

City proposes hiring surf school instructor concessionaire

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — “Everybody’s gone surfin’, surfin’ Cape May, N.J.” That’s not the correct lyrics for the Beach Boys’ hit record “Surfin’ USA,” but young folks in the city will have the opportunity to wax their boards and tell their teacher “we’re surfing.” The city is seeking a vendor to operate a surf school. City Council tabled the hiring of a surf school “instructor concessionaire” through the competitive bidding process at a March 5 meeting. The contract could run one to five years.

Resident Jules Rauch asked where the surfing school would be located. Deputy Mayor Lorraine Baldwin said the school would use the Queen Street beach. He said he had concerns if the contract ran for five years without an opportunity to adjust the contract, especially if the demand for the school is more than four or five students. City solicitor Chris Gillin-Schwartz said the goal was to try the surf school for a year

with the city having an option to extend the contract. “It’s a new concept and I think the Recreation Department thought this would really be a positive thing for the city, to try it out and then if it turns out to be a positive thing, it would give the city the opportunity to extend it or expand it or whatever the city deems appropriate at that time,” he said. Rauch said he was concerned someone next would want to open a sailing school in Cape May. “These are all positive things, but we have a limited

amount of beach and we’ve got an increasing population,” he said. The city is not obligated to open a kayak or sailing school, it’s just surfing this year, Gillin-Schwartz said. Baldwin said she thought a surf school in Cape May was a great idea, but she had questions about insurance coverage and hours of operation. Gillin-Schwartz said the surf school would follow the same insurance and indemnification requirements of other concessionaires along the beach as required by the Joint Insurance Fund.

The city would have the option of closing the school on a day of rough surf, he said. The operation would not interfere with the beach patrol, Gillin-Schwartz said. “Are they also required to go through any criminal background checks in advance?” asked Baldwin. “I would want to make sure that’s a condition of any company we contracted with; they’re going to be dealing with children.” Gillin-Schwartz said the vendor would not be a city

employee and more than likely an established surf school would bid on the contract and would be held responsible for its employees. Baldwin said she was uncomfortable with not having language in the contract about hiring practices. Gillin-Schwartz said language could be included in the contract that the surf school operator would meet or exceed the city’s hiring practices. Council expects to revisit the enabling resolution at its next meeting.



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

A surfer attacks a wave March 10 at Queen Street beach in Cape May, future site of a surf school, taking advantage of 30 mph winds and 3- to 5-foot seas.

Railbike operator to lease part of Welcome Center

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city awarded a one-year, \$12,000 lease to Revolution Rail for a portion of the Welcome Center. The company plans to put an information desk in an unused space in the northwest section of the building. Revolution Rail rents rail bikes for use on railroad tracks from the Welcome Center ending at the bridge over the Cape May Canal. Cape May Seashore Lines has not operated a train into Cape May for more than a decade due to damage to the swinging railroad bridge over the Cape May Canal, effectively cutting off Cape May from rail service from the mainland.

The Chamber of Commerce of Greater Cape May rents the second floor of the Welcome Center. Revolution Rail operates 16 railbikes on the tracks from the Welcome Center to the approach to the Cape May Canal. The leases are technically a sublease since the building is owned by New Jersey Transit, with the city holding the first lease. The lease with Revolution Rail may be renewed for four additional one-year terms with a 3 percent annual increase. At a March 5 City Council meeting, Dennis Crowley, chairman of the Municipal Taxation and Revenue Advisory Com-

mittee (MTRAC), said the committee has been concerned about the fair and equitable establishment of fees for services rendered and whether those fees should be escalated over time in order “to avoid the prospect of them becoming stale through inaction over the course of a decade or so.” He said the 3 percent escalation clause on the lease with Revolution Rail falls into a trap the city found itself in with other contracts that fail to keep up with inflation. Crowley said MTRAC recommended escalation clauses would be calculated by something akin to cost of living index or labor statistics. City solicitor Chris Gil-

lin-Schwartz said the lease provides that any extensions of the lease with Revolution Rail are at the election of council. “It provides the opportunity for a 5-year term, but because we’re the tenant essentially of NJ Transit, there has to be an escape route for the city to get out of deals like this and to evaluate it on a year-by-year basis,” he said. Gillin-Schwartz said when a city lease is being offered, the escalation clause can be tied to the Consumer Price Index.

Family Promise launches fundraiser

NORTH CAPE MAY — Family Promise of Cape May County is launching a Community Match Challenge, inviting local businesses, organizations, and community members to donate during the month of March. All donations will go to support their mission to keep working homeless families together during times of crisis by providing safe shelter, meals and support services needed to educate, encourage, and empower families in their quest to re-establish their individual pride and independence. Michael Craig, owner of

the Washington Inn, has agreed to match any donation during the month of March up to \$10,000. Family Promise is hoping this will stimulate and enhance donations during the month of March for anyone who wishes to support their non-profit organization during these challenging times. Family Promise is also building a network of landlords that would be willing to keep their property affordable for the families they serve. All Family Promise families are required to work, are pre-screened, and tested for drug use before

being accepted into their program. Many families fall into homelessness due to job loss, sickness, the recent influx of Airbnb’s, rent increases and long-term landlords wanting to sell their properties. Family Promise is asking landlords to make a difference during Cape May County’s affordable housing crisis. Visit familypromisecmc.org to pledge or donate. Family Promise of Cape May County is a fully recognized 501(c)3 exempt organization. Donations are fully tax-deductible.

Service area to be named for Willis

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

OCEAN VIEW — The tradition of naming service centers after influential residents continues with Cape May County’s Ocean View service area being named for actor Bruce Willis. The New Jersey Turnpike Authority approved the naming at the request of the New Jersey Hall of Fame. Other service areas in the state are named in honor of Whitney Houston, Frank Sinatra, Jon Bon Jovi, Vince Lombardi and Connie Chung. In 2021, Gov. Phil Murphy announced nine service areas would be named for notable New Jerseyans. “This is about putting New Jersey greatness on full display,” Murphy said. “This is the first part of an extended statewide exhibition of heroes throughout our state. From military heroes on the Battleship New Jersey to historical figures on the New Jersey Turnpike to science and technology trailblazers at Newark Penn Station, New Jerseyans will find pride in our contributions to society and the world.” The service area was originally to be named for author Toni Morrison but her family did not grant rights. Willis was a graduate of Penns Grove High School. His television credits include “Moonlighting” with Cybill Shepherd. Willis’ motion picture credits in-

clude “Pulp Fiction,” “The Sixth Sense,” “Unbreakable,” “Die Hard” and “Look Who’s Talking.” Along with the name, an exhibit about Willis will be installed in the service center building. Last year, his family announced Willis was diagnosed with frontotemporal dementia, causing him to retire from acting.

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DATE	HIGH		LOW	
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
13	11:09	11:32	4:48	4:59
14		12:01	5:45	5:49
15	12:25	12:56	6:45	6:42
16	1:21	1:55	7:48	7:39
17	2:22	3:03	8:55	8:41
18	3:22	4:17	10:07	9:51
19	4:43	5:21	11:10	10:56
20	5:41	6:12	12:01	11:50

MOON PHASES

New moon, March 10 • first quarter, March 17

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