



WESTFIELD
RESIDENTS
ASSOCIATION,
INC.

WESTFIELD NEWS

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CUCIA PARK-BOARDMAN LANE OFFICIAL REPORTS

Monday, April 19, 2010

*In the 3rd Congregational Church
Friendship Hall
94 Miner St., Middletown*

Brief Business Meeting 7 p.m.

Guest Speakers 7:30 p.m.

Pedro Wasmer, co-owner of the Boardman Lane property, accompanied by his engineers, and, Diane McCartin, Project Manager of the U. S. Army Corp Engineers that has been approved to build the Army's huge reserve center on Westfield's Cucia Park, accompanied by some of her staff, will be the guest speakers at our WRA April Quarterly meeting. Each will dispel all rumors about the above two pieces of Westfield property by telling us exactly what their plans are for the lands. Will you like what you hear? Attend our April WRA Quarterly meeting for the answer.

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**Westfield Residents
Association, Inc.
P.O. Box 373
Middletown, CT 06457**

Mail to:

At the Common Council Meeting 4/5/2010

The subject that garnered the most attention and public comments was item 11-3, to authorize the mayor to sign an 80 year lease that would give city resident Anthony Pioppi Step One in his quest to build a 9 hole golf course, that could be played as 18 holes using dual airways. The site would be the city's Maromas open space land.

Attendees speaking in favor of the mayor's signing of the agreement stated that the proposed golf course would greatly improve the neglected portion of the acreage and that the course would attract golfers from everywhere, who, after playing golf, will patronize Middletown's downtown restaurants, stores, and the hotel.

Attendees opposing the mayor's lease signing provided pertinent information on the value of the open space for other purposes, the very negative playing conditions that will turn off many golfers, and, if or when, Mr. Pioppi finds the financial backers that he needs, how many, many years it will be before the city starts receiving what hardly will be a budget-lessening amount of income from the course.

With all of the information presented, pro and con, on Item 11-3, the public asked that the decision authorizing the mayor to sign the lease be tabled until the next meeting to give Council members time to study what was said and consider adding to the lease more city physical and financial protection. Three Councilmen, David Bauer, Grady Faulkner, and Ron Klattenberg, supported that request but the vote was 9 to 3 against it. So, in due time, the lease will be signed as is. Excluding the need to find financial backing, for Mr. Pioppi, the lease is only the first of four steps toward building the course. He must still get approval from the city's Inland Wetlands Agency, the Environmental Division of the U.S. Army's Corps of Engineers, and the city's Planning and Zoning Commission.

Pet Owners Warning!

Springtime means pretty spring flowers, but, for pets certain common spring plants can be extremely hazardous. Here is a list provided by the North Shore Animal League Of America.

Plants That Cause Gastrointestinal Upset:

- Amaryllis
- Caladium
- Calla Lily
- Ferns
- Hyacinth
- Iris,
- Tulip.

Plants That Cause Severe Illness or Death:

- Easter Lily
- Foxglove
- Lily Of TheValley
- Morning Glory
- Narcissus
- Rhododendron,
- Tiger Lily
- Azalea
- Bittersweet
- Clematis

It's Up to You!

On March 12th, Middletown resident James McAuliffe informed WRA he was in the process of trying to form a Middletown Taxpayers Association to promote efficiency and fiscal austerity in Middletown's government activities (particular interest in spending that affects the mill rate). Also increased citizen awareness and engagement on fiscal issues and organized opposition to unjustified and wasteful spending.

Because such an organization's efforts could become quite political and WRA is adamant about being non-political, WRA is not speaking for or against the project. To learn more about James' proposed association, his progress, or to become a member, call him at 860 347-1591, or on his cell phone 860 754-6977.

COME HEAR THE UPDATE: Boardman Lane and Cucia Park

(Continued from page 1)

NOTE: To get first hand, complete, up-to-the-minute information on this previously controversial location for the reserve center, we had to change our WRA Quarterly Meeting from the usual last Monday of the month to **Monday, April 19th**. We deeply appreciate Diane's changing her national agenda so that she too can be with us. We regret,

and apologize, that you have gotten this newsletter with such short notice of the meeting. It was caused by the need to change the date.

