



Boyle, Gibson reach 100-goal milestone

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House of the week

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168th YEAR NO. 18 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, MAY 11, 2022 \$1.00

Council questions addition on AME Church

Purpose of building topic of debate after ELTC proposes exterior changes

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council approved a \$94,000 professional services contract with Mills and Schnoering Architects for preparation of a preservation plan and concept design study for the city-owned Allen AME Church property.

During a City Council meeting May 3, Warren Coupland, chairman of the city's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC), and

two council members questioned whether East Lynne Theater Company (ELTC), which wishes to lease the church for 10 years, wants an addition built on the back of the building.

Deputy Mayor Stacy Sheehan said one of the concept designs for restoration of the church includes building an addition, which she said would harm its historic value.

Mayor Zack Mullock disagreed, saying the idea behind restoring the church is to save

it from demolition and create a community gathering place.

Coupland said the church probably was built in 1891 and is an important historic building because of its simplicity.

"This was during the period of significance when everything was Victoriana," he said. "This building was very plain in design and reflects the rather modest financial situation of the church members."

The church was built in stages, with its bell tower added in a

later stage. In the late 1920s, the addition of a pipe organ required a "bump out" to the back of the building.

The nearly 100-year-old organ is also a significant historic element of the building, Coupland said.

"When you look at trying to put an addition on that building, it seems like the only reasonable place to do it is in the back and that would cover that significant element in itself," he said.

Coupland said whether the

HPC would approve such an addition was not the issue at council's meeting. He noted an addition would require the approval of the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO).

Forming an advisory committee to determine the best use of the church would make sense, Coupland said, adding that a concern was spending taxpayers' money on the church for which all the effort would be for

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Volunteer sought for harbormaster advisory position

Duties will include observations, reporting to proper authorities

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city is seeking a volunteer harbormaster to deal with a continuing problem of boats being abandoned in Cape May Harbor.

At a May 3 City Council meeting, Councilman Mike Yeager said at one time, the city's harbor had seven abandoned boats. He described the position as the eyes and ears for the enforcement agencies that can address the issue of abandoned boats.

"Let's be sure we prevent a situation where we have a boat that can sink, because a sunk boat in the harbor is a navigation hazard, obviously a safety hazard and an environmental hazard," Yeager said.

The harbormaster would work with the city manager and code enforcement, who could communicate with the State Police. He said the state Motor Vehicle Commission is responsible for abandoned boats.

City solicitor Chris Gillin-Schwartz said the position would be "one tick above honorary."

"You're still leaving enforcement to the appropriate officials — code enforcement, the police de-

partment, State Police, the Marine Services Bureau," he said.

Gillin-Schwartz said the position would be similar to the relationship between the Historic Preservation Commission and the city's compliance officer. He said the powers of the harbormaster would be limited, essentially desk duty.

The harbormaster would provide consultative support for investigations and make recommendations for potential enforcement action. Gillin-Schwartz said the harbormaster in consultation with the city manager and in coordination with code enforcement could communicate with an owner/operator of a transient vessel or long-term anchored vessel on behalf of the city.

Deputy Mayor Stacy Sheehan said she was concerned with liability to the city of actions taken by a harbormaster.

"We are not going to be asking this volunteer to patrol the seas for us," Gillin-Schwartz said.

He said the harbormaster would not have a badge or use a city-owned boat. Gillin-Schwartz said the city is seeking an experienced

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Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Mother's Day outing

A family of swans has a Mother's Day outing at Lake Lily in Cape May Point.

West Cape considers backing sportsmen's club

By JACK FICHTERH
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — Borough Commission considered passing a resolution endorsing the position of the Sunset Beach Sportsmen's Club, which is in a dispute with the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), to remain at its beachfront location in neighboring Lower Township.

At issue is the DEP contends the club has no deed to the land it occupies. It is believed the land was given to the club in the 1950s by the Harbison Walker Magnesite Plant in a handshake agreement.

The DEP wants the club to vacate its building and is at odds with a liquor license the sportsmen's club

holds only for the use of its members. The state plans a restoration of much of the former magnesite plant property.

During a meeting April 27, borough solicitor Frank Corrado suggested Borough Commission wait until Mayor Carol Sabo was present to consider the matter. Sabo was absent from the meeting.

Attorney Chris Gillin-Schwartz, representing the sportsmen's club, said the club is a nonprofit organization located at the end of Sunset Beach. He said many were not aware of the club's location.

"That's kind of the idea with the club, they have peacefully operated at that location since 1957," Gillin-Schwartz said.

The club was not asking nearby

municipalities to take a legal position as to who is right or wrong on the issue but was seeking a statement of policy from municipalities to support it remaining in its current location, he said.

Gillin-Schwartz said the club has continuously renewed its liquor license without incident and has contributed to the community.

"The club membership is made up of a wide range of backgrounds and residents from West Cape May, Cape May Point, the city of Cape May and Lower Township and beyond," he said.

Borough Commissioner Dan Kurkowski asked if the club were under any time constraints. Gillin-

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Township drops out but concerts to continue at ferry terminal

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Lower Township Council turned down a shared service agreement for its annual summer concert series with the Delaware River and Bay Authority (DRBA), breaking a 10-year run of shows at the ferry terminal.

Lower Township officials said they did not agree with certain restrictions placed on residents attending the concerts, which led to their deci-

sion. While the terms of the agreement could not be settled, the DRBA decided to move forward with the concert series without financial support from Lower Township.

"In my opinion, the agreement doesn't fit the township," Mayor Frank Sippel said. "What I mean by that is there are some restrictions in the agreement that are being placed on Lower Township residents and other members of the public to attend the concerts."

He said since taxpayer

dollars pay half of the talent fees of the bands, he could not support the resolution.

Township Manager Mike Laffey told the Star and Wave township officials did not come to terms with the agreement with DRBA. He said the DRBA has decided to move forward with its concessionaires at the ferry terminal for the concerts without Lower Township.

Laffey said the township wanted concertgoers to be able to bring coolers with food or soft drinks to

the concerts on the ferry terminal lawn, excluding alcoholic beverages.

"I guess we didn't agree on the terms fast enough and they agreed to move forward with their concessionaire," Laffey said.

Exit Zero restaurant, which has taken over the three restaurants in the ferry terminal building, posted on social media that coolers will not be permitted but it will be grilling treats and serving drinks on the lawn and concertgo-

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NAILED IT. Rusty Nail

The Rusty Nail is back! Our famed surfer bar and restaurant is back open for the 2022 season. Stop by for breakfast, lunch and dinner—as well as delicious cocktails and the coldest draft beer in Cape May (as verified by Exit Zero Magazine).

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