

Cape Island Year in Review

Continued from Page A2

the city will lease 33 vehicles for a term of up to 60 months at a total annual cost of \$393,240 with an estimated first year budget of \$395,740 inclusive of a one-time down payment with the city having an option to purchase the vehicles at the end of the lease for an estimated \$1 per vehicle through Enterprise's auction program.

— What began locally with an SUV abandoned on the beach at the Cove ended with a Horsham, Pa., woman charged with the murder of her 11-year-old son. Cape May police spotted the vehicle partially submerged at 3:30 a.m. April 11. The driver, Ruth DiRienzo-Whitehead, 50, allegedly killed her son after he went to sleep at about 9:30 p.m. April 10, then drove to the city and into the ocean just off Beach Avenue. According to authorities, after the vehicle was no longer operable, DiRienzo-Whitehead walked to the family's home in Wildwood Crest, where she was later taken into custody.

— Cape May Point Borough Commission approved its 2023 municipal budget that featured a .4-cent increase in the local purpose tax rate. The tax levy was increasing by \$41,000 and the tax rate from 32.9 cents to 33.3 cents per \$100 of assessed value. A total of \$1.5 million of the \$2.1 million budget was to be raised by local purpose tax. The tax increase was being driven by lifeguard and beach tag personnel salaries increasing by \$17,000 due to the increase in the minimum wage. The tax increase amounts to \$40 on a property valued at \$1 million.

— Council approved its 2023 municipal budget, which featured no increase in the local purpose tax rate, as well as an amendment to fund the salary of two new police officers. The city anticipated collecting \$4.9 million but actually realized \$7.6 million from room tax, beach tags fees and parking meters last year. Mayor Zack Mullock said the city has not had a tax increase in four years.

— City Council was moving forward with a plan to provide a 25-year lease to East Lynne Theatre Company (ELTC) for use of the Allen AME Church. The city bought the historic house of worship in 2021 following a fire in 2019 that damaged the steeple, bell tower and parts of the interior. As part of the agreement, ELTC proposes a framework for financial support for the continued restoration and preservation of the church and continued recognition of its historical significance. ELTC will pay the city \$1 per year for the lease, which notes the property may be used for the limited purpose of performing arts programs. The church would remain available to the city as a public facility mostly during the off season of ELTC.



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Fund for Cape May founder Curtis Bashaw, center, cuts a ceremonial ribbon July 5 to dedicate the new arches erected on the Promenade.

— If construction is complete and it passes state inspections, Shore House Canna would open around July 4, becoming West Cape May's and Cape May County's first adult use cannabis dispensary. Reconstruction of the former Ripple Root gift shop was under way at 124 Sunset Blvd.

— While spending is up, taxpayers will see a reduction in the local purpose tax rate from Cape May City Elementary School due to an increase in ratables and equalized property values. Total ratables in Cape May are \$2.9 billion, up \$22 million from 2022. The local purpose tax rate dropped .5 cents from 5.3 cents per \$100 of assessed property value to 4.8 cents. The tax levy totals \$1.9 million, a 2 percent increase. State aid remained the same as 2022 for transportation, special education and security purposes while school choice aid increased from \$168,576 to \$194,004. Military impact aid totaled \$1.2 million.

— The city's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) approved an update of its design standards for restoration and new construction for the first time in more than 20 years. On May 15, Steven Smolyn, Ripple Root gift shop was under way at 124 Sunset Blvd.

— The city received a \$400,000 check from the county to be used for infrastructure projects, part of \$6.4 million in grant awards to all county municipalities. The grants are to be used for priority drinking water, storm water and sanitary sewer infrastructure projects in each of the 16 municipalities in the county.

— At a May 15 meeting, City Council hired Paul Dietrich for three years as full-time city engineer. His duties will include supervising the performance of city projects, oversight of the Community Ratings System — which affects flood insurance rates for homeowners — and serv-

ing as flood plain administrator and municipal housing liaison. Dietrich will be paid a salary of \$130,000 per year.