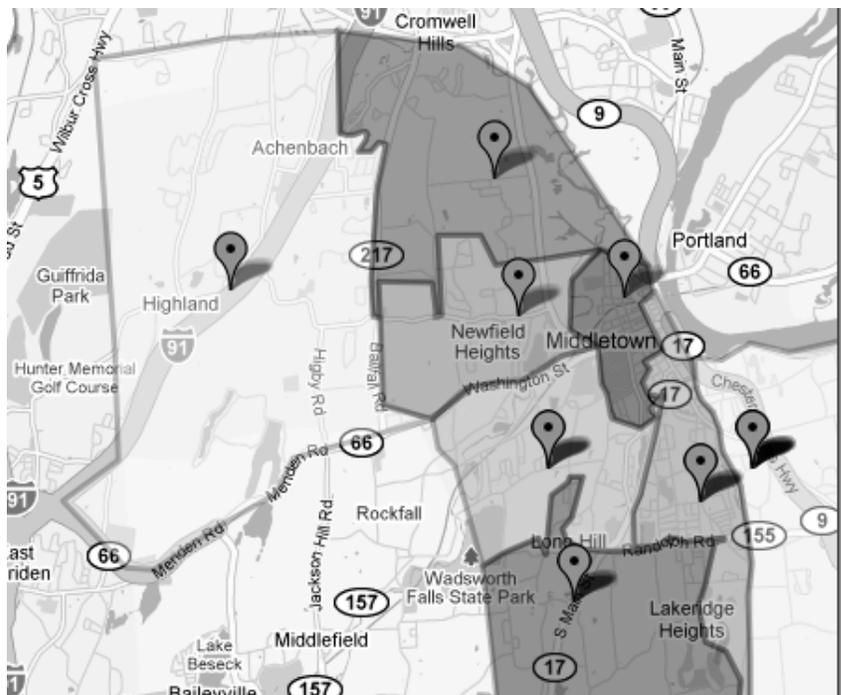
Join WRA for this special event. Admission, like the refreshments, is free.

We'll be looking for you!

Elementary School Redistricting to Alleviate Overcrowding at Moody

The Board of Education voted at their April 6 meeting to accept the redistricting plan developed by a committee of parents, teachers, principals and others.

The most significant change for Westfield schools is a reduction in enrollment for Moody. In recent years, Moody has been overcrowded by as much as 120% of student capacity. The redistricting plan reduces the number of students at Moody to 380, about 95% of the building's capacity. It does this in large part by stopping the busing of students from neighborhoods near downtown out to Moody.



For further coverage of the School redistricting, see articles by several different correspondents for the Middletown Eye; the article about the Board of Ed vote is here:

<http://middletowneyenews.blogspot.com/2010/04/board-of-ed-votes-to-redistrict.html>

Common Council to meet in Westfield May 13th

The Common Council has been holding monthly meetings at various locations throughout the city this year, to offer citizens an opportunity to bring any and all concerns to their attention. The 5th of these meetings will be held at Moody Elementary School, on Thursday, May 13th, at 7PM. All members of the public are invited and welcome to speak on any topic.

In the coming weeks, the Council will be holding special meetings at City Hall to discuss the budget.

- Tuesday, April 20, 6PM: includes Planning Department budget
- Wednesday, April 21, 7PM: includes Public Works budget
- Tuesday, April 27, 7PM: includes Parks and Recreation, Police Department, and Board of Education Budget

KidCity Hosts Crayons for Cancer Drive

On March 20th, Middletown's KidCity hosted the non-profit organization, Crayons for Cancer. Founded in fall 2008 by 6-year-old Emily Christensen to raise funds for kids battling cancer, Crayons for Cancer collects, peels and melts down old crayons into new shapes. The new crayons are sold and 100% of the proceeds go to Children's Hospitals to support Family Funds at Oncology Units. Crayons for Cancer originally supported the Oncology Unit at Connecticut Children's Medical Center in Hartford, but that partnership has expanded to include Minneapolis Children's Hospital and the Hasbro Children's Hospital in Providence.

