Looking Forward

East Orange Updates Master Plan with an Eye to the Future

2017 NJLM Conference Preview

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The League goes to great lengths to be sure the municipal voice is heard in the State budget process. Please be sure to add your voice to the process this year.

February 28 Governor’s Budget Address in the Assembly Chamber was attended by Mayor Al Kelly, League President. He took advantage of the gathering to address the media on municipal needs.

March 15 The first Assembly budget hearing–Mayor Gary Passanante, Somerdale, Member of the League Executive Board, was ready to address the committee when a snowstorm struck, forcing postponement.

March 22 Rowan University, Glassboro–Mayor Al Kelly, Bridgeton, League President, addressed the Assembly committee at the rescheduled meeting.

April 13 Rowan College at Gloucester County, Sewell–Mayor Al Kelly, League President, again addressed the committee to voice municipal concerns and needs relative to the State budget. His testimony is featured on page 42.

Throughout April and May, League Senior Legislative Analyst Jon Moran attended several meetings of the respective Senate and Assembly budget committees to monitor testimony by State agencies impacting the budget. See some of his analyses in the April 7 daily update posted on our website, NJLSOM.org.

And early last month (May), the Treasurer and the Office of Legislative Services presented the budget committees with revised revenue collection figures for the state’s current fiscal year. Based on that data, adjustments were made to current state spending. And, also based on those figures, new projections were made for revenue anticipations in the upcoming budget. We alerted you to those developments and urged you to remind your legislators of the vital role that local government plays in protecting and advancing the interests of New Jersey’s almost 9 million citizens.

Throughout this process, copies of testimony and letters outlining municipal concerns were mailed and delivered to members of the Senate and Assembly.

As we often say, you play a critical part in the process of voicing municipal issues to legislators. Over the past 7 years there has been no adjustment to CMPTRA funding. This means the value of CMPTRA funding has decreased 11% over those 7 years. We know your budgets and property taxpayers feel that loss of value when you create your local budget. Be sure state legislators know it as well. We also know the state has, for years, diverted energy tax receipts away from municipalities to fund the State’s priorities, especially during the recession. It is time for that diversion to stop and instead make our property taxpayers the priority now.

Take time now to review the testimony of League President Al Kelly on page 42 and then pick up the phone or email your legislator to add your voice to the State budget process. They need to hear directly from you who are responsible for balancing your local budgets, paying your local bills, and caring for your local property taxpayers who bear the greatest tax burden.

As we often say, you play a critical part in the process of voicing municipal issues to legislators.”
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Planning Hanover Township’s Economic Renaissance

How strategic planning and marketing has helped create the “Hanover Avenue corridor”

By John L. Ferramosca, Deputy Mayor and Director of Planning, Hanover Township

Today, anyone traveling through what has been dubbed the “Hanover Avenue corridor” in the Cedar Knolls section of Hanover Township would bear witness to a revitalization underway that’s restoring this once-blighted area. Twenty years ago this picture was markedly different: Shuttered industrial buildings, debris, and waste piled high in rear yards pock marked Hanover Avenue and underscored the need for major redevelopment and environmental clean-up from legacy industry. The corridor had been in decline for years, as industries took flight from the area, similar to the trend New Jersey as a whole was experiencing.

The challenge before the Hanover Township Planning Board was both daunting and clear—how could the board restore this badly blighted industrial corridor into one of economic vibrancy? The answer? By proactively employing strategic planning and leveraging economic development efforts.

A Case for Action

The process of reinvention began with a comprehensive situation assessment of the corridor for each and every lot to determine the structural condition and environmental state of each facility. The Planning Board used a “Case for Action” approach, where each member was tasked with providing their own evaluation of the properties, along with supporting details on positive and negative impacts. Each of the 10 Planning Board members then presented their perspective on their assigned lots. Based upon this exchange of thoughts about the state of the parcels, the “Case for Action” or situation assessment of the corridor was developed.

After reaching consensus on the nature and extent of the blight, the Planning Board turned its focus to the desired future state. What could this corridor become, what would
the ideal uses be, and how best to transition it into re-development? The Planning Board collectively believed that this well-travelled corridor serving Hanover, Morris Township, and Morris Plains was ideal for services and retail uses for the surrounding communities. With that vision in place, the Planning Board then assessed zoning ordinances to determine if the regulations supported the desired retail and services uses for this section of town. The Township’s Planner, Blais Brancheau, worked with the board to create an update to the Master Plan, and thus began the process to rewrite the zoning regulations within the corridor.

