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Waldwick downtown gets second phase of makeover

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Waldwick Suburban News
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WALDWICK — Work on the second phase of the downtown revitalization project spearheaded by the Waldwick Community Alliance was expected to begin last week on West Prospect Street, from the south side of Harrison Avenue up to Franklin Turnpike.

The work is expected to be completed by the spring, and will mirror work done during the first phase of improvements on West Prospect between Harrison and Hewson avenues last year.

The municipality and West Prospect Street business owners between Harrison and Hewson paid a combined \$50,000 for the first phase of the project, which features potted shrubs and enhanced sidewalks and curbs dotted with antique lampposts.

Two years ago, the governing body deemed it the borough's responsibility to purchase the lampposts with shades for \$15,000 or more from the capital budget.



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The new sidewalks, pavers and curbs are the responsibility of the alliance, but are paid for with funds collected from business owners who choose to participate in the project.

Alliance vice president Doug Cowie said the grass-roots group's contractor, Creative Pavers of Montvale, were expected to begin installing new pavers on Monday, Dec. 7.

"It should take two to three weeks provided everything goes okay," said Cowie.

He added that PSE&G has recently finished installing the hollow, plastic piping below the existing curbs that would run electricity to the lampposts.

Cowie predicted the pavers would be installed during December and the lampposts by January, weather permitting.

Cowie said the streetscape improvements are on hiatus for the north side of Harrison and Franklin Turnpike, along the Rite Aid property. The drugstore chain has an application pending with the borough's

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Zoning Board of Adjustment to add a bank on the premises. It hasn't been determined when the application will be heard, officials said.

Cowie said it would be difficult to map out a streetscape plan for the property along the Rite Aid because it's questionable as to where the entry or exit ways will be.

Christine Figliuolo, president of the Waldwick Chamber of Commerce, said the alliance's initiative enhances downtown and attracts more commerce to the borough.

"It's always good for the town when we see aesthetic improvements," she said. "It's all good and worth it — the alliance's efforts are amazing."

In addition, Cowie said the alliance is one step further in beginning renovations on the Waldwick train station on Hewson Avenue.

A 25-year lease between NJ Transit and the alliance was finalized this summer.

One of the conditions under the lease is that the alliance has seven years to restore the historic building, Cowie said. He said the alliance hopes to finish it in two or three.

The \$16,000 scope work study, which



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determines the order of repairs to be performed on the station, is almost completed and will be sent to the state and NJ Transit officials for review.

Once the plan is endorsed, the alliance's first task would be raising the historic building so its sill plate or foundation could be replaced, hopefully this winter.

Cowie said the project is expected to cost the alliance \$400,000, and that the group will seek grants to cover for a majority of the costs.

The rest of the money will come from fund-raising.

So far, the alliance has raised up to \$50,000, and will host their next fund-raiser, a wine tasting, from 7-10 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 6 at St. Luke's Church in Ho-Ho-Kus.

"Everything leading up to this point has been difficult and hectic," Cowie said. But, he said with relief, "It's going to be worthwhile to see the end result."

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