

S. Orange gets grant for senior housing

By ALLISON FREEMAN

The South Orange Board of Trustees last night unanimously passed a resolution accepting a \$50,000 community block grant from Essex County Executive Nicholas D'Amato for a low-income senior citizens housing project.

Without the grant, the \$5 million project being planned by the South Mountain B'Nai B'rith/Community



Roger Ross
'More bridges to cross'

Housing Corp. would not go through, said Village President Roger Ross at a special meeting in village hall.

Earlier this week, the board of trustees adopted a resolution expressing its willingness to provide \$435,000 for the housing project.

D'Amato presented the check, available from HUD, to the board so the apartment complex at 219 South Orange Ave. could be built, he said. The money was part of a special emergency fund and was made available to the village.

"We were able to come up with this money basically overnight so we could keep the project going," D'Amato said. "I am sensitive to the needs of senior citizen housing, and I just can't let the project go. This is a project worth saving."

The \$50,000 will be allotted toward architectural fees, Ross said.

After the resolution was passed, the trustees voted to suspend the rules of the special meeting and open it to questions from the audience.

One resident said he was dissatisfied with the way the board handled the resolution because it did not open the meeting to the floor before voting.

"I have the opportunity to talk now, but everything is already taken care of," said Joe Sylvester. "This is not the type of government we want to see in our town."

"We ought to have better understanding and communication," he said. "I think there ought to be a change."

The village board has applied to the state for more funding for the project, Ross said. If the board does not receive the money, it will be back to where it was before receiving the community block grant.

The board will not know about state funding until after the November election, Ross said, adding it should go through.

"I have reason to believe the state is favorable," he said. "There are still a lot of bridges which still need to be crossed."

If for some reason the project is canceled, community block grant money not used must be returned, D'Amato said.

The eight-year-old project now goes to the Village Planning Board for approval, Ross said. If everything goes smoothly, construction could begin by next spring.

The building will be located near other apartment complexes and is designed as an L-shaped structure, Ross said. After 30 years, the project would become the property of the village.



A bulldozer is used to demolish Roessler's gymnasium at High and Lewis streets in Perth Amboy

DOWN FOR THE COUNT Perth Amboy levels crumbling 1911 gym

By MARIA DEL PILAR PEREZ

Perth Amboy resident Ed Gandy stood in awe at the ease with which the demolition crew broke through Roessler's gymnasium at High and Lewis streets.

"It takes me a day to repair my windows and it takes him a second to tear those down," said Gandy, a Johnstone Street resident.

For 78 years, the red-bricked gym stood on that corner. Built in 1911 by Frank Roessler for his personal use, it was donated to the city in 1926 for a recreational facility. But the deteriorated structure has been vacant for 15 years.

Yesterday, an excavator's long, iron arm made rubble out of the structure.

Spectator Chris Joy, 13, of Wisneria Street, commented, "It would be more fun to dynamite the whole thing."

A snowfence erected around the lot kept people from wandering onto the demolition site. About 11:30 a.m., a crowd began to gather alongside the fence.

Gandy, who is 69 and has lived Perth Amboy all his life, reminisced as he gazed at the half-demolished building. "I used to walk in the snow all the way from Holy Trinity Church to play basketball here. We were the Ravens playing against the Ashley Street kids," he said.

As many bricks as possible will be preserved for use in future construction projects at the waterfront area or for walkways in town, according to City Business Administrator Venus Majeski.

"Dallas Contracting has done good work for us before," Majeski said.

The demolition job is expected to cost about \$39,000.

"My first project with the city was this gymnasium," said Charles Lorfing, superintendent of buildings and grounds. He said he had no regrets in having the structure torn down because "kids broke in and it was a safety hazard."

The building, located next to Caledonia Park, was an attraction to neighborhood children. After a beam perforated the brick wall facing Lewis Street,

Lorfing and Director of Environmental Control Thomas Santamaria suggested to Mayor George J. Otowski the immediate removal of the deteriorating structure.

"I saw that dormer hanging there, and I said, 'It's time.' The bricks could fall on a passerby anytime," Lorfing said.

