



An aerial view of Kids World amusement park in Long Branch

Long Branch hopes plans for beachfront can be kept afloat

By SUE EPSTEIN

Long Branch will take several steps Tuesday night to get its plans to revitalize the beachfront back on track after more than two years—and several legal battles.

The city council will try to save the Hilton hotel-convention complex at Garfield Park, considered the key to the revitalization, by ratifying an agreement with the state to close a portion of Ocean Avenue.

The council will also end a battle begun more than two years ago by boardwalk business owners when it acts to reopen the portion of Ocean Avenue from Laird to Chelsea avenues.

That battle has strained the participants and changed the entire landscape of the city's amusement area.

The road was closed in 1985 and turned over to the owner of Kids World Amusement Park, who built fences separating the east and west sides of the road and put rides in the middle.

Several business owners, including James and Nancy Rykel, sued the city and the owner, Ric-Cic Corp., to get the fences taken down.

Superior Court Judge Patrick McGann ruled last month the city's vacating of the road was illegal.

But the action comes too late to save the businesses that suffered when the fences went up or prevent the personal grief suffered by the Rykels and other business owners who joined the suit, they said.

"I sued over a principle," Nancy Rykel said. "I won, but what is the good of it? My husband developed bleeding ulcers because of the strain. He died last December. I had to sell my house to pay our bills and I'm still being sued by two businesses I haven't been able to pay. I don't know how I'm going to pay the thousands of dollars in legal fees."

Rykel said another of the business people who sued David Bassinder, died of a heart attack last year.

"Another of the business people on our side suffered a stroke," she said. "We won our point, and for that I'm very happy. I wanted to show the city they can't step on us, but at such a cost. And I keep thinking it never had to happen."

According to McGann, the case began in 1985 when attorneys for Ric-Cic came before the city council and asked that the road be turned into a pedestrian mall because of the large numbers of children who visited Kids World. The amusement park was on the fishing pier and across the street next to the building housing the Rykels' business.

Business owners on both sides of the street supported the move, according to Rykel, because "as it was first discussed, it was to be a wide-open pedestrian mall."

We thought that would really help our business because there would be no cars and people could move about freely," she explained.

But after the city acted and turned over the property, the rides and fences went up in the middle of the street, closing off one side of the street from the other and

affecting businesses on both sides.

Rykel and her husband got together with their landlord, George Cucucella, who also owned a restaurant across from the boardwalk, and they filed suit first against Ric-Cic and its principal owner, Patrick Cicalese, and the city. The city argued it vacated the road for safety reasons and Cicalese could do with his property what he wanted.

But the judge disagreed, arguing the safety purpose was spurious. The area was safe for pedestrians and had been safe for them for years.

While the issue of Ocean Avenue was being thrashed out in the court, a spectacular fire destroyed the pier and several adjacent businesses in June 1987, leaving only about one third of Kids World standing.

An investigation by the city police department ruled the fire was accidentally caused by a gas leak ignited by an arcing electrical wire below the boardwalk.

Cicalese did not reopen this year and has introduced plans before the planning board to build condominiums on the site. The plans are pending approval.

But while many of the boardwalk amusements no longer exist, the city fathers have not settled on a plan for redevelopment of the amusement area and its plans for an adjacent hotel complex are in jeopardy.

The plan to build a Hilton hotel complex at Garfield Park, next to the former Kids World site, is in peril because the city backed out of an agreement with the state.

Garfield Park was part of the Green Acres program and could only be sold if the city agreed to provide equal property elsewhere.

The city offered to swap Garfield Park for the part of Ocean Avenue from Ocean Terrace to Madison Avenue according to city administrator Anthony Muscillo.

The plan was to turn it into a bicycle-jogging path," he said. When the time came for the city council to act, the public objected and the council voted it down. The proposal was reintroduced in December and voted down again.

Late last month, the city received a letter from the Department of Environmental Protection, which oversees the Green Acres program that declared the swap null and void endangering the entire project.

The developers who plan to build the hotel complex had received the other necessary approvals and were about two weeks from beginning construction.

The city council introduced an ordinance two weeks ago to approve the swap and will vote on it Tuesday night.

We'll be voting to close one area of Ocean Avenue and rescinding the vacation of the other end," he said. "The area we're closing will be added to the promenade."

The Department of Transportation will have to give final approval of both actions for them to become effective. Approvals that Muscillo anticipates will be received without an trouble in light of the pressures on the city.

It's been a rough month, Muscillo said.

Hillside, DOT officials to discuss Rt. 22 cleanup

By LISA PETERSON

Hillside and state Department of Transportation officials will meet Sept. 21 in an attempt to resolve their dispute over the cleanup of Route 22.

Mayor Samuel McGhee said township officials had complained to the DOT for two years about the "litter, filth, dust and debris" along the Hillside section of the road, but "nothing was done."

McGhee last month directed local public works employees to clean the highway.

DOT officials have maintained that all of Route 22 is regularly cleaned, although they could not provide a work schedule for the section in Hillside. DOT spokesman Randy Linthurst said a "big part of the problem" in the area was attributable to the garbage crisis, which he said has resulted in illegal dumping along roads.

McGhee had threatened to close Route 22 in both directions so a municipal crew could conduct a cleanup if the DOT did not do the job by Aug. 8. In response, Linthurst said State Police would reopen the highway if necessary.

The mayor said he later realized the move would have "punished" motorists, so only partial lane closings were ordered while a Hillside crew conducted the cleanup on Aug. 9.

Hillside Health Administrator An-



Angelo J. Bonanno, administrator/secretary of the Hillside Board of Health, picks up some litter strewn along Route 22

gelo Bonanno said that on the cleanup day, DOT crews "circled the area all morning" and then began working just east of the municipal crew.

