

# Lower moves to further limit cannabis retail zone

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Township Council wants more control over where cannabis-related business may operate. Council introduced an ordinance that would create an overlay zone to confine cannabis retail stores and offices of cannabis delivery services

to a specific section in the General Business Zone. In 2021, council adopted an ordinance that amended the land development code and authorized the issuance of no more than two Class 5 cannabis retail licenses and no more than two Class 6 cannabis delivery licenses in the township's GB-1 and I (Industrial) zoning districts.

In addition, council adopted an ordinance to expand the permitted zones in which Class 5 Cannabis Retail Licenses and Class 6 Cannabis Delivery Licenses are permitted to include the MD-2 (Marine Development Commercial Zone.) The township determined that revisions to the GB-1 zone, and the conditions asso-

ciated with Class 5 Cannabis Retail Licenses and Class 6 Cannabis Delivery licenses should be revised in order to establish an overlay zoning district to ensure that these uses are confined to specific areas of the GB-1 zone.

The Cannabis Overlay Zone would be located within the GB-1 zone and confined to the shopping center in North Cape May that houses the Acme market and the shopping center across the street that houses the post office and Dollar Store. Breakwater Plaza is not included in the cannabis business overlay.

Township Manager Mike Laffey said the change in the ordinance would keep cannabis businesses away from residences. He said there are parcels in the GB-1 zone that are close to homes.

Cannabis businesses are also permitted in the MD-2 district on Ocean Drive, Laffey said. The county airport is not included in the cannabis business overlay, he said.

The township would require submission of a license and/or a conditional license approved by the state of New Jersey and/or the Cannabis Regulatory Commission to

engage in the retail sale of marijuana. The design of any building must conform to the general character of the area and not adversely affect the safe, comfortable enjoyment of property rights in the zone in which it is located, according to the ordinance.

No cannabis retail stores would be located within 300 feet measured from the front entrance to the proposed commercial property, of any residential structure, firehouse, school, public playground, place of worship, hospital, beach, public recreational facility, or public library.

All sales to consumers must take place in the indoor areas of a cannabis establishment and/or curbside, in accordance with the provisions of N.J.A.C. 17:30-12.4, in front of said cannabis establishment.

With the exception of the wholesale delivery of cannabis and/or the delivery of goods/equipment associated with the operation of a cannabis retail store, no business shall be conducted in the rear of a cannabis establishment. Hours of operation would be limited to 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Cannabis consumption

areas are prohibited from operating anywhere on the premises which are licensed to engage in the retail sale of cannabis. No outside storage of any cannabis, cannabis products or cannabis paraphernalia would be permitted.

Cannabis retail stores and/or cannabis delivery services proposed to be located in existing buildings would be exempt from site plan review provided no expansion or external renovations are proposed to same. Cannabis retail stores and/or cannabis delivery services proposed to be located in new construction would require site plan review and approval.

On Nov. 3, 2020, New Jersey voters approved, by a ratio of 67.08% voting in favor of legalizing marijuana and 32.92% against Public Question No. 1 which amended the state Constitution to allow for the legalization of marijuana for adults at least 21 years of age.

In Lower Township, approximately 70% of registered voters voted in favor of legalizing marijuana in the state of New Jersey.

A public hearing on the ordinance will be held during council's Dec. 19 meeting.

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## Deck the Hall raises \$15,000 for CASA

ATLANTIC CITY — A renewed partnership between OVG360 and Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) for Children of Atlantic, Cape May and Camden Counties to host the 6th annual Deck the Hall - Festival of Trees at Jim Whelan Boardwalk Hall has generated \$15,000 to benefit locally neglected and abused children this holiday season.

In conjunction and with the support of the Casino Reinvestment Development Authority (CRDA), Lite 96.9 WFPG and Coca-Cola, OVG360 solicited the local community to sponsor 33 custom-decorated holiday trees that will be on display to the public in the Boardwalk Hall lobby through the duration of the holiday season.

In addition, the public is invited to daily holiday organ recitals at noon through Dec. 23.

Members of these organizations spent the last week decking Boardwalk Hall with their trees, which were unveiled at a private reception with individuals and agencies that help local foster children and families.

Proceeds from the event will be used to help recruit and train more volunteers to serve and advocate for children living in the foster system.

