



North Cape man among producers of holiday film

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House of the Week

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169th YEAR NO. 48 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 29, 2023 \$1.00

HPC endorses designs of the AME Church's steeple, tower

Supports demolition of church parsonage

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) issued a favorable advisory report on designs for the steeple, bell tower, stairs and a ramp for the city-owned Allen AME Church.

At a Nov. 20 meeting, city engineer Paul Dietrich said phase one of the project involved replacement of the roof, exterior facade and windows.

"The design team also took a lot of painstaking help with several members of the HPC in reconstructing the dimensions and the size and the scope of the witch's hat to bring that back in," he said, referring to the steeple.

Dietrich said the plans had one deviation from the original church building, steps descending directly from the front door. By current city code, a 3-foot landing is required, he said.

HPC Chairman Warren Coupland said the plans showed a different proportion from the original bell tower, noting the steeple is shorter. He said plans showed a height of 77 feet for the steeple.

Dietrich said another sketch showed a height of 64 feet at a different grade. He said 77 feet is an elevation, not a height, so the steeple would be 65 high from grade.

No measurements were on record for the original steeple, Dietrich said, so scaling was based on photographs of the church and the size of windows.

HPC Commissioner John Boecker said the height of the steeple relative to the height of the rest of the tower seemed shorter. Dietrich said the proportions of

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Jeanette Blaesi/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

Wrong side of the tracks

An abandoned sailboat is high and dry on the land side of the 'ghost tracks' at Higbee Beach.

Engineer will study drop-offs on beach

Firm will assess slope, template and bathymetry

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council awarded a \$43,189 contract Nov. 21 to ACT Engineers to assess the beaches in relation to C-spine injuries and sand replenishment.

ACT is expected to complete 3D and computer-generated models that would mimic the waves in Cape May's position on the coast.

According to city engineer Paul Dietrich, Cape May received three bids in response to a request for proposals.

A subcommittee of the Beach Safety Committee and Dietrich interviewed personnel from ACT Engineers and concluded it had the best team with experience in beach modeling combined with local presence and experience. ACT has offices in Marmora and Robbinsville.

Dietrich recommended the contract be awarded to ACT, which submitted the lowest price of the three proposals. The initial work includes data collection and analysis.

According to a letter to Dietrich from ACT Engineers, "To initiate conversations regarding the city's current beach condition, the team must first compile the site's historical data and information."

The compilation of data will allow ACT to develop a starting point for

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West Cape May to address water waste

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — In a town where water is precious and fairly expensive, the borough is looking for methods to stop wasteful watering such as operating sprinklers in the rain.

At a Nov. 22 meeting, Borough Commission discussed amending water regulations, in particular enforcement issues.

Deputy Mayor George Dick said a sprinkler system for a home on Third Avenue has been watering every day of the year at noon, which he estimated

amounts to 500 gallons of daily water use.

"It's a big issue. We're using drinking water to water our plants," he said. "We're going to try to do some enforcement, we're also going to try to do some education."

Water use in the borough has increased 40 percent since 2013 and is not sustainable, Dick said. He noted Cape May, which sells water to the borough, plans to build a new desalination plant.

Mayor Carol Sabo said the borough's Environmental Commission discussed moving toward drought-tolerant plant-

ings, minimizing lawn coverage and conservation of water.

Borough solicitor Frank Corrado said Cape May has a water ordinance. He said he would review the ordinance and create a draft proposal to amend the borough's water rules.

Sabo said some of the regulations are in place in the borough but are not being enforced.

Borough Commissioner Giacomo "Jack" Antonicello asked if fines were part of the water ordinance.

Corrado said fines could range

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Beach replenishment slated to begin Jan. 2

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — A U.S. Army Corps of Engineers beach replenishment project is scheduled to begin Jan. 2 on Wilmington Avenue.

The dredge Liberty Island is moored in Cape May Harbor, according to city engineer Paul Dietrich, who said the Army Corps requires the dredge to have a tugboat stationed with it 24 hours per day, seven days per week.

"They have 40 days of pumping out at the Coast Guard base and they should be hitting our beach just after the new year," Dietrich said.

In other business, he said a pump station will be installed at Bank Street around Dec. 13, an area with a persistent flooding issue.

Electric vehicle charging stations are being installed at the Welcome Center and City Hall. The pedestals for the charging units are in place but they have not been activated due to a strike by workers of Atlantic City Electric, Dietrich said.

"The final connection is going to be a little bit delayed; their queue has gotten backed up quite a bit," he said.

Councilwoman Maureen McDade suggested a sign be placed on the charging stations so the public does not attempt to use them. Dietrich said the stations would be "bagged."

A new phone system should be installed in City Hall during the first week of December. Dietrich said the city should be saving a good amount of money with the new system.

He proposed using some of the savings to upgrade technology for internet infrastructure and provide some redundancies at City Hall, Convention Hall and at the Department of Public Works to ensure reliability.

A couple of convention locations at Convention Hall were diminished by slow internet speeds, Dietrich said.

"They're trying to have higher internet speed access and Comcast just couldn't provide that with their upload

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Point to introduce new flood ordinance

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY POINT — Borough Commission plans to introduce a new flood hazard ordinance at its next meeting, a requirement of the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP).

The ordinance was developed by the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) with help from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

A model ordinance was developed by the DEP with which some municipalities had issues, accord-

ing to Cape May Point Floodplain Administrator Paul Dietrich, who also serves as the city of Cape May's engineer. The new ordinance was in connection with DEP's Protecting Against Climate Threat (PACT) rules which have higher freeboard requirements.

According to FEMA, freeboard is an additional amount of height above the Base Flood Elevation used as a factor of safety (e.g., 2 feet above the Base Flood) in determining the level at which a structure's lowest floor must be elevated or floodproofed to be in accordance with state or commu-

nity floodplain management regulations.

"If the state adopts flood hazard regulations, we're going to have to regulate to them regardless of what our ordinance says," Dietrich said.

He said grants consultant James Rutala and the county Chamber of Commerce worked with DEP to make recommendations for the state's model ordinance.

Dietrich said the borough's proposed flood hazard ordinance would not change anything, but it

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