

Cape May Star and Wave



House of the week

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Lower gets funds to study Foster House

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165th YEAR NO. 17 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24, 2019 \$1.00

Committee, design firm begin talks on specifics

Architect says public safety building will fit on firehouse site

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — A committee including the police and fire chiefs, city manager, deputy manager and a councilman met last week with three staff members of USA Architects, selected to design a new public safety building.

Councilman Shaine Meier said much of the meeting was discussing a needs assessment for the building, "room to room."

He said items were discussed such as the number of personnel in the fire and police departments, number of bunks for firefighters and the size of administrative offices.

"Every aspect of what goes into a firehouse or a police station was discussed," Meier said.

City Manager Neil Young said a representative of USA Architects would attend the next meeting of the Public Safety Building Advisory Committee, which is open to the public.

"They made it very clear that a combined public safety building can fit in this location," Meier said, speaking of the current location of the city's firehouse.

He said USA Architects is committed to working with the public and creating a building that fits in a city that is a National Historic Landmark. The architectural staff photographed buildings throughout Cape May fol-

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Safety building advisory board vice chair quits

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Noting that the Public Safety Building Advisory Committee has finished its job, vice chairman Barney Dougherty resigned from the committee April 16.

"I'm going to enjoy life; I'm 87 years old," he said.

Dougherty served as chief of Cape May's Volunteer Fire Department for more than 25 years.

In a 3-2 vote April 2, City Council appointed Kathleen Wyatt as chairwoman of the Public Safety Building Advisory Committee, necessitated by the death of former chairman Jerry Gaffney in December. Dougherty had been serving as acting chair since that time.

Council members Stacy Sheehan and Zack Mullock voted against the enabling resolution, stating they had not been included in the decision process.

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Deborah McGuire/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

Cape May held its annual Easter Fashion Stroll on Sunday, April 21, at Rotary Park. Above, Katelen Zhelyazkova, 15 months, and her mother, Macy, meet the Easter Bunny. At top, girls line up for judging in the 4 to 6 year old category. Below right are the 4 to 6 year old boys. Below left is Isabela Henery, 4. At bottom is the Brockman family of Rio Grande.



Meter rates doubled at mall to ease city parking

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — In a 3-2 vote, City Council approved raising parking meter fees from \$1 per hour to \$2 per hour around the Washington Street Mall. An initial proposal would have also raised meter rates along Beach Avenue, Stockton, Gurney, Windsor, Howard avenues, Jefferson Street and Broadway.

At an April 16 meeting, council members Zack Mullock and Stacy Sheehan voted against the ordinance.

The concept of the plan, known as performance pricing, is to encourage drivers to park at less expensive meters away from the mall, making more spaces available in the center of town. The city is in the process of receiving bids for a new shuttle service that would ferry passengers at no charge throughout the city.

Members of the public spoke for more than an hour, largely criticizing the proposal. Chris Cook, owner of Across the Way on the Washington Street Mall, said raising the meter rates would be detrimental to the city and seem unwelcoming to visitors.

Cook said the rate hike could cause residents of neighboring communities to shop in other towns.

"Even though the dollar amount, a dollar to \$2 is not very substantial, it's still going to create animosity from our visitors. They're going to have a negative first impression when they come back to visit us, which may discourage future visits," he said.

Bonnie Cassells, co-chairwoman of the Parking Advisory Committee, said the committee undertook much research before coming up with its recommendations presented to City Council last November. She said the owner of parking facilities in Philadelphia advised the committee it would cost about \$30,000 per parking space to construct a parking garage in Cape May.

"The parking rates that you would have to charge to even support that parking garage would be way above what we are asking today," Cassells said.

She noted it costs \$4 an hour to park in the Acme lot.

"It's the most expensive place to park in the city of Cape May but you can always find a parking place there because of that," she said.

Part of the ordinance promotes a parking zone on Beach Avenue, east of Philadelphia Avenue, where parking will be free after 5:30 p.m. She said the city is hoping to provide free shuttle transportation around town.

Parking Committee member Jim Testa said the city is trying to reallocate parking spaces that are overfilled and balance them with spaces that are used less. He said the committee believes the \$2-per-hour parking fee is a workable number.

Testa said the committee believed its responsibility was to look overall at what is best for everyone in town, not what is best just for merchants but what is best for residents and visitors and what promotes business.

"If we don't do something, it's just going to get worse," he said.

Mall business owner Zach Ruffo said he was seeking repeat customers.

"I don't think we should give people a reason to go somewhere else," he said.

Ruffo said visitors could shop in other towns where parking meter rates are less expensive.

Ryan Platzer, owner of a mall shop, said clear

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