



## Beach patrol part of life for Back family

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## House of the Week

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169th YEAR NO. 34 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 23, 2023 \$1.00



Benita Battaglia/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

## Maritime marital bliss

The Cape May Police Department, Beach Patrol and Fire Police assisted during this year's Wedding of the Sea ceremony Aug. 15, sponsored by Our Lady Star of the Sea Parish in Cape May and the Knights of Columbus. The ceremony has been adopted as a community event that honors the character and values of the Cape May area while bringing together individuals and families of multiple faiths, nationalities and backgrounds.



## West Cape reaches deal with Habitat for homes

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — Borough Commission approved an agreement with Habitat for Humanity to build two affordable housing units on borough-owned lots on Willow Avenue and approved the borough's spending plan for affordable housing trust funds.

The borough is under a court order to provide two affordable units.

At an Aug. 9 meeting, affordable housing counsel Eric Nolan said the next step was to negotiate with the Fair Share Housing Center to amend its settlement agreement to incorporate the two habitat homes. He said once the Fair Share Housing Center signs off on the plan, it will need approval by Borough Commission and the housing element will need to be

approved by the Planning Board.

"There will be another Planning Board action which is the subdivision for the site itself," Nolan said.

When all that work is completed, the borough must schedule a court hearing, a combined fairness and compliance hearing to approve the agreements and to approve the housing element fair share plan, he said.

Nolan said if the court approves the affordable housing plan, it will answer with an amended judgment of compliance which will amend the original order and give the borough continued immunity from Builders' Remedy lawsuits until 2025. He noted the borough's affordable housing plan has a two-unit gap.

Affordable housing plan- See West Cape, Page A2

## City OKs off-site affordable housing

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council approved off-site affordable housing for a 13-home development off Pittsburgh Avenue known as Cape May Cove.

Council adopted a resolution placing a deed restriction on the building at 1134 Lafayette St., where two affordable housing units will fulfill the development's requirement.

The Planning Board approved the plan in March. The home will be converted into a two-bedroom apartment for very low-income persons and a three-bedroom unit for a low-income renter.

During public comment at an Aug. 15 City Council meeting, Dennis Crowley, chairman of the city's Municipal Taxation and Revenue Advisory Committee, said affordable housing has been neglected to a certain degree in Cape May in terms of use and availability.

Crowley said he believes this was the first example of a swap in which a builder was able to exchange a location in some other part of the town for his requirements. He said he believes an ordinance rather than a resolution should be used to approve the transaction.

The city has the right and the obligation to make sure that affordable housing is both available and

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## Preservationist wants to save water works

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Laura Calnan, a former city councilwoman and historic preservationist, is urging the city not to tear down the building housing the city's desalination plant when it is replaced or expanded.

The city needs to replace its 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.

She addressed council at an Aug. 15 meeting noting the water works building was an issue before the city's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) in 1995, 1996 and 1997. At that time, the building had to be changed to accommodate new equipment and for a potential addition, Calnan said.

The city believed it would reach its maximum water output by 2020, especially if Sewell Point were developed, she said.

Sewell Point has been preserved as open space, but she said she was concerned the historic water works building would be demolished to make way for a new plant.

Calnan provided council, the city manager and city engineer with copies of a report on the building.

"What is transpiring is that the building itself needs to be evaluated," she said. "The city of Cape May has

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