



BPU picks Ørsted for Ocean Wind II

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House of the week

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167th YEAR NO. 28 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, JULY 14, 2021 \$1.00

Lower approves marijuana retail, delivery

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Lower Township Council passed an ordinance permitting retail sales of marijuana and cannabis delivery services as conditional uses in the General Business Zone and industrial zoning district.

On July 6, Mayor Frank Sippel said he realized it was a sensitive subject and not an easy decision for council.

"I'd like to remind everybody that this was actually passed in the No-

vember 2020 election by residents of New Jersey," he said. "In Lower Township, the number of voters that voted to legalize recreational cannabis was higher than the state average."

In the township's first ward, which includes Villas, 2,830 voted in favor of legalization of marijuana while 935 voted against it, Sippel said. In the second ward, which includes North Cape May, 2,719 voted "yes" while 1,273 voted "no."

In the third ward, which includes Erma, 3,141 voted "yes" while 1,644

voted "no."

Sippel said seven out of 10 Lower Township residents voted in favor of legalizing cannabis.

He said while council could have prohibited retail marijuana sales in the township, it could not stop delivery.

He said a retail store or a delivery service in a neighboring town such as West Cape May could deliver to Lower Township and there is nothing council could do to prohibit it.

Councilman Tom Conrad said he voted against legalizing marijuana

in November. He said the township needs money from the state to offset the costs it would create.

During public comment, resident Bill Salvia said permitting marijuana sales and delivery in the township broke his heart. He said he worked as a New York City police narcotics officer.

Salvia said the addictiveness of marijuana would not change. He said he felt sorry for the police department.

"If you're getting any money, that money should go to the police

department to build it up," he said. Marijuana use is a step toward heroin, Salvia said.

"Do we want to be known as the cannabis distributor of South Jersey or the shore area?" Villas resident Jane Erdo asked.

She said she believes marijuana is a gateway drug. Erdo said some people can handle marijuana and some can handle a beer or two or three and some cannot.

Harder drugs take users down a

See Lower Twp., Page A2



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Iron Moran: CMBP guard wins fourth SuperAthalon

Cape May Beach Patrol lifeguard Rob Moran won the 2021 Cape May SuperAthalon with a time of 47:43. The event included a 2.3-mile run on Beach Avenue, a 1.5-mile row and a quarter-mile swim in choppy seas. Moran is a four time winner of the event.

City trying to keep derelict boats out of harbor

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city has a continuing problem with derelict boats being left at anchor and abandoned in the Cape May Harbor.

City Council is preparing an ordinance that would require boat owners to register with the city before they anchor in the harbor and to provide the city with information on how long the

boat would be present and a phone number and email address.

After a boat has been anchored, docked or grounded for one week without registering, a code enforcement official may affix a notice to the vessel advising if the boat is not removed, the vessel, including any trailer on which a grounded vessel has been placed, would be moved to a holding area.

The city would be immune

from liability for any damage or loss to any vessel, or its contents, that is placed in a holding area. A penalty from \$100 to \$1,250 would be levied to the boat owner for each day of the violation, the working ordinance states.

The owner of a boat that has become a nuisance would have 72 hours to remove the vessel. If a boat held by the city is not claimed in 30 days, the city

would seek title to the boat.

At a July 6 council meeting, Mayor Zack Mullock said the idea for an ordinance covering abandoned boats was suggested by code enforcement.

Deputy Mayor Stacy Sheehan suggested state statutes be examined regarding abandoned boats. She said code enforcement would like to remove der-

See Boats, Page A2

Hotelier likens planned seawall to army bunker

Says 17-foot-tall structure would be 'threatening physical monument'

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — If it isn't broken, don't fix it.

That was the attitude of Gus Andy, owner of LaMer Beachfront Resort and a homesite developer, who is questioning the need for a 350-foot section of seawall at a height of 17 feet at the corner of Wilmington and Beach avenues in the Poverty Beach section of the city.

A project proposed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers expected to begin in June 2023 at a cost \$3.7 million would place a reinforced-concrete cap on top of the existing stone seawall to provide better protection from the sea.

"The wall they're proposing to build, I've never seen such an element introduced anywhere regardless of the city's historic significance and architecture," Andy said. "It will be a threatening physical monument."

He suggested the wall would worsen flooding by sending water to enter the city elsewhere.

The Army Corps issued an

80-page feasibility report and environmental assessment earlier in the year regarding the project. The report notes during Hurricane Sandy in 2012, the ocean overtopped the seawall in a number of locations, but primarily at the corner of Beach and Wilmington avenues.

It noted wave and tidal action from the storm forced about 8,000 cubic yards of sand over the seawall at the intersection and onto Beach Avenue and adjacent residential properties. Sand deposition in some areas was about 8 feet deep with a cleanup cost to the city of about \$30,000.

Also at issue in the study area is the Frog Hollow neighborhood, which is low-lying and particularly prone to flooding. According to the Army Corps, the lowest ground elevations in the city are within Frog Hollow, from 3 feet to 6 feet above sea level.

When the ocean overtops the seawall during a storm, Beach Avenue floods and acts as a drainage channel that funnels the water west

See Seawall, Page A2

Free jitney service returns for summer in Cape May

By JACK FICHTER
Sure Guide

CAPE MAY — Free jitney service has resumed in the city and will continue through October after City Council awarded a contract to Sea Isle City Transit of Atlantic City on July 6.

SIC Transit will provide service 10.5 hours per day for \$400 per day per vehicle. During peak periods, jitneys will operate seven days a week. A modified schedule will be in effect in the off-season.

SIC Transit is recommending operating a minimum of two jitneys on weekdays and three jitneys on weekends. The city can add more vehicles at its discretion, according to the contract.

Deputy Mayor Stacy Sheehan said the new jitney service starts earlier in the day and runs later into the evening, operating from noon to 10:30 p.m.

Mayor Zack Mullock said the contract costs less than the previous service. City solicitor Chris Gillin-Schwartz said SIC Transit provided the lowest responsible bid and met the city's insurance requirements.

The initial proposed route starts in the parking lot of Cape May City Elementary School, goes to Texas and Pittsburgh avenues, through U.S. Coast Guard base housing and then onto Beach Avenue with right turns on Congress Street and Con-

See Jitney, Page A3

Bezaire skips first meeting following release from jail

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Following his arrest on charges of invasion of privacy, cyber harassment, stalking and contempt of court — and 13 days in county jail — Councilman Chris Bezaire is taking a leave of absence from City Council. He did not attend council's July 6 meeting.

Mayor Zack Mullock said council did not have any

legal authority to remove Bezaire from council.

"He has agreed to take a leave of absence while he lets his own legal issues take place," Mullock said.

City solicitor Chris Gillin-Schwartz said it was up to Bezaire whether he attends a council meeting or not.

"But there is a municipal vacancy law and if a council member or any member of



BEZAIRE

a governing body doesn't appear for meetings in eight consecutive weeks, the vacancy is automatic," Gillin-Schwartz said.

He said the vacancy would occur unless council took some affirmative action to grant an

excused absence. Gillin-Schwartz said no mechanism exists that would allow council to vote a member out

of office.

"There are convictions that can disqualify you from office — that's a legal fact — but it doesn't sound like on July 6, 2021, that we're there yet," he said. "That process is going to have to play itself out, outside of council chambers, and council is going to have to continue to do the business of the city."

A preindictment conference has been set for Aug. 20, according to Bezaire's attorney, John Tumelty.

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