



Caper Tiger wrestlers remain undefeated

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House of the week

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Mullock: Success result of combined efforts

Mayor cites improvements in public safety, revenue, resiliency, history and culture

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Revenue is up and the sound of saws and hammers fills the core of the city as projects advance.

Mayor Zack Mullock delivered his annual State of the City Address during Cape May's annual reorganization meeting Jan. 3. He said council has done a lot of work but has much left to accomplish.

Mullock thanked City Manager Mike Voll for "pushing us

all in the right direction" and Deputy City Manager Lou Belaso for "putting his heart into the city."

Mullock said City Council must protect the city from natural disasters by increasing efforts for flood mitigation and prevent overdevelopment.

The city exceeded \$3 million in beach tag revenue in 2022, a new record for Cape May, Mullock said.

He noted a dozen labor contracts have been settled and projects undertaken without a

tax increase for three years.

Construction of a fire station has been accomplished through a pandemic, supply chain issues and inflation, Mullock said. A grand opening celebration for the fire station is being planned for April, he said.

Mullock displayed an early rendering of a design for a police station. He said the city is in the permitting process with the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for use of a property on St. John Street.

"I think Cape May has become a true example of what a community can be when we all work together."

—Cape May Mayor Zack Mullock

"We have already bonded for this, and we are already working with an architect, so that when we do get DEP approval, fingers crossed, we'll be ready to hit the ground running," he

said. The city has increased the number of police and fire personnel, Mullock said. Electric and hybrid vehicles, as well as a new ambulance, communications equipment and body cameras, have been purchased for the police department, he said.

The city's Bicycle and Pedestrian Safety Advisory Committee spearheaded painting of crosswalks and sharrows, he said.

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John Cooke/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

Topping off the fire station

A crane lifts the cupola onto the top of Cape May's fire station Dec. 29.

Section of canal bridge collapses

A 100-foot section of the railroad bridge over Cape Island Creek that connects Cape May to the mainland fell into the Cape May Canal. Sea Tow Cape May posted a warning to boaters Dec. 23. The bridge is inoperable, and trains have not crossed the canal for more than decade. Using side scan sonar, Sea Tow located the debris and removed it working with H. Arenberg Marine Construction.



Two projects could lead to safer beaches

Extension of P.A. system, coastal study under way

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Extension of the beachfront public address (P.A.) system is scheduled to begin Jan. 23.

At a Dec. 28 meeting of the Beach Safety Advisory Committee, Deputy City Manager Lou Belaso said he expected the system would be completed before the beginning of the tourist season.

City Council approved a bid of \$335,000 in November to extend the system from Convention Hall to Wilmington Avenue for emergency announcements.

According to the enabling resolution, the contract was awarded to Delaware Audio Visual Integration and Design of Wilmington.

The firm will integrate the new system with an existing system operating from Convention Hall to Cove Beach.

A subcommittee will explore the content of daily announcements that could be made over the P.A. system.

At its reorganization meeting Jan. 3, City Council approved advertising for bids to contract with a coastal engineer and planning consultant.

Beach Safety Advisory Committee member Thomas Medvecky asked if the goal of a coastal engineer would be to investigate Cape May's shore break believed to have caused C-spine injuries to bathers.

Councilwoman Lorraine Baldwin said the engineer would review beach surveys and look into creating a demonstration beach project. Any recommendations would be examined by council, she said.

Committee goals for 2023 include a marketing plan that would include a new beach safety video, committee chairman Steve Steger said.

Committee member William Kurtz suggested the television production classes at Lower Cape May Regional High School could produce the video. Baldwin said she

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West Cape seeks ruling on legitimacy of rejecting petition

Five borough residents served a court summons after bid to prohibit cannabis sales

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — Five residents who circulated a petition seeking an amendment to a borough ordinance permitting recreational cannabis sales recently received a summons to court re-garding a lawsuit filed by West Cape May.

The petition's request for cannabis stores to be 1,000 linear feet away from residences, parks and churches would have eliminated cannabis sales any-

where in West Cape May.

At a Jan. 4 meeting, borough resident Ellen McDevitt told Borough Commission she was one of five residents who last fall circulated a petition that received 174 signatures to change the wording of an ordinance allowing for the sale of recreational cannabis.

On July 14, 2021, Borough Commission adopted an ordinance that permitted the operation of certain cannabis-related businesses and operations.

"The borough has rejected

the petition, which is fine, but yesterday every member of that committee was served with a summons to Superior Court," she said. "We are being sued by the borough of West Cape May for what we can see the only reason is we circulated a petition."

McDevitt said the wording of the summons states "if judgment is entered against you, the sheriff may seize your money, wages or property to pay all or part of the judgment."

"That scared the pants off

me, which I think must be the intention to intimidate those of us that circulated the petitions," she said.

Borough solicitor Frank Corrado said the wording is standard language required by law.

He said the lawsuit was not filed against the petitioners but instead is asking the court for a declaratory judgment that the rejection of the petition, which had the requisite number of signatures, was because "the wording of your proposed amendment was misleading as

a matter of law, and therefore, the petition was legally insufficient."

Corrado told the Star and Wave the petition proposed an amendment to the cannabis ordinance that would set certain geographic limitations on where a retail cannabis store may be located in the zones where it is permitted. The petition asked for an amendment to the ordinance stating no cannabis retail operation shall be

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