

FACELIFT

DEP readying \$850,000 Crossing construction start

By J. STRYKER MEYER
Special to The Times

The state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) is quietly preparing to begin construction at the Washington Crossing State Park that will probably cost more than \$850,000.

Last year, after DEP Commissioner David J. Bardin scuttled \$8 million of park improvements, DEP then presented a modest plan for \$700,000 worth of improvements in the New Jersey park.

The latest plan calls for:

- A pedestrian overpass over Route 29 linking the two sides of the park.
- A toll booth, although last year DEP had promised not to put one in.
- A new park entrance off Route 546 (Pennington-Washington Crossing Road).
- A visitor's center complex.
- A concession stand.
- Two new parking lots.
- A new picnic area northeast of the present outdoor theatre-in-the-park.

THE PRESENT entrances to the park will be closed, restricting admission through the new entrance, which will have a toll booth where a \$2 fee will be charged for parking.

The new plan is the latest attempt by DEP to improve park facilities so that it can accommodate the millions of visitors expected this summer because this is the Bicentennial year.

There has been a running feud between the DEP and Hopewell Township since last May when Township Committeeman Christopher F. Bannister disclosed the state's plans for the park.

The township has been protesting that the state's plans for the park will bring more visitors, putting a greater strain on the township's small 14 member police department, local volunteer rescue and fire companies and township roads and may hurt the township's water resources. Officials say the township's governing bodies should have the right to review the plans.

The township has been protesting the state's plans which, they fear, will attract even more visitors than expected. They say township services, such as police protection, volunteer fire and rescue companies, and township roads will be overburdened and the local water resources may be damaged. Township officials feel they should have some right to review of the state's plans.



A state Department of Environmental Protection plan to improve Washington Crossing State Park will include a pedestrian overpass over Route 29 linking the two sides of the park.

THE TOWNSHIP COMMITTEE has been waiting since last summer for preliminary plans which, officials say, were promised to them.

"DEP went ahead with its plan, without regard for Hopewell Township," said one DEP source. "They knew they could 'stone-wall' it and get away with it."

Local township reaction to the new plan is mixed.

Mayor Frances C. Friedermann, "We feel the new plan would have been better if they had come to us for a complete review. I think we could have helped them. We will not throw any roadblocks in their way. We don't want to be obstructionist."

Bannister feels differently.

"I'm indignant with anger," he said. "Ever since this thing started last May, DEP has lied to us. And now they pull this. Bar-

din (state DEP Commissioner David Bardin) promised us full details. Guido (acting director of parks and forestry Alfred Guido) didn't bother. That's a classic case of a bureaucracy talking out of both sides of its mouth.

"I'VE CALLED AND written to Guido several times asking for more details. He never had the courtesy to respond. I'm a Republican, not of his party, therefore he can ignore me and the citizens I represent. As for the mayor's response, I'm sorry she has surrendered."

Guido could not be reached for comment.

Another DEP source told The Trenton Times, "The \$850,000 estimate is conservative. That project will probably cost \$1 million by the time they are done with it. And the project will not be finished by the May, June or July deadline."

Deepening financial woes force Morris Hall layoffs

A steadily worsening financial situation tolerated by the former financial directors has forced the Morris Hall Health and Rehabilitation Center to lay off 39 workers, the new financial manager claims.

The center was forced to lay off the workers because of the refusal of the Catholic Diocese of Trenton to underwrite the center's 1976 projected loss of about \$400,000, according to James Gallagher, the new financial director.

Last year, the diocese paid about the same amount to cover a 1974 deficit.

Employees at the center reacted with strong criticism of the move, claiming that the 148 patients at the Lawrence Road rest home will suffer from sharply diminished care standards. The claim is disputed by Gallagher, who said the center still will exceed state and federal care requirements.

GALLAGHER SAID outside firms are studying the center's operations, seeking other areas to save on costs. He estimated \$200,000 would be saved by the layoffs.

He said the layoffs were "the direct result of intolerable losses. Some people were not interested in controlling costs."

James Tunney, financial director for the diocese

said the refusal to further subsidize the center stems from a realization that operations were inefficient.

Tunney said "overstaffing is the primary reason for the deficit," and added "I don't know who's to blame."

AS AN EXAMPLE, Gallagher said, the center is reimbursed for term care patients at the rate of \$25 to \$27 per day through Medicare and Medicaid, but the overstaffing had driven up the actual costs to close to \$50 a day per patient.

