



Cain Chamberlin/Cape May Star and Wave

Above, left and right, visitors study displays at the 'The Way We Were' exhibit at the Carriage House on the Physick Estate. Above center, Sandra Jensen, CCA Historic Committee Director speaks during the exhibit opening.

Exhibit

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goals of President Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society," which was removing substandard housing, had the unintended outcome of eliminating businesses and homes that were in their path. Between 1945 and 1970, Cape May saw a decline in the black population resulting in less patronage of African-American

businesses.

"The African-American history is hidden in plain sight..." CCA Executive Chair Gail Pierson said. "If you go on a tour of Cape May, you'll see these spots where the businesses or remnants of them are still standing."

Businesses like Cape May's Planter Motel, the Richardson's Hotel (circa 1940s), Opra Huff's Bakery

(1950s) and the former Vance's Bar, one of Cape May's last black-owned businesses, which was recently demolished, are all included in the exhibit.

Jensen said of all the interesting information the committee found for this particular exhibit was the story of famous educator and author Booker T. Washington visiting the Tabernacle Baptist

Church in Ocean City in September 1914. The group was even able to find a photo of Washington from the event. Other famous African-Americans in the exhibit include musicians like Sammy Davis Jr., Billy Holiday and Louis Armstrong visiting Wildwood to perform. Pierson said CCA is currently rehabilitating the Franklin Street School, a

Cape May African-American Historic Site also featured in the exhibit, to house a community cultural center, run youth arts programs and operate community radio station, WCFA-LP 101.5 FM. She said this will not only be a way of reviving a facility for the community, but also preserving a piece of African-American history.

The exhibit "The Way We

Were...Cape May County's Once Thriving Black Business Communities," opened on Jan. 18 and will be on display through Sunday, April 13. Admission and parking are both free. For Carriage House Gallery hours, call 884-7525 or visit www.capemaymac.org. More information about the CCA can be found at www.centerforcommunityarts.org.

What

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councilmember can ask that any resolution be moved from the consent agenda to the regular agenda. Many times this is done in order to get or give an explanation before a vote. Sometimes this is done so a councilmember with a conflict of interest can recuse himself (sometimes herself) from the vote.

The council has to authorize the administration to enter into any contracts. The township has five union contracts,

all of which are negotiated behind closed doors with the city manager. Voll said council does not take part in the negotiations, but ultimately votes to approve each contract.

The governing body also votes to authorize the budget. Voll said budget discussions begin around November and a temporary budget is introduced after the first of the year to keep government running until the final budget is adopted. He said the process begins with himself

and the chief financial officer requesting a budget proposal from each department, and they go through them one at a time. He said he can discuss the budget with councilmembers one or two at a time, but not more without calling a public meeting. He said he will discuss the budget with the councilmembers, who will present their requests or recommendations. Along the line, he said, there are tough decisions made in order to keep spending down.

"The budget is not easy - it's

a long, lengthy process," Voll said.

Voll said last year, Deputy Mayor Norris Clark and Councilman James Neville spent a lot of time investigating health insurance plans, trying to save the township money, and this is not seen during public meetings. He said Councilman Tom Conrad worked to get a Medic Unit in Lower Township, which has the largest senior population in the county.

"These are things done behind the scenes," Voll said.

Voll said on Monday representatives of the township, including the mayor, met with officials from the Lower Cape May Regional School District to discuss participation in an economic development partnership. The mayor called a meeting, recently, to discuss drug intervention efforts. He invited representatives from the municipal court, the police department, recreation department, the school and Cape Assist. He said those kinds of meetings can't be held during the public meet-

ing, but the results, if only talked about at council meetings, are very tangible.

Voll said there are so many things that involve council that are long range projects, which means people assume nothing is being done. These projects range from developing the use of the Cape May County Airport, a study on the public safety building (which has been going on for seven years), Cox Hall Creek and related street flooding issues, road repairs, etc.

Budgets

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Municipal Utilities Authority to treat sewage.

The Tourism Utility budget totals \$1.1 million. This is the third year for the Tourism Utility, which was set up to operate Convention Hall and take a fresh approach at marketing Cape May. MacLeod said it generated a surplus in excess of \$94,000 in its second year in operation. The proposed 2014 salaries and wages for the utility totals \$330,000, while other expenses are set at \$737,175.

Mayor Ed Mahaney said the city initially received negative feedback from certain state officials when it imple-

mented the Tourism Utility. However, he believes the results speak for themselves in terms of its efficiency.

"When I proposed and city council agreed to invoke a Tourism Utility in 2012, there was some concern from state officials as to whether we were, as a city, trying to evade the 2-percent tax levy cap and my answer was no," Mahaney said. "We've had a history of utilities and it was legal for us to do it. We've always run a very strong, self-liquidating and self-supporting Water and Sewer Utility and now we had a Beach Utility that was court imposed. It only made sense at this point to be able to segregate out the cost of

every program and service we offer, fix a price to that service, and charge it to the people who use it - not burden the taxpayers, both commercial and residential, with a service that they don't use."

If MacLeod's budget were adopted, as is, the current fund budget would increase by nearly \$500,000 to \$16,599,793. Salary and wages in the current fund total \$6,444,625, and increase of \$124,475 from 2013. MacLeod said no lay offs have been proposed in his budget. He said since 2008, the number of full-time employees is the city has been reduced by five.

"This has been accomplished through attrition; simply, not filling certain posi-

tions when employees leave city employment," MacLeod said.

MacLeod noted a large increase in legal fees, for which he is recommending an earmark of \$575,000. This amount represents a \$395,000 increase from 2013, which he said is needed to pay for the school funding fight regarding the Lower Cape May Regional School District and legal questions relating to flood elevation issues at Cape May Convention Hall. Those expenditures could pay dividends in the future. Deputy Mayor Jack Wichterman noted that all of the money may not be used, but believes it's important to have an appropriate amount in the

budget.

"Sometimes you have to spend money to save money," Wichterman said.

The amount of the budget funded by taxes is \$9.2 million, up by \$547,405, which is 55 percent of the revenue side of the budget. MacLeod said based on recent historical data, the city anticipates just over \$4 million in revenues from parking meters, occupancy taxes, mercantile licenses and other fees.

MacLeod proposed the city use \$2.1 million of its \$3.5 million in surplus to support the 2014 budget.

Only two members of the public attended the meeting. Former mayor Jerry Gaffney of Columbia Avenue asked

about pension payments. Auditor Leon Costello said police and fire pension payments will be over \$680,000 while other public employees will be approximately \$360,000. MacLeod said workers make pension contributions in their paychecks ranging from 7.5 percent to 10 percent of their salaries, which covers about one-third of the pension payments.

The budget is now in the hands of Cape May City Council, which will provide input and potential changes. Council plans to introduce it by Feb. 18 and hold the public hearing and adoption by March 18.

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Draft 'event house' ordinance tweaked

By CAIN CHAMBERLIN
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY - After months of planning, Little Egg Harbor resident Megan Russo said she was devastated to hear she might not be able to

have her wedding in Cape May because of recent recommendations made by the city's Resort House Advisory Committee.

During public comment at the Jan. 9 meeting, an emotional Russo pleaded with

committee members, who have been given the task of advising Cape May City Council concerning the regulation of whole house rentals. Such rentals are being advertised as destinations for weddings, reunions and other special events, which bring large numbers of people.

Russo said her wedding May 3 has been in the planning stages for over a year and the whole house rental she has already secured a contract for is not in the C-3 zone, which the committee has recommended be the only zone event homes will be permitted. The event house Russo is referring to is owned by Mary McKenney, who serves on the advisory committee.

Russo said her wedding

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