

THE FOREST CITY NEWS



Our Annual Summer Tourist Guide is currently being prepared. If you would like to advertise or have an event you would like included, please contact Jennifer Butler at jennifer@forestcitynews.com or 570-785-3800 by Thursday, June 21. It will be chock full of Summer events and advertising from area businesses. It will be included in the June 27 edition of the *News*.

A "Touch A Truck" event is being planned for the Forest City Trail Town Festival on Sat., August 4 from Noon to 3 PM in the 400 block of Main Street. They are looking for trucks, heavy equipment, fire apparatus, etc. If you are interested in participating, please contact Patricia Striefsky at patriacia@forestcitynews.com.

Due to the July 4th holiday on Wednesday, July 4th, The Forest City News will publish the July 4 issue on Friday, June 29. All advertising and articles must be in by Thursday, June 28 at 3 PM.

Concerts at FCA Hist.Soc. June 26 & 29

The Forest City Area Historical Society is proud to announce two upcoming concerts by two of the areas most popular groups at their Museum, 629 Main Street, Forest City, Pa.

On Tuesday June 26th at 7:30 P.M., the Northeastern Pennsylvania Barber Shop Chorus will perform their "Summer Concert" with a host of wonderful songs. The group performed last year to wide praise from the audience. It is a fun and beautiful concert you don't want to miss.

On Friday June 29th at 8:00 P.M. The Old Time Fiddlers will perform their wide range of folk and bluegrass music that is a very popular local favorite. The concert is an annual event at the Forest City Area Historical Society Museum which always brings a full house attendance of enthusiastic listeners. This is a most entertaining concert for the whole family.

The two concerts are a fundraiser for the Historical Society. Admission is \$5.00 per person, children under 12 Free. The Forest City Area Historical Society Museum is a Handicapped Accessible facility with an elevator and air conditioning.

While at the Forest City Area Historical Society Museum, view the many historical displays of the communities of the Forest City Regional Area. For contacts: 570-785-3800.

FC Mayor To Resign

Forest City Mayor Tammy Rogalski has submitted her resignation which will be acted upon at the July 2nd Council meeting.

Among the names heard as possible successors are Barbara Mihelc, Bob Lesjack, Brian Karwowski, Carla Stackhouse, and Chris Glinton.

Council has 30 days after accepting the resignation to name a new Mayor.

15 local residents use comment period to express their feelings

More than a dozen local and area residents made comments, suggestions and criticisms during public comment periods at the June 4 Council meeting.

Several of the comments were directed at what was thought to be an attempt to ban "fire pits" a relatively new concept in backyards. What was actually proposed was a change to the town's present Open Burning Restriction to allow fire pits.

When presented by Council member Tracy Lazier, it was intended to allow fire pits to be used for hot dogs, marshmallows and recreation purposes. However, they must be constructed properly, must not be used to burn garbage or other odor-causing materials, and can only be used from 11AM to 12 midnight. The change to the ordinance passed without objection.

A number, including Christine Evans, commented on the desperate need to enforce pedestrian crosswalk safety including possibly using lighted signs to warn motorists that they must stop for those crossing at crosswalks.

Several comments, pro and con, were directed at the soon-to-be established Dog Park. Todd Marz said the funds should have been directed toward local events to bring people to town. He also felt the funding could have been used to better effect at the existing Kennedy Park.

Rachel Habetler questioned allowing leashed dogs to still use Kennedy Park. She also commented on speeding on Delaware St.

Pat McCabe urged that Main St. signs be secured to direct people to the new Dog Park.

Comments also were directed at the passage of the purchase of police handguns including applauding Chief Johnson for getting the firearms since any serious local incident will take a 30 minute response for State Police.

Dusti Swegel commented on the manner in which a \$45,000 new truck was ordered without discussion of warranty and the personal requirements of the people who would be driving it. She also saluted Chief Johnson for his record on getting

FC property owners to face Another fee for storm water

With no discussion, Forest City Borough Council, at its June 4 meeting, voted unanimously to advertise the amendment of an ordinance to cover Storm Water Management in the Borough. The ordinance will be voted on at the July 2nd Council meeting.

