

# County OKs improvements to Diamond Beach Park

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Improvements to Diamond Beach Park have been approved by the county for a project that includes new playground equipment,

pickleball courts, shade structures, a single use restroom and improved Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) access.

At a Nov. 20 Township Council meeting, engineer Will Hanson, of DeBlasio and Associates, said improvements for Diamond Beach Park have been approved by the Board of Commissioners with the project set to receive \$846,289 from the county Open Space Fund, which should cover 75 percent to 80 percent of the cost.

Hanson said the project is ready to be offered for bids.

In other business, final designs for reconstruction of Wildwood Avenue have been completed and were submitted to the state Department of Transportation (DOT) for a mandatory 30-day review.

"We actually just received feedback from DOT, so we'll be addressing all their comments

and getting that project out for public bid shortly," he said.

The project received two DOT grants totaling more than \$345,000.

Hanson said a project for five beach access pathways that require timber walkways was still in the design phase but will soon be ready for public bid.

Renovation of Rotary Community Park on Bayshore Road includes new playground equipment, shade structures, a single use restroom, new parking area and improved ADA access. He said construction of phase one was well under way with the clearing of the site.

Phase one is mainly funded by a \$400,000 state Department of Community Affairs grant. Hanson said phase two of the project requires more significant wetlands permits. He said design will begin once the state De-

partment of Environmental Protection approves the project.

A proposal has been made to extend 10 bayside outfall pipes to improve drainage. A jurisdictional determination meeting was held that outlined all the permits required for the project.

"We're working toward getting final designs into the various governing bodies that we need permits for," Hanson said.

A new project is an evaluation of storm sewer drainage on Frances Avenue. He said the existing stormwater system for Frances Avenue would be connected to the pump station on Ohio Avenue.

"Our office has surveyed the project area. We are currently base mapping it and we're going to be entering the design and evaluation phase once base mapping has been completed," Hanson said.

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the church could be re-examined with the architect.

"It's important to get this right; we're looking at a key building," Coupland said.

HPC Commissioner Jim Testa suggested moving the power lines and pole in front of the church, which led to a fire in the building when they fell due to an accident. Dietrich said the city was talking with Atlantic City Electric about burying all the power lines along that block of Franklin Street.

HPC Commissioner Tom Carroll suggested a shorter handicapped ac-

cess ramp since part of the proposed ramp appeared to be flat along the ground.

In other business, the HPC issued a favorable advisory report for demolition of the former parsonage next to the church that has served as offices for the Center for Community Arts and a studio for its radio station. The center will move into the new library inside the restored Franklin Street School.

HPC Commissioner Corbin Cogswell said he believes the parsonage is an important part of the history of Allen AME Church.

"We did also receive a

letter of support for the demolition from the county library; there is no official off-street parking for that facility," Dietrich said.

Coupland said the HPC has nine points of criteria for a demolition. Dietrich said the former parsonage is noncontributing to the historic district and is in an advanced state of deterioration. He said the property is better suited for use as a public parking area.

Dietrich said rehabilitating the former parsonage would not be a good use of public funds. Coupland said the state Historic Preservation Office supports demolition.

## West Cape May

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from \$50 to \$1,000 for an ordinance violation, which would be heard in municipal court.

In other business, the borough is seeking a letter of interpretation (LOI) from the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) for a borough-owned property off Sunset Boulevard next to the Black Duck restaurant. The lot is overgrown

and vacant.

Sabo said suggestions for use of the parcel include placing benches on the lot or making it a bike repair station. She said the DEP would decide what, if anything, the borough could do with the lot.

The DEP has stated the lot is 86 percent wetlands and 14 percent wetlands buffer, Dick said.

Shade Tree Commission member Wayne Hoffman said the DEP would

delineate the wetlands on the property. He said no structures or development would be placed there.

Hoffman said two dead trees are resting on Verizon wires on the property but Verizon showed no interest in removing them. He said the Shade Tree Commission planned to remove seven dead and dying trees from the lot.

"We do have plans to replace the trees," Hoff-

## Beach replenishment

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speeds, so upgrading that will also make us more competitive in the future environment for conventions at Convention Hall,"

he said.

City Manager Mike Voll said the ribbon cutting for the new fire station will take place 5 to 7 p.m. Nov. 29.

The city's Christmas tree lighting is scheduled for 7

p.m. Dec. 1 in Rotary Park.

The West Cape May Community Christmas Parade steps off at 5 p.m. Dec. 2, winding its way down Broadway and into Cape May.

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