

LCMR football rolls over Overbrook

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House of the week

Real Estate Resource



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Lower elementary schools close amid COVID

'The Lower Township School District will be switching to 100 percent virtual instruction beginning Nov. 20, 2020. The district will remain closed for in-person instruction through winter break.'

—Superintendent Jeff Samaniego

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

COLD SPRING — The Lower Township Elementary School District eliminated in-person education this week and will continue to do so until after the Christmas vacation break.

In a letter to parents dated Nov. 19, Superintendent Jeff Samaniego stated the COVID-19 impact to the district's schools and community is rapidly changing, therefore his administrative team is faced with

a tremendously difficult decision.

"Our commitment to student and staff safety remains our highest priority. Due to recent increases of COVID-19 cases and exposures in the Lower Township community and our schools, we are taking the necessary precautions to prevent the spread of illness," he said. "The Lower Township School District will be switching to 100 percent virtual instruction beginning Nov. 20, 2020. The district will remain closed for in-person instruction through winter break. We will monitor the

impact that this virus is having on our community and provide an update on December 21, 2020 to our families regarding the reopening or extended closure of our schools for in-person instruction."

He said instruction would be a combination of virtual, synchronous lessons and remote, asynchronous work five days per week.

Samaniego told the Star and Wave the district has been closely monitoring coronavirus cases for the past few weeks and has seen a spike in numbers across the board. He

said his decision was also based on events taking place outside of school such as students attending weddings and participation at dance studios.

The number of positive COVID-19 cases spiked at six students and six staff members, Samaniego said.

"We have about 22 staff members already quarantined, so staffing has become an issue," he said. "Just this week, it seemed like the walls were crumbling, we've been treading water, trying to protect our kids

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Region may be classified as 'high risk'

Health Department to set Cape, Atlantic COVID status level

By DAVID NAHAN
Cape May Star and Wave

Rising COVID-19 cases may be pushing this part of New Jersey into the "high risk" level for community transmission of the coronavirus, that is one stage below the "very high risk" classification in which schools are recommended to go to all-virtual learning.

At the "high risk" level, schools are told to "consider implementing fully remote learning," according to the New Jersey Department of Health.

According to a letter dated Monday, Nov. 23, from Ocean City School District Superintendent Dr. Kathleen Taylor, the Cape May County Department of Health advised all the school superintendents in the county about the "high risk" status.

Taylor noted the department will determine the status today (Wednesday). The state has divided New Jersey into regions to report trends with the coronavirus. The Southeast Region includes Cape May, Atlantic and Cumberland counties.

According to the state DOH COVID-19 recommendations, when schools are in the "very high" risk category, "it is recommended that they implement fully remote learning."

State DOH recommendations

"Schools in other risk levels should consult with their local health departments as they work to:

- Implement protocols requiring staff and students to stay home when sick or if they have been in close contact with someone with COVID-19 in the past 14 days. School administrators should be notified of illness.

- Develop a policy for daily symptom screening for students and staff; have plans for students and staff to report symptoms that develop during the day

- Identify rapid testing resources when staff and students develop COVID-19 symptoms.

Schools should:

- Clean and disinfect frequently touched surfaces at least daily
- Ensure adequate hand hygiene supplies are available
- Implement physical distancing measures such as reducing occupancy, installation of partitions and physical barriers, and cancelling large gatherings
- Implement source control through wearing face covering.

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William Thomas Cain/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

St. Mary's by-the-Sea may be the site of a science center if Cape May Point can work out an agreement with the Sisters of St. Joseph to use the buildings, which they were going to have demolished and let the property return to nature.

St. Mary's by-the-Sea may become a science center

Cape May Point seeks grant to fund feasibility study

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY POINT — The borough is applying for a grant from the Department of Agriculture for what could become the Cape May Point Science Center, known now as Saint Mary's by-the-Sea, a building owned by the Sisters of Saint Joseph of Chestnut Hill in Philadelphia and operated as a retreat.

In 2016, the Sisters of Saint Joseph announced the building may be demolished after 2021 with the property returning to nature. The sisters have owned and operated the retreat house, Saint

Mary's by-the-Sea, since 1909, providing retreats for sisters and laity.

Borough Commissioner Robert Mullock has spearheaded a concept to have the building preserved as a nature/science center.

A Rural Business Development Grant could be used to fund a feasibility study for a science center. The grants are designed to support technical assistance, training and other activities leading to the development or expansion of small and emerging businesses in rural New Jersey.

At a Nov. 12 Borough Commission meeting, Mullock said receiving such a

grant would not commit the borough to any expense.

"The discussions with St. Mary's involve St. Mary's (building) becoming a non-profit nature and environmental center," he said.

Mullock said one portion of the building would focus on marine sciences and marine life and another wing would focus on bird and butterfly migration, since Cape May Point is located in the Atlantic Flyway.

He said there was an opportunity for a marine science grant.

"We would have no obligation at the borough because

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County records 100th COVID fatality

By DAVID NAHAN
Cape May Star and Wave

Cape May County recorded its 100th coronavirus-related fatality over the weekend, a 64-year-old Middle Township woman, saw more than 300 new cases over a seven-day period and surpassed 2,500 cases since the pandemic statistics started being recorded in March.

Ocean City led the county in active cases as of Monday, Nov. 23, with 121, and Lower Township was next-highest

with 114.

Thirty-six of Ocean City's active cases were in long-term care. There were only four other cases in long-term care facilities the county — two in Dennis Township and one each in Lower and Middle townships.

There were 329 new cases over the past week, between Tuesday, Nov. 17, and Monday, Nov. 23, an average of 47 per day among county residents.

The recent high was on Nov. 20 with 60 reported

new cases. There were 35 new cases reported Monday.

The rising cases in Cape May, Atlantic and Cumberland counties may be pushing the Southeast region of the state, as defined by the New Jersey Department of Health, into the "high risk" category of community transmission. (See related story, this edition.)

The county has now recorded 2,534 cases of the coronavirus during the

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Mullock planning transition

Sewell Tract task force, engineer are top priorities

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Councilman and mayor-elect Zack Mullock offered some insight into changes the city may see when he is seated as mayor Jan. 1, including hiring an in-house engineer, forming a Sewell Tract task force and conducting an environmental study at the firehouse site.

At a Nov. 16 virtual meeting, Mullock said he would like to advertise to hire an in-house city engineer. The city currently contracts with the firm of Mott MacDonald represented by Tom Thornton.

"My obvious understanding is the in-house engineer would not be able to handle all of the engineering issues that city will need," Mullock said. "I know other municipalities and townships have used a pool of engineers; I think it will be important that we have that pool put together."

City solicitor Frank Corrado questioned introducing an ordinance to hire an in-house engineer until the new City Council is seated in January. He said the position must be created as a city employee along with a pool of other engineers.

"Time is of the essence," Mullock said. "We don't want to go too long into next year without someone who is designated."

City Manager Jerry Inderwies said he needed to check with civil service to determine if the engineer position would be classified or unclassified.

"If it's unclassified, council can make the appointment. If it's classified under civil service, then the appointing authority makes the appointment," he said.

Corrado said he would check on the issue and report promptly to council.

Mullock said he would form a task force for the sole goal of settling the Sewell Tract issue, representing the citizens of Cape May and their interests. He said goal No. 1 was preserving the Sewell Tract and "doing

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November is Lung Cancer Awareness Month



Lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer deaths in the country in both men and women, with 80% of those deaths are believed to be caused by smoking. Long time smokers should speak with their physician to see if they qualify for a Low Dose CT scan (LDCT), that can detect lung cancer early and increase survival rates.

