



Caper Tiger wrestlers off to strong start

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House of the week

Real Estate Resource



168th YEAR NO. 52 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 28, 2022 \$1.00



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Breaking down barriers

Cape May officials and members of the Center for Community Arts gathered Dec. 17 to break through a wall at the Franklin Street School. The barrier was built during the years of racial segregation to keep the Black children from entering a gymnasium reserved for white students from the city's high school. Under renovation, the building is expected to reopen in December 2023 as a branch of the Cape May County Library.

City, group reach funding deal on arches

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council received clarification on a project to place decorative arches on the Promenade and approved an agreement with the Fund for Cape May to cover aboveground expenses.

At a Dec. 20 council meeting, architect John Boecker, who donated his services to design the arches, said he originally presented conceptual plans to council April 5. He said the Promenade had arches at the turn of the 20th century stretching from

Windsor Avenue to nearly Pittsburgh Avenue.

"Because at the time, there was still the electric railroad, there was in fact different sets of widths as the boardwalk width changed as it went from east to west across the beach," he said.

The proposed arches would be just under 17 feet high and about 25 feet wide, Boecker said, adding that the original arches had lampposts that could be replicated and allow removal of "Cobra" streetlights along Beach Avenue.

The first phase of the project would run from

Gurney to Decatur streets. The arches would be installed 150 feet apart, Boecker said, with eight light fixtures on either side of the arches.

To identify donors for the arches, instead of a plaque, a metal disk would be placed in the pavement illuminated with a light, Boecker said.

The Fund for Cape May principal officer Curtis Bashaw said the nonprofit organization was started initially to support the rebuilding of Rotary Park, donating about \$475,000 to support the bandstand, light posts and benches.

The organization donated almost \$200,000 for the creation of Soldiers and Sailors Park.

The organization raised \$150,000 through a fundraiser in August to pay for the first six arches, Bashaw said. He said the organization's board of directors would sign an agreement with the city as a commitment.

City solicitor Chris Gillin-Schwartz said the agreement states the Fund for Cape May would create six arches and fund everything above ground.

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Unruly youths issue tops list, legislators say

Simonsen, McClellan hope to give power back to police

By DAVID NAHAN
Cape May Star and Wave

OCEAN CITY — The First Legislative District's assemblymen — Ocean City's Antwan McClellan and Lower Township's Erik Simonsen — said a prime focus in the upcoming year would be bringing some common sense to police enforcement of unruly teens. McClellan and Simonsen, during a break in the action of a recent basketball tournament where they were watching their hometown teams — the Ocean City Red Raiders and Lower Cape May Regional High School's Caper Tigers — pull out victories early in the season, talked about an issue that became pressing over the past two summers and on a few other issues.

After saying he wants to ensure everyone has a happy and healthy 2023, McClellan noted he is looking for legislative solutions to the problems police departments are having with teenagers during the summer. He wants solutions that help police and parents and protect the public.

"That's a big problem with what's going on on our beaches during the summer," McClellan said, referencing issues shore towns up and down the South Jersey coast have faced with large gatherings of teenagers.

The root is changes to laws governing juvenile enforcement that took effect when the state legalized recreational marijuana use. Police departments have found their hands tied when

dealing with teenagers suspected of drinking alcohol, using marijuana and other delinquent behavior.

The new laws also prevent police from searching teens for contraband and even asking for their names or reporting their behavior to their parents.

In November, Sea Isle City Mayor Leonard Desiderio, a member of the Cape May County Board of Commissioners, organized a work session with other mayors, police chiefs and prosecutors to try to find solutions to prevent problems exacerbated during the summer in shore towns. The focus is laws that make it illegal for police to detain or search unruly juveniles suspected of certain illegal behavior, allowing a lawless environment among groups of young people.

The local officials also want to address illegal gatherings such as the one that happened among car enthusiasts in September that saw dangerous events on streets in Wildwood and other communities and ended in the deaths of two people in Wildwood.

The officials, who included McClellan and Assemblywoman Claire Swift of Atlantic County, plan to meet again Jan. 18.

"We're working with our friends and colleagues from Legislative District Two to give the police more power and also be able to report back to parents," McClellan said of Swift, Assemblyman Don Guardian and state Sen. Vince Polistina.

See Legislators, Page A10

LOWER TOWNSHIP YEAR IN REVIEW 2022

COVID limits linger, sports park opens, new tax stream

JANUARY

ERMA — Lower Cape May Regional High School switched to virtual classes for a week beginning Jan. 3 while the elementary school district held virtual classes Jan. 3-15. The Richard M. Teitelman School had ongoing issues with water and staffing shortages resulting from increased COVID cases and child care issues due to elementary school and day care closings.

VILLAS — Kevin Lewis was sworn in as chief of the Lower Township Police Department effective Jan. 1, replacing longtime chief William Priole. He is a 16-year veteran of the LTPD and a member of the Cape May County Regional SWAT team for 11 years.

ERMA — Voters approved a bond referendum Jan. 25 for the Lower Cape May Regional High School District to replace the roof at Richard M. Teitelman Middle School

and install air conditioning in the high school and middle school. Voters were asked to approve an \$8.9 million bond payable over 20 years for a project totaling \$13.9 million.

FEBRUARY

COLD SPRING — Lower Township Council honored Joseph and Anne Salvatore on Feb. 7 for their work in historic preservation. Joseph Salvatore, co-founder and volunteer chairman of Historic Cold Spring Village and the Naval Air Station Wildwood Aviation Museum, had recently been presented with the New Jersey Historical Commission's highest honor, the Richard J. Hughes Award, for his outstanding lifetime achievement in the field of New Jersey history. Anne Salvatore also received the Hughes Award for superior stewardship and lifetime dedication to historical preservation.

VILLAS — Diamond Beach residents should have some added protection for their homes in 2023. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is scheduled to build dunes and berms on the beach from Hereford Inlet to Cape May Inlet to provide storm protection for the Diamond Beach section of Lower Township, North Wildwood, Wildwood and Wildwood Crest. On Feb. 23, spokesman Steve Rochette said the project would significantly reduce storm damages.

MARCH

ERMA — Area schools dropped mask mandates March 7 as per the direction of Gov. Phil Murphy. In a letter to parents, Lower Township Elementary School District Superintendent Jeff Samaniego stated COVID 19 cases were down in both the county and state. District Superintendent Joseph Castellucci said the Board of Education voted

Feb. 24 to rescind the mask mandate as of March 7.

VILLAS — A \$2.7 million renovation of Clem Mulligan Sports Complex was in its final stages when a local resident reported youths had vandalized the site. The complex includes a soccer field, baseball field, hockey rink, basketball courts, playground equipment, shade structure and a multi-use building. Mike Rosenberg told Township Council on March 7 that he saw kids at the field even though it is not open.

COLD SPRING — In a special election March 8, voters authorized the elementary school district to raise funds through the sale of bonds to replace HVAC systems in its four schools. Voters approved the bonding \$36 to 263.

VILLAS — Parcels of land have sat empty for decades off Fulling Mill Road between the runways of the county airport and the Middle Township border, but a pending

zoning change would allow homes to be built there. Lower Township Council introduced an ordinance March 7 to adopt a redevelopment plan for the section of the township and designate it as an "area in need of redevelopment." The change would allow construction of age restricted single-family homes and townhouses in the area that has been zoned industrial but has had no takers for such a use.

APRIL

VILLAS — Lower Township and county officials attended a ceremony April 9 to open the new \$2.7 million Clem Mulligan Sports Complex in the center of Villas. Township Manager Mike Laffey said he was excited to see the park come to fruition with the assistance of funding from the county Open Space

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