



## Moving employee parking would open some prime spaces

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## House of the week

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169th YEAR NO. 12 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22, 2023 \$1.00

## Lower to repair access paths for private beaches

### Cape May Beach association owns land; public permitted

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

TOWN BANK — Lower Township officials indicated they are willing to make improvements to access paths at privately owned beaches.

The township has made improvements to a number of access paths in Villas and North Cape May, installing railings and steps where needed, but the missing piece of the puzzle is the 13 beaches owned by the Property Owners Association of Cape May Beach. The beaches are in private ownership but open for anyone to use.

During a Township Council meeting March 7, Township Manager Mike Laffey said he met with members of the homeowners association on two or three occasions to discuss how to address access on its beaches. He said it requires an easement to undertake such work.

Laffey said the township must first survey the paths to identify the necessary easements. He noted the surrounding beaches are owned by the township.

"That was probably part of the hold up; we do not own those beaches," Laffey said. "You guys do,

we believe collectively they should all be safe accesses."

He said the easements would be the pathways at the end of the streets.

"A timeline is kind of tough because there's at least five of them that require pile driving, steps, ramps and things like that because of the vertical drop there in Town Bank specifically," Laffey said.

A couple of paths in North Cape May are highly eroded and will require steps and platforms, he said, something that has been done at other places in the township.

Laffey said the township sent a blueprint to the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) identifying materials that would be used, the steps, platforms and the width of each street.

He said the paths are limited to 6 feet wide, although two or three paths would be 10 feet wide to offer access for emergency vehicles.

Some of the paths may veer off to the south at the bottom of the steps to try to prevent sand buildup, Laffey said. He said receiving bids for pile driving could slow down the process.

A meeting will be set

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## Planners approve offsite affordable housing units

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — A real estate developer gained permission to provide the affordable housing required for construction of a subdivision at an alternate location.

The Cape May Planning Board approved an application to provide the two units required for a 13-lot subdivision off Pittsburgh Avenue, known as Cape May Cove, in a house on Lafayette Street.

The approval was an amendment to a condition placed on prior approvals based on a change in the law. A developer has the discretion of placing affordable housing units on or offsite.

The applicant, Thomas DiDonato, was represented by attorney Chris Baylinson. The subdivision is under construction on former government-owned land. The issue dates back to 2010 and included a decade of litigation and a preliminary subdivision approval in 2018.

Baylinson said it is a requirement under Cape May's fair share housing ordinance that subdivisions must include low- and moderate-income units when five or more are built.

Under the preliminary approval, the Planning Board required two affordable housing units be provided on site. Ten months later, the Planning Board adopted a new fair share housing ordinance that allowed for the units to be provided offsite, Baylinson said.

"We made an application a year or so ago to come here and ask the board if we could put them offsite into a building on Lafayette Street, which was a one-bedroom and two-bedroom apartment," he said. "The board was resistant to that. We withdrew and we're back here tonight."

Baylinson said the building on Lafayette Street is "nicer and better" now with a two-bedroom and a three-bedroom apartment. He said the ordinance does not

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## Van Drew: Wind farm proposal government, industry collusion

### Environment, fishing and tourism officials expect adverse effects

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

WILDWOOD — Billed as a "hearing on offshore wind industrialization along the East Coast," an event March 16 at the Wildwoods Convention Center included Congress members from two states, environmental organizations and representatives of the commercial fishing industry speaking out against wind farm projects planned off the coast.

U.S. Rep. Van Drew (R-2nd) called it the launch of a congressional investigation into offshore wind aimed at developing a comprehensive legislative solution for what he characterized as the disruptive effects of offshore wind.



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Cindy Zipf, executive director of Clean Ocean Action, speaks during a congressional hearing March 16 at the Wildwoods Convention Center.

"If offshore wind industrialization moves forward, it will be the most profound transformation of the Atlantic coast in the history of the United States of America," said

Van Drew, who long represented the region as a Democrat in local, county and state offices.

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## O.C. meeting: Hit pause button

### County, city host session laying out information on legal issues, expected effects of Ocean Wind

By DAVID NAHAN  
Cape May Star and Wave

OCEAN CITY — The moderators took pains to stress they were not against wind and other renewable sources of energy, but they made it clear they wanted a delay, at minimum, in the Ocean Wind 1 project slated to place as many as 98 massive wind turbines 15 miles off the coast and run transmission cables through the island to connect to the power grid in Upper Township.

At the information session Wednesday evening, hundreds of audience members nearly filled the Ocean City Tabernacle auditorium, overwhelmingly and audibly against Ocean Wind 1, a project by Danish company Ørsted projected to be operational in 2024.

Ocean Wind 1 is one of multiple offshore wind

projects stretching from New England to North Carolina. Ocean Wind 2 and Atlantic Shores are others planned directly off the coast of Cape May and Atlantic counties, with some turbines proposed closer than 15 miles.

The session was hosted by Leonard Desiderio, director of the Cape May County Board of Commissioners, and Ocean City Mayor Jay Gillian.

Michael Donohue, a lawyer and former Superior Court judge who represents the county on wind farm issues, provided an update of what is happening with the project, the negative effects they believe it will have on the economy and where the city and county are in litigation dealing with the New Jersey Board of Public Utilities.

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David Nahan/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Rich Baehrle speaks out against the Ocean Wind 1 project at the March 15 hearing at the Ocean City Tabernacle.

## Opponents stand up to criticize proposal

By DAVID NAHAN  
Cape May Star and Wave

OCEAN CITY — The opinions of the few dozen people who lined up to comment on Ocean Wind 1 Wednesday evening, March 15, at the Ocean City Tabernacle, were nearly unanimous: stop the wind turbine project off the coast of Cape May and Atlantic counties.

The first half of the information session hosted by Leonard Desiderio, director of the Cape May County Board of Commissioners, and Ocean City Mayor Jay Gillian was a presentation on

the status of the project, ongoing legal wrangling and what local officials believe will be the detrimental effect of having 98 massive wind turbines situated 15 miles off the coast with transmission lines running through Ocean City on their way to connect to the power grid in Upper Township. (See related story.)

That part of the session was to present facts, Desiderio and Gillian emphasized.

The second half was the chance for audience members to share their

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David Nahan/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Michael Donohue, special counsel to Cape May County on wind farm issues, moderates an information session March 15 at the Ocean City Tabernacle hosted by Cape May County and Ocean City.



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