

Old Bridge 1987

Newspaper Clippings re: Old Bridge  
Attach: Cover Letter

Pg. 5

CA000157L

THE STATE UNIVERSITY OF NEW JERSEY  
**RUTGERS**  
Campus at Newark

CA000157L

School of Law-Newark • Constitutional Litigation Clinic  
S.I. Newhouse Center For Law and Justice  
15 Washington Street • Newark • New Jersey 07102-3192 • 201/648-5687

June 5, 1987

Mr. C. Roy Epps, President  
Civic League of Greater New Brunswick  
47-49 Throop Avenue  
New Brunswick, NJ 08901

Dear Roy:

Enclosed please find recent newspaper clippings  
in connection with Old Bridge.

Sincerely,



encls

cc/Neisser, Payne (w/encls)

# Central Jersey

Woodbridge, N.J.—Sun., May 31, 1987

## Wetlands may hold key to Old Bridge growth

By K.J. COCUZZO

News Tribune staff writer

**OLD BRIDGE** — With new houses sprouting up like dandelions on a suburban lawn, township officials say they are doing their best to put the brakes on residential development.

The township's master plan — now in draft stages — may be the best way to do that, some municipal officials say.

"It should protect the town for the next 20 years," said Planner Henry Bignell. "We're also proving environmentally that most of Old Bridge should be not be developed, or at least developed at extremely low (housing) densities."

The preliminary findings of Hintz-Nelessen Associates, the township's master plan consultant, indicated that about half of Old Bridge's 40 square miles may be undevelopable.

One map prepared by the Pennington-based firm shows large areas of Old Bridge containing wetlands and/or high water tables. Some of the land is designated for aquifer recharge.

"I don't think any of us realized the extent of the wetlands in Old Bridge and the importance they seem to have statewide and nationally," said Planning Board member Philomena Genatempo. "We have constraints. We have to look at things in a different light."

Besides housing, the wetlands findings will also affect the township's road network, which officials agree needs improvement.

Carl Hintz, a principal in Hintz-Nelessen Associates, said the proposed Trans-Old Bridge Expressway "cannot be built because a major portion of it is wetlands."

The expressway, planned to be Old Bridge's second major east-west artery after Route 516, was contained for years in previous master plans.

Under its original alignment, the highway would have connected routes 516, 18, 9 and 34 with Exit 120 of the Garden State Parkway in the township's Laurence Harbor section.

Residential development in the late 1970s and early 1980s eliminated the proposed link between

Route 34 and the parkway.

In South Old Bridge, Olympia & York and Woodhaven Village, two major builders, were to construct large segments of the expressway as part of their projects.

But the O&Y and Woodhaven developments — which at one time totaled about 16,000 housing units — remain uncertain because of wetlands.

Hintz told Old Bridge officials Route 516 does not need to be widened to four lanes.

His partner, Anton Nelessen, recommended the two-lane county highway be improved, particularly at its intersections, from the Brown-town commercial area to Morganville Road.

One improvement alternative is installation of jughandles. With high-volume rush hour traffic in the mornings and evenings, it is nearly impossible to make left turns from Route 516, local officials said.

"It's a really good idea to have a traffic consultant do a study of the highway," Hintz said.

Mayor Russell Azzarello, who is

also a planning board member, said Hintz's recommendations for Route 516 make sense.

The Municipal Complex (at Route 516 and Cottrell Road) would be the hub for downtown Old Bridge," Azzarello said. "But you can't do that with a four-lane Route 516. At that width, it would be a super-highway."

The Hintz-Nelessen master plan envisions Cottrell Road as the future downtown or "main street" area, an idea Azzarello called excellent.

The Hintz-Nelessen survey of township officials showed a preference for five-acre building lots and resistance to strip-type commercial development along Old Bridge's highway frontages.

"I think the master plan shows the runaway development of the township is a thing of the past," Azzarello said. "If you can't build roads because of wetlands, you certainly can't build houses."

Said Mrs. Genatempo: "If nothing else we have a better understanding of what needs to be changed in Old Bridge."

# O&Y seeks deal on Mt. Laurel housing

By K.J. COCUZZO

News Tribune staff writer

**OLD BRIDGE** — Olympi & York has offered to pay Old Bridge \$15 million instead of actually building Mount Laurel housing here, the News Tribune has learned.