The law covers the documentation and reporting requirements of the entire storm water system in town, but it does not have a fee schedule which has not yet been established.

At a public meeting here on January 10, representatives of KBA Engineering, and a representative of the Penna. Dept. of Environmental Protection, revealed that a quarterly fee of anywhere from \$3.00 to \$12.00 is coming to property owners here and throughout Pennsylvania.

The fee, which could be added to the Lackawanna River Basin Sewer Authority bill, would be used to reduce pollution from water runoff into streams and rivers which feed into Chesapeake.

One of the major requirements will be to provide lengthy and complicated annual reports to DEP on what the community is doing to implement the programs to stop sediments, nutrients and pollution from flowing off local properties, into catch basins and then into rivers and streams. The eventually collector of this pollution is Chesapeake Bay.

The required reports will have to be submitted by an engineering firm.

The community will be required to map every storm

drug offenders.

Tim Madden suggested that Council publish a tentative agenda the week before a meeting so that residents would know what was going to be discussed at the next meeting so residents who had an interest in a subject would be able to attend. Madden said since he has a home on a boro alley and he is interested in what the town will do to regulate their use.

Former Council president Barbara Mihelc commented on Kennedy Park and also on the fact that the determination of the number of people who can occupy the 3rd floor of the Borough Building is the jurisdiction of PA Labor and Industry.

Paul Vendetti questioned some of the information found on the town's website regarding code enforcement and said some of comments were very displeasing. Council secretary Sharon Vannan said she would look at what is on the site.

John Septita and Abby Rodriguez commented on circumstances involving the renting and use of the 3rd floor of the Borough Building and whether there was sufficient parking available.

Donna Marz commented that Council show respect to concerned citizens who come to meetings to discuss issues.

Issues of the dilapidated vacant homes with garbage piled in and around them were also discussed.

Jason Obelenus spoke on the fire pit law change and also on use of the 3rd floor. He also said the town must do all it can to entice young police officers to come here including funding for clothing and equipment.

A question on the Kennedy Park cell phone tower was responded to by saying that no information has come from the company. A commenter said a cell tower would be a "cash cow" for the town as it would attract a number of cell providers.

Mayor Tammy Rogalski also used the comment period to tell the public that the rumor is false that the police are seeking to buy a side-by-side utility vehicle. Also she promised the public that the police are not "targeting" anyone.

water line, catch basin and source of runoff, including lawns, unusedland and parking lots. These details will be provided to the engineering firm to plot on GIS maps.

Forest City Solicitor Paul Smith has been advising both Forest City and Vandling Councils that the deadline for passing this enabling legislation is fast approaching and that failure of the municipalities to pass the laws will result in hefty fines from the state.

Also required in the legislation is the education of property owners that such activities such as fertilizing lawns, cleaning the outside of homes, washing cars and not cleaning up after pets, can contribute to illicit discharges.

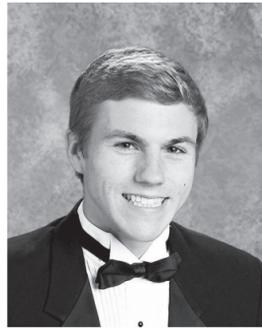
With no fee schedule attached to the Forest City ordinance, there is no determination yet as to what fee will be charged to property owners and when the fees will begin to be levied.

Rev. Wasnock New Asst. Pastor In Carbondale

Bishop Joseph C. Bamera, Bishop of Scranton, has announced that the Reverend Seth D. Wasnock has been appointed Assistant Pastor of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish, and St. Rose of Lima Parish, Carbondale, effective June 25, 2018.

He was previously Assistant Pastor of Our Lady of the Snows Parish, Clarks Summit.

FCRHS Graduation held Fri., June 15



Ian Bailey

Forest City Regional High School held Commencement Exercises on Friday, June 15 in the auditorium. Valedictorian was Erin Urban, Salutatorian was Matthew Trotter and Academic Honors went to Ian Bailey.

The third top student, Ian Bailey, was not available at press time last week.

