



**LCMRHS
sports
coverage**

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**House
of the
week**

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167th YEAR NO. 8 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2021 \$1.00



Werner Tedesco/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

Guess who's back

A snowy owl has returned to Cape May County but its exact location is not being disclosed to protect the bird. Above, the owl in flight during last week's snowstorm.

Raising valuable properties

Cape May OKs new standards for elevating historic homes

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — In a National Historic Landmark City, elevating a historic home to avoid flood damage and to lower flood insurance rates can present a challenge.

Cape May's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) and City Council are addressing the issue with new standards for raising the height of historic structures.

At a Feb. 16 virtual council meeting, council approved new standards for flood adaption for homes in

the historic district. The enabling ordinance states it is anticipated in future years the flooding exposure of Cape May will be increased as climate change contributes to intensified hurricanes, severe rainstorms, and high tides.

It notes elevating a building can significantly impact the historical character of individual properties and the surrounding streetscape and elevating an historic building would not normally be appropriate to use in a rehabilitation project in Cape May.

"However, Cape May City, with advices from

the Historic Preservation Commission has concluded the best policy for long term preservation of historic structures is to support property owners who wish to elevate their properties to mitigate flood exposure," it states.

The ordinance states the selected treatment for flood mitigation should always be one that minimizes the changes to the building's historic character and appearance. A structure should only be raised to the minimum necessary to meet the applicable flood standard and should not merely be raised to accommodate

parking or to achieve any particular clearance on the interior of the structure, it states.

Standards in the ordinance:

— Applicants must provide an elevation certificate from a licensed surveyor.

— Landscape design plans must be submitted to mitigate the transition in height. Berms or planter walls not to exceed 30 inches are encouraged.

— Existing foundation design elements are to be used as a visual reference and are to be repeated and

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City students will get more in-class hours

Day to begin at 8:30 a.m.

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Cape May City Elementary School will expand its in-person instruction time after the county Department of Health downgraded its risk of COVID-19 infection from high to moderate.

During a virtual Board of Education meeting Feb. 18, Principal Zack Palombo said as a result, school will open earlier at 8:30 a.m. beginning March 1.

"We'll still have the early dismissal, but we are currently looking at the next stage, which would be evaluating an even longer day and maybe even go to the full day," he said, adding that he has discussed the idea with some of the staff.

Palombo said the option remains for students to continue using remote instruction from home.

Space continues to be limited in the school to maintain a distance of 6 feet, Palombo said, adding that most of the school's teachers have received their first dose of COVID-19 vaccination.

Palombo said the school continues to require a two-week quarantine for students who have been exposed to a person with

COVID-19 or have traveled out of state. Lunch continues to be served in a "grab and go" format.

Superintendent Robert Garguilo said it is important to return students to classroom instruction. He said a children's hospital in San Francisco, where all learning is remote, has seen a 66 percent increase in the number of suicidal children in the emergency room.

He said the social/emotional aspect of learning is very critical.

The board of education voted against two requests for use of school facilities by outside groups. The swim team from Lower Cape May Regional High School requested use of Cape May City Elementary School's indoor pool and the American Red Cross requested use of the cafeteria for a blood drive.

Board member Anita DeSatinick said she wished the school could let the high school swim team use the pool but her first responsibility is to the children and staff of the elementary school.

Board of Education President Dawn Austin said she spoke with the school's contracted doctor

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City proposes 1-cent tax rate increase in '21

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city's proposed 2021 municipal budget features a 1-cent increase in the local purpose tax rate, equating to 2.48 percent.

The tax rate would increase to 37.2 cents per \$100 of assessed value of a property, up from 36.3 cents last year.

The amount to be raised by local purpose tax is \$10.8 million. Salaries and wages are up 4.17 percent.

At a Feb. 16 virtual City Council meeting, City Manager Mike Voll said the budget totals \$32.1 million. He said the current fund budget totals \$21 million, the Water-Sewer Utility totals \$7.2 million, the Beach Utility totals \$2.8 million and the Tourism Utility totals \$1.1 million.

Voll said the Tourism Utility Budget was substantially reduced due to the COVID-19 pandemic

and many events cancelled in 2020. He said tourism revenues for 2021 were an unknown.

He said his office was evaluating trash and recycling pickup for the city with a goal of a cost savings and keeping the city cleaner. Voll said the city was also considering contracting with a landscaping contractor to maintain city-owned properties with a projected cost of \$81,400.

Areas of the Promenade need upgrading and some widening, he said. Voll said he was working with the Coast Guard to transfer landscaping responsibilities to them for their entrance on Pennsylvania Avenue.

Chief Financial Officer Neil Young said the current fund budget was similar to 2020. The Beach Utility is increasing less than 2 percent due to an increase in the minimum

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Wind farm's benefits to blow across region

Small-business grants available

By CRAIG D. SCHENCK
Sentinel staff

Funding is available for small businesses in southern New Jersey to get in on the ocean floor of the wind-energy industry.

A group of business leaders gathered online Wednesday, Feb. 17, with representatives of Ørsted and the Pro-NJ Grantor Trust to learn about the funding and how local entrepreneurs can take advantage of the program.

In 2019, the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities approved a project by Danish wind-energy giant Ørsted

to build the first utility-scale offshore wind farm off the coast of southern New Jersey.

Dubbed Ocean Wind, the project will include hundreds of turbines 15 miles offshore generating 1,100 MW able to power 3.2 million homes by 2035. The farm is expected to be fully operational by 2024.

Ørsted established the Pro-NJ Grantor Trust — a \$15 million fund aimed at ensuring that the state's offshore wind industry is developed in a sustainable and inclusive way — through

See Benefits, Page A3

COVID numbers falling, still above level from fall

By DAVID NAHAN
Cape May Star and Wave

New cases of COVID-19 continue to decline off the peak in Cape May County during January but still remain well above the levels from last fall.

As of Sunday, Feb. 21, the number of active cases had dropped to just over 300 countywide, compared to more than 600 just a few weeks ago, but still much higher than the fall when there were less than a hundred active cases at a time.

There were 312 active cases in the county on Sunday, with the most — 75 each — in Lower Township and Middle Township, 50 in Upper Town-

ship and 37 in Ocean City.

Other active cases included Wildwood (19), Woodbine and North Wildwood (12 each), Dennis Township (11), Cape May and Wildwood Crest (6 each), Sea Isle City (5), West Cape May (2) and Stone Harbor and West Wildwood (1 each).

There are no active cases in Cape May Point and Avalon.

There were three non-resident active cases in Cape May and eight in long-term care, including four in Woodbine, three in Middle Township and one in Ocean City.

There were 29 cases reported Sunday, with highs

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Free Lung Cancer Screening • Saturday, February 27

Shore Medical Center, a proud member of the Penn Cancer Network, Advanced Shore Imaging Associates, and ScreenNJ are hosting a

LUNG CANCER SCREENING EVENT • Saturday, February 27 • 9 am - 12 noon • Shore Cancer Center

Consultations provided by Dr. Charles Roche of Shore Physicians Group.

IF YOU ARE: 55 to 80 years of age; and a current smoker or have quit smoking in the past 15 year a Low Dose CT screening may be right for you.

Call for more information and/or schedule an appointment at 609-653-3484.

Lung cancer is the number one cause of cancer deaths. Low Dose CT screenings can detect lung cancer early when it is the most treatable. Early detection saves lives. Call today.

