

# DUELING OCTOBER 11 ORANGE EVENTS

**BY WALTER ELLIOTT**

**ORANGE** : The local public will be facing a choice of which City of Orange Township events to attend here Oct. 11.

Councilman-at-Large Elroy A. Corbett has scheduled a host of city and Essex County law and order dignitaries for a town hall meeting on present and impending crime fighting strategies. That session is set for Bethel Baptist Church, 229 Wallace St., 7-9 p.m. Oct. 11.

Valerie Jackson, as city planning director and acting deputy business administrator, has scheduled the first of two Housing Opportunity Program and Education Forums for prospective residents and first-time time buyers. The HOPE Forum is set for the Oakwood Avenue School Multipurpose Room, 135 Oakwood Ave., 6:30-8 p.m. Oct. 11.

The overlapping Tuesday night events became apparent to some of the 24 members of the public on their way into the Orange City Hall Council Chamber prior to the council's Oct. 4 meetings.

Handbills for both events were placed almost side-by-side on a table of materials in the hall's fourth floor lobby. While the first mentioned event is ending 30 minutes later than the other, the second is starting a half an hour earlier.

The full council and Jackson, after considering a rescheduling of the first HOPE Forum, has resolved to prevent a similar unintended circumstance from happening again.

One of those preventive measures may be seen on Orange Channel 35 by the time you read this. Director of Community Services Darrell Holcomb and Channel 35 producer Campanella Godfrey, acting on West Ward Councilman Hassan Abdul-Rasheed's suggestion, will be posting a scrolling schedule of City of Orange Township events and meetings.

Another measure, offered by Council President Tency Eason, is to have the city clerk's office be a clearing house for various events. Acting Deputy Clerk Shinell Smith and her staff would then send a schedule for Holcomb and Godfrey to air in the cable access television channel. "Having a repeated schedule of events on Channel 35," said Abdul-Rasheed, "would let our citizens know what's going on and give them an opportunity to participate."

"The Mayor (Eldridge Hawkins, Jr.) plans to attend both events," said Jackson in response to Corbett's question during council comments. "He will be at the start of the HOPE Forum and then go

to the town hall meeting."

"If there's a husband-and-wife who want to go to both meetings," suggested Eason, "one can go to the first and the other to the second."

The apparent result of a communication miscue between organizing parties became evident during Corbett's commentary. He noted that the town hall meeting, while a follow-up to last May's crime summit, will host the likes of Acting Orange Police Director Kevin Sooy, Essex County Sheriff Anthony Ambrose and Acting Essex County Prosecutor Carolyn Murray. The guests will be part of a panel moderated by Essex County Freeholder Carol Y. Clark. Corbett, through Eason, asked Jackson if she could reschedule her HOPE Forum. Jackson countered that she had to go through the Orange Board of Education last month to get their permission to use the Oakwood Avenue room. The Oakwood School, in the East Ward, abuts the Walter G. Alexander housing site - where the 1952 project towers are being replaced in the late state legislator's name by affordable and market rate housing.

"To reschedule, we would have to go to their next meeting and ask," said

Jackson. "I know that Orange Housing Authority (Executive Director) Walter McNeil is to speak at the Oct. 11 forum but I don't know if he'll be available at the Oct. 25 forum."

Abdul-Rasheed noted that while the next board of education meeting was set for 7:30 p.m. Oct. 5, it was a non-voting session. "Local Talk" as learned that the Orange Board of Education's next monthly meeting, according to their Website, is scheduled at the Orange Preparatory Academy (the former Orange High and Middle school building) for 7:30 p.m. Oct. 11.

Jackson, in fielding a later question, said that the Alexander townhouses earmarked for senior citizens will be open next month, followed by the rest of the first phase of housing by year's end.

The planning director, who is also filling in as business administrator for the ailing John Mason, has set the second HOPE Forum for the Lincoln Avenue School Gymnasium, 216 Lincoln Ave., 6:30-8 p.m. Oct. 25.

"I'm making the crime meeting my priority," said Eason, who also represents the North Ward. "You can't attract people to live in Orange unless we can show that they are going to be safer."