

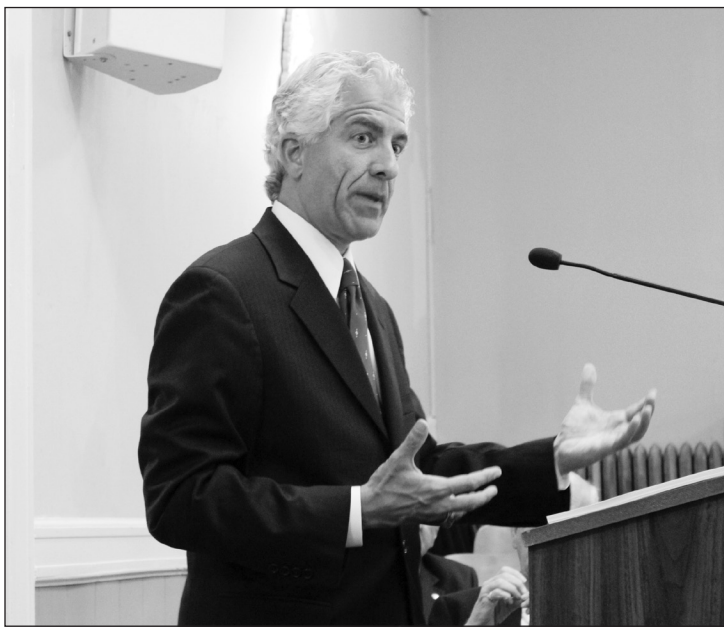
Study

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attending the district, pays less than \$8,000 per student. "You're sending just over five percent of the students and paying 35 percent of the cost. Is that fair? I think the answer is obvious," Gagliardi said to council.

At a past council meeting, he said Cape May was unlikely to see state legislators help change the funding formula. The formula was altered in the 1970s to be based primarily on property value, leading to a much higher cost per pupil in Cape May and West Cape May. Gagliardi, an attorney with the Porzio, Bromberg and Newman law firm, is experienced in changing regional school funding formulas and was hired by the city in late 2012.

In December 2003, the regional school board voted down a motion for a referendum from Cape May to the change the funding formula to one based upon 60 percent from property value and 40 percent on the number of students sent to the district. Gagliardi said another voter referendum in recent months aimed at changing the formula was put in front of the Lower Cape May Regional Board of Education but was not seconded. Wichterman said Lower Township's larger voter population would



Above, Attorney Vito Gagliardi explains a feasibility study on school funding to Cape May City Council, June 18.

have easily outweighed Cape May's effort to change the formula anyway. Gagliardi said the city should try for a court proceeding and ask the Commissioner of Education to establish a new funding formula. By doing so, the city would exhaust all administrative remedies.

Dr. Virgil Johnson, a veteran educator of South Jersey, spoke about the educational component in the 94-page feasibility study and said four alternative configura-

tions were explored involving the dissolution of Lower Cape May Regional and Cape May withdrawing from the district. The first option in the study states the city of Cape May could withdraw from Lower Cape May Regional and enter into a sending-receiving relationship with the district for students in grades 7-12. This is a similar agreement to the one Cape May Point has with the regional school district. The second option also sug-

gests the city withdraw from Lower Cape May Regional but enter into a sending-receiving relationship with another school district, such as Middle Township. Johnson said Middle Township and Lower Cape May Regional both have exemplary educational curriculum, similar extracurricular programs and are similar in size and demographics. Johnson and the rest of the team agreed sending the students to a different school should be the least desired option.

The team drafted a resolution for council to consider for the next meeting, which petitions the county superintendent to review the idea of Cape May withdrawing from the district and beginning a send-receive agreement.

In the third option, the dissolution of Lower Cape May Regional would result, by operation law, in the expansion of Lower Township into a K-12 school district. In this scenario, West Cape May and Cape May City could enter into a sending-receiving relationship with Lower Township for the education of their students in grades 7-12, such that their students would continue to be educated in the same schools in which they are currently enrolled.

The final option also involves the dissolution of Lower Cape May Regional and the expan-

sion of Lower Township into a K-12 district. However, this option implies Cape May and West Cape May enter into a sending-receiving agreement with another school, such as Middle Township.

James Kirtland, a retired CPA who spent 18 years as a board of education member, explained the financial impact of each of the four scenarios. He said the figures were based on "2012 dollars" as he could not predict the future tax levy or state aid figures.

