

Cape May Star and Wave

161ST YEAR NO. 3 CAPE MAY, N.J. SERVING AMERICA'S NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CITY WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 14, 2015 75¢



HOUSE OF THE WEEK

Page B1



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Page A8



LCMR objects to paying cost of special elections

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

ERMA — The Lower Cape May Regional School District is appealing a state Superior Court judge's decision ordering the district to pay the \$42,000 cost of a Dec. 9 special election that asked voters in three municipalities whether Cape May should be permitted to withdraw from the district. Lower Cape May Regional Superintendent Christopher Kobik said the

district is opposed to paying the cost of the special election because it felt "rather than spend money on providing an opportunity for one of our constituents to get out of the district, we felt that spending that money on educating students is what the taxpayers intended when they provided that money to us."

The regional school district paid \$42,000 to the county Board of Elections, so a favorable appeal would provide the school district with a

refund, he said.

"My focus is and will remain on the education of students and similarly try to secure all resources necessary for that main goal," Kobik said.

A joint letter on behalf of Lower Township and the Borough of West Cape May states, "It is significant that the special school election of December 9, 2014 was approved by the Board of Review and called by the county superintendent, not by the Lower Cape May Regional Board of Education."

It notes that Lower Township and the West Cape May agree with the appellant that the applicable statutes contemplate that where a board of education of a school district calls the date on which a special school election is conducted, that fact makes the school board responsible to pay for the expense of conducting such a special school election.

"The December 9, 2014 special election was not called by the Lower Cape May Regional school board.

The proposal for Cape May City's withdrawal from the Lower Cape May Regional School District was defeated by a landslide of opposition to the proposition where 91.5% of the voters rejected Cape May City's attempt to withdraw from the regional district," states the letter.

Point two in the letter states, "At the incipient stage of this political controversy, the Township of Lower, See Special elections, Page A5

Lower MUA soon will hire top executive

By BETTY WUND
Special to the Star and Wave

VILLAS — The Lower Township Municipal Utilities Authority (MUA) Board of Commissioners held its annual reorganization meeting on a bitter cold night Jan. 7.

Board Chairman Brian O'Connor said that the board is in the final stages of hiring a new executive director. He said there are four viable candidates.

"By the next meeting the position should be filled," O'Connor said.

He said acting Director Craig Loper has been performing many duties.

"He's been doing a wonderful job. This puts an added (administrative) burden on his work," O'Connor said. "The administrative part of it is very difficult."

The MUA's new VAC-CON vacuum truck was outside and available for inspection but no one wanted to fight the cold to see it. The truck is the latest purchase of the MUA to replace an older model. The cost was \$365,970.

In financial business, a payment of \$303,792 from the Water and Sewer Capital Improvement Fund was approved. It was paid to South State Inc. for final roadway restoration for water main trenches. A \$3,344 payment to Remington Vernick & Walberg Engineers for inspection of road-work restoration was also approved.

Chris Eaton, representing Remington Vernick & Walberg, reported that he, Roper and Commissioner Pete Bitting are finalizing plans for the Schellenger's Landing sewer project. The plans will be submitted

See Executive director, Page A2



Jack fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Sign of the times

The Washington Street Mall in Cape May was devoid of shoppers and walkers on a cold and blustery morning Friday, Jan. 9. While some stores are open weekdays, many more are open on weekends. The quiet days of January allow shop owners time for renovations or vacation in warmer climes.

City Council weighs rules for outdoor food, drinks

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — An increasing number of restaurants in the city are offering outdoor dining. Some have sought approval, while others have simply added tables and chairs to outdoor space.

During the Jan. 6 City Council meeting, City Manager Bruce MacLeod said the city will revisit how it manages outdoor seating for restaurants.

"We find that this is happening in a combination of both private properties and public properties," he said. "In the case of public properties, the most notable locations are on the Washington Street Mall and Promenade, where we do have what we call patio permits that allow for outdoor dining."

He said outdoor dining was extending to patios, porches, decks, open lawn space and common areas such as sidewalks. Existing regulations pertain mostly to the mall and Promenade under the municipal code, which has minimal references to outdoor dining, MacLeod said.

In the C-1 primary business district, municipal code allows eating establishments to have outdoor tables provided such facilities are portable and within 10 feet of the principle building, he said.

MacLeod said there have been a few instances in which a business has gone before

See Outdoor food, drinks, Page A2

Pipe bursts in Cape May Convention Hall

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City firefighters were called to Convention Hall at 3:37 p.m. Jan. 8 to deal with a water leak in the front vestibule of the building. Water appeared to be leaking from the ceiling and flowing down the front steps of the building, then freezing on the Promenade.

City Manager Bruce MacLeod said a pipe from Convention Hall's fire-suppression system in the front foyer of the building began to drip the morning of Jan. 8. The city called a contractor for repairs but before they could arrive,

the pipe burst, creating a major leak, he said.

"We had to bring the Fire Department and Public Works out to shut that water supply off so we could get it under control and start to get it cleaned up," MacLeod said.

He said a contractor made a temporary repair but needed to order parts for a permanent fix.

MacLeod said it was possible the pipe break was the result of very cold weather. Roller skating inside the facility for the weekend was not canceled. He said most of the water that flowed from the broken pipe was contained to the foyer area.



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Members of the Cape May Fire Department work on a leak at Convention Hall. "We had to bring the Fire Department and Public Works out to shut that water supply off," City Manager Bruce MacLeod said.

Moffatt now mayor in Cape May Point

By BETTY WUND
Special to the Star and Wave

CAPE MAY POINT — Robert Moffatt, starting a second four-year term as a Cape May Point commissioner, chaired the first meeting of the year Jan. 8 as the new mayor.

Moffatt, who replaced Anita vanHeeswyk as mayor, read a statement about his feelings and goals for the borough government, saying he has plans he hopes to implement for a better borough.

"As we move into 2015, the Board of Commissioners is committed to working together. We are committed

to making sure that we are following the successful path that previous commissioners have laid the ground work for," he said.

"We are heading into budget season. The changes in the minimum wage will affect an increase in the budget. With the success of our beach season last year, we will certainly need to be keeping (costs and budget) in balance. I am pleasantly surprised by the number of exceptional applications the borough has received for code enforcement officer. The deadline is

See Moffatt, Page A3



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