

Eagle Scout honored at borough council meeting

Project includes new patio and bike rack for the Community House

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THE COAST STAR

SPRING LAKE — Spring Lake local Dylan Thomas, 15, was honored by the Spring Lake Borough Council and Mayor Jennifer Naughton on Monday night for the accomplishment of officially earning Eagle Scout rank.

While working his summer job at the Spring Lake Library, Dylan, a freshman at Christian Brothers Academy, realized the library did not have a designated area for bicycle storage, forcing cyclists to park on the lawn or sidewalk. Dylan thought a new patio and bike rack would benefit the members of the community by providing a scenic convenience for local cyclists traveling to both the library and the Community House.

"This is an outstanding project and one that will be enjoyed by children and adults who visit the library and local Community House," Mayor Naughton said, while delivering Dylan an official proclamation from the borough for his Eagle Scout honors. "You and all of your fellow scouts are really impressive young men. We are all so proud to have you

here tonight and proud to have you in our community."

After discussing his proposition with Spring Lake Community House Executive Director Patricia Barry, members of the borough council and his local Troop 31 leader, Dylan proposed a patio construction project to fulfill the final and highest attainable rank possible: Eagle Scout. After the borough signed off on the project and members of the community donated money for materials, the construction team — made up of Dylan, his fellow Troop 31 scouts, their fathers and a few local builders — began constructing the 9-by-13 foot patio.

Originally, he planned to build the 9-by-13 patio with pavers, which he described as "uniform brick-like building [objects]" that would fill the patio area exactly. However, he said, Ms. Barry suggested making it a bluestone patio instead, since it would look nicer.

"[Ms. Barry] has been amazing in all this," Dylan told The Coast Star in an earlier phone call, citing her as an important figure in the process of getting the project underway.

Construction began after several months getting the paperwork and permits in place as well as approval from the Community House.

Over the course of two weekends, the team carefully arranged bluestone and Belgian blocks into a patio

with bike parking and space for the community to enjoy the scenery, fit to serve the members of the Spring Lake Community House for many years to come.

The switch to bluestone did require more stone and time to cut it, said Dylan, since bluestones are not uniformly shaped.

On top of that, the team of Boy Scouts encountered additional challenges when Andy Clark, a troop parent who works in construction, pointed out that the sidewalk would need to be re-leveled.

"We thought it'd be a three-hour project and it ended up being 16 hours," said Dylan. Still, he said, the project was important.

"This is going to be there for a really long time," Dylan said. "This is going to really help the community. If you look at pictures in the yearbooks... you can see there's bikes everywhere. This will really help where the bikes go and it will have a profound impact in that way."

The bike rack itself has not been delivered, but Dylan said it should arrive some time in late November or early December, at which point it will be installed.

Dylan was joined by his family when he was honored with the official proclamation. He received a standing ovation from the Spring Lake Borough Council and the general public for the completion of the patio and his Eagle Scout honors.

In an email to The Coast Star, his parents said, "We are very proud of Dylan for seeing a problem and coming up with a great solution for the Spring Lake Community House. [The Community House] is an historic building that means so much to the many patrons that frequent it and we hope the patio and bike rack will be very useful for many years to come. We are also incredibly grateful to the many scouts and dads of Troop 31 that devoted their time to help Dylan complete this project."

According to his mother, Marybeth Thomas, the construction team included scouts Charlie Thomas, Sean Henry, Joseph and Jacob Graff, John Breen, Landon Martin,

Jake Lu, Andrew and Nolan Clark, Zach Clifton, Daniel Ball, Declan Moran and Brendan Chase, as well as adults Andy Clark, Dan Henry, Don Ball, Larry and Genevieve Clifton, Sean Moran, Jim Vercelli, John Chase, Jason Martin and Dave Thomas.

"I just wanted to say thank you so much for honoring me," Dylan said to the council. "I just wanted to do something for Spring Lake that's going to last a while."

Mayor Naughton agreed that the patio and cyclist parking will benefit generations of Spring Lake residents. "I can't wait to park my own bike there," she said.

TWO ORDINANCES ADOPTED
The council adopted two ordinances that had first been

introduced at the Oct. 24 meeting; one to set rules for "privately-owned salt storage" and the other to amend Chapter 58, "Officers and Employees," of the borough code to remove the position of assistant borough foreman, which no longer exists.

The council also nominated Councilman Edwin Hale to once again serve as the borough's Fire Chief.

The next meeting of the Spring Lake mayor and council will take place on Dec. 5 at 7 p.m. in the borough municipal building.

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COURTESY OF MARYBETH THOMAS

The new bike rack and patio will provide a space for local bikers to safely keep their bikes outside the Community House, home to several important community organizations.

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