When the city acquired the property, it was under the condition that it be used for recreational purposes only. Esther Lewis was the custodian then, and for many years lived in an apartment on the top floor of the former Roessler home attached to the gym.

In 1974, the city stopped maintenance of the property.

Majeski said there were plans to construct condominiums on the site, but neighborhood residents opposed the idea. Roessler family members also claimed the property should be returned to them since it was no longer being used as a recreational facility.

On Monday, Acting Fire Director Ronald Mascenick advised the mayor to issue an emergency order and have the building demolished as a danger to public safety.

Yesterday, in a few hours, the demolition crew leveled the structure.

"Hurricane season is coming and that building was crumbling down. There was no way of restoring it," Majeski said.

Perth Amboy reached an agreement with the Roessler family stipulating that the property be sold for no less than \$200,000, with half the profits going to the family. A bronze plaque commemorating the family gift also will be placed in an appropriate location in the city.

John Diakun, 63, of Lewis Street said, "I don't think anyone's going to miss it, since it's been here for so long. But it's kind of historic."

A copper cupola vent that stood at the top of the building was carefully removed by workers as a spectator commented, "How beautiful, and it's copper, too."

State lawyer questions Sparta Bypass lawsuit

By FRED J. AUN

Bergen County developers who want the state Department of Transportation (DOT) to redesign its drainage plans for the proposed Sparta Bypass had their chance to complain about the design last year, says a lawyer for the state.

Deputy Attorney General Alice Thiele, representing the DOT, said Jersey Investors Growth Co. of Hackensack never mentioned any problems with the drainage plan during the condemnation hearings for the road right-of-way.

In light of that, Thiele has filed a

motion asking that a lawsuit filed by Jersey Investors be dismissed, she said yesterday.

The case is being heard by Superior Court Assignment Judge Reginald Stanton in Morristown. In a July 6 Superior Court complaint, Jersey Investors asked that the construction of the bypass be halted. The group charged that the DOT drainage plan for the proposed shortcut would channel stormwater into streams that would pour onto its property.

The bypass, expected to cost about \$14 million, will allow traffic on Route 517 to avoid congested downtown Sparta. It will include a new interchange with Route 15.

Jersey Investors' lawyer, Joseph L. Basralian, said the firm owns about 100 acres through which the bypass is being built. He stressed that the group, which plans to build a shopping center and housing on its land, is not opposed to the new road.

However, Basralian denied Thiele's assertion that Jersey Investors missed its opportunity to challenge the drainage plan.

"She's wrong," he said, explaining that at the time of the condemnation hearings, "We didn't have the drainage plan."

Basralian said his clients only recently saw the engineering designs for the road drainage, and when their engineer got a look at them, he immediately predicted a problem.

Despite the litigation, Jersey Investors and the DOT have been discussing the drainage problem and ways of circumventing it, Basralian said.

Man gets life term for murder in holdup

A 20-year-old Newark man was sentenced to life in prison yesterday for his conviction on murder and felony murder charges stemming from a fatal shooting last summer.

Superior Court Judge Thomas Brown imposed two concurrent life sentences upon Antoin Anderson. Anderson must serve 30 years behind bars before he can be eligible for parole.

Assistant Prosecutor C. Brian Kaplan, who tried the case, said the jury found Anderson guilty of shooting 21-year-old Rickie Dobbs during a holdup attempt on Aug. 2, 1988. The jury also convicted him of robbery and two weapons offenses.

The incident occurred on S. 19th Street and 19th Avenue in Newark at 4 a.m. Anderson was arrested two days later.

Two arrested in Newark auto theft ring

Two Newark men were arrested yesterday in what authorities called the culmination of a seven-month auto theft investigation centering on Newark International Airport.

Jose Hernandez, 38, of May Street and Carlos Cruz, 19, of Summer Avenue were arrested at a residence in North Newark, said Port Authority Detective Sgt. James Verdino.

Cruz was charged one count of facilitating fraud and one count of conspiracy, while Hernandez was charged with two counts of facilitating fraud, one count of receiving stolen property and one count of conspiracy, said Port Authority spokeswoman Lynn Tierney.

