

Mr. Dhiren Shah  
Editor in chief



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MAR. 25 - MAR. 31, 2010

# LOCAL TALK Weekly

## Local News Flash

BY WALTER ELLIOTT

### Orange Lifts Water Rule & Fixes Breaks

**ORANGE** - City officials, who have lifted an almost 28-hour "boil water" advisory 4:30 p.m. March 19, anticipate to have the advisory's cause fully repaired on or by March 27.

City Engineer and Director of Public Works Arlene Kemp said to Local Talk around noon March 24 that two breaches in a 20-inch diameter main within South Mountain Reservation should be repaired and flushed "by week's end."

"The 20-inch line and the 16-inch line that run mostly parallel to each other are made of iron," said Kemp of the two breaks. "They are fine when they are in a steady state but cracks can develop when a surge of water happens while it comes back on line. As of now, we're no longer using the East Orange Water Commission or New Jersey American Water transmission lines."

Kemp said that the Orange Reservoir's water level has been returning to its 21-foot depth and that the 16-inch line experienced no problems in serving the city's some 30,000 customers. The two lines run some 3.5 miles from six active wells in the Millburn part of the reservation to the Chestnut Street pumping station in the city's Valley section.

"The 20-inch line was laid in 1923 and the 16-inch line between 1870 and the 1880s," said Kemp. "Both lines have several interconnections so we can move water from one to the other. We're pleased that the 16-inch line handled the capacity well."

The crack was discovered while DPW workers were about finished repair a hole at another point along the 20-inch line. The hole - which was detected around Noon March 17 - was what prompted her, Mayor Eldridge Hawkins, Jr., City Administrator John Mason and Health Officer Vincent DeFilippo to immediately issue the water use advisory.

Hawkins and Kemp said that the water advisory was lifted 4:30 p.m. when New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection tests showed that the water met potable - or drinkable - quality standards.

"Our advisories went out in two stages," said Hawkins to Local Talk while at a March 20 event. "When the problem occurred, we put a bulletin out on our Web site and reverse 911 line and had notices given out by our staff to businesses, senior citizen centers and other places. When the tests came back 4:30 p.m. Friday, we put out the boil water advisory."

Hawkins, Kemp and Mason explained that the first bulletin urged customers to limit their water use. Mason said, to LTN 1:30 p.m. March 17, that the voluntary restriction was to minimize any possible infiltration of contamination rather than concern for water pressure.

"The DEP tests showed that we were well within e coli and fecal chloroform levels," added Kemp. "We

then got the word out Friday night with the help of our DPW employees and (OFD) firefighters."

Orange has been drawing water from the South Mountain Reservation watershed since after the Civil War. The then-Orange Township first bought the Railway River West Branch's banks in 1882 and dammed the stream in two places to create the reservoir and Campbell's Pond.

Orange later drilled wells further south between the 1890s and 1967 but had to negotiate with the Essex



County Park System. The nation's oldest county parks department had created the reservation from some 2,047 acres in West Orange, South Orange, Maplewood and Millburn in 1895.

Kemp said that the 20-inch line's hole was found near the well field. Repairing included notifying the DEP, taking water test samples and flushing the repaired line.

The director/engineer said that the crack, found under Millburn's Glen Avenue Bridge near Campell's Pond, complicated repairs.

"The line was running parallel to East Orange and New Jersey American's water line, a natural gas line and an electrical power line," said Kemp. "We had to notify each of the utilities before repairs."

Both Kemp and Hawkins explained that neither the Orange Reservoir nor Campbell's Pond have been the city's potable water sources for up to seven decades. The reservoir alone had supplied 19 percent of city customer demand as late as the 1980s.

"We stopped using the reservoir and Campbell's Pond before I got here," said Kemp. "My guess for Campbell's Pond is the 1930s. The reservoir was decommissioned five or six years ago."

### Local Officials & Advocates to Speak at NJTransit Hearing

**NEWARK** - At least one Orange councilwoman and two South Orange-Maplewood transit advocates are preparing to decry New Jersey Transit's planned fare increases and service cuts here at the state agency's headquarters 5:30 - 8:30 pm, March 25.

Orange Councilwoman-At-Large Donna Williams said to Local Talk March 16 that she intends to be at NJTransit's headquarters at One Penn Plaza East.

She will be likely joined by Lackawanna Coalition Executive Director David Peter Alan, of South Orange, and NJ Association of Railroad Passengers leader Al Papp, Jr., of Maplewood.

NJTransit, in response to Gov. Christopher Christie's Feb. 22 withholding of \$33 in state subsidy and call for further cuts, is asking for a 25 percent across the board fare increase effective May 1. The nation's largest statewide agency further proposes to cut 137 commuter rail, bus and light rail runs in urban Essex County between April 30 and July 1.

"I've been commuting on the Morris and Essex Line for several years," said Williams. "I and some of my fellow commuters are going to be affected by the proposed elimination of the 8:30 a.m. departure to Hoboken. This comes at a time when service has been declining."

City of Orange Township officials have been planning transit village developments surrounding Orange and the Valley's Highland Avenue stations. Orange riders are also within 10 minutes' walking distance of South Orange's Mountain and East Orange's Brick Church stations.

"The ghost of (NJTransit Executive Director) George Warrington still lives in NJTransit's headquarters," said Alan. "He called off-peak rail riders 'incidental.' If you calculate comparative off-peak round trip fares, you'll see that their fares will rise to between 47 and 63 percent."

Warrington (1955-2007) had led NJTransit and Amtrak 1990 to just before his death from cancer. It was under Warrington's latter 2002-07 tenure that he implemented the corridorization of commuter trains - keeping longer-distance riders' runs to an hour at the expense of short-distance riders' convenience. NJTransit halved off-peak service to one hour intervals May 11.

"Chris Christie is picking on the wrong constituents at the wrong time," said Papp. "Hiking the fares and cutting service during a recession is sending a wrong message. Riders who face more than an hour's commute or an hour's wait between trains will take to their cars and further crowd highways."

Papp said that commensurate toll increases have not been proposed for the Garden State Parkway or the New Jersey Turnpike. Gov. Christie, in a recent published interview, said that NJTransit last hiked fares in 2007 - and predecessor Jon S. Corzine used stimulus money in 2009 to keep fares as-is - while toll road parent NJ Turnpike Authority had not boosted tolls the same time.

The March 25 Newark hearing is to run 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. or, as a NJTransit official said, "as long as there are people wanting to make comments." One can also send questions or comments to njtransit.com or Public Hearing Office - Fare Proposal Comments - One Penn Plaza East, Newark 07105 no later than 11:59 p.m. March 27. The NJTransit Board of Directors are to vote on the fare and service proposals here 9 a.m. April 14.

### NEWARK FACES

(cont. from page 12) because of

meetings involving 700 has placed the Academy for for Shabazz HS to be broken High. Jackson is to discuss those members of the public through Vocational Careers HS plus the into three smaller academies, and other SAB meeting topics