

Wells

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investigating FEMA regulations regarding house foundations, said federal regulations allow for homes to be placed on foundations other than pilings.

Construction officer Jim James said the zoning ordinance required homes being renovated for more than 50 percent of their value had to be placed on pilings. That requires raising the home off its foundation, moving it, and driving pilings, after which the house is set on the pilings.

VanHeeswyk said Cape May Point was losing a lot of cottages because of the cost associated with this process.

"One of the reasons I ran for office was we were losing cottages. The cost of pilings was making it unrealistic to rehabilitate a house," she said.

She said in the last decade or so, if someone had a small cottage and wanted to add a second floor they had to put the house on pilings.

"I've been searching for some way around this and

recently found we have the ability to use these other building methods," she said.

James, who was out of the office at the time, said he couldn't quote the regulations, but there are other forms of foundations, such as grade beams, columns and piers.

"The original ordinance was written as if everything was in the V-zone and would require pilings. If you are in A-zone, above 10.5 feet and have flood vents, you would have other options," James said.

According to James, most of the point is in the A-zone.

VanHeeswyk said the V-zone is essentially the beach side of the dune, where they do not allow construction.

She said this does not change the requirement that houses being rehabilitated more than 50 percent of the value have to be at 10.5 to 11.5 feet above base flood elevation, as required by FEMA, but this offers the home owner more options as to how to get there. "I definitely want our prop-

er owners to have as many options as possible. And they will continue to get the discount," she said.

Borough residents qualify for a 15 percent discount on their flood insurance under the Community Rating System (CRS).

VanHeeswyk said there is also the possibility of gaining an exemption by creating a historic district to include all of Cape May Point, which is another option being floated.

Lincoln Avenue one-way?

Commissioner John Henderson said some residents have asked about the possibility of making Lincoln Avenue one-way. The street has been significantly narrowed by sand encroaching on the roadway. Some residents have suggested the section of Lincoln Avenue between Cape and Ocean Avenues be made one-way.

Henderson said he talked to Capt. Robert Sheehan of the Cape May Police Department, who said he

thought that section of the road should probably be one-way. Henderson then talked to County Engineer Dale Foster, because Lincoln Avenue is a county road. According to Henderson, Foster said he was told there was no automatic objection to the idea.

Preferences stated at the meeting indicated most residents favored a one-way street with traffic moving west to east.

Resident Ann Brecker asked why the encroaching sand could not be moved off the existing paved roadway. VanHeeswyk said at some point the sand must be stopped.

"There is an engineering problem," Schupp added. "Putting the sand back on the dune won't mean it will stay there."

Henderson said if it's just a matter of keeping the sand off the street, Public Works indicated that would not be a problem.

Concern was raised over the likelihood of drivers going the wrong way after making

the street one-way. Megane Smith of Harvard Avenue said this happens on Harvard a couple times a week in the summer.

"People do what they want to do and you just have to hope they don't bang into each other," she said.

Smith said making that portion of Lincoln Avenue one-way was just putting off the inevitable, which was addressing the sand issue.

Henderson said making the street one-way would give the borough time to address the problem. Constructing a retaining wall was one resolution being discussed.

Other news

VanHeeswyk also reported said the tax collection rate for 2011 was 99.21 percent. She said with such a high tax collection rate, the borough does not have to set aside much as a reserve for uncollected taxes.

She said taxes in the Point were reduced by \$11,537.97 for the Homestead Rebate

program. Commissioner John Henderson said Comcast has mailed a notice to Point residents regarding changes in services. He said according to the notice in March all analog channels would disappear.

"If you have basic cable and no cable box you will have no channels. If you have a digital box you will be OK," he said.

He said as a result of the digital technology, those who are still using a VCR would find it wouldn't work. Henderson DVRs would continue to work. The changes, he said, apply to the basic tier only.

Schupp said South Jersey Gas would be finishing work on gas mains by the end of February. He said they would continue to work in the borough installing laterals to individual customers.

