

Roofer blasts agency for failure to pay bill

By REGINALD ROBERTS

A roofing contractor told Newark Housing Authority (NHA) commissioners yesterday the company has not been paid for a project completed nearly a year ago despite repeated requests.

While NHA administrators said there are legal questions concerning the work, housing authority commissioners criticized the administration for failing to promptly pay other contractors.

Patrick Greene, an attorney representing Zorbas Contracting Inc. of Eatontown, said the company is owed \$300,000 for work that included new roofs on buildings at Seth Boyden Court. He said housing authority administrators failed to respond to at least 20 phone calls regarding the payment.

Greene said Salvatore Dispenziere, NHA director of development, sent a letter to the company last August certifying the work had been satisfactorily completed. He added \$165,000 in change orders had been approved, but never submitted for payment.

"I think there are some legal implications here," responded Benjamin Bell, NHA director of management.

"There is a question with some of the work" done by Zorbas, added Emil Nardachone, NHA general counsel, which officials said will be reviewed by staff.

Dispenziere was suspended from his job earlier this month because commissioners said he had not properly acted on construction delays at a townhouse project at Scudder Homes.

Commissioners declined to further discuss the Zorbas issue, but criticized administrators for failing to pay other contractors in a timely manner.

"Some have been trying to get paid over a long period of time," complained Commissioner William Payne.

Commissioner Anthony Carrino said the late, or lack of, payments could pose a hardship for some contractors. "A small contractor, we could knock him out of business," he added.

At the regular meeting, held a day early due to a housing workshop today, NHA Executive Director Daniel Blue Jr. announced the institution of a new contracting procedure that he said will help alleviate some of the problems relating to paying contractors.

Vernita Sias-Hill, appointed contracting officer in January, outlined the new procedures to commissioners in a 45-minute presentation.

Blue said the new procedures allow his staff to move on contractors who are not in compliance with their work or service agreements. "We will no longer find ourselves in the position of having to make emergency decisions after a situation has become serious enough to require executive-level action," he said.

Roseland board about-faces on air-conditioning contract

The Roseland Board of Education last night reversed a decision it made last week and awarded a contract for air-conditioning the Lester C. Noecker School to Century Consolidated Services Inc. of Newark for \$255,380.

Last week, the board rejected all bids because of unsatisfactory reports it had received about Century, the low bidder, from the Newark school system, officials said.

But last night the board engineer, Alan Rosenfeld of AIM Collaborative Co. of Newfoundland, said officials of Century have assured him they will do a quality job to erase the "black eye" they have received.

Rosenfeld told the board he will visit the school frequently to make sure the installation is being done according to specifications.

Century is expected to begin work

On July 4, Blue announced the termination of City Construction Co. of Jersey City, which was building the \$7 million 101-unit Scudder townhouse project. Officials found the project was only one-third complete, although company reports claimed it was 85 percent complete.

On other matters, Charles Knox, director of the Essex County Sheriff's Bureau of Narcotics, announced his bureau made 91 arrests, confiscated 330 grams of cocaine, 230 grams of crack and 44 decks of heroin during the last six months at various public housing complexes in the city.

In its crackdown on narcotics, the bureau also confiscated 10 vehicles, \$7,500 in cash and 16 guns, including two automatic assault weapons, Knox added.

"I'm appalled at the blatant distribution of drugs in the housing projects and throughout the city," he said.

Knox, a former director of the Newark Police Department, charged residents of public housing have not been helpful in the bureau's fight against drug trafficking. "We're not getting the support of law-abiding citizens," he lamented.

"Most of it is fear," Commissioner Wilnora Holman responded. She said if tenants were assured of anonymity they would be more cooperative with police.

The Sheriff's Office response to the drug problem came as a result of a tour NHA conducted in April with the major law enforcement agencies serving the city. The agencies also include the county prosecutor's office, the municipal police department, the federal Drug Enforcement Administration and State Police.

Also at last night's meeting, commissioners heard complaints from residents of the Felix Fuld Court housing complex.

Marian Williams, president of the Felix Fuld Tenants Association, complained of problems including broken sidewalks, a lack of general repairs, drug activity and fire alarms that sound for hours at a time.

Williams, who threatened a rent strike if conditions are not improved, said the tenants have been voicing their complaints without results the last four years. "We're tired of talk; we're ready for action," she said.

A resident fell on a broken sidewalk and fractured her arm, Williams said, adding the tenant was told by housing officials she could not sue.

Richard Beale, NHA director of modernization, said the agency had applied for HUD funds for a major renovation project at Felix Fuld. Denise Coleman, NHA director of housing, added that some of the other complaints are under review.



African experience

Dinizulu and his African Dancers, Drummers and Singers perform during the Newark Symphony Hall 'Outdoors at Noon III' presentation in Brownstone Park. Some 400 people attended the free performance.

Photo by Tom Kitts

Two nabbed for shooting cab rider during robbery attempt in Orange

By KEVIN DILWORTH

Two East Orange residents have been arrested on charges they shot and attempted to rob a man entering a taxi yesterday in neighboring Orange, according to police.

