

# MAHWAH SUBURBAN NEWS

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 15, 2009

## More opponents than fans at Pilot hearing

BY CHRIS NESI  
Of Suburban News

**MAHWAH** – About 50 residents packed a Zoning Board of Adjustment meeting last week to voice their concerns about redevelopment plans for a truck stop on Route 17.

Pilot Corp. plans to overhaul its site at 230 Route 17 south by razing existing structures and building a 4,282-square-foot convenience store. Its application seeks to add a diesel pump to the five that exist, and six gas pumps. The company would remove the truck scale and eliminate access from Ridge Road.

During the first meeting at which residents could address the plan, Oct. 7, they cited concerns that included the emissions of diesel fumes when vehicles are idling, access to tobacco products by under-aged individuals, and increased traffic and noise.

Armando Pavon, a Highland Road resident who said he was a Teamster for 23 years, said that if the project is allowed to go forward as planned, Route 17 would experience increased truck traffic and exacerbate existing conditions.

“You really need a lot of space to have trucks coming in,” he said.

### PILOT

FROM PAGE 1

“There’s no doubt going to be a line of trucks waiting on Route 17... It’s going to cause a backup, it’s a tremendous hazard.”

Glasgow Terrace resident Gladys Morarity questioned Pilot’s claim that the service station would be good for the community, and said Pilot’s goals are “to increase car and truck traffic to a site in order to make money. Lots of money.”

Schools Superintendent Dr. Charles Montesano also read a resolution passed by the Board of Education on May 27 stating its primary concern was the closure of the access from Ridge Road for the safety of students. When asked whether the board support-

ed or opposed the application, Montesano said, “The resolution speaks for itself.”

All but one of the 10 residents who spoke at the meeting stated their opposition to Pilot’s plan, and that resident, William Krane of James Bright Circle, called those who were opposed “a vocal minority.”

Eric Fuchs-Stengel, a Mahwah High School senior and the founder of the 250-student strong Mahwah Environmental Volunteers Organization, complained at the meeting of the stench from the site. Expanding in a subsequent interview, he said the smell of garbage and gasoline permeate the air every morning over the track of the school, which is in proximity to the stop.

Attorney James Lott with the

Riker Danzig law firm of Morristown, who represents Pilot, asserted in an interview Thursday that the elimination of trucker-friendly amenities, such as the scale and showers, and the reduction in the number of truck parking spaces would actually reduce truck traffic at the site, despite the addition of fuel pumps.

Ira Weiner, an attorney with the Beattie Padovano law firm in Montvale who is representing Parents for Safety in their opposition to the plan, said in an interview on Thursday that he would not speculate whether Pilot’s application would be successful.

“I learned a long time ago to try and second-guess the board based on questions is a mistake,” he said.

The next zoning board meeting is scheduled for Nov. 4.