

## Planners approve changes to Mahalo Cape May

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## House of the week

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169th YEAR NO. 25 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21, 2023 \$1.00

# Legal opposition to turbine farms mounting

## Cape May County, Ocean City, citizens groups sue to stop Ocean Wind 1

*Editor's note: More stories about the Ocean Wind 1 project and the process through the federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management can be found at [ocnjsentinel.com](http://ocnjsentinel.com). The Sentinel has been following issues involving wind farms proposed off the coast for the past three years.*

By DAVID NAHAN  
Cape May Star and Wave

OCEAN CITY — While Ocean City fights to stop Ocean Wind 1 from using its beaches and streets for transmission lines, Cape May County has hired a pair of attorneys to battle wind farms planned

off the coast.

Simultaneously, three citizens groups have filed suit in Superior Court against the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection and the company behind the first of multiple wind projects proposed off New Jersey.

Ocean Wind 1, a project by by Danish company Ørsted, could get federal approval as early as this summer for a wind farm 15 miles off the coast of Atlantic and Cape May counties that would feature as many as 98 massive wind turbines capable of generating 1,100 megawatts of power.

Ocean Wind 1 is part of Gov. Phil

Murphy's plan to have 100 percent "clean energy" powering the state by 2050, including 11,000 megawatts by offshore wind projects by 2040.

The federal Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) issued its Final Environmental Impact Statement on Ocean Wind 1 in late May. The Record of Decision is expected this summer, followed by a Construction and Operations Plan soon afterward that could see land-based work on the project begin this fall.

Ørsted is already in the planning stages for Ocean Wind 2, which is adjacent to Ocean Wind 1, and just

to the north of both are two more proposed facilities, Atlantic Shores North and Atlantic Shores South.

### Local and county

Under legislation quickly passed through the Legislature in 2021 that gave it the authority, the state Board of Public Utilities took away Ocean City's home rule and granted the company permission to use the rights of way and Green Acres land in the resort to run cables across the beach at 35th Street through town and out Roosevelt Boulevard to connect with the power grid in Beesleys Point,

Upper Township.

Ocean City, which did not grant permission to use the rights of way, has appealed the order to the Appellate Division of Superior Court.

Ocean City officials noted their frustration with the process at the City Council meeting in early June, when Mayor Jay Gillian and solicitor Dorothy McCrosson provided an update to let citizens know how the city was fighting the project.

After City Councilman Tom Rontoni suggested that "enough was enough" and that, figuratively, "we need to throw a rock back," Gil-

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Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

## Celebrating Juneteenth

Macedonia Baptist Church in Cape May celebrated Juneteenth on Monday, when its youth group depicted the event in words and song.

## Pride Month march this week in Cape May

By RACHEL SHUBIN  
Special to the Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The LGBTQIA+ community, regionally and around the world, is celebrating Pride Month and Equality Cape May is at the forefront locally.

The group has organized a Together for Equality march starting at 6 p.m. Thursday, June 22, at the Cove Beach Pavilion.

"The 2022 march was energetic and joyful, with several hundred people [of all ages] attending," Equality Cape May President Ann McCabe said. "There was a palpable sense of the abundance and relief that LGBTQ+ folks feel when coming together as a larger community. We know we are not alone, and that many in Cape May County are out and proud."

Participants will gather at 5:45 p.m. After the march, there will be speakers and a family-friendly after-party will be held at the Inn of Cape May. There will be music and face paint-

ing on the lawn, with food and drinks available for purchase.

"We [are] glad to welcome queer families, youth and people from many demographics and backgrounds," McCabe said. "For this year, we are mindful that bias against LGBTQ+ community members has increased nationwide, especially for trans people. We hope to create a safe environment where a broad array of people feels comfortable attending and celebrating their identities."

The speakers for this year's march will focus on intersectionality and the challenges faced by the transgender community. Speakers will include Tashon Watkins, Sarah Richards and Cassandra Gatelin.

Watkins is a local transgender youth mentor and will speak on assisting adult transgender persons and helping their transition.

Richards is a transgender community advocate and co-founder of Transgender Rights, Understanding & Education (TRUE), whose mission

is to support transgender, non-binary individuals and their families.

Gatelin is a local organizer and founding member of Cape May County Indivisible, a group that focuses on social justice issues.

Equality Cape May hosted its Pride Month kickoff party earlier in the month. Cape May Mayor Zack Mullcock spoke at the event on the continuous support of the local LGBTQ+ community.

Both Cape May and West Cape May reissued proclamations renewing June as Pride Month in the municipalities.

"We are glad to add Cape May Point to the list this year," McCabe said. "Last year, requests to declare June as Pride Month were made and granted by Cape May, Lower Township and West Cape May. We have been considering all the proclamations to be in perpetuity [as] it's certainly Pride Month every year in our book."

Equality Cape May organizes events

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## Lower supports giving tax break for volunteering

### State proposal would assist firefighters, EMS workers

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Lower Township Council passed a resolution endorsing a pending state bill that would give tax breaks to volunteer firefighters.

Fire companies are finding it challenging to attract volunteers. The bill was introduced in December and referred to the Assembly Law and Public Safety Committee.

If approved, voters would decide via referendum on the proposed amendment to the New Jersey Constitution, which would authorize municipalities to provide a property tax credit of as much as 100 percent for the primary residence of a volunteer firefighter or volunteer first aid rescue squad member.

To qualify for the credit, the volunteer would have to be an active member in the town where their primary residence is located.

The credit would be of-

fered to encourage more people to volunteer as first responders and to acknowledge those who currently put their lives on the line to ensure the safety of communities throughout the state every day.

The Volunteer Fire Company Assistance Program along with a special permanent state fund would receive an initial appropriation of \$10 million to support the operations and sustainability of volunteer fire companies.

At a June 5 council meeting, Mayor Frank Sippel said the bill would give municipalities the leeway to offer a take break of 10 percent to 100 percent.

Sippel said two Lower Township councilmen, David Perry and Roland Roy, are retired lifetime volunteer firefighters.

"It's a great bill. I'm hoping it makes its way through the Assembly and is signed by the governor and the

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## West Cape: Willow Ave. only suitable home site

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — While the borough is under a court order to build two affordable housing units and considering allowing Habitat for Humanity to build two single-family homes on Willow Avenue, residents of the neighborhood continue to lobby for them to be built elsewhere.

At a June 14 Borough Commission meeting, the question of any other available building sites in the borough was addressed by the borough's affordable housing counselor and planner.

Mayor Carol Sabo said after investigation, Willow Avenue is the only available borough-owned lot suitable for affordable housing.

Eric Nolan, affordable housing counselor, said the borough is still negotiating with Habitat for Humanity.

Affordable housing planner Susan Gruel said she updated the 2018 vacant land adjustment and inventory to determine whether any other sites were suitable.

"We used the most up-to-date tax assessment records, which are dated December 2022 — so it's a four-year update — and we looked at

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