

# The Record

MARCH 13, 1993

## Fair Lawn improvement project is joint effort

**By Ovetta Wiggins**

Staff Writer

**FAIR LAWN**— In moving toward a partnership between the Borough Council and the business community to revitalize a commercial district, the council has pledged \$10,000 to improve a section of River Road.

Mayor John Keith told about 50 business and community leaders last week that the council is committed to working with members of the Chamber of Commerce, business owners, and tenants to develop a plan for the mile-long stretch between Morlot and Maple Avenues, an area that has fallen into disrepair. He said the council plans to provide more money as the project progresses.

The River Road Redevelopment Committee, made up of a handful of business owners and community leaders has hired Don Smartt of The Community Advocates, an organization which acts as a facilitator for communities examining the problems and possible solutions in the revitalization process. The committee also has received \$10,000 in private pledges.

For the most part, complaints center on parking, traffic, cracked sidewalks, and the deteriorated condition of the area.

“We are going to need you to reach into your own pockets and reach into your heavy schedules,” said Smartt, who has worked in Freehold, Salem, Cranford, and Madison. “This is going to take a personal commitment.”

Keith said the borough will do what is needed to help improve the aesthetics of the business district, including planting trees, enforcing property

maintenance, and adopting a sign ordinance. “If the council dictates the future, it will not work,” Keith said “I don’t know what the vision should be for River Road, but I do believe in the consensus-building process.”

The Chamber and the council both have taken on the River Road project

before, with little effect. Once, the council prohibited businesses from putting their wares on the sidewalk, thinking it would make the area more presentable by eliminating a hazard-like atmosphere, one borough official said. In another instance, the Chamber hung U.S. flags from utility poles.

“Clearly, these efforts were not enough; they had a limited impact,” said Robert Cordon, the - deputy mayor, who also is a member of the redevelopment committee. “There was never a partnership and consequently, the economic competitiveness of the area was never addressed.”

---

**“I don’t know what the vision should be for River Road, but I do believe in the consensus-building process”**

*Mayor John Keith*

Fair Lawn

---