Ian is the son of Tom and Diane Bailey, Pleasant Mount. Bailey was involved in Student Council, FBLA, NHS, Boy Scouts (Eagle Scout), CHOPS, Ski Team, Soccer (Captain), Track & Field (Captain), Salvation Army Food Pantry, Steamtown Marathon, Senior Class President, 2016 & 2017 All-Region All Star Soccer, Keystone Boys' State Recipient.

He plans to attend the University of Vermont for Biochemistry.

Mining play Run through Was June 14

The first run-through of "Stories From Patch Town" was held at the Forest City Area Historical Society Thursday evening, June 14. The one act play will be presented at the Historical Society Sat., Aug. 4 at 5pm as part of the one-day Trail Town Festival and 250th Anniversary of Anthracite.

It was written and is being directed by Shelly Giles, Drama Director at Forest City Regional School. All participants will be costumed. Some period costumes are needed.

In about 35 minutes, it tells the story of families in the 1900's mining era in Forest City with a series of flashbacks from the present day to the very compelling drama of a mining accident in a Forest City mine.

Some 15 area residents, including high school students and members of the Historical Society, turned out for the first reading of the drama.

A few other non-speaking roles are needed. Anyone willing to appear in the play can contact Ms. Giles at 570-493-0346 or mgiles@fcrsd.org or attend the next practice session Thursday, June 21, 7pm at the Historical Society.

Zoning Hearing Date change

Council was forced to re-schedule a Zoning Hearing which was advertised in the News since there was insufficient time to do the required advertising due to the publication date of the News.

The meeting will be held Tuesday, June 26 at 6:30pm in the Borough Building.

The matters include a variance of parking spaces for Kevin Lesjack Funeral Home, and a change in use for the former Franceski Waste & Recycling building on Lower North Main St.

The Sno Trails Snowmobile Club is seeking to use Joseph Franceski III's Building to store its snow trail grooming equipment and also use the building once a month for a meeting room.

Trail Town Meets June 20

The next community meeting to discuss the Trail Town Festival and 250th Anniversary of Anthracite will be Wednesday, June 20 at 7:45am at Shirleys.

Three hour hearing on Herrick Issue

by Theresa Opeka

Opposition continued at a public hearing Wednesday, June 13 at the Herrick Township Municipal Building against a conditional use permit to change the Stone Bridge Inn and Restaurant to a drug and alcohol treatment center. Herrick Township Solicitor Attorney Marissa Cino McAndrew said they received 20 emails and a petition with 19 names against the proposed recovery center and 2 emails for it.

Ed Neyhart, the attorney representing Elliot and Kim Ross, owners of Stone Bridge, began the proceedings with a description from Article 3 # 7 from the township's ordinance regarding nursing homes, group homes and clinics. He said the proposed use fits under the conditional use permit and cited Section 405. "We will satisfy our burden of proof. Objectors will have to come forth. They must be able to prove there will be a substantial threat to the community and show this use will create a burden above and beyond. We will show it is a health facility," he said.

Mr. Ross, who is a Township Supervisor, and has recused himself from decision-making, testified first to the 2 applications, one for the restaurant and inn and the other for the adjoining property which is used as an office building. He said he believed he submitted the application on May 4th but wasn't sure. When Neyhart asked about parking at the facility. Ross said there was adequate parking and have had up to 200 guests for weddings. He also said part of the property wasn't developed.

Attorney Michael O'Brien, representing residents from Endless Mountains Resort, objected to Ross' statement, saying how would he know how the property is going to be managed. McAndrew said they will note his objection.

Ross said he applied for the conditional use permit based on the part of the ordinance that lists nursing homes, clinics and other health institutions as permitted uses for property.

Attorney Jamie Hailstone, representing another group of residents, asked Ross, "What experience do you have with medical treatment and rehab centers?" Ross replied he had none. Hailstone proceeded to ask Ross a series of questions including if he would be running the facility, how long will patients be staying there and if he knew for a fact there would be adequate parking. Ross answered no to all of them. Hailstone asked about the email from Cynthia Bellino, owner of Just Believe Recovery Center in Carbondale and the proposed buyer of the property, that was sent to Ross that stated she may have to sue people in the township if they didn't agree to the sale. Ross said he would have to ask her about it.