Family Funds help families cope with their child's illnesses by off-setting the cost of parking and meals while they stay at the hospital. Crayons for Cancer proceeds also go to Treasure Chests where young patients go to choose prizes after enduring tough chemo/radiation treatments and/or blood tests.

Crayons for Cancer was founded in honor of Emily's friend, Tarsh Brown, Jr (TJ), who passed away in August 2007, just before he reached 4 years old. He would have attended Bowers Elementary School in Manchester but cancer took his life early.

To date, Crayons for Cancer has raised over \$20,000, and the March 20th event raised \$124.00. KidCity is a permanent drop-off location (just give your donation to the front desk), and many area elementary schools have recycled their old crayons at the end of the school year. Macdonough and Moody Elementary Schools have both donated old crayons in the last year. Other drop-off locations are Dot the I's Events



(50 Market Square, Newington) and Sobelman Pediatrics (828 Sullivan Avenue, South Windsor).

There are many ways to help this organization: donate crayons, host a crayon party (great for boy/girl scout events and school service projects), or solicit crayons from restaurants or schools. You can also purchase new crayons in bulk – they make great party gifts or teacher presents.

A free Benefit Concert is being held at Manchester Community College Bandshell on Saturday, June 12th, from 11am to 3pm. The featured performers include The Music of Zeal & The Post Hole Diggers and the Magic of David Garrity. Major vendors include Blackie's Hot Dogs (Cheshire, CT), the Manchester Fire Department (Manchester, CT), and Nomads Adventure Quest (South Windsor, CT). Activities for kids include a bounce house from Nomads, a crayon party tent (come peel some crayons with us), face painting, a raffle and silent auction and ice cream from Highland Park Market.

Additional information is available:

<http://www.crayonsforcancer.org/>



WRA member Jennifer Mahr and her children Andrew (9) and Allison (6) sell crayons at the 3/20 KidCity crayon drive. Crayons for Cancer raised \$124.00 for CCMC's Oncology Unit.

Project Green Lawn

Project Green Lawn is a City of Middletown Public awareness campaign to encourage residents and businesses to maintain healthy lawns free of chemicals that are harmful to people, pets and the environment.

Exposure to certain lawn-care pesticides has been associated with increased risk of asthma, several types of childhood and adult cancers, birth defects, reproductive problems, nervous and immune system disorders, and liver and kidney damage.

Research reported by the National Institute of Health

indicates that children may be particularly sensitive to cancer-causing effects of pesticides. And, dogs whose owners use a popular lawn-care chemical found in most “weed and feed” products were twice as likely to contract cancer, according to a National Cancer Institute study

For more information on this vital subject, contact Kim O’Rourke, Middletown’s Recycling Coordinator at 860 344-3526 or go to the City website at cityof-middletown.com (go to the Public Works Department page and scroll down to Project Green Lawn).



One of Westfield’s Best Neighbors

Let’s just admit it—Westfield is home to a lot of characters of many kinds. They are our neighbors. You see them at the WRA Quarterly meetings and annual picnics with chili on their chins, on the Com-cast public television station with their arms crossed across their chests skeptically listening to the Common Council, and at the Third Congregational Church Strawberry Festival. But my favorite Westfield neighbor has got to be the Eastern Box Turtle (EBT).

This beautiful and ancient creature wouldn’t hurt a fly...well, maybe it would try to go after a fly, but more likely catch a beetle or an earthworm. Rest assured, an EBT would not harm a human. If you approach them, they might hiss

at you and retreat into their shell, or pick up their house on their four sturdy legs and try high-tailing outta here, as fast as its little feet can go (which is pretty slow). But this Westfield character-will not bother you for a donation while you are taking a walk in your neighborhood, will not mow their lawn at 7:00 in the morning after a long workweek, and will not spray anything foul-smelling on the bushes during your picnics, such as deer-repelling, synthetic wolf urine that really stinks. The Eastern Box Turtle is one of Westfield’s quietest and most considerate



neighbors; the kind of neighbor that we want to welcome and keep in residence.

