy business for five generations, the Gibbs—who keep 500 Holstein cows—also raise corn, soybeans, wheat and alfalfa on nearly 1,000 acres of their own and rented property.

Frank Gibbs said retiring the de-



Don Applegate, executive director of the State Agriculture Development Committee, left, and Warren County Freeholder Director John Polhemus, second from left, present a check to James and Frank Gibbs, right, for the county's first farmland preservation purchase

velopment rights on his family's land will be an asset to Allamuchy, noting, "You won't see housing" on the land or have any need in the future for expanding services such as schools and utilities.

Some of the money will be set aside for their retirement, while more than a third will go right back to the government for taxes. "That takes care of a pretty good chunk of it," Frank Gibbs said.

The Gibbs brothers explained they don't plan to retire yet and selling the development rights leaves the farm in better shape to continue in agriculture.

"We have a younger generation here interested in farming," Frank Gibbs said, referring to his two sons and one son of his brother who plan to continue the family farm.

"They're involved now," James Gibbs added. "This 600 acres can't change—won't change."

Frank Gibbs' sons Brant, 26, and Keith, 24, said they and their cousin James all back the move to keep the land permanently in agriculture.

Noting they are a closely knit family and the land has been farmed by family members since the late 1800s, Brant remarked, "It's tough for us to think this might be gone if we didn't do something."

Although farm life comes with its share of work and hardships, the younger Gibbs brothers said they would not trade it for another profession.

"You can't just think of this as a job" but a way of life, Brant said. When spring comes around each year, he added, "Your feet just start itching to get into the dirt."

Keith noted he has worked as a mason and on other farms, but always preferred working on the family farm.

"I can't think of any place better to raise children than outside on a farm," Brant said. His fiancée, Cris Cooke, who grew up on a farm, agreed.

Brown noted high property values stand in the way of young people who want to get involved in farming, but by eliminating development pressures on land, the state's preservation program allows property to be sold for its agricultural value, which is substantially less costly.

Brown said development rights purchases funded by the state and county are a stop-gap program while a permanent funding source for farmland preservation is sought. Funding in the future could come from a realty transfer tax or from developers buying "credits," paying money to a preservation fund in exchange for higher development densities on their own property.

Brown also urged farmers not to lose hope in the state program, even though most of the initial funding has been used. He asked voters to support the Open Space Preservation Bond on the November ballot. If approved, it would provide \$50 million to continue the farmland preservation program.

Don Applegate, executive director of the State Agriculture Development Committee that runs the preservation program, said the first rights purchase in each county serves to give the program credibility and reassure other farmers who are thinking of applying.

Incinerator foes protest at lawmaker's home

By RON MARSICO

About 50 persons demonstrated last night at the Mt. Olive home of Assemblyman Richard Kamin (R-Morris), protesting the "silent" response the legislator has given to Morris County officials' desire to site an incinerator in neighboring Roxbury.

The Republicans for Democrats, a group of primarily anti-incineration forces in Roxbury and Mt. Olive, erected a 25-foot replica of an incinerator in front of Kamin's home and at times were acrimonious during their exchanges with the assemblyman. The protest lasted two hours.

Kamin, who calls trash burning an acceptable solution to the state's garbage disposal woes, argued that the siting decision is outside his control and maintained a temporary statewide incineration moratorium would only increase costs.

The assemblyman said he would rather the incinerator be sited else-

where, but said the choice belongs to the freeholders. He noted that area legislators have agreed not to interfere in the siting process because they feel it would be a hindrance to county officials.

But Carmen Fascia, the organization's leader, criticized Kamin "because he's not helping us" and contended the assemblyman is misinformed about the costs and health impacts of incineration. Fascia argued other legislators have entered the fray in similar instances, recalling how Rep. Dean Gallo (R-11th Dist.) successfully helped fight the siting of an incinerator in Montville in the mid-1980s.

"We're not NIMBY's (not in my backyard). We're victims of dirty politics," asserted Fascia, who believes western Morris County is unfairly being saddled with the incinerator because it lacks political strength. He dismisses Kamin's suggestion that it would be improper for area legislators to challenge Morris officials' incinerator decision,

insisting "that is following party lines" in the overwhelmingly GOP-dominated county.

David Scapicchio, another group member, sharply criticized Kamin for accepting \$2,500 in primary campaign contributions this year from Foster Wheeler of Union Township, which has been chosen by the freeholders to build the projected \$135 million plant.

"I think you should give that money back," shouted Scapicchio. "How can you come out against Foster Wheeler? Are you representing the business interests or the citizens?"

But Kamin said he had no role in the selection of Foster Wheeler and insisted he properly accepted contributions from the company, noting it is one of the largest businesses in his district which covers part of Morris and sections of four other counties. He maintained Scapicchio and other critics were trying to taint his reputation by suggesting his acceptance of the donations was wrong.

"Your interpretation of a fair shake is not in my backyard," Kamin told the protesters, who pressed their demands that he at least support a temporary moratorium to lend time to the anti-incineration fight.

About half the protestors were youngsters, who joined their parents in carrying placards in an oval formation.

Deborah Walsh of Roxbury said she was protesting to protect her children's future. "I will not fight the incinerator when the freeholders move to Roxbury," asserted Walsh. "Then I will believe what they're saying."

