



Lower plans upgrades for Douglass Park

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House of the Week

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169th YEAR NO. 49 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 6, 2023 \$1.00

City opens firehouse with grand celebration

\$5 million facility replaces moldy pole barn with inadequate accommodations

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Dozens of firefighters, elected officials and residents gathered at sunset Nov. 29 for the ribbon cutting and grand opening of Fire Station 51.

The \$5.1 million facility replaced a pole barn structure that shook in strong winds and had inadequate sleeping facilities and ventilation. The new building may be the finest firehouse in the history of a city that values its fire department following devastating fires in 1869 and 1878.

Fire Chief Alex Coulter said the fire station represents nine years of hard work, taking seven years to get ground broken for the project.

He said the city administration and residents realized conditions in the old firehouse were deplorable and moved the project forward.

"Isn't it great?" City



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Cape May Fire Department Chief Alex Coulter speaks during the grand opening celebration. At right, the 16,100-square-foot building was designed to fit in with the historic district.

Manager Mike Voll asked as he opened the ceremonies.

In his invocation, Pastor Jeff Elliott of Cape May Lutheran Church said the

building is a symbol of the love and care the Cape May community feels for its first responders.

Mayor Zack Mullock honored former fire chief



Barney Dougherty, who provided a written statement for the event.

"After over 100 long years in the making, finally

the city is about to dedicate a building that is worthy of proudly being called home to Cape May's firefighters," Dougherty stated.

He thanked the hundreds of men and women and their families who through-

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New HPC map expands resort historic district

City's Planning Board now must consider boundaries

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) voted unanimously to adopt a revised map of Cape May's historic district, which includes the Promenade.

At a Nov. 20 meeting, Chairman Warren Coupland said the HPC went through an "exhaustive process of rationalizing the local historic district" in 2019 to the extent of having the state comb through the map for several days.

When the map was presented to the city's Planning Board, it was not approved for reasons that were unclear, he said.

Coupland said some changes have been made to the historic district map. He distributed copies to members of the HPC the commission approved unanimously in 2019.

The map now will be sent back to the Planning Board.

The current historic district map has some anomalies, Coupland said.

"There are literally properties in the middle of the block that are not in the local historic district and the house next door and the house on each side are in the historic district," he said. "For streetscape reasons, that's the whole motive of changing this."

The revised map would

fill in the gaps while the boundaries of the historic district would remain much as they currently exist, Coupland said. The revision fills also brings the Promenade into the district, he said.

"It doesn't really expand the footprint, it just cleans up the footprint, we want to clean that up for streetscape reasons," Coupland said.

He said the Promenade was taken out of the historic district to allow construction of Convention Hall.

City engineer Paul Dietrich produced a different version of the map colorizing the key and contributing properties, but the boundary was not correct.

"I'm sure that a map that's adopted by us is a map that is presumptively going to be considered seriously by the Planning Board," Commissioner Jim Testa said.

Commissioner Corbin Cogswell said the revised map would place buildings on the Promenade in the historic district and the boundary to the mean high-water mark.

It would simplify matters if the historic district map and the National Historic Landmark district map had the same boundaries, Commissioner Pip Campbell said.

In other discussion, Coupland said the HPC developed an ordinance

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Frank Scott/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

West Cape May Christmas Parade

Performers from Jersey Cape Dance & Gymnastics entertain the crowd during the West Cape May Christmas Parade on Dec. 1. At right, Cape Resorts owner Curtis Bashaw and Cape May Mayor Zack Mullock pose with mascot Blue Pig, Charlie Bashaw, Ansel Russo Martinez and Stella Russo Martinez at Congress Hall. Below, the Cape May United Methodist Church float.



DRBA hearing to address ferry fee changes

NORTH CAPE MAY — The Delaware River and Bay Authority (DRBA) is considering rate increases for travel on the Cape May-Lewes Ferry due to inflation balanced with some decreases for family and multi-trip travel.

The DRBA has scheduled a virtual public hearing to discuss the goals and objectives of proposed fare

changes. Among the changes to be considered are fare adjustments to reflect inflationary pressures and selected fare decreases to encourage family and multi-trip travel at the bi-state agency's southern crossing facility.

"We typically introduce a fare change every other year, which is designed to help reduce the operating

subsidy of the ferry, but also to make travel for families and multi-trip passengers more affordable over time," said Heath Gehrke, director of ferry operations. "This year, we are holding a virtual public hearing to get some feedback from our guests as we move to implement some proposed changes — a process we have not used before. We are inter-

ested to hear what the public has to say."

The online public hearing is scheduled for 6:30 p.m. Dec. 6 via Microsoft Teams to inform stakeholders concerning the goals and objectives of a fare proposal at the Cape May-Lewes Ferry.

Visit cmlf.com/2024fare-proposal to register and receive an email link for the public hearing.



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