The Toronto-based builder, in a private meeting last week, suggested a contribution of \$3,000 per housing unit to the township's Affordable Housing Trust Fund, instead of constructing low- and moderate-income units.

O&Y has revised plans calling for a multi-phased 5,000-unit housing project off routes 9 and 18, Texas and Englishtown roads in South Old Bridge.

Under the proposal, O&Y would pay \$3,000 per unit to the township upon the issuance of a certificate of occu-

## Old Bridge offered \$15 million

pancy for each dwelling.

The \$5 million would equal three-quarters of Old Bridge's proposed \$20.6 million municipal budget for 1987.

"The only stipulation on the money is that it has to be spent on subsidizing rents for income-qualified people and upgrading the community," 6th Ward Councilman Thomas O'Malley said. "The money is not for the construction of low- and moderate-income housing."

O'Malley, a Republican whose ward includes most of South Old Bridge, said O&Y made the proposal in a meeting last Tuesday between lawyers for the

township, the builder, Woodhaven Village Inc. and the Civic League of Greater New Brunswick.

"We haven't received the (O&Y) proposal in writing. It just came up last week and was reported to me by one of our attorneys," said Civic League President C. Roy Epps.

"But there's been an indication of some interest in doing this. I will reserve further comment until we have a formal proposal," Epps said.

Township Law Director Jerome Convery declined comment Friday, indicating the Old Bridge Mount Laurel litigation involving O&Y, Woodhaven and the Civic League "is an execu-

tive session matter."

Lloyd Brown, executive vice president of O&Y Old Bridge Development Corp., a subsidiary of the building giant, also declined to comment.

But O'Malley said: "Everyone agreed on the stipulated money. The Civic League also agreed to drop their so-called magic number (Old Bridge's fair share designation of Mount Laurel units).

"The Civic League agreed to our ordinance which calls for a 10 percent set aside for low- and moderate-income housing and four units per acre," he said. "There's been no formal action on this O&Y proposal, but there has been a meeting of the minds on it. Everything was in a stalemate before

See O&Y, Page A-4.

# O&Y: Builder wants to avoid construction

(Continued from Page A-1)

it. It's too early for me to give the proposal a yes or a no, but it's something we have to seriously consider."

Assuming the \$15 million proposal was rejected, an alternative could be O&Y building 10 percent, or 100 of its 5,000-unit project as Mount Laurel housing, O'Malley said.

The bipartisan Township Council voted, 7-0, in a private meeting Thursday to continue with a court action to set aside Old Bridge's January 1986

Mount Laurel agreement with Woodhaven and O&Y.

One council Democrat, who asked not to be identified, said he heard "rumors" about O&Y's \$15 million offer.

"Even if we had something on the table, I feel we should still push for the set aside of the Mount Laurel agreement," he said. "We want low-density housing built in South Old Bridge. But it sounds like O&Y is trying to salvage some of its project."

Township officials say the amount of wetlands at the O&Y and Woodhaven sites makes it impossible to build 1,056 and 582 Mount Laurel units, respectively.

The original O&Y and Woodhaven plans, withdrawn last year after the discovery of vast wetlands, called for 10,560 and 5,820 residential units.

If Superior Court Judge Eugene Serpentelli sets aside the Mount Laurel settlement, Old Bridge plans to ask him for permission to go to the state Affordable Housing Council.

The housing panel has estimated the township's "fair share" of low- and moderate-income dwellings at 417.

"Our argument is that we have already met the 417 figure. The 1,668 figure (called for in the Mount Laurel package, with O&Y and Woodhaven contributing a total of 1,638 units) is meaningless at this point," said Democratic Mayor Russell Azzarello. "All the facts on which the Mount Laurel agreement was based have changed because of the wetlands and the Affordable Housing Council. We have no alternative now."

# Old Bridge officials want master planner removed

By K.J. COCUZZO

News Tribune staff writer

OLD BRIDGE — Township officials want court-appointed master planner Carla Lerman removed from Old Bridge's Mount Laurel case because of an alleged conflict of interest, officials said Friday.

The Township Council and Planning Board, in separate private meetings last week, voted unanimously on resolutions seeking Ms. Lerman's ouster.

It is possible that Ms. Lerman may have been in conflict, township officials said, when she sold a Teaneck home to the relatives of a man who used to work for Samuel Halpern, a principal in Woodhaven Village Inc.

