

Cape May Star and Wave

161ST YEAR NO. 42 CAPE MAY, N.J. SERVING AMERICA'S NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CITY WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14, 2015 75¢



HOUSE OF THE WEEK

Page B1



TRANS-ATLANTIC ROWER VISITS UTSCH'S MARINA

Page A8



City orders feasibility study on altering beach slope

OUR VIEW

Cape May must fix beach slope before next summer.
Page A6

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council has authorized a feasibility study with a cost estimate to determine what steps could be taken to eliminate a sharp drop off along the waterline on Cape May beaches due to sand replenishment.

Known as a beach slope or shorebreak, it may be responsible for more than 200 spinal injuries that have taken place

on the city's beaches since 2001.

At an Oct. 6 City Council meeting, engineer Tom Thornton, of Hatch Mott MacDonald, said measures could include grading the beach or placing material in the surf zone. He said there may be long-term solutions that would exceed local funding for such work.

"We would recommend before you proceed with the actual work, that you conduct a feasibility study to make sure that what we're doing makes sense, make

sure that it's consistent with the knowledge that's out there relating to slopes and how they relate to injuries," Thornton said.

Mayor Edward Mahaney said he expected the feasibility for council's Oct. 20 meeting. Councilman Jack Wichterman said 700 truckloads of sand were moved three or four years ago to help correct the beach slope problem. In October 2011, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers undertook a backpassing operation, taking sand from behind

Convention Hall and depositing it on the Wilmington Avenue beach. The procedure was referred to as a "demonstration process" to see if it worked.

"I really don't have a heck of a lot of faith in what we've heard in the past from the Army Corps of Engineers or DEP (Department of Environmental Protection)," Wichterman said. "I don't think they know how to correct the problem."

Thornton said for the preliminary scope of work from Hatch

Mott MacDonald, the firm would acquire and review historical beach profiles from various sources such as the Stockton University monitoring program and Army Corps of Engineer design templates and jurisdictional boundaries. He said there is a particular berm width and slope.

Thornton said the city could not do anything within the Army Corps jurisdiction "without jumping through some real

See Beach slope, Page A3



Michael Zuccato/Special to the CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Keeping an eye on Cape May beaches

A drone provides a view of a new section of beach at Cape May's cove created by the coastal storm in early October. The photo was shot by Michael Zuccato using an unmanned aerial system, or drone. More images are available at michaelzphotography.com or michaelzphotography on Facebook. Cape May moved forward last week with plans to ban drones from airspace over the city.

Wichterman suggests Cape May ban drones

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Noting the number of helicopters, small planes and banner-towing airplanes flying over Cape May, City Councilman Jack Wichterman suggested banning drones over the city.

"It seems like a lot of people don't have a clue what they're doing with these drones," he said. "I believe one landed recently at somebody's picnic in either Middle Township or Lower."

Wichterman offered a resolution authorizing City Solicitor Tony Monzo to draw up an ordinance banning drones from within the city limits and as far out into the ocean as possible. He said his

goal was to eliminate the possibility of an accident between drones and an airplane or helicopter.

Mayor Edward Mahaney said he supported Wichterman's motion but asked that the city contact the U.S. Coast Guard base and county freeholders to ensure the ordinance would not impede drone testing taking place at the county airport and Coast Guard base.

"I think we can make what you want work because I think what you are talking about is just the general public having these devices," Mahaney said.

Council approved the motion in a 4-0 vote.

See Ban drones, Page A3

Lower MUA's planned winter projects delayed

By BETTY WUND
Special to the Star and Wave

VILLAS — The Lower Township Municipal Utilities Authority reported that two projects planned for this winter are on hold.

MUA Executive Director Mike Chapman provided the status of the two sewer projects — Schellengers Landing and Wissahickon — during the MUA Commission meeting Oct. 7. The sewer project at Schellengers Landing was put out for bid but has had to be put on hold. The bids were higher than budgeted. The restructuring of the project for a second bid was approved. The Wissahickon project,

also planned to start this winter, has been restructured to divide the job and is yet to be bid.

The proposed 2015-16 budget was presented by Chief Financial Officer Steve Testa. Revenues for 2014-15 were \$4,703,977 for the sewer operation, while expenses were \$4,954,937. The water budget for 2014-15 reflects revenues of \$3,686,635. Total expenditure was \$4,174,201 and total unrestricted net position utilized \$487,567. There is no increase anticipated in water and sewer rates.

"There is a 3.9 percent reduction in administrative costs

See Lower MUA, Page A4

Council fails to reinstate Sheehan as police chief

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

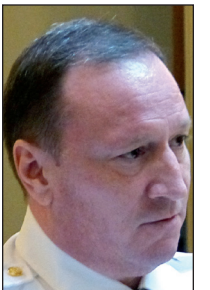
CAPE MAY — Councilman Shaine Meier offered a motion to reinstate Capt. Robert Sheehan as chief of police during an Oct. 6 City Council meeting. The motion failed when the vote tied 2-2. Meier and Councilman Jack Wichterman voted yes, while Mayor Edward Mahaney and Councilwoman Bea Pessagno cast negative votes. Deputy Mayor Terri Swain arrived later in the meeting after the vote.

Meier said council took action against two fine Cape May police officers "whose careers might be shattered because of us." Sheehan was demoted from chief to captain last March and Lt. Chuck Lear faces a disciplinary hearing beginning this week for his use of compensatory time.

"It is my belief that we were swayed into voting to remove Chief Sheehan with discussions that may be illegal," Meier said.

He said there was discussion of allegedly illegal activity involving Sheehan that proved to be untrue. "There was nothing illegal going on in the po-

See Sheehan, Page A2



SHEEHAN

School-funding battle in recess

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

ERMA — Cape May's fight to change the regional school-funding formula is slumbering while similar cases are being heard in appellate courts in northern New Jersey.

Councilman Jack Wichterman said he spoke last week with Vito Gagliardi, the special attorney hired by Cape May to try to change the funding formula for Lower Cape May Regional High School.

"At the present time, our case is in limbo while he works on two other cases with the appellate court," Wichterman said. "One is with River Dell School District and the other one is with North Haledon."

Gagliardi presented the North Haledon case before the appellate court last week "and felt it went really well," he said. Gagliardi will next present River Dell's case to the appellate court in January or March 2016. In that case, an administrative law judge recommend-

See School funding, Page A2



REGISTER NOW TO SUPPORT OUR COMMUNITY

4TH ANNUAL "SOLEMAN" 5K RUN AND MEMORIAL WALK SUPPORTING LOVE OF LINDA

in honor of whose lives have been touched by cancer

Raise awareness of the importance of character in people and to raise money for the Gene Sole Scholarship Fund.

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 7TH AT 9:00AM
CAPE MAY CONVENTION HALL

Registration is \$25 for 5K Run & memorial walk is \$15. Veterans are Free! Pre-registration guarantees each runner to receive a tee shirt. Information and registration at SolemanRun.com. Local Business support needed and always welcomed for scholarship fund.