Hailstone asked Ross what he did with the email. He said Bellino wanted it sent to the township's solicitor (McAndrew) but Ross forwarded it to Supervisor/Secretary Nancy Harvatine because he said he was unsure he should have direct communication with McAndrew. Harvatine forwarded it to McAndrew. Hailstone replied, "But didn't you recuse yourself from the board?" Ross answered yes.

No Cell Tower Petition around

Rachel Habetler, a regular attendee at Council meetings, and a past candidate for Council, is circulating a petition to "Say No" to a cell phone tower at Kennedy Park.

Ms. Habetler said she understands the attraction of a monthly income to the Borough from the tower "but will that money be enough to pay for the negative effects of radiation exposure to our citizens?"

The petitions are available for signature at Barking Cupcake and Turkey Hill.

Hailstone said, "But, you sent it to the township's solicitor but not your attorney. Why?" Ross repeated what he said previously.

O'Brien asked Ross if there was an agreement of sale between him or anyone. Ross replied, yes. O'Brien asked if he entered into the agreement as a private citizen or supervisor. Ross said as a private citizen. O'Brien asked Ross, "You don't know how many people will reside there or if there would be adequate parking?" Ross replied, "I know the septic system is adequate." O'Brien asked, "How many emergency calls will be made? Will there be adequate staff, parking? Conditional use shall not exceed use of emergency services. Do you know that?" Ross replied no. O'Brien said, "Did you draft the ordinance?" Ross said yes.

O'Brien asked how long he was a supervisor. He said he has been a supervisor for 33 years. O'Brien cited Section 608 of the ordinance: "Section 608 states proposed conditional use shall not put undue burden on the township. How can you say there won't be a conflict if you don't know how many calls there will be for emergency services?"

Neyhart objected, "You are asking things that are not relevant to the general ordinance." O'Brien asked Ross, "You agree Section 608 is relevant to the conditional use application?" Ross said, yes. O'Brien continued, "If you can't testify about the effect it will have on services, how can you say it won't have an effect on calls for emergency services?" Ross replied, "You would have to be able to see into the future." O'Brien said, "As the applicant, can you testify you have satisfied the burden?" Ross said, yes.

O'Brien asked Ross what improvements he has made to the property. Ross replied, "I am confused to your question." O'Brien said, "You satisfied Section 608.4?" Ross said, "I don't feel any are required." O'Brien asked, "You don't feel there will be a need for improvements?" Ross said, "There won't be any while I am there but I can't see into the future."

O'Brien asked what plans Ross has made for the property. Ross said, "Once the conditional use is approved, the property will transfer to the buyer. In my research for these facilities, I don't see conditional burdens to the township." O'Brien told him that wasn't what he asked. Ross said he was confused by the question. O'Brien asked again what plans he has made. Ross said, "You are asking a question I can't answer." O'Brien said, "Would it be fair to say you haven't made any plans?" Ross said, "Depends on what you mean by plans." O'Brien referred to the medical facility. He asked what kind of treatment will be provided. Ross said the treatment of addicts but couldn't answer all the questions. O'Brien said, "If you can't answer the questions, you haven't made the plans. Upon the approval, the facility will be transferred but is there a provision that the buyer will buy it only if you receive necessary zoning permits and approvals?" Ross said, yes.

O'Brien said, "In order to sell, you think you need zoning approval. I think we need to see the sales agreement as it is of public record." O'Brien asked, "Has your facility received any emergency calls in the past 10 years? How many times were the police called?" Ross replied, "Maybe 4." O'Brien asked, "Are you aware of the similar facility in Carbondale and the amount of emergency calls in the last 3 years? Year?" Ross replied, "I have spoken to the police in Carbondale. They have a good relationship with Bellino. The predominant issues with individuals are probably patients acting on their free will. They don't care to continue treatment and go to the police because they can't get their belongings back. They signed a waiver that they have to wait up to 24 hours."