The Woodbridge-based company is one of two builders involved in Old Bridge's January 1986 court-approved Mount Laurel agreement that Ms. Lerman helped negotiate.

"There's nothing to defend because I have done nothing that needs defense," Ms. Lerman said

Friday. "I explained the situation completely to all parties. I haven't heard from the township, or its attorney on what action they've taken. "I will let the judge decide (on the removal). It's his decision since he appointed me."

State Superior Court Judge Eugene Serpentelli named Ms. Lerman, an employee with the state Department of Community Affairs, as the court's master planner here in 1984.

Her job was to assist in negotiating a Mount Laurel compliance package between Old Bridge, Woodhaven, Olympia & York and the Civic League of Greater New Brunswick.

Township Law Director Jerome Convery and Planning Board Attorney Thomas Norman, in a series of letters earlier this year, asked Ms. Lerman for information concerning the house sale. She complied.

In the correspondence, Ms. Lerman indicated she learned by accident about the possible connection

between the buyers and Woodhaven.

She informed Serpentelli about the possible conflict sometime between Nov. 24 and Dec. 5, 1986. He advised Ms. Lerman to notify all the lawyers involved in Old Bridge's Mount Laurel case.

A sale agreement for the five-bedroom unfinished home was executed on Dec. 30, and the closing took place March 2 of this year. The sale price was \$275,000.

Council members Barbara Cannon and Arthur Haney publicly accused Convery last Thursday of withholding information about Ms. Lerman's possible conflict — a charge he denied as "ludicrous."

"When I have something of substance I go to the council, but not for day-to-day, routine work. When I got all the correspondence (on Ms. Lerman), I brought it to the council — and that was Thursday," Convery said.

He declined to discuss the merits of the township's action on the conflict issue.

Mrs. Cannon and Haney said they were concerned even if we're just talking about the appearance of a conflict of interest.

"We spent a lot of hours with Ms. Lerman talking about the O&Y-Woodhaven agreement. She sat in on sensitive negotiations," Mrs. Cannon said.

Lloyd Brown, executive vice president of O&Y Old Bridge Development Corp. East Brunswick, said he was surprised by the move to oust Ms. Lerman.

"When we go out to lunch as a group — our lawyers and the township's lawyers — we'd pick up the tab. Carla would pay her own way. Nobody would worry about it but her, and you couldn't argue with her," Brown said. "Carla Lerman is as straight as they go."

"She'll probably be replaced with another planner (because of Old Bridge's protest)," he said. "In the overall picture, it won't make any difference."

# Region

# C

THE HOME NEWS

CLASSIFIED C2-10

SATURDAY, MAY 30, 1987

## Town seeks planner's dismissal finds roles conflict

By **LENNY MELISURGO**  
and **JOE SABO**  
Home News staff writers

**OLD BRIDGE**— The Township Council wants Carla Lerman to be dismissed as the court-appointed master who oversees the town's Mount Laurel II compliance plan because Lerman allegedly sold property to someone affiliated with a developer involved in the affordable-housing litigation, officials said yesterday.

The council, at a private session Thursday night, unanimously approved a resolution calling for state Superior Court Judge Eugene Serpentelli to remove Lerman from her master planner post because of a "possible appearance of conflict of interest," officials said.

The Old Bridge Planning Board took similar action at a private meeting earlier this week, said several sources who asked not to be identified.

According to the sources, Lerman has sold a piece of property in Bergen County to a person affiliated with Woodhaven Village Inc. of Woodbridge.

Woodhaven Village is one of two large development firms that filed suit against Old Bridge in 1984, contending that the township had failed to comply with the state's Mount Laurel II ruling. The ruling requires developing New Jersey municipalities to provide a "fair share" of housing for families with low and moderate incomes.

seeking to nullify its Mount Laurel settlement because of the discovery of environmentally sensitive property slated for development. A court hearing on the motion is expected to be scheduled within the next two weeks.

Lerman was appointed by Serpentelli to supervise the negotiations among Old Bridge, the state, Woodhaven Village, and Olympia & York, another development firm that plans to build thousands of homes in the township.

Lerman could not be reached for comment yesterday.

Township Attorney Jerome J. Convery and Planning Board Chairwoman Joan George said that as a matter of policy, they do not comment on issues discussed in private session.

Planning Board Attorney Thomas Norman was not available for comment.