



House of the week

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Lower marks anniversary of officer's death

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165th YEAR NO. 8 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2019 \$1.00

Cape May Point's oldest home, built in 1820, to be demolished

Borough powerless to prevent it without preservation commission

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY POINT — The owners of the borough's oldest home, built in 1820, are about to have it demolished.

Unlike its neighbors Cape May and West Cape May, Cape May Point does not have a historic preservation commission and is powerless to prevent historic homes from being torn down.

The federal-style home at 310 Cape May Ave. was part of the Underground Railroad, according to former owner Sherry Theobald Edwards, who grew up in the home and now resides in Winnipeg, Manitoba Canada. She expressed sadness at the thought of the home's demise.

Edwards said her family had a verbal agreement when it sold the home that new owners would not tear it down. The Star and Wave was unsuccessful in contacting the current owners of the home, who reside in Potomac, Md.

Edwards said the house has hand-hewn beams and half-round floorboards.

The house has survived many storms and many movings, Edwards said. She said the late Carl Dickenson, of the Cape May County Historical Society, had researched details about the house be-



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

The federal-style house at 310 Cape May Ave., which was built in 1820 and moved several times over the years, was part of the Underground Railroad, according to former owner Sherry Theobald Edwards, who grew up in the home.

ing moved from West Cape May to Cape May Point to Crystal Avenue and then to Wright's Meadow after a fire in the Wrights' home at 310 Cape Ave.

She said she learned of the planned demolition when a contractor sent letters to nearby homeowners. "I received notice three

days ago when my brother heard of it," she said. "He is still the pastor of the Union Chapel at the Point."

She said her father, the Rev. Donald Theobald, was the Coast Guard base chaplain during the 1950s and pastor of Cape May Presbyterian Church for a time. The Theobald family has

been involved in the history of the Point, including the bicycle parade, which for 50 years terminated with a lawn party at the house.

She said the home was never placed on the National Register of Historic Places. Edwards said as

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Board reveals Lafayette park plans to public

Phases 2-4 expected to cost \$4.8 million in grants, loans

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Conceptual plans for phases two through four for Lafayette Street Park are nearly complete.

The city's Lafayette Street Park Advisory Committee held an open forum Feb. 13 in the City Hall auditorium updating a small audience on the status of the project. Committee Chairman Mike Jones said Phase I of the park, completed in 2016, was funded by Economic Development Authority grants totaling \$1.5 million. He said the entire grant was spent for Phase I, which included a playground area, a picnic area and a lighted soccer field.

A change in the Phase II concept design included realigning the baseball diamond, which was reoriented for better use of the southeasterly portion of the tract.

"Considering the amount of use of the baseball diamond, the multipurpose field was considered to be the best option," he said.

Conversion of the multipurpose field into a baseball/softball field will be accomplished using portable

outfield fencing, Jones said. The distance for fences for softball would be 290 feet, he said.

"It's very easy to take down a soccer goal, move it, put up portable fencing and then you've got a baseball diamond," Jones said.

The Dellas family name will continue to be associated with the baseball diamond, he said.

Jones said major highlights of Phase II and III include a U-shaped parking lot that will accommodate 80 unmetered spaces and two bocce ball courts fronting on Lafayette Street. Two tennis courts were originally planned but the committee has decided to have one tennis court and two pickleball courts.

"There's an extensive plaza area with benches and proposed centrally located water fountain feature," he said. "There is a proposed dog park area with separate areas for large and small dogs."

A pavilion will overlook the grassy field, Jones said. A bike path is proposed from the existing playground area through the site

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Point awards contract for Lake Lily project

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY POINT — Borough Commission awarded a \$353,000 contract to Harold Arenberg Inc. to repair a bulkhead and perform other work on the south end of Lake Lily.

During a work session Feb. 12, Commissioner Robert Mullock said the

first round of bids for the project came in at \$847,000 to \$1.4 million, which in some cases was more than triple a grant received by the borough. He said the commission was committed to getting the cost close to what was budgeted for the project. All earlier bids were rejected and the project was redesigned, Mullock said.

He said the project was also broken into three parts, which include constructing a new bulkhead, landscaping the banks, and concrete work and pathways. Mullock said the project also includes replacing a manhole, a critical piece of infrastructure that is deteriorating.

More bidders were encouraged to participate,

he said. In the first round, bids were received from only three firms, Mullock said. The winning bid for the bulkhead and cleaning out the lake came in at \$353,000, he said. Mullock said the range of bids was from \$353,000 to \$675,000 from nine bidders.

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CMBO to hold new Spring Watch bird count in March

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY POINT — The Board of Commissioners has endorsed a new bird migration project for the Cape May Bird Observatory (CMBO) to be known as Spring Watch at the Coral Avenue dune crossing, a favorite spot for birdwatchers.

During a Borough Commission work session Feb. 12, CMBO Program Director Brett Ewald said the observatory has run a Hawk Watch at Cape May Point State Park for 44 years.

"We're starting to see the benefits of that long-term

study," Ewald said. "You can do these counts for two or three years, the data doesn't mean so much."

"You start doing it for 30 to 40 years, you can start looking at population trends and where climate is playing a role," he continued. "It's the long-term goal that really has the best benefit."

Ewald said Cape May Point is world renowned for birdwatching. In 1990, the CMBO started a monarch butterfly monitoring program, the longest running study of its kind anywhere in the world, he said.

"At least 80 monarchs that have been tagged here in Cape May Point have

been recovered in Mexico," Ewald said.

He said Cape May Point is a crossroads of bird migration unlike any other location on the East Coast. Scoters and other seabirds feed in Delaware Bay along with those heading north to breeding grounds. Songbirds, raptors and other birds following a direct northward path land in the Point after crossing the bay, Ewald said.

Unlike other counts, which are focused on certain groups of birds, Spring Watch will encompass "everything," he said.

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The Coral Avenue dune crossing will be ground zero for the Spring Watch throughout March.

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