



Cape May Point Women's Lifeguard Challenge

Page A8-9



House of the Week

B1



169th YEAR NO. 31 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 2, 2023 \$1.00

Some funds secured, more pending for desal plant

Engineer recommends Cape May build new facility rather than rehabilitating current one

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city needs to replace its water desalination plant, a project with a price tag in the range of \$25 million to \$30 million, much of which the city administration hopes will come in the form of grant money.

At a July 18 meeting, David Samuel, managing partner in Consulting and Municipal Engineers (CME), updated City Council on the project. He has met a number of times with the mayor, city manager and city engineer.

Samuel said one of his focuses has been coordination with the federal infrastructure bank to get additional funds for the project.

He said he has met with the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and its commissioner to review it.

"We're receiving positive input from all of those agencies," Samuel said.

The project had a very limited authorization to start, so preliminary plans have not been prepared, he said.

"We're all waiting for that next batch of federal funds that was supposed to be authorized," he said. "Then we can bring in the architect and complete the building design."

Michael Zumpino, chief executive officer of grant consultants Triad Associates, said his firm submitted an application for congress-

sional-directed spending as part of the federal infrastructure bill, and Cape May secured a \$600,000 grant for preliminary design and obtaining permits.

Samuel said he anticipated completing a design for a new desal plant by the end of the year. He said the project can be completed in phases if necessary, depending on the financing.

The new plant would be built in what is now the parking lot of the city's water plant, Samuel said, adding that it would have three reverse osmosis units — referred to as trains — and an iron-removal plant. The system would have two large filters, each with a capacity to handle 1 million gallons per day. He displayed schematics and

concept plans that he said needed to be tweaked based on input from the city's water department.

Councilman Mike Yeager asked Samuel if he has visited other desalination plants in the U.S.

Samuel said he had not but that CME is part of Trillium Flow Technologies, which handles such plants in Florida. CME has worked on 30 water treatment plants in New Jersey but not a desal plant, Samuel said.

"A desal is nothing more than a high-pressure membrane water treatment plant," he said.

Samuel said Cape May's current desal plant has an effective capacity of about 68 percent while new systems are achieving effectiveness of 75 percent. He said a

certain percentage of water is lost since it is used to backwash the system.

The current desal plant has two 1 million-gallon trains.

"This new plant will have a 3 MGD (million gallons per day) capacity but you're also going to have another MGD of water through the iron-removal process that you are currently feeding to the public without iron removal; you're sequestering the iron," Samuel said.

He said all parties recognize the project is a function of how much grant funding is received to minimize the cost to the city.

While the city has two trains in the desal plant, it actually has 1

See Desalination, Page A5



Caroline Dupree/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

Parading princesses

The 90th annual Cape May Baby Parade was held July 28 on Beach Avenue. Participants included Lyla and Adelyne Shaw, above.

HPC says wood poor choice for seawall project

Board also objects to use of stamped concrete trim

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) debated whether benches on a planned extension of the seawall and Promenade to Wilmington Avenue should be trimmed in wood or if the wood could become a hazard in a hurricane.

Two weeks ago, HPC Chairman Warren Coupland and solicitor Robert Fineberg met with Colliers Engineering, which is creating plans for an expanded Promenade.

The bulkhead would be replaced and include a vegetated sand slope up to the seawall. The new wall would be constructed on top of the current stone and gravel one and the view from Beach Avenue would be a vegetated dune.

Coupland said when he saw plans for the seawall, it appeared that the bulkhead

at street level and seating were made of timber. He said detail on the plan identifies it as stamped concrete, which is not appropriate.

HPC Commissioner Tom Carroll said he recalled the proposed seating as stamped concrete.

Coupland said he doubted the state Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) would approve the use of stamped concrete.

"What I had proposed is the front of the seating area dressed in wood and the seat back in Ipe," he said.

It would be inappropriate for the HPC to endorse the use of stamped concrete, Coupland said.

HPC Commissioner Jim Testa said seating would be built into the seawall. Coupland noted the wood adds expense to the project.

Testa said he had concerns about using anything that would be detachable

See HPC, Page A5

City cracks down on parking permit sharing

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city is cracking down on holders of parking permits for homes who are allowing other persons to park in their spaces. A sign marks the space as reserved parking.

City Manager Mike Voll said each parking permit carries a number that must be displayed on the back of the vehicle's rear-view mirror. The license plate number must match the number on the parking permit.

"It seems to be that people that have those signs are violating it by having their guests park there," he said. "I just want to let the public know the police are going to

start to enforce that; we're getting complaints about it all the time."

He said the enabling ordinance has been in effect for 13 years with no increase in the parking permit fee. The fee for a reserved parking space from May to October is \$350 and January to December is \$500.

Voll said police also are enforcing low-speed vehicle regulations. In addition, code enforcement is counting seats in restaurants to ensure they do not exceed the allowable number as stated on their mercantile license, he said.

City engineer Paul Dietrich said an application for expansion of the seawall to Wilmington Avenue was

submitted to the state Department of Environmental Protection on June 5 and deemed complete. He said the final design of the seawall expansion should be completed in spring 2024.

Dietrich said the DEP and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers were cooperating and it was likely the Army Corps design for the seawall would match the city's design.

Dietrich said a mechanical engineer would need to design the electrical and mechanical systems for a public restroom on the Promenade next to Convention Hall. He said the city hoped to have the project ready for bidding in one month.

Wind farm opponents file lawsuit

By DAVID NAHAN
Cape May Star and Wave

TRENTON — Opponents of Ocean Wind 1, the wind farm planned off the coast of Cape May and Atlantic counties, filed suit to block federal subsidies from going to Ørsted, the Danish company behind the project.

Two citizens groups, Project Our Coast NJ and Defend Brigantine Beach, and three Ocean City residents filed the suit, arguing subsidies from the New Jersey Legislature are an "unconstitutional state giveaway," according to their attorney, Bruce Afran.

The suit was filed in Su-

perior Court in Trenton to stop almost a billion dollars in federal tax credits given to the company in a bill approved in July in the state Legislature and signed by Gov. Phil Murphy. The suit argues the bill is illegal "special" legislation in violation of the New Jersey Constitution.

"The Legislature's giveaway of federal tax credits to Ørsted benefits a single company in violation of the New Jersey Constitution," Afran said in a release announcing the lawsuit. "In New Jersey, laws that favor a single private party are generally unconstitutional."

With substantial fanfare July 6 at the Paulsboro fa-

cility that is manufacturing the massive monopiles that will hold as many as 98 wind turbines in the Ocean Wind 1 project, Murphy signed the bill to give Ørsted federal tax credits to help ensure manufacturing remains in New Jersey after New York offered that incentive to do the work in the Empire State and the Maryland governor wants a facility there.

Those tax credits would have otherwise gone to New Jersey ratepayers.

Steve Sweeney, who pushed to get the monopile plant in Paulsboro while he was Senate president, had advocated for the tax

See Wind farm, Page A3

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