

City Council seats two new members, moves meeting time



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE
Deputy Mayor Shaine Meier receives his oath of office from City Clerk Patricia Harbora on Jan. 1 at City Hall.



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE
Councilwoman Stacy Sheehan receives the oath of office from state Superior Court Judge Louis Belasco.



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE
Councilman Zack Mullock receives the oath of office from his father, Robert Mullock.

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Two new members of City Council received their oaths of office Jan. 1 along with a re-elected councilman beginning his second four-year term.

Newcomers Zack Mullock and Stacy Sheehan took their seats on council on New Year's Day in a packed City Hall auditorium. Shaine Meier received his oath to begin his second term. Mullock thanked his wife, Justine, "for picking up the slack" while he serves the city. "If I listen to my wife's advice, I will serve the city very well," he said.

In addition, Mullock thanked the citizens of Cape May for electing him to council.

Sheehan also thanked the voters of Cape May for electing her to council. She said she was eager and ready to serve and looked forward to working with the other members of council.

"I think together this council can face any challenge and find the best solution to those challenges," Sheehan said.

Councilwoman Patricia Hendricks was elected by council to serve a deputy mayor. A moment of silence was held for former mayor and councilman William G. Gaffney, who passed away Dec. 28.

Meier said the Public Safety Building Advisory Committee moved forward under Gaffney's leadership to choose an architect for the project. He said he felt honored to follow in the footsteps of Gaffney and former mayor Jerry Inderwies Sr., who passed away in October.

Hendricks said she wished Gaffney were present at the meeting to celebrate the new council. She described Gaffney as principled, energetic and a steward of the community.

Council reappointed Frank Corrado as solicitor. Erin Burke was reappointed as deputy city clerk. Hendricks was appointed as a Class

III member of the Planning Board.

Mullock was appointed to the Washington Street Mall Business Improvement District Management Company Board of Directors. In addition, he was appointed a council liaison to the Historic Preservation Commission. Meier was appointed as liaison to the Shade Tree Commission.

Hendricks was appointed as council liaison to the Environmental Commission. Michael Sorenson was appointed as municipal public defender. Sheehan was appointed as a regular member and council liaison to the Municipal Buildings and Properties Advisory Commit-

tee and as council liaison to the Pet Advisory Committee.

Council approved starting its work session meetings at 4 p.m. on the first Tuesday

of the month. Work sessions formerly began at 6 p.m. The second meeting of the month, on the third Tuesday, will retain a start time of 6 p.m.

Hank's Sauce founders visit West Cape school

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — Two local entrepreneurs who turned a hot sauce recipe into a business and a restaurant in Sea Isle City told their story to students Monday at West Cape Elementary School.

Hank's Sauce principals Brian "Hank" Ruxton and Matt Pittaluga are partnering with the school on its new STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) lab to teach plant science, food chemistry and the art of entrepreneurship to students in kindergarten through the sixth grade.

While both have worked in restaurants, surfed together and attended Flagler College in St. Augustine, Fla., where the original Hank's Sauce recipe was perfected, Ruxton has cooking expertise while Pittaluga is a graphics and marketing whiz.

The sauce is sold in more than 100 ShopRite and Acme markets along with smaller outlets and on-line. Pittaluga said Ruxton would make the sauce for his own use but as he shared it with friends, its popularity began to grow. At the same time, Pittaluga as a graphics major needed a product for his portfolio.

Ruxton describes Hank's Sauce as a hot sauce that is not overly hot. "I hated hot sauce," Pittaluga said. "I was very bland. I didn't really like spicy, but there was something about the sauce I really thought was different, it was just packed with flavor."

The ingredients are lo-



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE
Hank's Sauce principals Brian 'Hank' Ruxton, left, and Matt Pittaluga share their knowledge of entrepreneurship and food chemistry with students at West Cape May Elementary.

cally sourced, Ruxton said.

After graduating from college, Ruxton and Pittaluga decided to move back home to Sea Isle City and began making the sauce. Ruxton started growing peppers in his backyard. They developed a second flavor with cilantro and a hotter version with habanero peppers.

Developing a sauce called "Camouflage" was a trial-and-error method, Ruxton said.

"You're not always going to hit a homerun," he said. "You are going to mess up, and every time you mess up, you're going to learn from it."

Even with a great product, you must find a way to make people want to buy it, Ruxton said.

Necessity is said to be the mother of invention. The entrepreneurs needed a commercial kitchen in which to produce the sauce,

so they started a restaurant from scratch, also called Hank's Sauce. The restaurant had mostly end-of-week hours initially since the kitchen was needed to cook the sauce, according to Pittaluga.

"We went right to farmers markets, festivals and things that were real cheap to get our product in front of people's faces," Pittaluga said.

He said a ShopRite executive purchased a bottle of Hank's Sauce at a farmers market, leading to the supermarkets selling the product.

Having contacts in commercial fishing, restaurants and bakery businesses locally also helped get their product in stores, Pittaluga said.

After a few years of producing everything by hand in 20-gallon pots and not finding a co-packer they liked, they constructed

their own building and began cooking in 200-gallon kettles, he said.

When starting a business, you must work hard and then work even harder, according to Pittaluga.

"And then when you are working harder, you have to work even harder," Ruxton said.

He said they are now able to make as many as 1,000 cases of sauce per day. While they have pondered applying to television's Shark Tank for greater expansion, Pittaluga said they would not want to give up a portion of their company to do so.

In addition to learning the business of specialty sauces, West Cape May Elementary students are experimenting with food chemistry, sustainable gardening and plant science in their enrichment and STEM classes. Older students, working with enrichment teacher Paige Calabro, are making their own West Cape May secret sauce.

The STEM lab is growing Datil peppers from St. Augustine for Hank's founders and continuing to focus on the science of sustainable food, including how to remove heat from peppers.

The entire school grows in its own greenhouse and gardens. This year, with a focus on the Datil peppers, they will be growing tomatillos and other peppers, cilantro, arugula, lettuces, carrots, nasturtiums, different types of parsley and other produce.

Teacher Cindy Baldacchini said Ruxton and Pittaluga have demonstrated a start-up company does not have to be a tech industry.



FISH MARKET

FRIDAY, JANUARY 11TH
thru SUNDAY, JANUARY 13TH

FRESH FLORIDA SHRIMP
(21-25 CT.)
\$9.50/LB.

MACARONI AND CHEESE
WITH LOBSTER MEAT
\$6.95 EACH

TAKE OUT SPECIALS

FRIED SHRIMP PLATTER

Served with baked potato
or french fries & cole slaw
(regular price \$12)

\$6.95 EACH

Good Only Wednesday, January 9, 2019
at the Take-Out counter



FRIDAY, JANUARY 11TH
thru SATURDAY, JANUARY 12TH

FRIED OYSTER PLATTER

served with baked macaroni
and cheese & stewed tomatoes
\$12.95

BROILED OR FRIED CRAB CAKE PLATTER

served with baked potato
or french fries & coleslaw
\$11.95

APPETIZER SPECIAL

OYSTERS ROCKEFELLER

\$7.95

BUY 1 GET 1 FREE SEAFOOD COMBO PLATTER

Good for Sunday, January 13, 2019 ONLY!

BROILED or FRIED
SEAFOOD COMBINATION
FILET OF FISH
DEILED CLAM,
SHRIMP, SCALLOPS
served with baked potato or
french fries & cole slaw - \$14.95

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