From there, the Planning Board advanced the concept that large-scale retail was needed to attract top-quality stores and create an inviting streetscape for shoppers. With that in mind, the board proposed 10-acre-retail zoning with a principal building of 75,000 square feet of floor area to the Township Committee. The governing body, which supported the concept of attracting destination retail uses to the corridor, embraced the Planning Board’s proposed zoning and quickly approved it.

**Pushing against a recession**

With the planning in place, the job for redevelopment was referred to the Township’s Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) to support the marketing efforts of the envisioned corridor. Little did EDAC or the Planning Board know that the national and economic landscape was soon about to be severely shaken by the Great Recession starting in October 2008. Despite the strong headwinds of the recession, Hanover continued its marketing push and soon succeeded in attracting two major entities to the heart of the corridor: Novartis and ShopRite.

Novartis acquired an existing facility from a company called Dendreon and quickly upgraded the office/lab/manufacturing building Dendreon formerly had occupied. The Village Supermarkets-ShopRite group sought and received approval from the Planning Board to build an 85,000 square foot supermarket in a shopping center that would host additional stores and a

---

**IDEA**

For Hanover Township, the reinvention of Hanover Avenue is a major boon on many levels.

**STRATEGY**

Bob Nardone, who served on both the Planning Board and EDAC throughout the initiative, sums it up best: “The Planning Board faced a difficult challenge for how to re-develop this corridor of town, which was in significant decline with many operations having closed for 20 years.

**TARGET**

Through well-considered planning, buy-in from the Township Committee, and drawing on the marketing expertise of the EDAC the target was to showcase potential retail opportunities.

**INVESTMENT**

Nardone added: “Together, we crafted a strategy for success that transformed a blighted corridor into one of economic strength.”

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This new ShopRite raised the bar for retail in the area by providing experiential shopping, featuring a well-developed service deli, prepared meal offerings and service bars along the perimeter of the store complementing the traditional meat, produce, dairy, frozen food, and grocery departments.

With a solid base now realized and using the “Rings of Success” formula popularized by Mayor Ron Francioli where “success breeds success,” EDAC continued its marketing efforts to attract top-quality retail uses. They set their sights on attracting a large box home improvement store to the corner of Hanover and Ridgedale Avenue to anchor this heavily travelled location.

However, the economic climate at the time and rise of internet shopping were curtailing the ability to draw large-scale retail. Despite these obstacles, the marketing efforts continued to attract quality ratables in addition to Novartis and ShopRite that are building on the economic vibrancy that has dramatically revitalized the Hanover corridor.

A soon-to-be shopping center containing TJ Maxx, Home Goods, Ulta, Quick Chek, AutoZone, MedExpress, Five Below, and other stores is under construction, and three other retail developments have recently been approved: a BJ’s center, a Lidl grocery store, and a smaller retail center.

Impressive Metrics

From blight to economic resurgence, the Hanover Avenue corridor currently provides amenities to the Hanover Township community along with strong ratables to support the tax base, benefits which will grow as development is completed. A case in point—the BJ’s center is an 18-acre site which will feature a BJ’s member club, including a tire center and gasoline station, along with two smaller retail buildings, with a total floor area of almost 118,000 square feet.

“The shopping center will be developed in three phases with the BJ’s development hopefully getting underway this year,” noted Mayor Francioli. He added, “The Planning Board approval has many conditional requirements to this approval such as installation of a traffic signal, which will serve the entrance to the shopping center and Mennen Arena, provide expanded lanes to facilitate traffic flow, enhanced landscape buffering along the sides and at the rear of the property, and an ongoing environmental cleanup initiative. All of these requirements will be met at no cost to our taxpayers.”

With the addition of the BJ’s shopping center and other retail space, the Hanover Avenue corridor will boast some impressive metrics. In addition to the major infrastructure improvements to facilitate traffic flow and the environmental cleanup of the area, the corridor will feature over 380,000 square feet of prime retail space and employ an estimated 350 to 400 persons.
One of the greatest responsibilities of municipal officials is moving communities into a better future. Whether it’s transit villages, technological advancements, or dog parks, towns plan today for the happiness of citizens of generations to come.

