

City applies for state grant to help upgrade Promenade

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city is seeking grant funds from the state for repairs and maintenance of the Promenade.

At a Nov. 17 meeting, City Council approved \$9,616 for engineering service fees to put forth a proposal to the state Boardwalk Preservation Grant Program administered by the Department of Community Affairs.

"A couple of months ago none of us knew there

was going to be \$100 million state fund involving specifically boardwalks and promenades, so we're going to put forth a really good grant application for the funds for the first boardwalk in America, by the way, it wasn't Atlantic City," Mayor Zack Mullock said.

He said he hoped Cape May would receive some substantial grant funding from the state.

Councilman Shaine Meier called for more maintenance for the Promenade noting divots that could be

hazardous for bicycle riders.

Mullock said City Engineer Paul Dietrich held a phone conference with Collier Engineering and grants consultant Jim Rutala regarding deficiencies on the Promenade. He said the divots would be included in the grant application.

Dietrich said Collier Engineering assessed the entire length of the Promenade. He said a number of areas need attention on the Promenade, both structurally and aesthetically.

"We definitely think

we're going to have a competitive grant application to get some of those funds to do those maintenance issues," Dietrich said.

Mullock said he believed the city was assembling a pretty significant package for the state grant.

The city is conducting the assessment to determine the need for a three-year phased plan, Dietrich said.

In its proposal, Collier Engineering Services stated it scope of work would include an assessment of the Promenade, prelimi-

nary visioning of what the city proposes to accomplish with the requested grant funds and preliminary cost estimates to be used to ensure adequate funds are being requested in the grant application.

"This may entail bringing ramps and railings up to ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) code compliance, adding additional ADA ramps, upgrading or replacing public restroom facilities, installing dune mats on dune crossovers, upgrading or replacing water fountains and rinse sta-

tions, implementing Promenade repairs to enhance longevity, widening the Promenade for improved bicycle accessibility and introducing storm resiliency measures such as an elevated structure sitting wall," states the proposal.

"The Jersey Shore is where memories are made, and we need to make sure our families can keep creating those memories of summers down the shore for generations to come," Gov. Phil Murphy said in August when he signed the bill for the grant program.

Poll: Congressional, Supreme Court approval plummets

GALLOWAY TOWNSHIP — As a government shutdown looms, wars rage and chaos reigned as the House selected a new speaker, New Jersey voters are disgusted with Congress, and even Republicans disapprove of how the GOP majority is functioning, according to a Stockton University Poll released last week.

Only 13% of New Jersey adults approved of the way Congress is doing its job, while almost 80% disapproved. That result has

been consistent in recent years of polling, but the new poll by the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy at Stockton University shows that Republicans especially have taken a hit from their own base.

Among Democrats, 67% approved of how their party is conducting itself in Congress, with 21% disapproving. But only 46% of Republicans approved of how Republican members are doing their jobs and 46% disapproved. Independents basically called

out both parties, with 67% disapproving of the Democrats and 76% disapproving of the Republicans.

"In our hyperpartisan times, the two parties diverge, and huge majorities take opposing sides in every poll no matter what the issue. So, for this many Republicans to not voice support for their team is significant," said John Froomjian, director of the Hughes Center.

"With every failed attempt to elect a House speaker, even Republicans in Washington are bemoaning the damage they are doing to their brand, not to mention the country," Froomjian said.

The poll of 630 New Jersey adults has a margin of error of +/- 3.9 percentage points.

The poll also contained gloomy news for the Democrats. In blue-state New Jersey, Democratic President Joe Biden's approval registered at 38%, with a majority (54%) saying they disapprove of the job he is doing. The typical partisan split was evident on this question, with 76% of Democrats approving and 5% of Republicans approv-

ing of Biden. Importantly, only 30% of Garden State independent voters approved of the president's performance and 59% disapproved.