Charles Edwards of Newark was reported in good condition at University Hospital in Newark following the 4:40 a.m. incident on Berwyn Street, at the border of the two cities, Orange Police Director Charles Cobbert said.

A 17-year-old male resident of North Walnut Street, identified as the gunman, and Kelly Smith, 19, of South Munn Avenue, were picked up by police minutes after the attempted robbery and shooting, he added.

Cobbert said Edwards was getting into a taxi when he was approached by two males.

"One of them struck him in the head with a handgun and shot him once, causing a flesh wound to his right hip," Cobbert said.

The cab driver sped off, he added, and the suspects fled on foot.

Edwards managed to walk "towards Central Avenue, where he flagged down a passing East Orange police patrol car," Cobbert continued.

The patrol car, along with a responding Orange Police Department patrol unit, accompanied Edwards back to the shooting scene, where the victim was able to point out his assailants to police, he said.

The younger suspect, not identified because of his age, and Smith were both charged with attempted robbery, aggravated assault, possession of a weapon and possession of a weapon for an unlawful purpose.

Cobbert said the 17-year-old was sent to the Essex County Juvenile Detention Center in Newark, pending a hearing.

Smith was put in the Orange lockup and was being held without bail pending a municipal court arraignment today.

Bloomfield caught in budget bind

By CARYL R. LUCAS

Bloomfield may have to borrow nearly \$4 million to pay its bills if Essex County freeholders do not adopt a 1989 county budget soon, a township official said yesterday.

"If the freeholders don't adopt the county budget by Aug. 1, we may have to borrow \$3,053,000 to cover the board of education's salaries and bills due Aug. 14," said Wayne Hartmann, township director of finance. He noted the school district will need an additional \$1,017,000 by Aug. 30 for expenses.

"For every day the county does not adopt the budget means we will most likely have to borrow more than \$4 million," he said. "It will cost the residents \$775 a day and in two months you're talking \$46,500."

Hartmann added borrowing the money could result in a one-point tax increase for residents next year.

Until the freeholders pass the county budget, Bloomfield like other Essex municipalities, will not be able to certify its tax rate or produce tax bills for residents, he continued. "Thanks to the freeholders, other towns are sitting in the same boat," charged Hartmann.

Hartmann hopes the tax bills will go out by Aug. 1, but he has set no definite date. Under state statute, tax bills should have been certified before June 4.

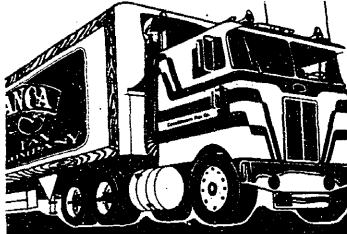
With the freeholders' delay, Hartmann said it also may be difficult for the township to collect taxes to pay county taxes by a Aug. 15 deadline.

"We would have to borrow another \$1 million to pay the county installment," he explained.

In his opinion, Hartmann said the county's delays could backfire.

"My recommendation is not to pay the county a penny," he contended. "The freeholders may have substantial problems if municipalities decide to withhold paying the county on a timely basis in order to recoup loss revenues."

While the council has adopted a \$28 million budget with a proposed municipal tax rate of \$4.14 per \$100 of assessed valuation, taxpayers may end up paying more, according to Hartmann. He said the tax rate was \$3.93 last year, which will increase by 21 points this year.



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Fairfield to consider cinema

By MEG NUGENT

The Fairfield Planning Board will make another attempt Sept. 12 to conduct a long-awaited, special meeting on a proposed 10-plex movie theater that has sparked opposition in the township.

The session is set for 8 p.m. and will begin in the Fairfield Council Chambers, said board Secretary Tom Tucci, adding the meeting will be moved across the street to the Churchill School if there is a large turnout.

Board members had met in special session last week to review the controversial plan. But they were forced to

postpone it after the applicant's attorney, Jerome Vogel, explained that because of a mixup over meeting dates, his office failed to notify businesses and residents of the session.

The applicant, Prime Motors/Cinerafrica, is required by law to notify anyone located within 200 feet of the 10-plex site about the date, time and place of the meeting on the project. The board cannot legally hold the meeting without that notice.

The proposal calls for construction of the movie theater and offices on Route 46 West across from the Sheraton Hotel.

Irvington teen fatally shot

By KEVIN DILWORTH

A 17-year-old Irvington resident was murdered Tuesday by unknown assailants who gunned him down as he talked on a pay telephone at Madison and Stuyvesant avenues, Police Director Anthony Colacurto said yesterday.

He identified the dead man as Elvin Campbell of Stuyvesant Avenue.

Campbell was pronounced dead at Irvington General Hospital about 40 minutes after the shooting happened "shortly after midnight," Colacurto added.

"A car drove by and shots were heard coming from the car," he said.

"The car then sped off north, toward Newark, along Stuyvesant Avenue."

The victim, shot once in the stomach, walked one block home to his Stuyvesant Avenue residence and then collapsed outside, Colacurto said.

Several family members and friends picked him up and transported him to the hospital, where he was pronounced dead, the director said.

Police do not have much to go on other than the fact that "three young men were involved," he said.

According to Colacurto, anyone with information about the shooting should contact the Irvington Police Department's Juvenile Aid Bureau.