



House of the week

Page B1



School pool dedicated in Cape May

Page A3



'Boutique' hotel planned in West Cape May

Owners seek several variances, face opposition from neighborhood homeowners

'I am very concerned about the neighbors, and I don't want to create any kind of nuisance. I want to be a good neighbor.'
—applicant Mark Lukas

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — If the borough's Planning Board approves, Mark Lukas and Edward Celata will turn the historic home they own at 119 Myrtle Ave., opposite Wilbraham Park, into a 20,609-square-foot boutique hotel.

Borough Hall's meeting room was filled with a number of objectors to the project during a Planning Board hearing on the application Oct. 10.

Attorney Dorothy Bolinsky, representing the applicants, said the home would be converted into six hotel units with an addition to the building, creating 24 units with an interior restaurant of 80 seats,

a small gym, a small spa, a rooftop pool and a parking area. She said the applicants agreed to reduce the number of restaurant seats to 50 to comply with accessory use standards in the borough's construction code. By doing so, the project does not require a use variance. In addition, a home at 123 Broadway would be demolished to create an en-

trance driveway and parking for the hotel from Broadway.

Board solicitor Brock Russell said if the applicants agreed to a deed of consolidation for the two lots, a D variance would not be needed for the project.

Lukas said the home on Myrtle Avenue was overgrown

'I will have vehicles pulling in and out up to my house from 5 foot away, the entire length of my property.'
—Paul Niemczura

See 'Boutique,' Page A2

Revised FEMA flood zone maps

Some homes removed but others added

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The Federal Emergency Management Agency has removed 469 properties in the city from the AE zone on new flood maps but has added 76, resulting in a net change of 394 fewer properties in the zone.

"That's a pretty significant number of properties that are now not going to be in a flood zone," city engineer Tom Thornton said during a special meeting Oct. 11.

He said those whose homes have been added will be receiving a letter when their policy is up for renewal stating that their homes are now in the AE zone.

In an earlier version of FEMA's Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM), a total of 2,585 properties in Cape May were located in a flood zone, he said. Two buildings were removed from



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Cape May homeowners look for their properties and base flood elevations on the Federal Emergency Management Agency's new flood zone maps Oct. 11 at Convention Hall. Almost 500 homes were removed from flood zones when the maps were updated but some were added.

the old VE zone while one building was moved into the new VE zone, for a net change of 394 properties being removed from the flood zone, Thornton said.

The new Cape May FIRM map defines two AE zones, a coastal AE zone for waves less than 3 feet and another for waves less than 1.5 feet, he said.

Thornton said FEMA requires construction in the coastal AE zone to follow the same standards as a V

See Revised, Page A4

Project to ease Route 109 jam at Schellenger

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Traffic coming off the Garden State Parkway along Route 109 headed into Cape May during the busy summer season backs up as it becomes one lane in front of two hugely popular restaurants. In addition, pedestrians trying to cross Route 109 from a marina to a restaurant find themselves in a dangerous situation.

The South Jersey Transportation Planning Organization (SJTPO) is considering plans to relieve the bottleneck along state-owned Route 109.

"Anyone who's ever lived here has gone over the parkway bridge into our beautiful Schellenger's Landing section of Lower Township — which most people think is Cape May, but it's not, it's Lower Township — and experienced the extreme horror of the traffic there," Mayor Erik Simonsen said.

Lower Township police brought their safety concerns to the attention of the SJTPO, noting the difficulty of pedestrians crossing Route 109 as well as concerns with vehicular traffic. The SJTPO compiled crash data and conducted an

analysis to illustrate safety concerns with the intersection. A "Problem Statement" was provided to the state Department of Transportation Capital Programming Unit for consideration and further evaluation.

Lower Township Manager Jim Ridgway said the SJTPO made some recommendations, which he shared in a meeting with the owners of the Lobster House and Lucky Bones restaurants, who supported the suggested plans. Township Council passed a resolution Monday supporting advancement of the SJTPO's problems statement on the intersection, sending copies to the DOT and the county Board of Chosen Freeholders.

"The biggest thing is adding a left-turn lane at the bottom of the bridge," Ridgway said. "Currently there are just two lanes there. They want to add a third lane for safety reasons."

"With that additional lane there, that should alleviate potential problems," he said.

Simonsen said the problem should have been addressed about 50 years.

Ridgway said the width of current lanes would be adjusted and crosswalks

See Project, Page A3

Homes in flood zones must have flood vents

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — A new city ordinance goes into effect Oct. 27 requiring those selling their homes to obtain a Flood Damage Prevention Certificate. Part of the process is confirming a home has the proper number of flood vents along the foundation.

"If you're in a flood zone, you have to come in (to the city Construction Office)

INSIDE

Cape May Point, West Cape May work to reduce insurance costs.

with an elevation certificate," city Floodplain Administrator Jason Dilworth said during a flood map presentation meeting Oct. 11. "We're really focusing on flood vents. We're just going to take a look at how many flood vents you have, if you have any, and try to come into compliance with the flood vent aspect of the elevation certificate."

Homes not located in a flood zone do not require an elevation certificate, which can be confirmed in the construction office, he said. Those located in a flood zone need to comply with the required number of flood vents along the foundation, Dilworth said. He said the city is waiving the fee for a permit to install flood vents.

See Flood vents, Page A4

City resident questions lack of flood insurance

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — According to Cape May resident Jules Rauch, the city has about 4,000 properties, about 70 percent of which have flood insurance. He said that leaves about 1,200, or 30 percent, of properties in the city without flood insurance.

When flying over Cape May in an airplane, it is apparent how much water surrounds the area, Rauch said.

"It is important that everybody really look at having flood insurance," he said.

City Floodplain Manager Jason Dilworth stated there were 2,725 properties covered by flood in-

urance policies in 2016, representing 71 percent of the total improved properties in Cape May.

"Anyone who has looked at TV in the last month or so has seen devastation in areas that were never wet before," Rauch said during a City Council meeting Oct. 3.

Nationally, only 12 percent of homeowners have flood insurance, according to the Insurance Information Institute, with only about 20 percent of coastal residents purchasing flood insurance.

As of August, 68 insurance companies participated in the Write Your Own program, started in 1983, in which insurers

See Insurance, Page A4



WASHINGTON INN

OPEN EVERY FRIDAY & SATURDAY

Open Thanksgiving and December 26th - December 31st, 2017

Five for Fridays at THE WINE BAR
\$5 small plates • \$5 wine • \$1 oysters

Open at 4:30 PM

the wine bar



Open Wed. – Sun.
with Wine Flight Menu