Trash may be left at the water tower by appointment only until April 1, when regular hours resume.

Craig

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or Edie Kopsik. Douglass told the Star and Wave he believes the Lower Township Republican Committee predominantly has a one-sided view, which he doesn't think is proper.

"The committee is stacked so that if someone says jump, they jump," he said.

"Basically told him I was never accepted by the organization and felt he was trying to influence my vote. I think it's a borderline ethics issue," Douglass said.

Douglass said at the Jan. 4 meeting he tended to agree with Beck's position that there was a conflict having Donohue, the

Cape May County Republican Committee chairman, as township solicitor.

"There are conflicts there. If not before, it is obvious now," he said.

Douglass said state statutes say when there is a vacancy on the council, the committee is supposed to send three names. He said council is not supposed to get a tally list showing how and who voted. On Jan. 4, when Conrad nominated Craig, he said it was based on Craig being the top vote getter in the committee vote.

Douglass said he questioned whether or not Conrad should vote on the committee's nominee because he is a committee member. Donohue said

there was not a conflict.

"I don't know if that was an educated guess or if he was going by the statute or not," Douglass said.

Douglass said he opposed Craig in the 2008 municipal elections after talking to people in the community.

"People started talking and I listened to the community. That's when I was moved to run against Craig. No one else was running, so I said I would run. I said if people were not supporting him it doesn't make sense to run him," Douglass said.

Douglass said there were rumors of promises of county jobs for both Craig and Lare.

Lower Township Republican Committee Chairman Jeff Lindsay said the committee would be meeting at 7 p.m., Jan. 18, to vote on the vacant Ward 2 seat.

Town

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in the rankings on a regular basis. Mahaney said the site polls close on Jan. 31, so those who are interested in voting should do so now. Visitors to the site can vote daily.

There were 647 reader-nominated towns on the list, which was the most ever in the seven years the poll has existed. Mahaney said he was thrilled to see Cape May find its way into the top 10 out of nearly 700 towns nominated.

Budget Travel currently has 2.4 million readers and is described as a publication that provides "practical and timely tips and tools, uncovering the best under-the-radar discoveries and show-

ing just how any destination can be made accessible."

Nearly 50,000 have already cast their vote for the Coolest Small Town in America and the only requirements for the competition are nominees must have a population of less than 10,000 and have "an edge and a heart."

"Nearly 400 years after its founding, Cape May is still a popular place for sun, surf and relaxation," the website says. "The town is rich in local inns and B&Bs, many of which look out over the sweeping white sands and gentle waves."

The website mentions organizations associated with Cape May, like the Mid-Atlantic Center for the Arts

and Humanities (MAC), as well as popular tourist attractions like the Emlen Physick Estate and the Cape May Point State Park.

Michael Sprague, a writer for Budget Travel, described Cape May as "one of the most attractive areas in New Jersey," and having "gorgeous Victorian homes, great beaches and a view of the ocean and the Delaware Bay."

Cape May is presently ranked behind Hammondsport, N.Y., Weaverville, Calif., Beaufort, N.C., Port Townsend, Wash., Damascus, Va., Nashville, Ind., and Sainte Genevieve, Mo., on the list of Coolest Small Towns in America.

New wine law allows broader sales

By CAIN CHAMBERLIN
Cape May Star and Wave

TRENTON - Gov. Christie signed legislation (A-4436) yesterday allowing the direct shipment of wines to consumers while at the same time allowing out-of-state wineries to sell products in New Jersey.

Small New Jersey wineries that produce less than 250,000 gallons of wine per year will now be able to open new wine outlets. Legislation also grants the licensing of new wineries, which was being withheld until the Legislature or courts found a resolution to a Constitutional conflict with New Jersey law.

Ray Natali, part-owner of Natali Vineyards in Cape May Court House said many of the state's wineries are in rural areas, where the relationship between the winery and wholesalers is fairly weak, so much of the business is made through tasting rooms and wine festivals. He said about 60 percent of his vineyard's business comes from events hosted on the property. The state's ban on direct shipping, eliminated by the legislation, was believed to be the reason the state's wine industry could not compete with other wineries. Natali said the new law will do great things for the local Jersey wineries.

