



House of the week

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Bank Street lot eyed for makeover

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166th YEAR NO. 8 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2020 \$1.00

Safety building panel turns focus to vote

Goals are to get public informed, referendum on ballot in June

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — With City Council at loggerheads over approving a bond to construct a new public safety building to house the fire and police departments, the Public Safety Building Advisory Committee has turned its attention to holding a binding referendum on the question of constructing the building.

At a Feb. 11 meeting, Committee Chairwoman Kate Wyatt said a focus group meeting was held Feb.

8 at Cape May Lutheran Church. Police Lt. John Bobik and Fire Chief Alex Coulter were among the 30 participants, she said.

Wyatt said audience members had questions about the architecture of the proposed building and the streetscape. Information on the architectural design has been included in an information sheet that will be distributed at the next focus group at Village Green, she said.

A binding voter referendum could be held on the question of constructing a public safety building in early

June, she said, if approved by City Council.

Wyatt said when a referendum was held in 2008 on the construction of Convention Hall, an information brochure was mailed to every voter.

On the topic of holding a town hall meeting prior to a voter referendum, Coulter said he was not in favor of such a meeting.

"The name of the game has been delay, delay, delay, and this is another delay," he said.

City tax assessor Lou Belasco said a lot of positive comments could oc-

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—Rose Traficante, co-chair, Public Safety Building Advisory Committee

cur at a town hall meeting. Wyatt suggested bringing in USA Architects to describe the build-

ing at a town hall meeting. She suggested having an independent moderator for the meeting such as the League of Women Voters, which would also provide timekeepers.

"By and large, most people truly understand this is in support of firemen, policemen and EMS," committee co-chair Rose Traficante said, adding that the new building would be a solution to many problems.

Police Chief Tony Marino said if a referendum were approved, a town

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Group says Sheehan's statement misleading

Sends councilwoman letter about attempt to save Sewell Tract

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Following a negative vote by Councilwoman Stacy Sheehan at a City Council meeting Feb. 4 for the city to provide funding to Concerned Citizens for Sewell Tract Preservation, the group's board of trustees sent a letter to her expressing its dismay and attempting to clear up some points.

It stated: "Unfortunately, we were further distressed to read from reports of last week's City Council meeting that you were quoted by the local media as saying the following: 'Sheehan said she was against all development of the Sewell Tract, but she was concerned the city should not be providing funding to a private organization.'"

The letter noted Sheehan said the city should be handling the case itself.

It also states Sheehan said during the meeting she believed residents were not aware of how the lawsuit was structured. At the meeting, she said it was the state Department of Environmental Protection v. East Cape May Associates (ECMA) and Concerned Citizens. She said Concerned Citizens was "on the side of the developers."

"It seems most unfortunate to us that, after all the time Concerned Citizens has spent as plaintiff intervenor in the litigation and all the information we have provided, among other things, to council members and your city solicitor, that you should fail to recognize why Concerned Citizens is in the litigation, what its position is and, perhaps even worse, misrepresent that position in public," the letter stated.

The letter to Sheehan offers a few explanations and corrections:

"1. The reason Concerned Citizens became a plaintiff-intervenor in the Sewell Tract litigation in 2014 is because, despite our comments

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Deborah McGuire/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

A lion in winter

Lex, an African lion, had many visitors at the Cape May County Zoo over Presidents Day weekend.

Book takes a new look at murders on parkway

By ERIC AVEDESIAN
Sentinel staff

OCEAN CITY — Christian Barth remembered the first time he heard about the two coeds found murdered in the woods along the Garden State Parkway.

He was vacationing with his parents at the Jersey shore when they drove past mile marker 31.9 of the parkway.

"Did they ever find out who killed those girls?" his mother asked his father.

For Barth, an attorney originally from Cherry Hill and who currently resides in Connecticut, that small question opened up an interest in a cold case and led him to write a book about it.

"It stuck in my mind and I was fascinated by that," Barth said.

In 1993, he read a Philadelphia Inquirer article by columnist Larry Lewis about Ted Bundy's confession to a prison psychologist that he murdered the two young women.

"That's what started me into doing an investigation into it," Barth said.

Barth's book, "The Garden State Parkway Murders: A Cold Case Mystery" published by WildBlue Press, tells the story about the 1969 murders that made national news.

Susan Davis of Camp Hill, Pa., and Elizabeth Perry of Excelsior, Minn., both 19-year-old students at Monticello Junior College in Godfrey, Ill., visited Ocean City on Memorial Day weekend in 1969.

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Rehoboth shares Cape May's parking problems

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Our fair city is not the only shore town that has parking problems.

Across the bay and down the coastal road of Route 1, Rehoboth, Del., has meters, parking permits and a busy downtown with limited parking available.

Krys Johnson, communications coordinator for Rehoboth Beach, said perception plays a big part in the town's parking problems.

"When people come into town, they want to park where they

are going, right in front of it," she said.

Johnson said Rehoboth Beach has substantial parking available but that visitors may not know where it is located. For 2020, the city has a wayfinding program using signage to direct drivers to additional parking areas, Johnson said.

One year ago, a parking garage task force recommended to City Commission the construction of a 300-space parking garage next to Rehoboth Beach City Hall. The project would have included the city, Colonial Parking and the EDis Co.

The committee called it a mo-

bility center since it would have also served scooters, bikes and Uber. Construction cost of the parking garage was \$10 million, with Rehoboth Beach leasing the land to Colonial Parking and EDis, which would design, fund, build and manage the structure. Income from the garage would be shared with the city and the other two entities.

Johnson said a public parking lot with meters is located next to the Rehoboth Beach Convention Center that was constructed with a new city hall three years ago. She said the hot-button topics on the parking garage include "Is it needed? Who will

use it? Who will pay for it?"

"It just doesn't have the traction to move forward," she said.

"The parking garage task force has no meetings planned for the future," Johnson said. "There has never been a cohesive push to get to the next step for the garage."

She said last year, city commissioners voted to increase parking meter fees in certain areas of downtown and the ocean block. Meters went from \$2 per hour to \$3 per hour with a three-hour limit.

Johnson said the city took

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