

West Cape may be getting fiber optic internet service

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

fiber optic internet provider wants access to the borough's right of way to provide service to residents.

Joe Haase of Planet Networks told Borough Commission on Jan. 25 that the 30-year-old company started in northern New Jersey and is now expanding in this region.

"We are actively building all sorts of types of fiber infrastructure throughout. We're starting in Atlantic County currently; we're actively permitting and building in Egg Harbor Township and Northfield," he said. "We plan on working our way south."

Planet Networks is not seeking to tear up roads or sidewalks but to occupy the space in the air between the utility poles, Haase said.

If the company needed to do further construction, it would seek permission from the borough, he said.

"We'll be following Route 9 coming down and we'll be building out the main roads as we first start and then we

disburse out to the individual neighborhoods and individual houses," Haase said.

Planet Networks would lease space on the poles from Atlantic City Electric and Verizon.

Mayor Carol Sabo asked if the fiber cables could be placed underground. Haase said the cost of burying cable would be 10 to 50 times more expensive.

He said Planet Networks was strictly internet and would not be installing infrastructure for cellphone service. Haase said they would not be hanging any sort of boxed equipment on utility poles.

The wires between the poles would measure a quarter-inch to 1 inch in diameter, he said. A device called a tap would hang between the wires on poles to provide service to individual homes, he said.

Telephone service

through the internet could also be provided with wired, "old school" phones, Haase said, adding it was not cost effective for Planet Network to provide television service by trying to compete with Comcast.

During public comment, resident John Gordon asked how many communications companies would be allowed to hang wires in the borough. "Next thing you know, there's going to be another three or four wires right in front of our houses hanging down," he said.

The state Board of Public Utilities does not allow municipalities to restrict the number of wires that can be mounted on utility poles, Haase said.

He said he could not offer a timeframe of when Planet Networks would be available in the borough since they were at the mercy of the owners of the utility poles,

but speculated the winter of 2024 as a date for service to start.

"If there's not enough space on the pole for us to attach currently, they either have to move the existing cables around or replace the pole itself," Haase said.

Resident Lynn Dudinsky asked if Planet Networks was providing service in other municipalities in southern New Jersey.

Haase said the company was not currently providing service in southern New Jersey but was under construction in Atlantic County.

He said service would also be offered to residents of Cape May Point.

Borough solicitor Erika Lezama-Simonson said she would examine Federal Communications Commission laws and have more information for Borough Commission at the next meeting.

For the perfect gift, come visit our
WILDWOOD BOUTIQUE

14 DAYS TIL VALENTINES DAY!

Petals

FLORAL DESIGN & GIFTS

202 East Rio Grande Avenue · Wildwood, NJ
www.petalswildwood.com · 609-523-9500

FLIGHT DECK
DINER Fly on in

OPEN DAILY • 7:30am – 2:00pm
Frequent Flyer? Join our **BREAKFAST CLUB**

Cape May Airport off Breakwater Road
609-886-1105 • Flightdeckdiner.com

CUP OF SOUP & HALF SANDWICH \$6.99
MON. - FRI. LUNCH COMBO

DISCOUNT HYDRAULICS CORP

HEAVY TRUCK & EQUIPMENT REPAIRS
Service Is What We Sell

210 Rt. 47 South, CMCH • 609-465-5344

WORK & LEISURE CLOTHING
2 LOCATIONS: SOMERS POINT & MAYS LANDING
www.SOMERSPOINTHUB.com

WINTER SALE • ALL JACKETS 20% OFF

Not valid with any other offer or prior purchases. EXPIRES 2-28-23

THIS VALENTINE'S DAY, GIVE THEM WHAT THEY REALLY WANT!

BUCKS 4 BOOTS

BRING IN YOUR OLD CLUNKERS & WE WILL GIVE YOU TOWARDS A NEW PAIR PLUS A FREE PAIR OF SOCKS

\$15

HUB WORK & LEISURE
SOMERS POINT 609-926-0688 • MAYS LANDING 609-625-2266
OFFER EXPIRES 2-28-23

SOMERS POINT • 609-926-0688
Acme / Petsmart Plaza
Rt. 9, Somers Point, NJ 08244

MAYS LANDING • 609-625-2266
Mays Landing Diner Shopping Center
Rt. 40, Mays Landing, NJ 08330

Grant may fund temporary floor at Convention Hall

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city is applying for a \$100,000 local recreation improvement grant from the state Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to purchase special flooring for Convention Hall to handle roller skating and potentially pickleball.

"We've been putting it in the budget for years for roller skating and possibly indoor pickleball," Deputy City Manager Lou Belasco said. "During the

wintertime, we could just put down the floor and then remove it when the season is over rather than continually having to resurface the floor every year."