May and June are the months when you are most likely to spot an EBT. This is the time when they are

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The Eastern Box Turtle (continued)

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out and about looking for companionship and sunny nesting spots in easy-to-dig soil. You already know what they look like if you've lived in Westfield for any length of time—they have colorful black with orange, yellow, or tan patterns and high, helmet-like shells, angular facial features, sturdy little legs with claws that are not sharp, and large, soulful eyes. The turtles with the red eyes are the males, and those with the big, brown eyes are usually female.

They should not be confused with the flatter-shelled aquatic turtles, which also live in Westfield, who can be shy (like pond turtles) or some, even downright nasty (like snappers). EBTS need water for drinking (they are sensitive to dehydration) and for an occasional dip in the pool to cool off on hot days, but they are strictly land-lubbers. Just like you and me, they like hiking and foraging during dry and pleasant weather, dewy Spring and Summer mornings, or lounging in lush, moist microhabitats where there is deep, moist, organic rich soil. They like hanging out near wetland perimeters or in stony glacial till soils. Yup, EBTs know a nice place when they see it, and it looks a lot like our backyards and woodlands of Westfield.

Sadly, people, and the things that people do, are their primary threat. The Eastern Box Turtle is listed by the State Department of Environmental Protection as a Species of Special Concern and are becoming rarer and rarer for a variety of reasons but primarily due to loss of habitat from development, road kill accidents from cars and heavy construction equipment, and “collection”, “rescue” or “relocation” usually by misguided folks who don't know any better, but also sometimes by people who capture and sell them on the internet or to pet stores (a pricker bush around the ankles and a frowney face to them!) For this reason the specific locations of their habitats are often kept secret.

Wild box turtles usually do not survive as “pets” and cannot be relocated from outside of their home territories. A funny thing about EBTs is that they

have that “homing” thing going on, and they just “know” where their food and sources of water are. It is thought that they use the earth's magnetic field or the position of the sun to reorient themselves back to their homes. But sometimes they just don't make it; usually they die from starvation, dehydration, or the risks associated with the treacherous journey home.

What difference does it make to have one less Eastern Box Turtle? It can mean the end of the entire population in a region! In some groups there are only one or two males or females sustaining the entire population. According to the State DEP, a box



turtle takes well over a decade to reach sexual maturity! Some believe they have to be, like, age 13 or 14 years old before they can even reproduce! This suspected fact of life plus the fact that they have low egg outputs and egg survival rates create a delicate balance of survival. So even the loss of one box turtle can doom an entire population in a region... forever! So please, don't capture a box turtle.

The good news is that a healthy and unharmed box turtle can live over 100 years old if they are left alone. Populations of box turtles can hang on in a patch of forest within a city or in between neighborhood subdivisions if they are allowed to peacefully co-exist next to human habitats, but this means considerate and informed neighbors.

This is why you shouldn't give EBTs as gifts to the

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The Eastern Box Turtle (continued)

grandkids. If you see a box turtle trying to cross the road and in harm's way, whatever you do, don't put yourself or your family in harm's way, too! If you can safely remove the turtle from the road, move it in the direction the turtle wants to go (not back to where it came from). Turtles, like people, are stubborn as heck and will just try to cross the busy road again. What if you find an injured turtle? Read on.

Unfortunately, EBTs are often seriously injured by lawn mowers, by cars, or heavy construction equipment. I can share with you from personal experience that it IS possible to save an injured box turtle. One of the greatest gifts my family and I received was being able to help save a box turtle that had several large stress cracks in its shell (aka, carapace), probably due to being run over by heavy construction equipment. We found the poor thing in our backyard pond a few years ago and it most certainly would have died from infection if it hadn't been for the fact that we knew who to call to find a vet who takes injured wildlife over the counter for no charge.



This box turtle received several weeks of care from the vet who successfully cleansed and repaired its shell using dental epoxy (don't try this at home), and received several weeks of rehabilitation from a certified wildlife rehabilitator. It was then released back at the exact same spot where it was found, and a year later, we were thrilled to see the turtle return for a visit!