In this issue, we focus on planning and how some towns are drawing up blueprints for the future. In the 1960s, the brighter future of tomorrow is what we are currently enjoying. Whether or not the exhibits at the 1964 World’s Fair New Jersey Pavilion came into fruition as realities, the effort of striving to lay the foundation for success has been a benefit reaped today.

For future generations, towns like East Orange are working on new Master Plans to ensure vibrant cities with places to live, work, and play for years to come. Other towns such as Hanover are planning for years to come by building business-friendly environments that ensure future generations will continue calling their hometowns home.

Planning doesn’t always have to be a formal process of committees and reports, NJLM invites you to start “Realizing Tomorrow’s Potential” at the 102nd League Conference this November. Before NJ Municipalities starts its summer break, we give you food for thought with the first of our Conference Preview sections starting on page 44. When the magazine begins a new season of publishing in October, we plan to provide you with more Conference details as well as information and inspiration for your professional development. Have a great summer!

### Plans for the Future

**Compu-Updates**

In 1963 for the town of Nutley (nutleynj.org/), rode a high-tech wave by automating the water billing procedures with the latest technology of the day— an NCR Compu-Tronic Accounting Machine. Their success in saving time and creating more accurate bills for residents was featured in the May 1963 issue of New Jersey Municipalities.

**Speeders Lose Licenses**

Keeping roads safe is a timeless concern throughout the Garden State. The spotlight was on the “Speeders Lose Licenses,” a campaign run by the Truck Safety Committee of the Hillside Safety Council. “With over 500 decals eventually going into circulation, the wandering safety slogans will speak out to passers-by from streets, alleys and parking lots all over town.” –Henry Goldhorn, Township Attorney, Hillside October 1962

**People, Purpose, Progress**

When the New York World’s Fair opened April 22, 1964, New Jersey was represented on a two-acre site close to the Fair’s unisphere theme center. “The story of New Jersey will be told in terms of its people—and pointing up to [New Jersey’s] Tercentenary motto: People, Purpose, Progress. Each of the 21 small pavilions will tell a different story all of which will provide to the non-Jerseyan an excellent idea of the large variety of industry, recreation, transportation, social and scientific research, education, agriculture and cultural aspects located in New Jersey.” –March 1964
League Welcomes New Staff Attorney

Frank Marshall, Esq., has joined the staff in April as the new League Staff Attorney. Among his many areas of legal work at the League, Marshall will conduct legal research and prepare documents, reports, summaries, and recommendations for internal analysis. He also will work with the Amicus Review Committee researching requests and writing briefs. In the legislative arena, the staff attorney will help administer the League Legislative Committee and lobbies on behalf of League positions. In addition, as of this month, Marshall will pen the Legal column in NJ Municipalities magazine (see page 54).

Prior to joining the League, Marshall was a Tax Controversy Associate with E. Martin Davidoff and Associates in Dayton and a Legal Research Assistant/Clerk for Timothy J. Hinlicky, Esq., in Egg Harbor Twp. He was also a certified legal intern/student attorney at Valparaiso University Law School Tax Clinic in Valparaiso, IN, and a summer intern in Judge Higbee’s Chambers of the New Jersey Superior Court in Atlantic City. Marshall has a B.A. in Criminal Justice and a J.D. from Valparaiso University School of Law. He is licensed to practice law in New Jersey and Pennsylvania. He can be reached at fmarshall@njslom.org.

Here He Is...

Ocean City’s Mr. Mature American 2017 contest featured a face familiar from the League Conference, Town Crier Rich LaLena. While the town crier was an impressive singing talent, the event winners were: Mr. Mature America 2017: Matthew Allen, 64, Newtown, PA; First Runner-Up: Gregg Clayton, 58, Somers Point; Second Runner-Up: Frank Formica, 65, Atlantic City.

Veteran entertainer Regis Philbin served as master of ceremonies for the Mr. Mature America Pageant on April 8 as well as the grand marshal in the annual season-opening celebration Doo Dah Parade held earlier that day.
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