The cuts, affecting all departments at the 197-bed facility, include 21 members of the nursing staff (four full-time registered nurses); five dieticians; all three members of the social services department; two housekeepers; one of two ambulance drivers and the center's full-time public relations director. Some other fulltime positions were cut to part-time work.

Dr. Werner Hollendonner, the center's medical director who resigned in protest over the layoffs, is still working at the facility. He said he has not had a reply to the resignation letter he sent to the diocese last week.

West Ward establishes security plan

A new "Block Captain" program, designed to increase security in Trenton's troubled western neighborhoods, is being formed in the wake of the January murder of a 10-year-old West Ward boy.

The West Ward Citizens Patrol last night announced formation of the program at a meeting attended by more than 80 West Ward residents in the Cadwalader Branch Library on Hermitage Avenue.

Each volunteer block captain will agree to keep a special watch on who enters and leaves the neighborhood and report suspicious actions to the police.

More than 15 persons signed up last night to become captains or to join the dozen-member citizens patrol.

The patrol, armed only with

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2d suspicious fire heavily damages Major's Furniture

By LEE PASTERNAK
Staff Writer

A fire believed to be arson heavily damaged merchandise and the third floor of Major's Furniture Mart at 4 North Broad St. last night.

It was the second suspicious fire to damage the building within 16 months and the fourth fire at the State and Broad streets corner since 1974.

Alarms that showed simultaneously that sprinkler heads were deluging fires on three of the four store floors, and the main valve in the basement was being tampered with, were received at 5:31 p.m.

Battalion Chief William Noon gave the second alarm 14 minutes later, putting 35 firemen, six pumper and two ladder trucks on the scene. The blaze was reported under control at 6:14.

MATCHES FOUND scattered in the building had apparently been struck to light the blazes, Detective Lt. Carl Worob said.

There were fires on the first, second and third floors, with the third floor damaged the heaviest. The flames had spread over a 50-foot radius and started up a stairway toward a fourth floor storage area.

There was heavy water and smoke damage in the store and also in Devito's Pizza. The same restaurant was heavily damaged in a fire that spread up the rear of Major's store Nov. 10, 1974.

A violent explosion wrecked Dominic's Pizza in the adjacent East State Street block and heavily damaged Dunham's department store Jan. 27, 1975.

THE PARKLANE hosiery store at 101 East State Street was destroyed in a blaze exactly a year ago on March 11, 1975. George Evans' newsstand went up in the same fire.

It was the third blaze for Major's which is operated by Mitchell Marsky of 51 Forsythia Drive, Levittown.

His store previously located at North Broad and Academy streets was wiped out in a blaze Dec. 14, 1971.

Another multiple alarm fire Aug. 21, 1971 destroyed the Red White and Blue Home Furnishings Outlet.

Last night's fire was partly held in check by 124 sprinkler heads which opened in the ceilings of the furniture store, Deputy Chief Vincent Pompei said.

Police detoured Broad Street traffic as firemen fought the blaze with seven lines and their snorkle pumper. Smoke and water damage was reported in Arthur Treacher's restaurant at State and Broad Streets.

Louis Hano of 9 Cadwalader Drive owns the building.

Donahue pays debt with bouncing check

By HENRY BRYAN
Staff Writer

Donald Donahue, who was bounced from office by Hamilton Township voters Tuesday, bounced a \$100 "rubber check" off the board of education as one of his last acts as the township's self-proclaimed fiscal conservative.

"That rubber check stretched so much that it won't fit into his Eldorado Cadillac," said Elmer Kovacs, a long-time antagonist of Donahue. Kovacs was also bounced from office by voters.

The 23-year-old Donahue, who is a substitute teacher in Trenton and a part-time bookkeeper at the Penn

Hotel, could not be reached for comment.

Donahue's beige check, with blue scene of sailing ships in the center and the words "Salute from the French Fleet" printed on it was handed over to the school board two weeks ago.

The check was supposed to repay part of the \$383 Donahue spent winning and dining friends in Atlantic City at a convention last October.

After being censured by the board for lying about his expenses in Atlantic City, Donahue agreed to pay back part of the money.

The check was sent back to the school board yesterday, according to

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And it's
barely spring

Ah, the joys of a spring-like day and an accommodating tree branch. Warmer sunny weather in Vancouver has sent the Stanley Park bears — no relation to the Stanley Cup Bears, who have been mistaken for bears by less fistically-inclined foes — into the trees to bask just a little closer to the source of those golden rays.