



Boys lacrosse clinches first place in National Division

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House of the week

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169th YEAR NO. 20 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, MAY 17, 2023 \$1.00

Group calls scope of wind projects 'staggering'

Clean Ocean Action argues for pilot farm to gauge effects before large-scale development

By DAVID NAHAN
Cape May Star and Wave

OCEAN CITY — It wasn't "until the whales and the dolphins started washing up that people's attention was able to focus" on the offshore wind farms, according to Cindy Zipf, and when people looked beyond the whales, they realized what is happening is "staggering." "I don't think ever in the history of mankind have we proposed to industrialize an ecosystem this fast and at this magnitude," she said. Zipf is executive director of

'I don't think ever in the history of mankind have we proposed to industrialize an ecosystem this fast and at this magnitude.'

—Cindy Zipf,
Clean Ocean Action

Clean Ocean Action, a coalition of groups dedicated to protecting the ocean. She said the group is not against

offshore wind farms but ardently believes there should be a pilot project to determine their impact on the ocean, marine species and industries that thrive on the ocean rather than a headlong rush to place turbines up and down the coast not just off New Jersey, but from South Carolina to Massachusetts.

The project closest to fruition here is Ocean Wind 1 by the Danish company Ørsted. Ocean Wind 1 plans 98 massive wind turbines 15 miles off the coast of Atlantic and Cape May counties with transmis-

sion cables that would run through Ocean City to Beesleys Point in Upper Township, where they would connect to the power grid.

Land-based work on that project could begin as early as this fall, according to company officials, if the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) gives its approval this summer and a Construction and Operation Plan (COP) and other permits follow quickly.

Ørsted already has proposed Ocean Wind 2 adjacent to Ocean Wind 1 and another project in the

works is Atlantic Shores just to the north. Those are just a few of the multiple wind-energy projects planned along the coastal U.S.

Zipf acknowledges the pace at which the plans are moving forward is making efforts to slow or stop them difficult.

"It's challenging considering how fast-tracked everything is and how limited the permitting process is. It's kind of under the jurisdiction of two people to make it happen, President Biden and Gov.

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Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

All you can eat

Horseshoe crabs have arrived to spawn on the beaches of Villas, producing a feeding frenzy from sea gulls that gulp down their eggs by the thousands. The eggs are a crucial energy source for migrating red knots and ruddy turnstones.

City approves dune management plan

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — While the city's sand dunes may not tower above the beach like in some other towns, they provide a line of defense from flooding and healthy vegetation helps hold them together.

However, little attention has been paid to Cape May's dunes and they contain non-native plants and poison ivy.

On May 2, City Council adopted a management plan prepared by the Lomax Consulting Group that establishes a science-based approach to evaluating and maintaining dune

vegetation.

Owner Peter Lomax said he wanted to create a plan that could quickly and easily be implemented by the city's staff. He said the dunes are a responsibility of the community at large.

Lomax said the plan is a descriptive document to help the city understand the state of the dune system and what challenges and issues it faces. It identifies a series of management actions that can be undertaken in a manner that prioritizes the ecological integrity of the dune system.

He said the document is intended to be used as a reference guide in an ongoing basis for any work that is to

be done in and adjacent to the dune system, whether that's being done by contractors on behalf of the city, by city departments and staff or the public in collaboration with the city.

Cape May's dune system stretches from the U.S. Coast Guard base to the Cove and Nature Conservancy property, he said.

"It doesn't just protect you when the coastal storms arrive, it is a sand bank, it is a reserve of sand that when that storm passes, that sand is then available to redeploy onto the beach," he said. "This happens through a natural process whereas dunes are

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Zoners deny variance for hotel rooms atop eatery

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — In a unanimous vote, the city's Zoning Board rejected an application for 12 hotel rooms on the third and fourth floors above a Beach Avenue restaurant.

The building at 429 Beach Ave., which now is home to Taco Caballito Tequileria, was operated as a hotel beginning in the late 1800s. An addition to the upper floors would have accommodated a second egress from the building and al-

lowed for two hotel rooms per floor.

On April 27, attorney Joel Fleishman, representing owners Ross Hammer and Lauren Cavallo, was seeking approval to open 12 hotel rooms above the restaurant. He said the project received conceptual approval from the city's Historic Preservation Commission.

The applicants were requesting a use variance to allow two principal uses on the site with a restaurant operating on the first and second floors and a hotel on the third and fourth floors.

Fleishman said the project would result in returning the building to the historic use that started circa 1879 when it was built.

Hammer said Victor Denizot built it, the Lafayette Hotel and the Iron Pier in Cape May. He said the hotel would be named after Denizot.

Plans called for the hotel to have self check-in by phone and a code would be provided to allow entry, Hammer said. Twelve parking

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West Cape May, Cape May taxes up at LCMRHS

Borough residents facing a 33 percent rate increase

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

ERMA — Cape May and West Cape May will see their regional school taxes increase while Lower Township's will decrease under the Lower Cape May Regional High School budget for 2023-24.

The local tax levy totals \$23.8 million, up 3.1 percent from last year. Total revenue is \$2.1 million less than prior years mainly due to the district using up federal funds and total federal aid dropping from \$4.6 million to \$1.2 million, a 73.4 percent decrease.

As a regional school district, the state calculates the share a municipality must contribute to funding the district based on property values and resident students.

For 2023, Cape May will pay 32.28 percent, up from 31.59% last year. Lower Township will pay 59.18 percent, down from 61.72 percent last year. West Cape May will fund 8.54

percent, up from 6.69 percent in 2022.

West Cape May will see the largest tax rate increase, rising 33 percent from 30.7 cents to 40.3 cents per \$100 of assessed value.

The local purpose tax rate for Cape May will increase to 27 cents per \$100 of assessed value, up from 25.7 cents last year.

Lower Township's tax rate will fall by a half-cent to 39.5 cents.

The average tax bill for a house assessed at \$500,000 in Cape May would be \$1,350. In Lower Township, the average tax bill for a house assessed at \$500,000 would be \$1,972.

West Cape May's average tax bill for the regional school district for a house assessed at \$500,000 would be \$2,014.

State aid is decreasing due to state S2 legislation. State Adjustment Aid decreased by \$833,306. Choice School Aid increased by \$296,116.

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Neighbors don't want Habitat home in area

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — The borough is under a court order to add two affordable housing units and considering allowing Habitat for Humanity to build two singles on Willow Avenue.

However, many of the neighbors of the proposed site spoke out against allowing affordable housing in the area.

During a Borough Commission meeting May 10, Council on Affordable Housing (COAH) counsel Eric Nolan said his firm represents more than 80

municipalities specializing in Mount Laurel legislation which specified every town in the state must deliver their fair share of low- and moderate-income housing.

The second Mount Laurel decision of the Supreme Court in 1983 created the Builders Remedy, which allows a developer to contract purchase a site, spot zone it and increase the density even if it is zoned for single-family homes and build 50 to 70 units, Nolan said. Since towns had not created affordable housing, developers sued municipalities all over the

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