Bonanno estimated the cost of the cleanup by Hillside was \$12,000 for both labor and equipment. Trash collected along the road included paper

wrappers, vehicle parts and an animal skeleton, he said.

The health administrator said the debris was cleaned up along most of the 1 1/4-mile stretch of Route 22 through Hillside but there were areas "too dangerous" to work because of traffic hazards.

Alfonso Alaimo, regional director of the DOT's Newark office, is scheduled to attend the Sept. 21 meeting which will be held in the Hillside municipal building.

We have a problem and they have a problem, and we're going to sit down and just kind of brainstorm and discuss the concerns, Alaimo said.

Township Attorney Marvin Braker, who also plans to attend the session said, "Mr. Alaimo has been very receptive to meeting with us. I would like to see the entire matter come to some type of resolution."

First, the township would like to see the state clean the highway and provide some type of schedule and if not, we can work on alternatives like cleaning the highway ourselves and billing the state," Braker said.

Bonanno said the township intends to bill the DOT for work already done in cleaning the highway.

"Now we're beginning to open up the dialogue," Braker said. "There's nothing like sitting down and discussing things."

Plainfield clergy seeks repudiation of Farrakhan

By GABRIEL H. GLUCK

Several Plainfield religious leaders have called on city officials to condemn Black Muslim leader Louis Farrakhan, who is scheduled to speak in the high school next month.

Rabbi Gerald Goldman of Temple Shalom, along with several other clerics, said that, while the members of the clergy are not asking the city council to stop Farrakhan from speaking, they would like to see the city leaders repudiate his message, which they called racist and anti-Semitic.

Councilman Jon Bramnick, who is supporting the request, said he does not believe a majority of the council will agree to the clerics' request.

City leaders have to condemn anyone, Farrakhan or anyone, who communicates racism or anti-Semitism to young people," Bramnick said.

"Public officials have to condemn those kinds of statements. But I don't see support for that kind of statement coming from the council," he said. "That sort of moral message should also be forthcoming from the board of education."

Farrakhan, who is scheduled to speak Oct. 29, was invited by a Plain-

field group called "Your Community Conscious."

"I say they should let him come. He's the best thing that's ever happened for black people," said Taryn Evelyn, a member of the group.

"It's a shame that every time someone stands up for the black man, that the white media and the white clergy come out against him."

Evelyn said the charges that Farrakhan is a racist and anti-Semite were "a bunch of bull."

"All he's out to do is to help black people, and help them up. I think he should come to Plainfield," she said.

Last week, Goldman, along with the Rev. Barbara Aspinall of the Crescent Avenue Presbyterian Church, the Rev. Earl Cambridge of Praise Tabernacle and the Rev. Joseph Mirandi of St. Mary's R.C. Church, appealed to the members of the city council to take a stand on Farrakhan.

"I think that it's a decency issue that involves every citizen in Plainfield because a man is coming to town who has insulted every soldier who died in World War II by saying that Hitler was a great man," Goldman said.

"He has insulted the entire white community by saying whites are devils,

and Jews, by saying that Judaism is a dirty religion."

Noting the murders of 6 million Jews during the Holocaust, Goldman said Farrakhan has furthered anti-Semitism.

The rabbi said he hoped that all the city's Catholic and Protestant clergy, black and white, will join together on this issue.

In addition, several members of the clergy want the council to issue a statement, Goldman said, "disassociating themselves from Farrakhan's racism and his anti-Semitism."

"He has a constitutional right to speak," Goldman said. "But I wouldn't want anyone outside of Plainfield to imagine that he represents the views of this city."

"We've built Plainfield on the basis of tolerance and harmony and I don't want to see that undermined by an avowed racist and anti-Semite," said Goldman, who said he expects to join with other members of the clergy and picket Farrakhan's appearance in the city.

"I think it's important for a town like Plainfield, for a town that went through racial violence 20 years ago and has to attract businesses and home-

buyers, that it is important that the leadership make clear that they disavow themselves from the message of a racist and anti-Semite. Such messages only breed poison and hate, and an outsider has to wonder what is happening to the moral fiber of this town," Goldman said.

It's Plainfield specifically that needs to make certain that its leadership, that its vision of one community, is not diminished by the poison this man spreads," he said.

Aspinall said she believes Farrakhan spreads hatred and discord.

If you ever read some of the stuff he says, it's just vicious—a lot of anti-Semitism. Free speech is very important, but it is important for the city council to disavow what he says," the minister said.

City Council President Harold Mitchell said the council has no authority over the board of education and cannot dictate who is allowed to speak on school property.

However, he said he was doubtful he would support any resolution regarding the Farrakhan issue.

Mayor Richard L. Taylor also said he did not want to get involved in the issue.

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E. Orange shipper jailed

An East Orange businessman has been jailed on charges that he accepted money from customers to ship furniture and other items to Jamaica in the West Indies, and instead kept the money and furniture for himself.

Orange Police Director Charles Cobbetti identified the suspect as Joseph Walker, 36, the operator of Sealair Shipping Inc. on South Harrison Street, East Orange.

Walker, who lives in Plainsboro, was arrested by East Orange police on a complaint that he failed to return

a \$4,000 truck he rented from a firm in Orange, Cobbetti said.

The suspect, charged with theft of services and theft by deception, was being held in jail while authorities conduct an investigation into how many people paid Walker money to ship things that never were delivered, he added.

Cobbetti said the police already have found \$6,150 worth of furniture originally bound for Jamaica in a Bayonne warehouse, where Walker rented space.