— Borough Commission decided not to expand sanitary sewer service to homes on Second Avenue and parts of Sunset Boulevard and Third Avenue in West Cape May. The project would have comprised about 68 properties with an estimated cost of \$1.6 million.

alcohol and cannabis and prohibited acts related to noise and nuisance conditions. The ordinance makes the named violations a

breach of the peace, which can result in a six-month driver's license suspension

Cape Island, Page A7

JUNE

— City Council introduced an ordinance dealing with breach of peace to head off problems with groups of juveniles taking place in other towns in the county. The ordinance states prohibited acts are the public consumption of

Petals
FLORAL DESIGN & GIFTS

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

MILESTONES BAPTISM BIRTHDAY OFFICE PARTY BABY SHOWER

JUST BECAUSE RETIREMENT HOLIDAY PARTY GRADUATION

NEW NEIGHBOR ANNIVERSARY ENGAGEMENT PROMOTIONS

New Jersey Vision.org

Cold Spring Grange Restaurant #132

Now booking for your special event

735 Seashore Rd., Cape May, NJ 609-884-0114. hcsv.org

Proceeds benefit HCSV Foundation, a non-profit living history museum

MAY

TIDES: Jan. 3-10, 2024

DATE	HIGH		LOW	
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
3	12:47	12:41	6:30	7:00
4	1:34	1:30	7:24	7:41
5	2:27	2:27	8:26	8:29
6	3:23	3:31	9:31	9:22
7	4:14	4:29	10:29	10:14
8	5:03	5:22	11:23	11:04
9	5:52	6:15	12:14	11:55
10	6:42	7:08	1:03	

MOON PHASES

Last quarter, Jan. 4 • new moon, Jan. 11

Cape May Star and Wave

167 YEARS OLD • 1854-2022

CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE (ISSN 519-020)
Volume 170 Number 1

Published weekly by Sample Media, Inc.,
963 Lenape Drive, Lower Township, NJ 08204

Published Weekly (52 times a year)

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE: By mail for \$42 a year; \$75 for two years; \$22 for six months. Periodical Postage at Cape May Court House, N.J. and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to the Cape May Star and Wave, P.O. Box 2427, Cape May, N.J. 08204.

CAPE 47 LUMBER

WILDWOOD LOCATION HAS FULL LINE OF
TOOLS • HARDWARE • LUMBER • DRYWALL
WOLF PVC DECKING, TRIM BOARD & RAILING

WE HAVE WHAT YOU NEED!

TARP SALE
Huge Assortment

HEAVY DUTY 6ft High x 8ft Wide
STOCKADE FENCING
\$69.99

WE SPECIALIZE IN
DRYWALL DELIVERY
7-STORY BOOM
DELIVERIES AVAILABLE

TAMKO DIMENSIONAL SHINGLES
\$105.00 per Sq. Ft.
WOLF PVC DECKING
IN STOCK

3% SALES TAX WILDWOOD



416 STATE HWY. 47 S., GREEN CREEK
609-889-9090

101 ROBERTS AVE. WILDWOOD
609-522-8395

MON. - FRI. 7:30AM - 5PM
CLOSED SATURDAY & SUNDAY

MON. - FRI. 7:30AM - 5PM
SAT. 8AM - 4PM • CLOSED SUNDAY

EVENTS at Cape May County Library



Featured Event in January 2024:

Vision Board Workshop
Tuesday Jan. 9th, 6pm-7pm
Court House Library

☆ PLEASE VISIT www.cmclibrary.org ☆
TO LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR FUN, INFORMATIVE, AND FREE EVENTS!

CAPE MAY COUNTY LIBRARY

• Cape May Court House • Cape May City • Lower Township •
• Sea Isle City • Stone Harbor • Upper Township •
• Wildwood Crest • Woodbine •

Adult Events Department
adultevents@cmclibrary.org
(609) 463-6350 x700

[Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/cmcountylibrary)
[Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/cmclibrary)
[Twitter](https://www.twitter.com/cmclibrary)

@cmcountylibrary @cmclibrary