

# Sheehan: Chamber should pay city costs for festival

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Each year on the last Saturday of October, the Chamber of Commerce of Greater Cape May holds Oktoberfest to draw visitors to Cape May into the shoulder season.

Part of Carpenters Lane is closed and transformed

into a German promenade with authentic music and food, while artisans sell crafts, antiques and collectibles.

Gatherings require city services and Deputy Mayor Stacy Sheehan asked City Council to make the business group reimburse the city for staffing and other costs.

In a 3-1 vote June 8, council approved a temporary allowance for open alcohol containers and public consumption of alcohol for Oktoberfest with a waiver for special event fees.

Sheehan said opening the street for drinking allows outside vendors to sell alcohol instead of having beer gardens operated by local establishments.

City Clerk Erin Burke said local establishments must apply for a special event permit to sell beer outside their licensed location as an extension of their premises. She said a beer garden would require a different permit.

Burke said a beer garden was suggested in Rotary Park but the idea was not supported by the city's police and fire departments. She said she was not aware of any establishments from outside Cape May planning

to sell alcohol at Oktoberfest.

"I think last year was also the first time we had open consumption throughout the whole event," Sheehan said. "Before, it was just in certain areas."

For the past 30 years, there has been flexibility in allowing the public to walk around and enjoy beverages at the event, unofficially, Burke said.

City Manager Mike Voll said no vendors from outside Cape May would be selling alcohol at Oktoberfest.

Sheehan said she has an issue with the chamber not paying for the cost of emergency workers and other city employees at the event. "This is a big event; it's going to require a lot of overtime," she said.

The chamber should at least pay the cost of the extra help that's needed

for the event, Sheehan said.

"There's a lot we already do for the chamber — the bus permits, they collect all the money from them; we charge them \$1 for rent — and I think when it comes to an event like this, which is being profited on, they should at least pay for the extra help that is needed to man this event," she said.

Council recently enacted an ordinance with different application fees for events for nonprofit organizations and profit-making businesses. A section of the ordinance stipulates that any costs incurred by the city associated with the events would be billed to the organization so the city does not incur any costs.

Burke said the ordinance had a caveat stating any applicant can request waiver of those fees from council. She said the city did not charge such fees in the

past.

"We're not talking a whole lot of money and it does bring in a lot of people for the event," Voll said.

Sheehan argued the city would be paying nine hours of overtime for police and emergency medical services.

"Also, alcohol should be contained to the area outside the premises, it shouldn't be open to walking around," she said.

She cast the lone vote against the resolution.

Councilman Shaine Meier said he appreciated all the work of the chamber in partnership with the city. Councilwoman Lorraine Baldwin said she concurred with Meier.

Mayor Zack Mullock said the chamber "did a ton of work for the city of Cape May and brought a lot of money to the city of Cape May."

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## Coastal engineer

Continued from Page A1

city had a plan, it could contact the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and congressional representatives for money. He said the request for qualifications should be crafted by the city.

The coastal engineer could help the city maintain its beaches, DeBlasio said.

"Right now, the city has a general permit. So, the city is able to do certain

things within the limit but if they got a CAFRA individual permit or what we call an IP, it would give the city more latitude to redistribute sand up and down the beach to flatten it out, knock down scarps, etc.," he said.

A CAFRA IP permit from the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) would be effective for five years and could be renewed for an additional five years, DeBlasio said.

He said it would take the

city six to eight months to obtain such a permit and cost about \$30,000.

Cape May Beach Patrol Chief Harry Back said a bad midsummer storm could render a beach unusable due to a cliff of sand.

DeBlasio said the city could request an emergency authorization to move sand in such a case. A coastal engineer can advise whether the city could move sand in the water below the mean high-water line, which would involve

a separate permit from the Army Corps, he said.

Beach Safety Advisory Committee member Sara Werner, a lieutenant on the CMBP, is preparing to shoot a new beach safety video this week. She submitted the script to the committee.

Steger said the video could be shown during Movies on the Beach and posted on the CMBP and city websites.

Baldwin said a contract to complete the P.A. system from Convention Hall to Poverty Beach for emergency announcements would likely be put out to bid in the fall. The city is awaiting state approval to install poles and wiring in the sand.

During public comment, former Beach Safety Advisory Committee chairman Dennis DeSatnick asked if a wireless P.A. system were being considered. Baldwin said a wired system is preferred because a wireless system would not have enough power.

DeSatnick asked if the telephone company had been contacted and if a wireless system had been recommended to City Council. Baldwin said the phone company had not been contacted nor had a wireless system been suggested.

He asked if U.S. Rep. Jeff Van Drew's office and the Army Corps of Engineers had been contacted in relation to correcting the surf zone drop off that has produced injuries to bathers. Baldwin said Van Drew's staff had been contacted.

DeSatnick asked if Baldwin had read a 1992 Army Corps report that suggested two angles on the jetty at the Cape May Inlet.

"That was the demonstration project that was being pushed to see if you could do it," he said. "And if you remember, the Army Corps has admitted their mistakes from 1911 when they did the jetty."

DeSatnick complimented the committees work on beach safety education in schools, updating beach safety booklets and videos. He said he was disappointed the city did not recognize National Beach Safety Week during the week prior to Memorial Day.

"I want to thank you for your efforts, you're doing a great job. I just think that realistically, you need the city to move," DeSatnick said.

The CMBP has scheduled an open house for 8:30 to 10 a.m. June 26 at its headquarters.



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