

## Montclair Town Council: Residents still concerned about Wellmont-area parking



file photo by gEorge wirt

The Township Council okayed a resolution to designate the Wellmont Theater's property as an area in need of rehabilitation. This change allows the municipal Planning Board to include the building in a redevelopment plan.

Four residents from 10 Roosevelt Place appeared before the council to lament that the parking problems tied to event attendance at the Wellmont Theater, an issue recently reported by The Montclair Times, have not abated despite ongoing police presence in the area.

One resident, Julie Samuels, told the council that she still confronts the recurring problem of cars with no hang-tags parked in permit spots.

"I have an N-permit," Samuels said. "I park in the North Fullerton lot on Sunday mornings." Samuels explained that on top the \$500 permit she already pays for, with the dearth of available permit spots in the area, she has needed to pay additional fees to allow her to park on the street overnight.

Township Attorney Ira Karasick told her the municipality is aware of the issue and is doing all it can to relieve those residents beset by errant parkers.

Jackson added, "We need to be sure the Wellmont is being aggressive in their solution."

The council further discussed the Wellmont with regards to a resolution on its agenda that designated the property as an "area in need of rehabilitation."

The resolution, which the council passed unanimously, cited a memorandum from the township director of utilities confirming that the properties' sewer lines need to be replaced.

However, Karasick noted that the municipal Planning Board had recommended the designation so that the properties could be included in its area redevelopment plan.

"It doesn't qualify as an area in need of redevelopment, but it does qualify as an area in need of rehabilitation," Karasick told 4th Ward councilmember Renée Baskerville. "I believe it's for infrastructure, but the real reason is for planning purposes."

Baskerville feared this was an act of "spot-zoning," a practice in which a municipality changes the designation of one sole property to allow a developer to build something otherwise restricted by statutes.

Karasick assured her that the resolution gives the township no power of eminent domain, and noted, "Sometimes, as we were talking about with the hospital, you include things, not to do anything, but to protect them."

In a perfect turn of phrase, he added: "I'm not sure what the reasons were here, but I do know that's the reason."

### **Jackson gets county award**

Mayor Robert Jackson was honored yesterday at the 13th annual African American History Month Celebration. The event was hosted by Essex County Executive Joseph DiVincenzo in the county's Hall of Records.

DiVincenzo presented Jackson with the county's Martin Luther King Jr. Leadership Award. A release from DiVincenzo's office stated that "... our honorees have made significant contributions to our community, and their dedication truly captures the dignity and determination of the King family."

Joyce Goldman, constituent services director for DiVincenzo and a Montclair resident, appeared at this past Tuesday's Township Council meeting to announce the event and applaud the mayor, as did his colleagues.

"Mr. Mayor, we recognized you before," said 3rd Ward councilmember Sean Spiller. "But we also congratulate you."

Email: [katzban@northjersey.com](mailto:katzban@northjersey.com)