"It's going to help - some wineries don't believe it will, but I think the majority of us do think that it will help," Natali said. "We'll pick up anywhere from 20 to 30 percent of business."

Natali said wineries in Cape May County depend widely on the tourism during the summer months, so when the off-season arrives, much of the business leaves the area. He said the direct-shipping ban being lifted will allow that business to continue

throughout the year. "Our people are down here and come to see us May through November mainly," he said. "Now, if they like our wine, we can ship it to where they are."

While others believed if the bill was passed, it would put people out of work and liquor stores out of business, Natali believes there will be little harm to the distributors around the state. He said distributors are selling beer and

to approve the wineries that wanted to become wineries and were held up in limbo."

Natali said he would be thrilled to see more wineries in New Jersey, especially in the southern end because he feels it would truly help the tourism and overall economy of the state.

"Everyone makes wine their own way, and all South Jersey wines are great," he said. "We have amazing wineries down here and I'd love to see more of them."

Natali Vineyard partner and associate Kevin Celli said the state is producing well-received wines that are winning international awards and medals, and this law will help sustain the farms and vineyards in New Jersey.

"We're the Garden State, and we're losing the garden," he said. "It's one more step in the right direction. You're talking about business owners that have put every dollar they have into opening their business and are trying to sustain their farm business, and they had this restriction on what they can do and where they can sell."

Celli said it feels great to join the other 38 states who have this direct shipping capability, and have the potential to develop bonds with more businesses around the area and out-of-state. He said Natali Vineyards produces about 22,000 bottles of wine per year and the bill passing will allow them to grow and bring in more revenue to expand. As the seventh largest wine producer in the country, Celli believes New Jersey will become an even larger producer now that the wine bill has passed.



liquor, and will still have the same amount of wine in their stores. Natali said small South Jersey vineyards are simply trying to sell their wine, and do it by going directly to the consumer.

"I think they realize that we're not going to put people out of work, and it's just that it will help the little guy, like these little wineries," he said. "Right now there are 38 of us, and after this law passed it gives them the right

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Hall

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construction phase engineering and contract administration has been set at around \$110,000.

City Manager Bruce MacLeod said the city applied for a grant around two years ago to help pay for the restoration of City Hall but it was not awarded. He said the city applied for the maximum amount of \$500,000. MacLeod said the city could apply a second time, but grant funding in the present economy is limited.

The report says, given the age of City Hall, it is generally in good condition.

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'Be Local, Shop Local' winners

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE —The Cape May County Chamber of Commerce kicked off the annual Shop Local for the Holidays campaign with the 1st Annual Be Local, Shop Local Contest for the 2011 Holiday shopping season.

Shoppers were able to submit copies of receipts from purchases in Cape May County stores from Nov. 14 to Dec. 14, 2011 in order to be eligible to win prizes awarded in four categories: 1) Shopping in the most Cape May County Stores, 2) Shopping in the most Cape May County Municipalities, 3) Shopping in the most Online Cape May County stores and 4) Prize

drawings for all contestants that entered.

The Be Local, Shop Local Campaign Contest was created to entice residents and visitors to shop at Cape May County businesses this holiday season because of its benefits to the community. The plan is get people to think more about where their dollar is spent and what that means to our community. Dollars spent at local businesses have three times the impact on our community and simultaneously creates jobs, funds more services, invests, improves and promotes Cape May County as a whole.

The 2011 winners are: Julie Miner, Barbara Tomalino,

Shelley VanDyke, Francey Burke, and Maggie Warner. Contest prizes included \$100 Visa Gift Cards furnished by 1st Bank of Sea Isle City, Cape Bank and TD Bank. Morey's Piers Passes, and overnight stays at The Golden Inn in Avalon and The Carroll Villa Hotel in Cape May.

For more information on places to shop in Cape May County, please visit www.capemaycountychamber.com.