

Cape May Star and Wave

163rd YEAR NO. 45 CAPE MAY, N.J. SERVING AMERICA'S NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CITY WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2017 75¢



House of the week
Page B1



Victorian Era banks on display at museum
Page A7



Substation plan raises questions, concerns

Residents of flood-prone area worried the building could exacerbate problem

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Residents of Elmira and Bank streets and Venice Avenue, an area prone to flooding, questioned Atlantic City Electric officials about whether an expanded power substation in the neighborhood would worsen the situation.

Atlantic City Electric held an information session Nov. 4 at Congress Hall to answer residents' questions on the utility's plans

to upgrade its Cape May power substation at Venice Avenue and Elmira Street.

The project includes installation of a second transformer and the construction of a larger control building. Some residents raised questions about whether the upgraded facility would worsen flooding in a neighborhood plagued with high water during nor'easters and heavy summer storms.

Atlantic City Electric presented a new design for the control

building that copied some of the historic architecture of Cape May with gables, dormers and shutters.

Resident Jim Ross said an alternative site for the substation at the city's Public Works yard was suggested but it was .3 acres too small. He questioned whether the city could move trucks it parks in the yard to accommodate a power substation.

Ross said he was not concerned as much with the appearance of the control building as how much water it would displace.

"That area floods five to 10 times a year," he said. "We had an engineer do a run on it at one of the heights and levels of the water in the street. It would roughly displace about 700,000 gallons of water just by having the structure there in addition to what already occurs."

Ross said the street could flood to a level of 6 to 12 inches. He said the neighborhood was neglected for a long time but new homes have been constructed to a value of \$18 million. Elmira Street is one

of only three evacuation routes from Cape May, Ross noted.

Civil engineer Terry Combs, of Adams, Rehmann & Heggan Associates of Hammonton, said most of the surfaces would be stone to a depth of 8 to 12 inches, which would store storm water equivalent to the runoff from a 100-year storm for the additional impervious coverage the construction would generate.

"The expansion of this com-

See Substation, Page A2



Werner Tedesco/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

Calm and colorful

Night falls on the fleet at Lund's Fisheries on Nov. 2 in Cape May Harbor.

Victorian Towers residents: Details of repairs scarce

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Residents of Victorian Towers have complained they had few details of a major renovation to their 40-year-old building.

Victorian Towers is comprised of 205 apartments for low- and moderate-income seniors located on the corner of Washington and Ocean streets.

According to the state Department of Community Affairs, HVPG Developers, Metropolitan Real Estate and Diocesan Housing Services Corp. of the Catholic Diocese of Camden were jointly awarded \$12.8 million to renovate the apartments. Diocesan Housing Services Corp. announced a tenants meeting for 10 a.m. Thursday, Nov. 9.

Residents contacted by the Star and Wave were

hesitant to comment on their frustrations with the building's current condition.

"They've started construction, we know nothing," said a resident who asked not be identified.

Off the record, residents have complained of elevators that are not inspected on a regular basis, dirty carpet in hallways, substandard cable television and internet, inefficient heating and cooling and a lack of communication from management. They also complained of theft from common storage areas and a lack of security camera monitoring.

Another resident complained new siding was being placed over exterior brick that appeared to be moldy.

During a City Council meeting May 31, attorney Nicholas Talvacchia, of Co-

See Residents, Page A4

Lower awards no-bid deal on new tax maps

By RACHEL SHUBIN
Special to the Star and Wave

VILLAS — Lower Township Council authorized an emergency appropriation of \$731,000 on Monday for the creation of new tax maps. Township Manager Jim Ridgway said the process is long overdue as the current maps are more than 50 years old.

"Van-Note Harvey Associates will be creating the maps. They cover Cape May County and they specialize in these types of endeavors," Mayor Erik Simonsen said.

The council has used four different engineering firms for various improvements and chose Van-Note Harvey because it has previously done this job in other townships.

"Middle Township was more than happy with the maps done by Van-Note Harvey

See Lower awards, Page A3

City considering speed reduction near USCG base

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — As the main road into the U.S. Coast Guard base, Pennsylvania Avenue carries a heavy load of traffic, and its wideness may encourage drivers to speed in a neighborhood filled with children living in Coast Guard housing.

City engineer Tom Thornton, of Mott MacDonald, said designs for reconstruction of Pennsylvania Avenue were completed and plans and specifications have been submitted to the state Department of Transportation Office of Local Aid for review. He said the bidding process for the work has been held off in conjunction with a traffic-calming study.

He presented the results of the study to City Council during a meeting Nov. 6. Thornton said the engineering firm is

See Speed reduction, Page A4

Committee: Set time for dogs on mall, Promenade, beaches

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city's Pet Advisory Committee is recommending that leashed dogs be permitted on the beaches and Promenade before 8 a.m. throughout the year.

Committee Chairwoman Linda Steenrod presented the committee's recommendations to City Council on Monday. She said the city has some signs posted on the Washington Street Mall stating dogs are not permitted, but they are not located at every entrance to the mall. She said if the ordinance prohibiting dogs on the mall remains in place, each entrance to the mall should display a "no dogs"

sign.

"Signage was a big concern of the committee and may be contributing to some miscommunication," Steenrod said.

The committee suggested wording on signs prohibiting dogs be changed to a phrase such as "dogs only permitted" followed by the restrictions of hours or time of the year.

Although it may require an ordinance change, the committee is recommending leashed dogs be permitted on the mall until 8 a.m., with doggie pick up bags and disposal cans provided by the city, Steenrod said.

"Additionally, we recommend that dogs be allowed on the mall during the off-season months January

through April at any time," she said.

Steenrod said the committee recommends the city's dog park be available free of charge to all users. Currently, the city sells seasonal and weekly passes for the park.

"Most of the usage fees are being paid by locals who purchase season passes," she said. "Most visitors do not know they should have a pass and therefore do not obtain one."

She said the city clerk reported a total of 55 passes were sold in 2017, 38 seasonal passes at \$20 each for a total of \$760 and 17 weekly passes at \$10 each for a total of \$170. Steenrod said the

See Committee, Page A3



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