

## Engineers propose demolition of reservoir, pipe

Township utility engineers Jerry Spiesbach and Ryan Lemli, of Malcolm Pirnie, revealed plans at a recent public meeting of the Township Council for the demolition of the 300,000-gallon Cragmere reservoir and standpipe on Mahwah Road.

The \$32,800 project includes the abatement of lead- and

asbestos-containing materials. The quantity of concrete to be removed has not been determined; construction time depends upon the amount of concrete contained on the site, Spiesbach said.

Bid specifications would also be prepared as part of the project.

The township would like to raze the site's current structures because they pose a threat to public safety and are subject to vandalism.

Once the 3-acre property –

described as a “very marketable asset” – is leveled, the township would prepare it for housing development.

## Valley Fitness goes to Planning Board

Valley Fitness & Wellness Center, LLC, an affiliate of The Valley Hospital in Ridgewood, has withdrawn its application without prejudice from hearings before the township's Zoning Board of Adjustment.

Following the adoption of an ordinance by the Township Council, fitness and wellness centers have been incorporated into the GI-80 (General Industrial) zone. Therefore, the proposed 90,800-square-foot facility conforms to the zoning code and no longer needs a

variance from the zoning board.

Previously, the zoning code did not include a definition of fitness and wellness centers.

Valley Fitness is expected to appear before the township's Planning Board with a new application.

## DARLINGTON

FROM PAGE 4

director of the Trail Conference, a non-profit federation of hiking clubs and environmental organizations dedicated to building and maintaining hiking trails and protecting related open space, said the 19th century building's character would not be compromised.

The building, which sits on 2.8 acres and is about 4,744 square feet, will serve as the Trail Conference's headquarters, currently located at 156 Ramapo Valley Road in Mahwah, with offices, meeting rooms and public exhibits.

“The structure's interior will be adaptively reused to provide for the execution of our day-to-day operations,” Goodell said. “Our greatest challenge will be making it as green as possible while not sacrificing historical integrity.”

Goodell said requests for architectural proposals would be released sometime this month. Fund raising will begin immediately, and he said he hopes construction may begin in the spring. Additional renovation funds are being sought from the Mahwah community and corporate sources.

“Based on donations and the generosity of our neighbors, I hope to complete a first-class rehabilitation of the schoolhouse,” Goodell said.

Local historian Carol Greene, a member of the schoolhouse steering committee, said the purchase of the schoolhouse has been an uphill struggle.

“A less resourceful group might have given up,” she said. “I believe in the Trail Conference as an organization and as stewards of open space. It's an ideal match for the township.”

According to the New Jersey State Historic Preservation Office, the building “is the state's most architecturally significant schoolhouse,” and Greene says it's an “architectural gem.”

The Trail Conference has already applied for the schoolhouse to be included on the National Register of Historic Places; the schoolhouse was placed on the Bergen County Historic Sites Inventory in 1984.

“I'm extremely pleased that we are able to maintain the Darlington Schoolhouse,” said Mayor Richard Martel. “The cooperative effort assures that this structure of importance, one of the oldest within the township, will remain in good hands.”

For Goodell, the acquisition is symbolic.

“It's a building that educated schoolchildren for 50 years; it was a big part of the community,” he said. “In the same way, our educational organization will be providing citizens a higher quality of life and a greater sense of place.”

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