



Shoulder widening, repaving set for Bayshore Road

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House of the week

B1



167th YEAR NO. 38 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 22, 2021 \$1.00

Public input crucial to flood-mitigation project

By RACHEL SHUBIN
Special to the Sentinel

In an online presentation last week, federal and state officials said the massive flood mitigation project proposed for New Jersey's coastal and back bay communities needs considerable public input to look at all of the potential environmental impacts. Officials said they will need to manage their own expectations for a project estimated to cost at least \$16 billion with construction not beginning for almost a decade.

The New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, in conjunction with the U.S. Army

'This is a huge effort and we have to manage our expectations ... We really need folks to share thoughts on how we can go through this together since it's a huge expense for the federal government.'

—U.S. Army Corps of Engineers coastal resilience scientist Jay Smith

Corps of Engineers, offered the presentation and allowed questions as it gets public feedback on its tentatively selected plan (TSP) for flood mitigation along the back bays.

The feasibility report and tier one environmental impact statement present preliminary findings to identify coastal storm

risk management strategies to increase resilience and reduce risk from future storms and compounding impacts of sea-level changes for the New Jersey Back Bays (NJBB) region.

This joint DEP and Army Corps project research began almost nine years ago, after the devastation caused by Hurricane

Sandy in October 2012. The plan includes building massive storm surge barriers across Great Egg Harbor Inlet between Ocean City and Longport, Manasquan Inlet and Barnegat Inlet. The phased construction would begin in 2030.

The proposal incorporates multiple projects to reduce storm and flood damage and stretches from Neptune to Cape May. It covers 950 square miles of coastal area in Cape May, Atlantic, Ocean, Burlington, and Monmouth counties. The plan also includes cross-bay barriers in the south end of Ocean City and along Absecon Boulevard.

"Our role is that we are a cost-

sharing partner with this study and coordinating among municipalities," DEP director of coastal engineering Bill Dixon said. "Collectively, all levels of government are going to need to assist."

The \$16 billion price tag is for construction costs, while the TSP estimates the annual operating and maintenance costs are \$196 million.

"This is a huge effort and we have to manage our expectations," U.S. Army Corps of Engineers coastal resilience scientist Jay Smith said. "We really need folks to share thoughts on how we can go through this together since

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Photo courtesy of CAPE MAY MAC

MAC marks 50th anniversary

Cape May MAC (Museums+Arts+Culture) celebrated its 50th anniversary (1970-2020) Sunday at the Emlen Physick Estate, one year late due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Members, staff, volunteers and guests celebrated past, present and future, with abundant thanks to volunteers. A time capsule will be on permanent display in the Carroll Gallery and the retrospective '50 Years of MAC' exhibit is open through Oct. 24.

Crackdown on short-term rentals paying off

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Lower Township has located 247 additional short-term rental properties that have generated an additional \$80,000 in revenue from license fees.

During a Township Council meeting Sept. 8, Mayor Frank Sippel said short-term rentals became a "hot topic" when COVID-19 hit

about a year and half ago. In April 2020, the township had 408 registered short-term rental properties, he said. As of Sept. 7, 2021, the township had 655.

"That's a total of \$144,835 collected so far for this year, so the bottom line, we're up 247 additional short-term rentals," he said.

The township received an additional \$80,000 in revenue, Sippel said, noting

most of the rental properties in the township are now operating in compliance with regulations.

Sippel said he believes an additional 20 properties are operating without a permit and code enforcement would address that before the end of the month.

He thanked the township clerk's office for its research on the is-sue.

In March, Township Council approved a \$26,136

contract with Granicus LLC to identify owners of short-term rental properties who had not purchased a mercantile license.

Granicus identified owners of properties, locations and provided a snapshot of how large a home was being offered, whether a two-bedroom cottage or a five-bedroom house on the beach. Township mercantile fees are based on the size of occupancy of rentals.

Bezaire takes plea deal for cyber stalking

Cape May councilman faces three to five years' probation

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE — Cape May City Councilman Chris Bezaire pleaded guilty in Superior Court Sept. 17 to two charges of contempt and stalking in the fourth degree in a plea agreement with the state, which is recommending a term of probation of three to five years with a condition of 30 to 60 days in the county jail at the discretion of Judge Bernard DeLury. Sentencing is scheduled for Jan. 21, 2022.

The Cape May County Prosecutor's Office arrested Bezaire June 16 on charges of invasion of privacy, cyber harassment, stalking and contempt of court. He was released from the Cape May County Jail on June 28 following 13 days of incarceration.

DeLury told Bezaire he would be subject to a stalking restraining order for

count two of the charges. Anything else pending against Bezaire from the incidents would be dismissed, DeLury said.

He said Bezaire was giving up the right to trial of the facts by a jury of his peers and to cross examine witnesses against him. DeLury asked Bezaire if he had pleaded guilty in a court previously and Bezaire replied in the affirmative.



BEZAIRE

DeLury said count one alleged that on or about Feb. 2, Bezaire disobeyed a restraining order issued on or about Oct. 27, 2016, in the matter of "A.F. v. Christopher M. Bezaire" in Cape May County Family Court.

Bezaire told DeLury he violated the restraining order prior to his election to office by contacting "A.F.'s" fiancé, asking him to discuss with her the possibility of filing to dissolve

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Four arrested in robbery, aggravated assault in city

Victim flown to trauma unit in A.C.

CAPE MAY — Four Pennsylvania men were arrested last week in connection with an assault on Perry Street that sent the victim to a trauma unit.

According to Police Chief Dekon Fashaw, four suspects were engaged in an argument on the sidewalk at about 12:08 a.m. Sept. 4 after the hat the victim was wearing was removed from his head by one of the perpetrators. While the victim was attempting to get his hat back, he was struck

in the left side of the face causing him to lose consciousness.

As a result, the victim fell to the ground, striking the back of his head on the pavement. All four perpetrators then fled the scene on foot. The victim was transported to Cape Regional Medical Center and later airlifted to the Regional Trauma Unit at AtlantiCare Regional Medical Center due to his injuries.

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Mount Vernon Motel demolition set

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city's Planning Board approved subdividing the property at 301 Beach Ave., where the Mount Vernon Motel sits, into two 9,000-square-foot lots for the construction of two single-family homes following demolition of the motel.

A deed notice will accompany the sale of the lots with a number of conditions for future construction.

The applicant, Hobrow Inc., was the Hober family, longtime owners of the motel.

In June, the Planning



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

The Cape May Planning Board granted approval for the demolition of the Mount Vernon Motel at 301 Beach Ave.

Board denied an application in a 4-4 vote for the demoli-

tion of the 25-unit motel to

subdivide the property into three undersized lots for construction of single-family homes. At a Sept. 14 meeting, attorney for the applicants, Ron Gelzun, said the applicants sought to subdivide an 18,200-square-foot lot into two lots to build two homes. In June, the applicants sought to divide the property into three lots of 6,000 square feet each, one of which would have fronted First Avenue.

Tiffany Morrisey, planner for the project, said the applicants sought variances for lot size, width and frontage. She said the required

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