



Lower volleyball, football teams fall in playoffs

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House of the Week

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Ørsted walks away from N.J. wind farms

O.C., county, citizens group ecstatic

By CRAIG D. SCHENCK
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE — In a Halloween treat for opponents of offshore wind farms, Danish utility firm Ørsted announced Oct. 31 that it would cease development of the Ocean Wind 1 and Ocean Wind 2 projects.

“Macroeconomic factors have changed dramatically over a short period of time, with high inflation, rising interest rates and supply chain bottlenecks impacting our long-term capital investments,” said David Hardy, Group EVP and CEO Americas at Ørsted. “As a result, we have no choice but to cease development

of Ocean Wind 1 and Ocean Wind 2. We are extremely disappointed to have to take this decision, particularly because New Jersey is poised to be a U.S. and global hub for offshore wind energy.”

Ocean City and Cape May County officials, along with citizens groups and state legislators, rejoiced at the news.

“It’s a relief to see this costly and hastily approved project abandoned. It had become increasingly clear that it made no sense for ratepayers, the environment or even the future of clean energy,” Mayor Jay Gillian said.

Board of Commissioner Director Leonard Desiderio, along with at-

torney Michael J. Donohue, special counsel for offshore wind; county Administrator Kevin Lare and county counsel Jeffrey Lindsay hosted a news conference on the topic Nov. 1 at the William E. Sturm Administration Building (See related story)

Ocean Wind 1 called for as many as 98 wind turbines 15 miles off the coast of Atlantic and Cape May counties meant to produce 1,100 megawatts of power for New Jersey homes and businesses. It would have been the first of multiple offshore electricity-generating wind turbine projects not only off the coast of southern New Jersey, but along the

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Officials claim victory over wind power giant

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE — Cape May County officials are taking credit for playing a major role in stopping Ørsted’s ocean wind turbine

Danish utility firm Ørsted announced Oct. 31 that it would cease development of the Ocean Wind 1 and Ocean Wind 2 projects, blaming high inflation, rising interest

rates and supply chain bottlenecks.

During a news conference Nov. 1, county Board of Commissioners Director Leonard Desiderio called the decision a great day for the people and businesses of Cape May County and the Atlantic Ocean. He said many advised the county not to take on Ørsted.

“Here in Cape May County, we gave them a

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MTRAC suggests 1% local sales tax to pay for jitneys

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city’s Municipal Taxation and Revenue Advisory Committee (MTRAC) discussed the possibility of the city creating a 1% municipal tax on retail sales to fund a better jitney service.

“Because if the state says that because of your special circumstances, you’re a coastal resort town, you’re a fourth-class town, you’re going to have a different kind of commerce that’s going to impact you more than would be in a normal or a routine town, someplace in another county, you’re allowed to consider applying a sales tax on that activity,” MTRAC Chairman Dennis Crowley said during its meeting in October.

He said retail sales in Cape May in 2020 totaled \$266 million, with much of those sales from the Acme

and shops. Crowley said taking half of that amount, \$133 million, as a source of taxable revenue, a 1 percent city sales tax would generate \$1.3 million.

No other coastal towns have instituted a local sales tax, he said. Wildwood has a tourism funding source through an authority and Atlantic City has casino revenue, Crowley said. He said the mission of MTRAC was like that of Star Trek: “To go boldly where no man has gone before.”

The ability to levy a local sales tax has been available to fourth-class towns since just after World War II, Crowley said.

“It’s something we need to consider because it’s a new source of revenue and it could be used, if the city did this, they could dedicate that money to things like the jitney service,” he said.

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Mullock updates public on progress of projects

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council held a town hall meeting Nov. 2 to update the public on projects nearing completion, such as the fire station and library, as well as future projects such as expanding the seawall and building a desalination plant.

Mayor Zack Mullock updated the audience about completed projects. All but one or two beach entrances now have showers, he said, noting the beachside public address system was in operation during the summer for emergency announcements and safety information.

“At five minutes to 10 a.m. we have Merrill Alan Reese from the Eagles — thank you for doing it pro bono — with a gentle reminder to have your bikes off the

Promenade by 10 a.m., so our pedestrians can enjoy it without feeling like they are going to get run over,” Mullock said.

A significant amount of money for the extension of beach mats was included in the city budget last year. Beach mats are located at every beach and the city received a \$400,000 Department of Community Affairs grant for additional mats, beach wheelchairs and repairs to some beach ramps, he said.

Mullock said the city received a grant to install a new floor for pickleball inside Convention Hall.

Crosswalks were repainted on every city street and the speed limit on all city-owned streets was lowered to 20 mph, he said.

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Sam Galick/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

A pair of piping plovers built a new nest last spring at 16th Street in Ocean City, something not seen for years in the center of the island. Four chicks hatched but none survived longer than two weeks, falling victim to predators and lack of food.

A tale of piping plovers

Story features new life, tough odds, predators, an unfortunate end but also hope for future

By DAVID NAHAN
Cape May Star and Wave

OCEAN CITY — In May, Sideshow Bob and El Toro Loco created the first new piping plover nest in more than a decade on a beach in the center of Ocean City. There were high hopes for the four chicks that were born, but the odds were against them from the start.

Unfortunately there was no happy ending, but a hint at possibilities to come in the continuing struggle for this endangered species.

In the early 2000s, there were as many as eight pairs of piping plovers in the stretch of beach from 19th to 30th streets, but over time the habitat filled in. There hadn’t been a pair in that area since 2011, according to Christina “Kashi” Davis, principal zoologist with the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection’s Division of Fishing and Wildlife Endangered and



Sam Galick/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

A banded piping plover chick runs to the shoreline to eat while it can before being disturbed by human and animal activity. The chicks cannot fly for at least four weeks after hatching, making them extremely vulnerable at this stage of their lifecycle.

Nongame Species Program in Woodbine.

“When sites go inactive like that, we’re not actively checking. We go out during census periods in June, maybe, but that site was not

on our radar whatsoever,” Davis said. “Nothing happened that usually would trigger the reactivation of a site.”

Ocean City resident Rhonda Van Wingerden

called the division’s hotline in May to report a nesting pair on the 16th Street beach.

Davis was skeptical.

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