

# HPC to hold public outreach on updated standards

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Members of the Zoning Board were presented with copies of the city's new Historic Design Standards that update earlier versions and provide information in a more user-friendly format with color illustrations.

Steven Smolyn, of Architectural Heritage Consultants, who compiled the book, addressed the board via a Zoom call Aug. 24. He said many members of the Zoning Board were probably familiar with the previous version of the standards adopted in 2002.

The new standards took effect on Aug. 16. Smolyn said the city's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) web page has been revamped. The third phase of the project is community outreach, he said.

The HPC will hold three public events to provide information on the regula-

tions. An information session for real estate agents is scheduled for 2 p.m. Sept. 14 at Convention Hall and a session for homeowners at 6 p.m. A Zoom meeting for architects is set for 7 p.m. Sept. 28.

The update began in February with a subcommittee of 15 persons, including members of the zoning and planning boards and City Council. The HPC approved a draft of the new standards in April and the final version in May; City Council finalized it in July.

Smolyn said historic preservation domestically can trace its roots to the 1966 National Historic Preservation Act from which the secretary of the interior developed standards for rehabilitation in the 1970s.

"It was also at that time, Cape May published a really early and important preservation document called the 'Cape May Handbook,'" he said, noting he sourced material from that publication.

The HPC standards were updated in 1990 and the first historic design standards were published in 2002. Smolyn said in the past 20 years, the secretary of the interior has updated its standards for rehabilitation and provided guidance on flood mitigation and sustainability.

He said most of the text of Cape May's design standards is still intact from previous versions.

"We've really only made cosmetic updates to bring them to current standards and in compliance with the 2017 secretary of the interior's standards," Smolyn said.

The standards cover roofing, exterior cladding, windows, porches and entrances, lighting, doors, sites and streetscapes, walls, yards, storefronts, commercial lighting and signage, accessibility, mechanical and utility equipment, solar panels,

flood mitigation and how to raise a building in the historic district, he said.

Smolyn said a section addressing additions to homes has been greatly expanded. He said some homes on smaller lots cannot be expanded without destroying their historic integrity.

A section on new construction has been expanded in the guidelines as well as relocating homes and demolition, he said.

The earlier standards were printed with a lot of text and black and white illustrations. The new standards are easier to follow and hyperlinked in the online version, Smolyn said. The regulations are available on the city's website in the HPC section.

Ordinances are referenced along with state and federal resources. The book designates standards for properties that contribute to Cape May's historic district

and more lenient standards for properties that do not contribute.

Smolyn said the new construction section of the standards addresses proper site placement, height, massing, proportion and scale, architectural features and materials. He said those components of new construction come from the federal standards and guidance documents from the secretary of the interior.

"We've taken that and kind of customized that to Cape May's unique building environment," Smolyn said. Architectural styles are

depicted in the regulations with character-defining features.

"The intent of this is to make sure when someone comes with a Queen Anne property to the Historic Preservation Commission to make sure they are not altering any of these character-defining features to the point where they are no longer recognizable," he said.

Brochures providing a general synopsis of information will be available at City Hall. The project was sponsored by a grant from the state Historic Preservation Office.



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

## West Cape May Tomato Festival

The Capers entertain during the West Cape May Tomato Festival on Sept. 2 in Backyard Park.



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

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|------|------|------|-------|-------|
|      | A.M. | P.M. | A.M.  | P.M.  |
| 6    | 1:27 | 2:00 | 7:17  | 8:23  |
| 7    | 2:31 | 3:03 | 8:15  | 9:30  |
| 8    | 3:39 | 4:08 | 9:18  | 10:34 |
| 9    | 4:44 | 5:07 | 10:19 | 11:31 |
| 10   | 5:41 | 5:59 | 11:15 |       |
| 11   | 6:29 | 6:43 | 12:19 | 12:05 |
| 12   | 7:11 | 7:23 | 1:00  | 12:49 |
| 13   | 7:49 | 8:00 | 1:36  | 1:30  |

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Last quarter, Sept. 6 • new moon, Sept. 15

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