Regarding the U.S. senators for New Jersey, nearly three in four voters (72%) had an unfavorable view of Sen. Bob Menendez, while 8% had a favorable opinion and 12% were unfamiliar with him. Meanwhile, 46% viewed Sen. Cory Booker favorably and 35% unfavorably, while 12% were also unfamiliar with the junior senator.

Menendez and his wife, Nadine, were charged by the U.S. Justice Department last month in a bribery scheme. He was also recently accused of acting as a foreign agent for Egypt. Nearly 80% of residents were very familiar (38%) or somewhat familiar (41%) with the charges brought against Menendez. One in five were not at all familiar with the case.

A strong majority (71%) said Menendez should resign from his Senate position, while just 8% said he should remain in office. Just under one-fifth were

not sure (17%). This position was bipartisan, with 78% of Democrats and 79% of Republicans calling for his resignation.

The U.S. Supreme Court was not exempt from the approval ratings slump. Statewide, just over one-third somewhat (21%) or strongly (13%) approved of the job the court is doing, while more than half (54%) somewhat (16%) or strongly (38%) disapproved.


That rating was reversed among Republicans, however, with 54% saying they approve of the job the court is doing and 33% saying they disapprove. Among Democrats, 13% approve and 79% disapprove. Last year, the court overturned its prior ruling on the constitutionality of abortion in Roe v. Wade, a goal long sought by conservatives.

"These findings highlight just how politically polarizing the highest court has become," said Hughes Center Research Associate Alyssa Maurice.

More than half said they have a lot of trust (13%) or some trust (42%) in the Supreme Court, while 4 in 10 say they have hardly any

(25%) or no trust (18%) in the institution.

The poll of New Jersey adults was conducted by the Stockton Polling Institute of the William J. Hughes Center for Public Policy from October 9-18, 2023. Stockton University students texted cell phones with invitations to take the survey online and Opinion Services supplemented the dialing portion of the fieldwork, which consisted of cell and landline telephone calls. Overall, 92% of interviews were conducted on cell phones and 8% on landline phones. In terms of mode, 79% were reached via dialing and 21% were reached via text-to-web. A total of 630 New Jersey adult residents were interviewed. Both cell and landline samples consisted of New Jersey voter list and random digit dialing (RDD) sample from MSG. Data are weighted based on U.S. Census Bureau ACS 2021 data for New Jersey on variables of age, race, education level, and sex. The poll's margin of error is +/- 3.9 percentage points at a 95% confidence level. MOE is higher for subsets.



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Two North Cape May men arrested on drug charges

ERMA — Two North Cape May men were arrested for distribution of the controlled dangerous substance (CDS) ecstasy and methamphetamine by

Lower Township police and the county Prosecutor's Office.

A narcotic investigation into the distribution of ecstasy concluded Oct. 25 with the arrest of Jacob Groff, 31, and Craig Needles, 67, both of North Cape May.

The county Prosecutor's Office Gangs, Guns and Narcotics Task Force received information from the Homeland Security Investigations Atlantic City Office that Customs and Border Patrol agents at John F. Kennedy Airport intercepted a package

originating from the Netherlands addressed to Groff which contained ecstasy pills.

A controlled delivery of the package was facilitated by law enforcement on Oct. 25. The county Prosecutor's Office, Lower Township police and county Regional SWAT Team executed a court-authorized search warrant on the residence of Groff and Needles and seized approximately two ounces of ecstasy, over one-half ounce of suspected methamphetamine, a .25 caliber semi-automatic handgun, drug paraphernalia including various prescription legend drugs, computers and \$4,081 in currency.

Groff and Needles were charged with one count of possession of CDS with intent to distribute methamphetamine, one count of possession of CDS with intent to distribute MDMA, one count of possession of a firearm during the commission of a CDS offense, one count of possession of methamphetamine, one count of possession of MDMA, one count of money laundering, one count of possession with intent to distribute drug paraphernalia and conspiracy to possess with the intent to distribute methamphetamine and MDMA.

Groff and Needles were processed and lodged in the county correctional facility pending court proceedings.

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