



## House of the week

Real Estate Resource



## Victorians' Thanksgiving much like ours

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165th YEAR NO. 48 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2019 \$1.00



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

## MAC makes Christmas shiny and bright

Mid-Atlantic Center for the Arts lit the Christmas tree at the Emlen Physick Estate on Nov. 23, kicking off the holiday season in Cape May.

## City elementary board OKs teachers contract

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The Cape May City Elementary School Board of Education voted Nov. 21 to ratify a collective bargaining agreement with its teachers represented by the Cape May City Education Association.

When approved by the association, teachers will have a new contract replacing one that expired in June 2018. The school board approved teacher salaries retroactively for the 2018-19 school year and the 2019-20 school year.

The board also approved salaries for school

years from 2018 through 2020 for nonunion members. Robert Fineberg, board solicitor, advised the board not to release details of the contract until it's ratified by the teachers association.

The school board approved a shared services agreement with the Stone Harbor School District for the services of a Spanish teacher one day a week from Dec. 1 to June 30 at a cost of \$9,157. Principal Zachary Palombo said the teacher would serve all grade levels in the school and work a full day each Tuesday. He said the teacher also serves

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## Judge declares mistrial in East Cape May case

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Atlantic County Superior Court Judge Christine Smith declared a mistrial and rescheduled the trial to start again March 15 in the longstanding East Cape May Associates v. the state Department of Environmental Protection concerning the city's Sewell Tract.

The Sewell Tract was purchased in 1951 by Thomas Brodessa and Philip Robinson, who also developed Village Green in Cape May. In 1990, the land was conveyed to East Cape May Associates, also owned by Brodessa and

Robinson. They sought to develop much of the 96-acre tract but were prevented from widespread development by the DEP. East Cape May Associates sued the DEP claiming a taking of the land by the state.

As litigation has dragged on, the DEP made an amelioration offer to allow East Cape May Associates to develop 20 to 25 acres of the Sewell Tract, much of which is believed to be wetlands.

City solicitor Frank Corrado said Concerned Citizens for Sewell Tract Preservation would ap-

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Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Bill Seeger of the Cape May Taxpayers Association speaks to City Council about the beach tag fee increase for 2020.

## City approves increase in 2020 beach tag fees

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council approved an increase in fees from \$28 to \$30 for seasonal beach tags purchased after April 1. Weekly tags will increase from \$18 to \$20 and three-day tags from \$12 to \$15.

The enabling ordinance also included a manda-

tory annual evaluation by the city manager Nov. 1 to examine revenue and any shortfalls and make recommendations whether beach fees should be modified.

In addition, a new category of a \$50 commercial beach tag was approved for hotels and other accommodations. A provision of

See Beach tags, Page A8

## City fire dept. seeks timeline on mold work

President wants trailers provided until new accommodations ready

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Mold was discovered in the city's firehouse five months ago, forcing fire personnel to abandon their bunkroom and move their sleeping quarters to the meeting room.

Jim Matthews, president of the Cape May Fire Department, told City Council at a Nov. 18 meeting that the latest report from Coastal Environmental on conditions in the firehouse was "not good."

"Has every member of council been in the firehouse to see the work done in the bunkroom, dayroom, bathroom to this point?" he asked. "It is an absolute disgrace."

Matthews said he did not believe any council member would accept and pay for the work that was done on the firehouse to this point. He said he did not know who was making the decisions on what is being done in the firehouse "but their knowledge of a logical building progression needs to be reassessed."

Water intrusion into the firehouse must be stopped, starting with the roof and heating and air conditioning units, which need attention or upgrading, Matthews said. He said all sheetrock and insulation needs to be removed.

"All, and I reiterate, all mold needs to be remediated for the bunkroom, dayroom, kitchen; that area needs to be closed off and ventilated," Matthews said.

He said the building then

needs to be inspected to ensure mold has been remediated and the "building put back together."

Matthews asked if anyone had a timeline for when such work would be completed.

"What about the health of my career firemen living in these substandard conditions?" he asked.

He acknowledged a presentation made by Councilman Zack Mullock at council's last meeting depicting a number of fire and police stations constructed for \$4.5 million to \$5 million. Matthews said none of the stations depicted in the presentation had a completion date of 2019 but were from 2008 to 2017.

"Personally, I know building materials have increased 30 to 40 percent in that time," he said.

Matthews said he believes prevailing wages also increased during that time period. He asked how many of the fire stations in Mullock's presentation were done with prevailing wages and benefits. He asked how many of the buildings were constructed with nonunion labor and how many of the buildings were public safety complexes or just police or fire stations.

"How many were second or third fire departments in your presentation, not primary ones," Matthews asked.

He said new restrooms, bike paths, extending the

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## Seashore church to serve as Lower warming center

By DEBORAH MCGUIRE  
Special to the Star and Wave

ERMA — Seashore Community Church of the Nazarene will open its doors this winter as Lower Township's warming center.

"A couple of years ago the state passed a law saying each municipality must have a warming center, which is different than a shelter," Ed Donohue said during the Lower Township Council meeting Nov. 18.

Donohue, who serves as Lower Township's Office of Emergency Management coordinator, explained the difference between the two. He said a shelter is operational during a declared state of emergency and must be staffed by the township. A warming center, on the other hand, operates whenever the temperature is 25 degrees of

lower without precipitation or 32 degrees or lower with precipitation. Warming centers operate 6 p.m. to 6 a.m.

The township's warming center is located in the recreation center on Bayshore Road, but Donohue spoke with local churches last year to find an alternative. While several churches expressed interest, they were unable to accommodate the request due to logistical issues.

The Rev. Tim West, pastor of the Seashore Community Church, and Donohue discussed the issue, resulting in the church opening its doors during Code Blue alerts.

"The church does a lot for the community already," Donohue said, noting its outreach programs and food pantry.

Donohue said he spoke

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