"I am sure we at CASA for Children aren't the only ones excited that the Deck the Hall Festival of Trees



Provided  
The 6th annual Deck the Hall - Festival of Trees generated \$15,000 for Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) for Children of Atlantic, Cape May and Camden Counties.

event is back. This holiday staple was greatly missed during the pandemic. It is just one of the many ways that OVG360 and its employees give back to the community, and we are honored to be chosen as the beneficiary of this spirited event," said Terry Norton-Wright, CASA's director of development. "The feelings of goodwill that this event inspires give us a wonderful platform to raise awareness about the challenges facing children in foster care and the importance of having a CASA volunteer at their side every step of the way."

CASA for Children recruits, trains and supports citizen-volunteers who advocate for children in the community and ensures that a well-trained independent volunteer is able to voice timely and objective recommendations to the Family Court on behalf of a child.

A child with a CASA volunteer is:  
— Twice as likely to be adopted than to linger in long-term foster care  
— Half as likely to re-enter the foster care system  
— More likely to have a plan for finding a permanent home  
— More likely to have bet-

ter educational achievement  
In Atlantic, Cape May and Camden Counties last fiscal year, 464 children had a CASA volunteer, a trusted adult who will stick with them until their case is resolved. Hundreds of children in these counties are still in need of a volunteer.

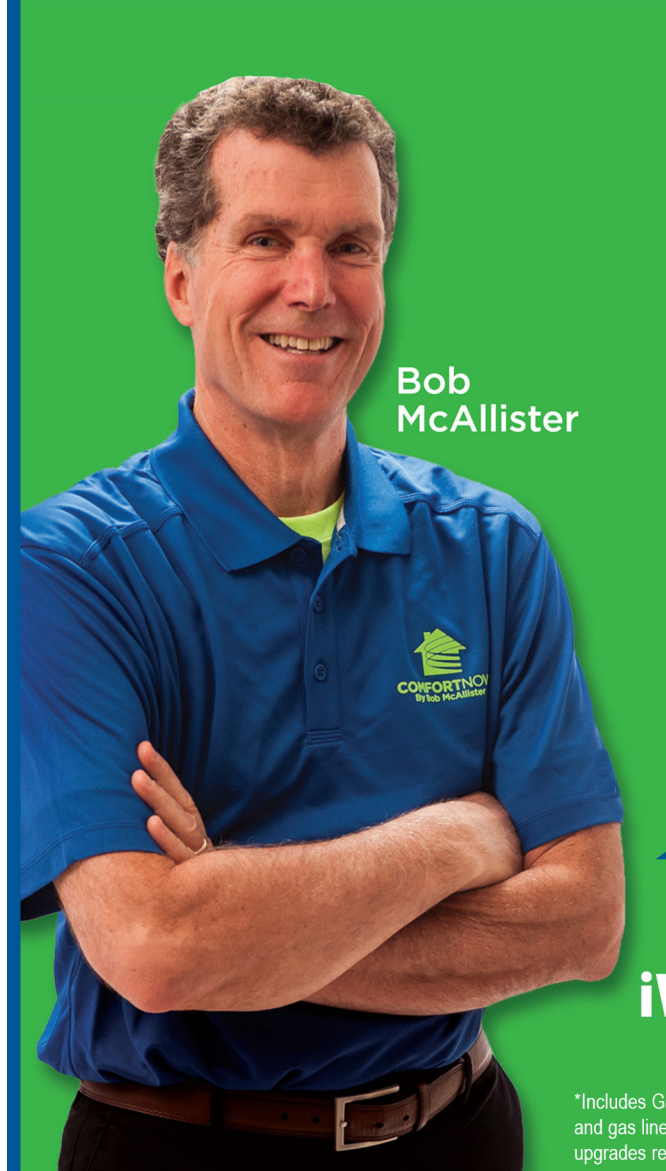
"Once again, we are absolutely humbled by the support of our partners and local business community who contributed to this year's event," said OVG360's Jim McDonald, general manager of Jim Whelan Boardwalk Hall. "OVG360 is dedicated to giving back to our local community. We are proud to help support the critical services CASA provides to children in our region and continuing this tradition for years to come."

To date, the annual event has generated \$73,000 for local community organizations. The event has generated \$67,000 total for CASA and in 2014 \$6,000 was raised for the Community FoodBank of New Jersey Southern Branch to support those in need.

Boardwalk Hall and the Atlantic City Convention Center are operated by OVG360 and owned and funded by the CRDA.

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