At a Jan. 17 meeting, Deputy Mayor Lorraine Baldwin said the enabling resolution read, "insert name of park." She said she assumed the grant was for Kiwanis Park.

Councilwoman Maureen McDade noted the resolution did not specify what the city wished to do with the grant funds.

Council amended the res-

olution to specify the grant would be used for Convention Hall.

Council's resolution recognizes DCA may offer a lesser or greater amount of grant money and upon receipt of a fully executed agreement with DCA, the city authorizes the expenditure of the funds.

The DCA Local Improvement Grant is a competitive grant.

Funds will be allocated to each recipient to help cover costs associated with updating community centers, playgrounds, pools, fields,

walking or bicycle trails, rail trails, multi-sport courts, and recreational facilities; project development professional services costs; equipment costs including playground and recreation facilities equipment; and environmental remediation costs required to prepare recreation sites for use.

Gov. Phil Murphy appropriated \$25 million in the FY2023 budget for the Local Recreation Improvement Grant to support improvement and repairs to public recreation facilities.

County reports 228 new COVID cases, averaging 32 per day

Cape May County had 228 new cases of COVID last week according to Covidactnow.org. The county Health Department stopped reporting COVID cases as of June 2022. Covidactnow reported 21 hospital admissions per 100,000 persons in the county.

The risk level is high. Since many test for COVID at home without reporting positive cases to healthcare providers, the level is likely much higher.

According to the New York Times, which is monitoring Cape May County COVID cases, an average

of 32 cases per day were reported, a 42 percent increase from the average two weeks ago.

The Centers for Disease Control recommends wearing a mask indoors in Cape May County due to high community risk levels.

Statewide, 1,637 new con-

firmed cases via PCR testing were reported and 673 new probable cases by antigen testing and 15 deaths. As of Jan. 28, 67 of New Jersey's 71 hospitals reported 1,157 patients with confirmed or suspected cases of COVID with 45 patients on ventilators.

Cape May Zoning Board elects Hutchinson new chairwoman

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — During its annual reorganization meeting Jan. 26, the Zoning Board

elected a new chairperson and vice chairperson.

Diane Hutchinson resigned as chairwoman after selling her house with plans to move out of the county. The board elected Theresa Werner to replace her as chairwoman.

Sam Venuto was elected vice chairman.

The board renewed contacts with Rich King as board solicitor and Craig Hurless as board engineer. Hurless has served for 24 years in that capacity.

The board went into closed

session to discuss a pending lawsuit and a potential settlement. King said the board could not take action without holding a formal hearing before the public on a future date. No announcement was made by the board following the closed session.

City board of education seeks new member

CAPE MAY — The Cape May City Board of Education announced a vacancy for a board member position.

The person selected will serve as a member through Dec. 31.

Interested individuals must be a resident of Cape May for at least one year, and a U.S. citizen, at least 18 years old, be able to read and write and a registered voter in the district.

Candidates cannot be disqualified to vote, convicted of a disqualifying crime nor directly/indirectly interested in a contract

with, or a claim against, the board.

Qualified candidates should submit a letter of interest and a resume to John Thomas, business administrator/board secretary, by mail, fax, or email address below. Applications will be accepted until 4 p.m. Feb. 17.

Candidates will be offered the opportunity to make a three-minute statement at the Feb. 23 Board of Education work session meeting. More information about being a board member in New Jersey can be found at <http://bit.ly/3wi1sTT>



Picture by Dennis Flanagan



Pictured: The Hudson Family

The Cape May Point Science Center is proud to announce a new project tracking the American Robin.

One of the most numerous and familiar birds of North America is the American Robin. In the winter, the Cape May Peninsula is home to over 7 million Robins from far and wide. Robins use the area of the Cape May Peninsula as a winter stopover site, meaning they may spend a few days to months here following their migration from the breeding grounds to our north. Robins are generally considered facultative migrants, meaning they tend to only move as far as they need to feed on worms and berries, commonly following the frost line as the seasons change. The Cape May Point Science Center is partnering with Conservation Science Global for the Robin Project initiated by and under the supervision of Dr. David La Puma. The project will track robins with tiny cellular tracking devices produced by Cellular Tracking Technologies, enabling us to answer questions such as: For how long do individual robins stay in our locale? Under what weather conditions do they venture farther south or north, and how do they compare in their stopover habitat use to the myriad of other species being studied here, including raptors and owls?

Through this tracking study, we can learn more about the American Robin and what drives their behavior during winter in our region. Through a better understanding of their needs, we can work to keep common species common through effective and targeted conservation efforts. The project was funded by a generous donation from Mabeth and Dan Hudson Family.



101 Lehigh Avenue • Cape May Point
www.CapeMayPointScienceCenter.org