We later learned that this particular individual, whom we fondly named Boris, was one of the oldest successfully rehabilitated Eastern Box Turtles in Connecticut in recent years, according to those in EBT circles. What a thrill it was to be part of that success! (If you find an injured box turtle, please hold it and call me at 860 346 0339; we will connect you to the right people to help save its life or we can do that for you.)

Here are some ways to prevent lawn mowing accidents from happening, courtesy of the Quinnipiac River Watershed Association's Turtle Crossing Project (Sigrun N. Gadwa of Carya Ecological Services, LLC.)

- Keep lawns short enough that turtles can be easily seen (< 4 inches)
- Cut fields and brush when turtles are least active (which is not at 7:00 a.m. in the morning when your neighbors are still sleeping.) Avoid mowing when temperatures are pleasant; instead mow when weather is hot and dry. Turtles typically feed and travel across fields and similar sunny upland areas when temperatures are moderate, mostly from May through June. In summer, the highest risk period is the morning hours when there is still dew on the ground. During the hot, dry conditions typical of midday, turtles usually rest in the shady edges of fields or under shrubs. In prolonged hot, dry spells, turtles often bury themselves and become dormant underground.
- Brush hog field edges or managed open habitat in the mid to late winter, when ground is frozen or relatively dry. Turtles hibernate underground during winter months.
- If mowing when turtles may be active is unavoidable, set height of mowing deck to 6-8 inches. Although adult eastern box turtles reach no higher than four inches with necks extended, under certain conditions 8 inches clearance is wise, such as if ground is uneven or rocky or if mower has rotating blades such that suction can draw turtles up into the cutting zone. Uneven ground can elevate turtles into harms' way. Probability of injury is very high for a flail-type

Box Turtle Neighbors (continued)

(Continued from page 7)

- mower with a deck set lower than 6 inches; risk is moderate for a haying cutterbar (attached to side of tractor.)
- When closer mowing (lower than 6-8 inches) is unavoidable, use these precautions: Use a hand-held string trimmer, which would not injure a turtle fully within its shell. For larger areas, have someone walk ahead to check for box turtles. Any turtles found should be moved several hundred feet out of the way. Do not relocate turtles off the site!
- Leave strips or “islands” that are infrequently cut, such as a 3 to 8-foot wide swath of meadow or shrubs between the lawn and the woods edge; beds of shrubs and perennial wildflowers with wood chips; or a meadow-wildflower patch.

Turtles will spend more of their time in these areas, feeding on insects and worms, than in the open lawn or field, and they improve the overall habitat quality. Woodchips are a preferred refuge in the heat of the day. Avoid broadcast pesticide use in these areas.

I really do love Eastern Box Turtles; can you tell? I hope that this information helps us all to protect them so we can keep these interesting characters as our really good Westfield neighbors. They are one of our most special creatures and part of what makes Westfield a unique and wonderful place to live.

Article by Cathy Branch Stebbins with technical assistance from Sigrun Gadwa, Carya Ecological Services, LLC and the State DEP website.

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

The WRA represents the interests of all who care about of life in Westfield, and all who care about the reasonable development of Middletown. We hope we can count on your continued support. Please use the renewal application below.

- 2010 Officers
- Chairperson
Arline Rich
 - Vice Chair
Stephen Devoto
 - Secretary
Carolann D'Eon
 - Treasurer
Ron Goodrich
- Committee Members
- Ann Loffredo
 - Cathy Branch Stebbins
 - Jennifer Mahr
- Alternates
- Bill Dougherty
 - Bob Dezi

WESTFIELD RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION, INC.

**Address:
P.O. Box 373
Middletown, CT 06457**

WRA MEMBERSHIP FORM 2009-2010

Please Circle One: NEW RENEWAL DONATION

Make checks made payable to **WRA**. Mail to: Treasurer, Westfield Residents Association, Inc., P.O. Box 373, Middletown, CT 06457.

Name(s): _____ E-mails: _____

Address: _____

 Middletown, CT 06457

Telephone: _____

_____ \$10.00 per person
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 _____ Amount of Donation