



MTRAC: Make utilities repay general fund

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House of the week

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Watershed plan: Buy flood-prone properties

West Cape May balks at cost amid red-hot real estate market, faults plan for lack of alternatives

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — A watershed master plan from Stockton University recommends the borough purchase flood-prone properties and turn them into open space, but that is an expensive proposition for taxpayers in a hot real estate market.

At a Nov. 11 Borough Commission meeting, borough engineer Ray Roberts said commissioners and department heads have

been examining a watershed master plan. He said the plan needs to be discussed and moved forward.

The plan recommends the borough continue its acquisition of open space, in particular in areas that will be prone to flooding in the future.

If properties in those areas are for sale, the borough should purchase the properties, demolish the buildings and make them open space, Roberts said.

After many years, flood-prone

areas would not contain any buildings and flooding in those locations would have no consequences, he said.

“Has the university considered the price of real estate lately?” Mayor Carol Sabo asked. Roberts said he spoke with Cape May’s floodplain manager Lou Belasco on that issue.

“There’s not enough money in the world to do what they are saying in that report,” Roberts said.

He said many watershed plans

offer “billion-dollar solutions that you are required to put in here because that is the solution.”

For West Cape May, other than acquisition of properties, the plan recommends creating construction rules and regulations that prohibit development in high flood hazard areas, Roberts said.

The plan was prepared by Stockton University and also included Cape May and Cape May Point, Roberts said.

“If you look at the actual recommendations that are being proposed, there are no structural recommendations, no one is saying build a flood wall, no one is saying build your dunes up to 80 feet tall,” he said.

Roberts said the plan recommends protecting critical facilities and infrastructure.

He said the borough’s fire station, police substation and elementary school are outside

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Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Cape May marks Veterans Day

Students from Eileen Oleksiak-Hall’s third-grade class at Maud Abrams School in Lower Township presented a salute to the different branches of the military during Cape May’s Veterans Day ceremony at Soldiers and Sailors Park. Below, Sgt. First Class Larry Hogan, U.S. Army retired, left, delivers the invocation at Cape May’s Veterans Day ceremony with City Manager Mike Voll. Bottom right, David Goodwin, 99, a tail gunner who completed 33 missions and was shot down twice during World War II, was recognized during Cape May’s Veterans Day ceremony. Bottom left, Cape May County held its ceremony at the Naval Air Station Wildwood Aviation Museum with retired Brig. Gen. Jeffrey Pierson as master of ceremonies.



John Salvatore/NASW



Educational center part of restoring Pond Creek

Project expected to begin in spring

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

HIGBEE BEACH — A project to restore tidal flow from Delaware Bay into Pond Creek will kill acres of invasive phragmites but also include trails, nature-viewing blinds and possibly an educational/interpretive center at the former magnesite factory site.

Dave Golden, director of the Division of Fish and Wildlife of the state Depart-

ment of Environmental Protection (DEP), updated Lower Township Council on the project Monday.

He said the project in the Higbee Beach Wildlife Management Area, which stretches from the former magnesite factory site to the Cape May Canal, covers about 1,200 acres with work scheduled to begin in the spring.

“Much of this project is designed to restore the marsh to natural habitat,

and the way to do this is by restoring natural tidal flow into the marsh,” Golden said.

When the magnesite plant was in operation, Pond Creek was cut off to flow from the bay by a gate that became inoperable, he said.

The project includes marsh enhancement and upland habitat restoration at the magnesite plant site.

Golden presented a con-

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City planners reject new Jetty Motel

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — At the end of a five-hour hearing, the city’s Planning Board unanimously voted against preliminary and final site plan approval for the construction of a new Jetty Motel on Beach Avenue that would have featured a 243-seat restaurant and bar and stacked parking.

The audience numbered

more than 100 persons.

Attorney Bob Baranowski, representing the applicant, Cape Jetty LLC, said the board approved redeveloping the site in 2019 for a 61-room hotel. The new application sought to also construct a restaurant and bar open to the public which was previously only for hotel guests.

The plan was amended to reduce the hotel to 53 rooms and increase in

the height of the building to accommodate higher ceilings.

Baranowski said the new plan required variances for parking and height. He said the plan called for 81 parking spaces on site and 42 spaces offsite for a total of 123 spaces. The height variance sought was for 43.3 feet when 40 feet is permitted.

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Mission Inn reverting to private home

By RACHEL SHUBIN
Special to the Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The Mission Inn started as a private home and now, after 29 years of operating as a bed and breakfast inn, will return full circle in 2022.

For the past five years, Wendy Collins and Laura Shaddock ran the Mission Inn. At the end of 2021, they will hand over the keys to the new owners who plan to make the inn a private residence.

“The new owners are keeping the name as part of the real estate transaction, so it will always be the Mission Inn whether it’s a private home or not,” Collins said. “I don’t know if they will keep the sign [out front].”

Located at 1117 New Jersey Ave., the home was built in 1912 by Nelson Z. Graves in an elegant California mission style. It has operated as a B&B since 1992. The



Rachel Shubin/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

After 29 years as a bed & breakfast inn, the Mission Inn will be transformed back into a single-family home next year after being sold.

inn has eight guest rooms, each with a private en suite bathroom and shower.

Collins said the Mission

Inn has operated as the top-rated B&B in Cape May

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