



## Boys basketball drops first game of the season

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## House of the week

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169th YEAR NO. 3 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 18, 2023 \$1.00

# City may help housing authority expand offerings

## Cape May has \$2M. in Affordable Housing Trust Fund it is considering sharing

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Future affordable housing for the city may come through building new units and improving current facilities at the Cape May Housing Authority.

In his State of the City Address Jan. 3, Mayor Zack Mullock said it was a mistake for a previous administration to pay employees stipends from the Affordable Housing Trust Fund and that his administration would use the funds for their intended purpose.

In 2020, Jerry Inderwies paid stipends to six city employees from the city's Affordable Housing Trust Fund totaling \$100,000 while serving as city manager.

The state allows 20 percent of affordable housing funds to be paid for administrative costs and neither the state Department of Community Affairs nor the Cape May County Prosecutor's Office charged Inderwies with any wrongdoing.

Mullock said city residents elected new leadership and the new administration stopped the practice. The city has asked the

employees to return the stipends. In September, council approved a resolution authorizing voluntary deduction of earned paid time off in lieu of monetary payment to resolve the issue.

"Now we are on to what's important, actually using the Affordable (Housing) Trust Fund for what it is intended to be used for," Mullock said. "Today, that trust fund is \$2 million, which is a nice amount of money, but if I handed you \$2 million and said, 'solve the affordable housing issue in the city of Cape May,' you're not going to be able to do

a lot with \$2 million. We know a lot of houses in Cape May are selling for \$2 million, certainly a lot of them are selling for \$1 million."

The city is looking at working with the Cape May Housing Authority, which is considering a major upgrade to its facilities, Mullock said. He said many of the units do not have a washer or dryer and there is no laundry facility at the site.

The mayor said the housing authority planned to make a presentation to the city's Historic Preservation Commission.

He said it was requesting the \$2 million affordable housing funds from the city to fill gaps in its financing.

"They are looking at and will be presenting to council upgrades to all the houses, 16 new family houses, so that would bring working families back into the city of Cape May, seven new senior houses and 33 new parking spaces," Mullock said.

Being able to make a dent in affordable housing for such a small amount of money is something for council to consider, he said.



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

## Daybreak at Lighthouse Pond

The sunrise illuminates the Cape May Lighthouse at Lighthouse Pond, as it has at this version of the lighthouse for 163 years.

# Health center links expectant moms with care

By DAVID NAHAN  
Cape May Star and Wave

WILDWOOD — CompleteCare has teamed up with Shore Medical Center to ensure women have access to maternity services after Cape May County's only hospital stopped offering those services last fall.

South Jersey's CompleteCare Health Network has facilities in Wildwood

and Cape May Court House.

"We are what is called a community health center or a federally qualified health center, which means we are given the job of making sure everyone in the community has access to high-quality health care," according to Kimberly Tweed, vice president of communications and development.

CompleteCare used to send local pregnant moth-

ers to Cape Regional Medical Center to deliver their babies, but now is having them go to Shore in Somers Point, which is the next-closest hospital.

Cape Regional announced that effective Sept. 10, 2022, it would stop providing maternity care services due to a lack of doctors.

"One of two obstetricians

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'For a lot of people in the area, especially those who are uninsured or underinsured, we're one of the few resources for them to get complete health care in the area.'

—Kimberly Tweed, CompleteCare

# Cape May budget up double rate of inflation since '10

## MTRAC says revenue lagging, wants wide-ranging increases

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — According to the city's Municipal Taxation and Revenue Advisory Committee, Cape May's annual municipal budget has increased 87 percent since 2010.

On Jan. 13, MTRAC Chairman Dennis Crowley said inflation has risen at a rate of 3 percent a year since 2011 for a total increase of 42.57 over the past 10 years.

"In that same period of time, the Cape May city budget has increased 87 percent. The budget has gone from \$11.7 million in 2010 to \$22 million in 2022," he said.

With respect to the impact of inflation on city services, it is far greater than the national impact, he said. Crowley said as the budget increases exponentially, the city needs to look at how it is generating revenue to keep up with inflation.

"In the past, it's usually been property taxes," he said.

MTRAC is suggesting City Council raise mercantile license fees. The committee is drafting a

position statement on the 2023 municipal budget for delivery to council. The committee has studied mercantile license fees in relation to the impact of inflation.

The city's mercantile license fee for accommodations is \$32 per unit which has not been increased in at least 10 years, Crowley said. MTRAC has been tasked with recommending new revenue streams and ensuring an equitable distribution of impact, so everyone is treated fairly, he said.

Crowley said over time there has been an unequal impact in terms of residential rental fees in relation to hotels, motels and guest houses. In 2022, council established a reasonable fee for residential rentals but there is a significant disparity evident regarding the accommodations industry, he said.

"There is a significant gap between the fee for units in hotels and motels and guest houses and those in residential rentals," Crowley said.

He said hotel and motel room rates have increased annually to account for

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# Lower shrinks cannabis retail zone

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Lower Township Council approved an ordinance to create an overlay zone that confines cannabis retail stores and offices of cannabis delivery services to a specific section of the General Business Zone.

In 2021, council amended the land development code and authorized the issuance of no more than two Class 5 cannabis retail licenses and no more than two Class 6 cannabis delivery licenses to operate within the GB-1

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Critics assail licensing delays.  
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and industrial zoning districts.

In addition, council expanded the permitted zones in which Class 5 and Class 6 licenses are permitted to include the Marine Development Commercial Zone.

The township determined that revisions to the GB-1 zone and the conditions associated with Class 5 and

Class 6 licenses should be revised to ensure the uses are confined to specific areas.

The overlay zone is confined to the shopping center in North Cape May that houses the Acme market and the shopping center across the street that houses the post office and dollar store. Breakwater Plaza is not included in the cannabis business overlay.

Cannabis businesses are prohibited within 300 feet of homes or public facilities. Council approved the ordinance Jan. 4 with no public comment.

# Cape May-based cutter helps rescue seven

BALTIMORE, Md. — The U.S. Coast Guard rescued seven people Saturday from a disabled, adrift tug towing a barge 30 miles offshore from Ocean City, Md.

A crew member aboard the tug Legacy notified watch standers at Coast Guard Sector Maryland-National Capital Region at about 3:30 a.m. Saturday that while towing a 290-foot barge from New Jersey to Guyana, a 1,000-foot towing line became entangled and fouled the starboard propeller.

The vessel continued to

make way on one engine when the tow line snapped. The crew attempted to regain tow of the barge but the line became tangled in the port propeller, immobilizing the vessel.

The crew member said Legacy was inoperable and that the crew was making preparations to abandon ship.

The 154-foot Coast Guard Cutter Lawrence Lawson, homeported in Cape May, N.J., was already underway and diverted to the scene to help.

Once there, the cutter's crew was unable to get

near the disabled tug or barge due to weather and concern that the loose tow line beneath the water's surface would foul the vessel's propellers.

The Lawrence Lawson maintained station and provided critical assistance to responding units and ensured safety of the crew members.

Coast Guard Sector Maryland-National Capital Region launched an MH-65 Dolphin helicopter crew from Coast Guard Air Station Atlantic City

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