

# Township secures state grant for historic Foster House

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Lower Township received a \$38,850 grant from the New Jersey Historic Trust to conduct a study prior to restoration of the Judge Nathaniel Foster House on Bayshore Road.

At an April 15 Township Council meeting, Councilman Tom Conrad said the funds were the first step in getting the home remediated and “brought back to its former self.” The grant will fund the creation of design and construction documents, an architectural conservator report, a professional construction cost estimation, an archaeological investigation, an interpretative and furnishing

plan and a hazardous materials audit.

“Hopefully that gets moving along. We have some other monies waiting to start for refurbishing and repairing it that will then come in the fall after the study is done,” Conrad said.

The grant requires a match by the township of \$12,500.

According to the New Jersey Historic Trust, built around 1730, the Foster House is significant as a well-preserved, first period, heavy timber frame building that features exposed beams, original flush board walls and several original fireplaces.

The house's main block was remodeled around 1830 in the Federal style

and retains chair rails, mantels and door trim that resulted from the remodeling. It is one of the few remaining structures from the first period in the area originally known as Fishing Creek in Lower Township. The house is also locally significant as the residence of Nathaniel Foster, a respected leader who served as a justice of the peace for almost 30 years.

Foster's son fought in the American Revolution. Foster was appointed justice of the peace for Cape May County in 1739 and held that position for almost 30 years. When he died in 1769, he left his property to his son, Salathiel, and to his grandson, Reuben, the son of his deceased son George. The Foster House, located

at 1649 Bayshore Road, remained in ownership of the original family until 2006 when Isabella Foster Sakewicz passed away and the Cape May County Historical and Genealogical Society purchased it and stabilized the house for a decade. The home was purchased by the county Open Space Program and is on lease to Lower Township, which hopes to restore the house over the next decade either as a well preserved Colonial Period home or township historical museum.

The house needs a new roof and removal of asbestos shingles probably installed in the 1920s. Underneath the shingles is the home's original siding from the 1700s.



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Lower Township received a grant to study the conditions of the Judge Nathaniel Foster House on Bayshore Road prior to restoration efforts.

# Roads, Lake Lily in borough's plans for capital improvement

By JACK FICHTER  
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CAPE MAY POINT — Borough Commission introduced a bond ordinance appropriating \$1.7 million and authorizing the issuance of \$1.5 million in bonds for capital improvement projects.

At an April 11 meeting, Commissioner Bob Mullock offered an inventory of projects for the next six years. He said the borough acts very conservatively in anticipating grant money.

Mullock said projected costs of \$3.4 million in capital projects were funded by \$1.3 million in grants, leaving a balance of \$2.1 million

to be funded by the borough.

Capital improvements for Lake Lily have a cost estimate of \$525,000 with \$426,000 in grant funding, leaving a balance of \$98,200 for the borough, which was funded in 2016.

Lake Lily engineering fees of \$200,000 are being funded by the borough from 2019 to 2022 budget years.

All the cost of a \$75,000 emergency generator for the municipal building was funded by grants.

“This year, we will be doing Pearl and Brainard avenues in the fall,” Mullock said,

The cost is \$428,000 with a \$160,000 anticipated grant. Pearl Avenue renovations

total \$237,000 with \$158,000 in grants leaving a balance for the borough of \$79,000, which was budgeted from 2017 to 2020.

Ocean Avenue improvements are cost estimated at \$140,000 with \$139,000 in grant funding. Yale Avenue improvements, which includes removal of lead goosenecks, is cost estimated at \$690,000 with grant funding of \$175,000. Mullock said the borough should qualify for an additional \$200,000.

“We may be able to get that for 40 to 45 percent paid,” he said.

While the capital improvement budget includes \$750,000 for a public works

building, Mullock said there is no plan or location selected at this time.

“Just that we need it,” he said.

Mullock said the borough has a good surplus balance and it did not want to be caught with a lot of money in the bank that should have been spent for flood mitigation projects when a hurricane strikes.

He said the borough began with a balance for capital improvement projects of \$331,000. Even after completing the list of projects, with a capital surplus, the borough will end up with the same amount as it started, Mullock said.

“Our capital improvement

fund goes from \$331,000 to \$827,000, so we're well funded to get these projects done,” he said.

The \$827,000 balance is projected to occur in 2022.

During public comment, a resident noted the public works building was in the budget but there were no expenditures for 2019. Mullock said the borough was going to need a hurricane-protected building which would survive at least a Category 3 or Category 4 storm.

“When we put it in the budget, it shows us we can afford to do it,” he said.

Mullock said the question remains where to locate the building and what type of construction should be used.

“A lot of towns can have a 10-block area wiped out in a hurricane, Cape May Point cannot,” he said.

A building is needed to protect equipment in a location where it can safely access the streets, Mullock said. He said the borough

does not have a building that could survive a direct hit from a Category 2 hurricane.

The borough's firehouse is at a flood elevation of about 6.5 feet at the road and about 7.2 feet inside, Mullock said. The borough's municipal building would be completely surrounded by flood waters in a Category 2 hurricane, he said.

The borough's water tower, the public works area on Sunset Boulevard and the public works garage on Lighthouse Avenue are within 10 inches of each other as far as flood elevation, Mullock said.

“The fact is we need to have at least one, safe hurricane building,” he said.

Mullock said the borough would come up with a plan it hoped everyone would support.

Borough Administrator Steve O'Connor said the capital improvement plan was just an inventory of “projects in the pipeline or potentially in the pipeline.”

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## TIDES : April 24-May 1, 2019

| DATE | HIGH  |       | LOW   |       |
|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
|      | A.M.  | P.M.  | A.M.  | P.M.  |
| 24   | 12:09 | 12:41 | 6:30  | 6:28  |
| 25   | 1:00  | 1:38  | 7:25  | 7:23  |
| 26   | 1:56  | 2:40  | 8:23  | 8:24  |
| 27   | 2:56  | 3:43  | 9:21  | 9:26  |
| 28   | 3:56  | 4:40  | 10:15 | 10:25 |
| 29   | 4:52  | 5:30  | 11:03 | 11:18 |
| 30   | 5:42  | 6:14  | 11:45 |       |
| 1    | 6:27  | 6:54  | 12:06 | 12:24 |

## MOON PHASES

Last quarter, April 26 • new moon, May 4

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