Beautification Committee’s Work
Plainfield is more park-like

By Mildred Carson

Plainfield — Masses of seasonal flowers to greet the eyes of local pedestrians as well as commuters at the Plainfield railroad station. The increasingly park-like appearance of the Netherwood railroad station grounds.

Colorful plants at various civic buildings. New “sidewalk” planting of trees in the business area, punctuating with greenery the expanse of cement.

Small, well-kept areas of bloom and green trees in the city’s parking lots.

All these and many other projects all over the city attest to the success of the Mayor’s Beautification Committee which has just completed its fourth season of renewal activity.

The committee, which has been dormant as a whole for a while, has been active again since last January.

Since that time, a group of about 30 civic, garden and service club representatives, with others from schools and various concerned citizens, has been working to beautify the city with planned plantings, a continuing community campaign and many “clean-up” projects, particularly along the railroad embankment.

Mrs. Charles B. Hollerson, who is not only a member, but also chairman of the committee, has been largely responsible for the committee’s many accomplishments, especially in its early days when the annual budget was about $50.

The two women persuaded many businessmen and other interested citizens and civic groups to underwrite or to assist financially in various projects or to buy trees for the committee to plant.

Now the Beautification Committee has a limited amount of city funds available to beautify and plant on city-owned property such as Library Park or the City Hall Grounds. And its other projects are made possible by donations from the service, garden and civic clubs, and concerned individuals.

A typical beautification project was the landscaping of the railroad embankment near the railroad tracks at Watchung Ave. and E. Fourth St.,” Mrs. Sandford explained.

“The planting along the embankment, undertaken by the Plainfield Garden Club, cost more than $400. But the cost of the labor, shoring up of the bank, fertilizing and topsoil, before the planting could begin, doubled that figure,” she added.

Another project was made possible by the local Telephone Company which provided $100 for the planting of nine little-leaf linden trees and six ornamental trees to screen its new parking lot behind the building at Park and W. Fifth St.

“The company paid for the trees which the committee selected and the Shade Tree Bureau planted and will maintain, since they are all planted on city sidewalks,” Mrs. Sandford said.

Shade trees growing along E. Fourth St. opposite the police headquarters were planted with $900 donated two years ago by The Courier News, Mrs. Hollerson added.

It costs about $90 to plant a tree, according to Mrs. Sandford, who noted that the amount includes the purchase and delivery of the trees as well as the digging of a hole and the preparation of the ground prior to planting.

Other beautification projects have been carried out too, at the city’s parking lots. The Parking Authority, which administers the lots, at first regarded with some trepidation the committee’s activities on its territories, but now it has become a supporter. For the last two years the Parking Authority has donated a substantial amount to the committee to maintain the plantings on its lots.

Young people and children have been enlisted throughout the city to assist in the committee’s work. A Girl Scout troop first planted a small triangle of bittersweet barren earth at the south entrance to the railroad tunnel on the Netherwood Street. They have maintained it for the last two years. Another Girl Scout troop has planted the window boxes at the police headquarters and the urns at City Hall.

Various youth and neighborhood groups have organized energetic clean-up campaigns of railroad embankments, the downtown area and their own yards.

Anti-litter parade have been held by the committee each year and it has helped to sponsor various contests to promote a cleaner, tidier and more beautiful city.

In the Clinton school area, a small rectangle of land was made available and an anonymous donor gave $100 for shrubs and plants to beautify the “garden patch.” Children at the school, aided by a group of adults, became involved at first-hand in planting and beautification efforts.

The Beautification Committee also got permission to maintain a small park on private land in Millenborg Place and a nearby resident, Andrew Fowler, has volunteered to move the grass and keep the property in order.

The Junior Woman’s Club has undertaken the task of overspending the city’s litter baskets, keeping a close eye on their installation and periodic emptying, Mrs. Sandford said.

For the last three of its four years of renewal activity, the Beautification Committee has been aided by the professional help it desperately needed. “We could do just so much,” Mrs. Sandford recalled, “but we had to have manpower and trucks, too, not just on an

A typical before shot taken at Watchung and E. Fourth Streets shows litter on railroad embankment. It now blooms with flowers most of the year.

Looking toward Netherwood Station in Plainfield, one can see this grassy plot, once a sea of mud, which is maintained by the Mayor’s Beautification Committee. (C-N photo by George R. Smith)