Last night's protest was the third for the group in less than two months. The previous demonstrations occurred at the residences of Freeholders Jack O'Keefe and Carol Murphy. Fascia, the group's leader, said the protests will continue and added he is hopeful the next one will be at the home of gubernatorial candidate Rep. Jim Courter (R-12th Dist.).

Four arrested following West Orange melee

By KEVIN DILWORTH

Four men have been arrested following a Monday night melee—involving about two dozen fistfighting people and 70 onlookers—in the Valley section of West Orange, police reported yesterday.

The 9:55 p.m. incident at Mitchell and Tompkins streets began when some people made racial slurs about others whom they mistakenly thought were Hispanic, explained Officer James T. Laing, who responded to the scene while off duty, along with several on-duty officers and the Essex County Police.

"There were 20 to 30 people actually involved in fighting, and there

were another 70 people looking on," Laing said.

Laing and two other officers were injured along with several other people while trying to break up numerous scuffles.

Police Chief Edward M. Palardy identified the arrested suspects as Thomas J. Burns, 21, of Mitchell Street; Juan Wilkins, 18, of Steuben Street in East Orange; William Galusso of Constant Street in Hillside, and Leo Mazza of Mechanic Street in Orange.

Officer Kevin Dalgauer said he arrived at the scene and saw Burns holding "a steel garbage can over his head, running toward a group of residents" and throwing the receptacle at them.

Burns then picked up an approxi-

mately 3-foot-long, rusty "steel pipe and began to swing it wildly at me," continued Dalgauer, noting that he had to use his nightstick to protect himself.

Within moments, at least six West Orange police officers had arrived at the scene, along with Orange police and Essex County police, all trying to quell the disturbances, authorities said.

Most of the crowd dispersed after being ordered to do so by police, Laing said.

Burns, after being injured in the street fight, was taken to Orange Memorial Hospital for treatment, reported Dalgauer, who himself was injured in the left elbow.

West Orange Police Officer Dominick Bertoldi was punched in the face and kicked, and Laing sprained his right hand.

Burns was charged with aggravated assault and possession of a dangerous weapon, Galusso with resisting arrest and interfering with a police officer. Mazza and Wilkins were charged with creating a disturbance and resisting arrest.

Galusso, Mazza and Wilkins were all released after being issued summonses in police headquarters, according to the police chief. Burns was ordered held in jail, without bail, pending a municipal court arraignment.

"There have been several incidents in the Valley area over the past year or so, and the police department is taking a no-nonsense approach to lawbreakers," Palardy noted. "There will be beefed-up police patrols in the various neighborhoods there."

Man sought in store heist

Verona police were searching yesterday for a man wanted in connection with the armed robbery of a local card shop, said authorities.

The man walked into the Pilgrim Card and Gift Shop on Route 23 North about 6 p.m. Monday posing as a customer, and fled a few minutes later with an undetermined amount of cash, said Capt. Thomas O'Connor.

The captain said the man walked into the store, approached the register with a card in his hand, opened his

jacket to reveal a handgun and ordered the 16-year-old store clerk to empty the cash drawer.

The man fled on foot after instructing the clerk to walk to the back of the store, he said.

O'Connor described the man as Hispanic, 5 feet, 7 inches to 5 feet, 9 inches tall, with a medium build. He said the man had a pockmarked face and a pencil-thin mustache, and was wearing black pants, a black "Members Only" jacket and possibly an earring in his right ear.

They brought the suspect back to the Essex County community and formally charged him with aggravated sexual assault, he added.

According to Cobbett, the charge stems from his "forcibly raping" his 32-year-old former girlfriend in her Mechanic Street apartment last month.

Bachlor will remain jailed in Orange, pending an arraignment in the city's municipal court tomorrow.

Twisters strike 3 counties

Continued from Page One

cracked some walls. The other houses had aluminum siding torn off and part of their roofs ripped open, Dalina said.

On nearby Florida Grove Road, there were damaged roofs and numerous broken television antennas.

"It's fortunate no one was hurt," Dalina said.

Woodbridge Police Lt. Barry Burns said heavy winds hit the Keasbey industrial section about 7:45 p.m.

"It was almost like a whirlpool," Martha McGill, a Woodbridge resident, told WWOR-TV of Secaucus.

"I saw debris in the air just flying," she said. "It was like the Wizard of Oz."

In neighboring Perth Amboy, a tornado ripped through a trucking company, tossing tractor trail-

ers.

Five trailers at the Levitan Interstate Transport Inc. terminal on Route 440 were flipped over, police confirmed.

Perth Amboy Deputy Chief Stephen Poloka, who went to the scene, said he found one tractor trailer upside down with another one thrown on top of it.

He said police spent several hours directing traffic through the storm-damaged area. By 10:30 p.m., most of the roadways were clear, he said.

"The path of damage showed the force of the storm as it whipped along," Poloka said.

There was also damage reported in parts of Neptune Township in Monmouth County and the Ringoes section of East Amwell Township in Hunterdon County.

Late last night, heavy thunderstorms were reported in Staten Island and on Long Island, the National Weather Service said.

Ex-boyfriend seized in Orange sex assault

An East Orange man was arrested in Middlesex County yesterday and charged with raping his former girlfriend in her Orange apartment, Orange Police Director Charles Cobbett reported.

John Bachlor, 47, of Amherst Street in East Orange, was picked up by Woodbridge police in their community on an outstanding arrest warrant, Cobbett said.

Once Orange police were notified,

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