He said from the city's perspective, withdrawal from or dissolution of the Lower Cape May Regional School District could save taxpayers as much as \$5 million annually. This would amount to an annual savings of around \$900 yearly based on a residence assessed at \$500,000. Kirtland said additional money could be saved by sending students to Middle Township but the differences between options are minor in relation to the overall impact and recommended the city not send its children to another school.

According to the study, the city's withdrawal from Lower Cape May Regional and sending students to the district on a send-receive basis would result in a proportional negative financial impact on each of the other two constituent communities of Lower

Township and West Cape May. Kirtland said Lower Township would be impacted the most, picking up 87 percent of the savings enjoyed by Cape May in the event of a withdrawal.

A sending-receiving relationship with another district in the event of a withdrawal would put an additional cost of approximately \$450,000 on Lower Township and \$50,000 on West Cape May.

Under the dissolution scenario where all three municipalities continue to send students grades 7-12 to the schools they already attend, West Cape May would save approximately 40 percent (\$925,000) while Lower Township's tax levy would go up by approximately \$5,550,000 annually. Should the Cape May and West Cape May send their students elsewhere, Lower Township's additional costs increase around \$750,000.

Gagliardi said alleviating Cape May's funding formula problem would not occur overnight as there are several options to consider and a long legal process to go through.

Council will vote upon the resolution petitioning the executive county superintendent to examine the city's withdrawal from the district at the July 2 regular council meeting at 1 p.m.

Still

Continued from page A1

Committee member and Cape May Planning Board Engineer Craig Hurlless said the zoning analysis says Cape May's commercially zoned

businesses and commercial districts do contain and permit uses that may be considered appropriate with this concept.

Shared parking is a concept that may be applied when

land uses have different parking demand patterns and are able to use the same parking spaces/areas throughout the day. The method is most effective when these land uses have significantly different peak parking characteristics that vary by time of day, day of the week and/or season of the year.

Hurlless said Ventnor had only one ordinance related to shared parking. He said the city official he spoke to indicated that no one had utilized the code to avoid obtaining a variance. Hurlless said the number of hotels and motels in Ventnor were not as abundant as in Cape May, however the two municipalities are similar in that the commercial zones were opposite the residential district and

have peak seasonal visitation.

Richard Higbee contacted Ventnor's neighboring community, Margate, which he said had a shared parking ordinance that seemed "informal."

"If you ask them if there's a parking problem, their answer is yes," he said.

Higbee said beachgoers in Margate typically park in residential areas and walk several blocks to the beachfront, as these areas don't have parking meters. He said judging by the reports he has read, the shared parking concept is very situational and every municipality should be looked at differently.

Mayor Ed Mahaney, who is also a committee member, said Margate has wider streets and lots, as well as nicer streetscape than Cape May and Ventnor, so the abil-

ity to have shared parking is greater. He said Margate does not have hotels and motels like Ventnor because the socioeconomic status is higher. Hurlless said Margate is primarily residential as well while Ventnor is more commercially developed.

"Margate consists mostly of just residents that live there, so they have very little visitation and tourism," Hurlless said.

Harley Schuler said he contacted Haddonfield, which also has a shared parking ordinance. He said it seemed to be a trial and error process in order to make more sufficient parking in the commercial area. He said the municipality tries to create incentives and regulations for employees to park in other locations to make more spaces available for customers.

Higbee said he has heard of institutions like colleges and hospitals that do the same and Cape May could also consider it. Murray said it was a possibility because of the shuttle service the city offers.


Gus Andy said he is in favor of shared parking and the committee should focus more on Cape May and how shared parking would benefit the city rather than observing other communities. He said because of Cape May's tourism, growing from a population of 4,000 in the offseason to nearly 50,000 in the summer, there is a lot of potential in such a concept. Murray said the committee is focused on Cape May, but wanted to obtain the background and experiences of other municipalities that have utilized the concept. Murray said it seems as though most communities use parking variances rather than shared parking.

"It seems places that have shared parking ordinances aren't using them anyway," he said. "I think we need to discuss the pros and cons of both shared parking and parking variances."

The committee agreed to discuss shared parking versus granted variances at the next meeting, as well as the enforcement of these parking models. The Shared Parking Advisory Committee meetings are open to the public and held at City Hall. The next meeting will take place on July 12 at 9:30 a.m.

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30	2:15	3:01	8:20	9:02
1	3:14	3:59	9:14	10:05
2	4:13	4:53	10:06	11:03
3	5:09	5:43	10:56	11:57

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New Moon, July 8
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