The two were taken to the Essex County Jail and are scheduled to be arraigned this morning, Verdino said.

The afternoon arrests came following an investigation by the Essex County Auto Task Force into car thefts from the airport and streets in Newark and Elizabeth, Tierney said. The task force is jointly operated by the Newark Police Department, the Port Authority police, the Essex County

Prosecutor's Office and the Essex County Sheriff's Office, she added.

"Everybody has an equal part," said Verdino, adding that the arrests were "a real good, cooperative effort."

Police allege the suspects were part of a foreign sports car theft ring involving eight others arrested early this year, Tierney said. The ring specialized in stealing Mazdas, and accounted for at least 52 such thefts from airport parking lots, she added. Another 50 cars were stolen from streets in Newark and Elizabeth, Tierney said. Twelve of the vehicles were recovered during the investigation.

According to the Port Authority spokeswoman, the thieves would steal the cars, change the vehicle identification numbers and resell them. Other charges relating to the ring include selling a New Jersey temporary car title and counterfeit auto insurance cards.

Verdino said yesterday's arrests conclude the investigation. "This should do it," he said, declining to comment further.

Mayor of North Brunswick warns graffiti painters

The multi-colored graffiti that covers the walls of the Adams Lane bridge in North Brunswick has Mayor Paul J. Matacera seeing red.

The mayor declared yesterday that the township will prosecute graffiti

artists who exercise their creativity on public property, especially any caught defacing the bridge.

The bridge, which carries vehicular traffic over the Amtrak railroad tracks, has become "a horrendous eye-

sore," Matacera said.

"North Brunswick will not be turned into a metropolitan haven for vandals to write their slogans and profanities on public property, with decent law-abiding citizens paying for the extra maintenance through their taxes," Matacera said.

The mayor said a Middlesex County bridge crew, at his request, painted the bridge yesterday for the second time this year.

"We are a residential community which takes pride in its appearance, and my aim is to see that it stays that way," the mayor said.

Township authorities are plotting strategies to nab the graffiti artists, who face fines of up to \$7,500 and up to six months in jail if convicted of criminal mischief.

Orange man charged in bungled burglary

A 26-year-old Orange man was charged with burglary early yesterday after he dropped into McCrory's at 3 a.m., police said.

Kenneth Brown of New Street broke through the Main Street store roof skylight and set off the burglar alarm at 3:18 a.m., said Orange Police Director Charles Cobbett.

Police and security arrived with the store's key and found Brown hiding under shelves in the rear of the store, Cobbett said.

Four teams, one field spark fracas

By MEG NUGENT

A mistake in schedules kept West Orange police busy when they were called in to break up a fracas that started over playing field rights during a local baseball contest, authorities said yesterday.

There were no arrests or injuries, aside from a few bruises earned in the pushing, shoving and grabbing that took place during the skirmish on a playing field behind West Orange High School, according to Capt. Richard Williamson.

"Cool heads did not prevail—instead of cool heads prevailing, they started pushing and shoving," said the captain, in recounting the incident.

The melee involved a "large group" of adults which had to be broken up by eight police officers responding to reports of a "big disturbance" at 7 p.m. Wednesday.

Williamson said the number of people involved in the incident was not known.

However, he disputed an anonymous caller's contention that children were involved in the fighting.

"Our report doesn't indicate that any child was caught in the middle or injured in any way," said Williamson.

The captain said that according to a police report of the fight, two games—one of them a Little League playoff, and the other a contest between two women's softball teams—were accidentally scheduled by the West Orange Recreation Department for the same time at the high school field.

Jim Rogers, West Orange Recreation director, said the playoff teams were part of the Mountaintop Little League, based in West Orange. He said a recreation department schedule listed the women's teams as playing for Kessler's and for the Johnny B. Produce Corp., both of West Orange.

West Caldwell Councilman Robert Masella, who coaches one of the Little League teams, said his team of seventh- and eighth-grade boys was not involved in the fracas, and that the team left at the outset of the argument over field rights.

He said the first batter in the play-off had just gone up to the plate when the women's teams arrived.

