



Three Caper Tiger wrestlers make state tournament

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House of the week

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168th YEAR NO. 9

CAPE MAY, N.J.

Serving America's National Historic Landmark City

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 2022 \$1.00



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

The Prince Edward Inn at 38 Jackson St. in Cape May now may move forward with an asphalt roof.

Zoners reverse HPC's decision on roof of inn

Owner can use asphalt over cedar shake as initially OK'd

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

capricious, unreasonable or contrary to law.

CAPE MAY — In a unanimous vote, the city's Zoning Board reversed a decision by the Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) requiring a cedar shake roof on an inn on Jackson Street.

Attorney Tony Monzo, representing Prince Edward Inn owner Renee Quinn, argued the HPC approved asphalt roof materials in 2019 and later decided the application needed to be reheard. He said it was a legal issue whether the HPC had the right to revoke a prior decision two years later.

The HPC approved the Prince Edward Inn, a contributing building to the historic district at 38 Jackson St., for an asphalt shingle roof in 2019 but when installation started, evidence of a former cedar shake roof was uncovered. The owners were told to stop construction and return to the HPC.

Monzo said HPC's first decision should stand with the decision of the second HPC hearing having no bearing on what was previously approved. Quinn said that when he purchased the inn in 1998, it had an asphalt shingle roof that had been installed in the 1980s.

On July 19, 2021, HPC Chairman Warren Coupland said when a historic element is uncovered during renovation, city and national standards require the applicant must return to the HPC.

The HPC recognized during the 2019 hearing that at some point the inn had a wood roof since it was built in the 1800s, Monzo said, noting asphalt shingle roofs did not exist at the time.

During the recent meeting Feb. 24, solicitor Richard King told board members they could overturn an HPC decision only if they found a determination was arbitrary,

He said Quinn made it clear that she did not have the

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No tax increase expected for city municipal budget

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

Voll said.

CAPE MAY — City Manager Mike Voll presented his annual budget message to Cape May City Council, announcing this year's spending plan will not require a tax increase.

He said the city budget is increasing by 4 percent, which can be covered by the current revenue stream. The city generated about \$1.5 million in surplus last year, according to Voll.

During a special City Council meeting Feb. 22, Voll said the overall municipal budget totals \$33.2 million. It consists of the current fund, water/sewer utility, beach utility and the tourism utility.

"If everything stays the same and we add these new expenses, we're still looking at adding \$850,000 to surplus again in 2022," he said.

The current fund budget totals \$21.7 million, the water/sewer utility budget totals \$7.3 million, the beach utility budget totals \$3 million and the tourism utility totals \$1.1 million,

With a higher occupancy tax and a new transient accommodation tax, the city is expecting to bring in \$1.5 million to \$2 million in surplus in 2022, Voll said.

"The city officials along with our staff are very aware of the economic and fiscal challenges that face

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'Disaster of major proportions'



Greater Cape May Historical Society

The nor'easter of March 6-7, 1962, destroyed Cape May Convention Hall, above, as well as caused the death of 22 people. It was 60 years ago this week.

Winter storm of '62 wreaked havoc 60 years ago

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Sixty years ago this week, the nor'easter of 1962 wreaked unparalleled havoc on Cape May County, killing 22 people, destroying the city's boardwalk and damaging thousands of homes at the shore.

'The recurrence of the attack of high waves at tidal stages above normal literally leveled some communities.'

-U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Philadelphia District, issued a report in December 1962 on the damage inflicted by the coastal storm March 6-7. It surveyed damage in an area from Manasquan Inlet to Fenwick Island, Del., and the Delaware Bay shores of both states.

residents isolated in flood-encircled homes without power, gas, sanitary facilities or potable water," the report states.

"Based on their long-standing familiarity with the sea and storms, permanent residents of some coastal communities contend that the severity of the 6-7 March storm far exceeded that of any storm in living or recorded memory," the report states.

It notes the majority of deaths attributable to the storm occurred during evacuation attempts.

Total estimated damage on all affected coastal communities was \$125 million, with 48,562 homes suffering flood damage and 6,015 structural damage. More than 2,166 businesses along the coast were damaged. Loss of life from the storm totaled 22 persons.

"The third high tide on the morning of 7 March, generally overwhelmed the entire district coast," according to the report. "Coastal protection structures, man-made or natural, if still intact, were in a seriously weakened condition at that point, and the recurrence of the attack of high waves at tidal stages above normal literally leveled some communities."

The Army Corps called the 1962 "a disaster of major proportions."

At about that time, 45 fires were reported burning simultaneously between Ocean City and Cape May. The report notes every branch of the armed services assisted with the evacuation work. Trucks, buses, amphibious vehicles, boats and helicopters were utilized to remove residents.

Residents were caught off guard after the second high tide March 6. Many felt the danger had passed by both the relative calm that attended the recession of flood waters and decreasing amount of flood damage at each low tide.

According to the report, by the morning of March 8, some communities along the coast were virtually devoid of inhabitants.

"As a result, high tide on the morning of 7 March found many

The nor'easter was classified by the Weather Bureau as an "unusu-

ally severe extratropical cyclone."

"Waves in the surf zone at scattered locations on the New Jersey and Delaware coasts may have attained heights estimated between 20 and 30 feet," states the report. "A wave recorder on Steel Pier in Atlantic City indicated a maximum wave height for this location of about 15 feet in water offshore, but proximate to the surf zone. The record is incomplete because the sensing element was destroyed in the storm."

The maximum increase in ocean tidal surge due to the storm was 3.8 feet. The maximum velocity of wind recorded in Atlantic City was 44 mph with gusts to 58 mph. Precipitation consisted of mixed sleet and rain totaling 2.2 inches in Atlantic City.

"Although it is difficult to determine the specific start and cessation of storm activity, it is generally agreed that the duration of the storm was about 60 hours, and encompassed sufficient time for four complete tidal cycles," the report notes.

Cape May hammered

A description of damage from Cold Spring Inlet to the Delaware Bay entrance to the Cape May Canal estimated damage at \$4.2 million with \$1.7 million attributable to wave action. The number of flooded homes totaled 1,505. The oceanfront of Cape May suffered the most severe damage.

"High waves lifted the boardwalk decking from its supports and car-

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Lower Twp. schools to hold bond referendum

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

COLD SPRING — The Lower Township Elementary School District will hold a voter referendum March 8, giving voters a chance to decide whether to authorize the district to raise funds through the sale of bonds to replace HVAC systems in its four elementary schools.

School, the Carl Mitnick School, Sandman Consolidated School and Maud Abrams School, as well as exhaust fans, electrical breaker panels and patching and painting ceilings and soffits.

Cost estimates are \$2.4 million for the Memorial School, \$4.2 million for the Mitnick School, \$4.5 million for Maud Abrams School and \$4.3 million for the Sandman School for a total of \$15.6 million. The state would pay 40 percent, or \$6.2 million.

The local share is \$9.3 million of a \$20 million project, according to Lower Township School District Superintendent Jeff Samaniego.

The district's financial advisers have made a preliminary analysis of the costs of the bonds, minus the debt service aid, and ESSER (Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief) money; over 20 years. The tax impact on an average-assessed

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