"We left because they said we were playing on their field—we were the visiting team," said Masella, adding that he did not know what happened after his team left.

Williamson and Rogers said the recreation department has been backed up with rescheduling various league games that had to be postponed after they were rained out during the spring downpours.

Williamson said the women's game Wednesday night was a "rain makeup."

Noting that 14 to 16 ball games were on the schedule last night, Rogers lamented that the backup means "We'll be playing 'til October."

The captain said that the scheduling glut "doesn't sanction" the fracas, adding, "They're supposed to be adult people."

Phillipsburg homeless will get aid

By DAVID VANHORN

Homeless people who are mentally ill would get special counseling and other services at a daytime drop-in center that the Easter Seal Society wants to open in Phillipsburg.

The state Department of Human Services' Division of Mental Health and Hospitals has approved a \$63,300 grant for a center to help the homeless in Warren County, said Rosemarie Rosati, program coordinator for Easter Seal Community Services. The county freeholders voted to give the grant to Easter Seal, which took over the project from the Family Guidance Center.

Rosati insisted the center will not cater to the homeless outside the county, but will care for people in the county who are destitute.

"We're not looking to bring people into the area, but take people off the street who are homeless... and into services that can help them get stable," Rosati said. "It's like a resource for the community."

The trained staff would help clients find housing, a job and, if necessary, treatment for mental illness, drug and alcohol abuse, she said. Recreational activities and educational programs also are planned.

Up to six workers would be at the center, including four who already work with the homeless through Easter Seal's clinical case management program, Rosati said. Workers also will scour Phillipsburg's riverbanks, streets and the soup kitchen at the Church of the Blessed Hope on Mercer Street for people who need help.

"There has been no service in the area, so it's hard to know exactly how many people will be needing it," she said.

The center will open no earlier than October, preferably in a residential district near downtown, where the homeless congregate, she said. Phillipsburg was picked because it is Warren County's largest town and has the most homeless people. A site has not yet been found.

EXPENSIVE FURNITURE MADE AFFORDABLE
EXTRA SAVINGS
THIS FRIDAY AND SATURDAY!

LEATHER LOVESEAT
REG. \$2150 NOW \$1799

HIGH GLOSS LACQUER
REG. \$180-\$260 NOW \$89-\$149

HALOGENS FROM \$79

MARBLE FROM \$99

4 PC. ITALIAN LACQUER BEDROOM SETS
REG. \$1610-\$2100 NOW \$999-\$1399

TAKE RT. 46
TO CLINTON ROAD EXIT
3 MI. WEST OF WILLOWBROOK MALL
HOURS: MON.-SAT. 10-6
(201) 882-4645
78 CLINTON RD. • FAIRFIELD, NJ

N.J.'S CAR PHONE CENTER
The two most important functions a professional facility can offer:
INSTALLATION AND SERVICE!

Of course you want the right price, but price alone does not mean top quality installation and service. At Installations Unlimited, our 10 years experience of custom installation, service and satisfaction have allowed us to become one of the largest Metro One Agents in the tri-state area. Come in and experience the best!

CAR PHONES
NOVA/AT&T 832 CHANNEL CELLULAR PHONE WITH 50 NUMBER MEMORY
• Auto-Retal Of Last Number Called
• Electronic Lock To Restrict Use
• Digital Display Of Number Called
• 3 Year Warranty
\$299*
MFG. LIST N/A
CUSTOM INSTALLATION W/ ANTENNA & NUMBER INCLUDED
*HANDS FREE \$50 ADDITIONAL

NOKIA
HAND HELD CELLULAR PHONE
• 40 Number Memory Speed Dialing
• 15 Hours Standby Time On A Single Charge
• Low Power Alert And Call Timers
• Comes Complete With AC/DC Charger
• 832 Channel Capacity
\$599
P-30 MFG. LIST N/A
PHONE NUMBER INCLUDED

INSTALLATIONS UNLIMITED
1166 W. Chestnut St., Union, NJ 064-6469
Mon. - Sat. 9:00 - 5:30, Thurs. Evenings till 8:30 pm