

# Cape May Star and Wave

161ST YEAR NO. 49 CAPE MAY, N.J. SERVING AMERICA'S NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CITY WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2015 75¢



## HOUSE OF THE WEEK

Page B1



## PARKING GARAGE CAN FIT IN WITH HISTORIC DECOR

Page A10



## Should raised home lose status?

### Cape May Historic Preservation Commission still not sure

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — If a home that contributes to the city's historic district is raised to above flood height, should its rating be lowered from key or contributing status? The city's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) pondered that issue during a Nov. 23 meeting.

An English-style cottage at 329 Congress St. formerly sat at ground level but was raised considerably and the façade

modified, according to HPC Chairman Warren Coupland. He said the HPC approved adding porches to the side and back of the cottage after it was raised.

"To get the zoning approval, the house had to be literally moved a few feet," Coupland said.

He said moving a house may give it a lower rating. So many changes were made to 329 Congress St. that it would be hard to argue the home continued to be a contributing

structure, he said.

HPC Commissioner Tom Carroll said it was still an attractive house but did not really reflect any period of construction other than "vastly modified English cottage on stilts." Coupland said the home was designed to rest on the ground.

HPC Commissioner Corbin Cogswell said the changes were dictated by floodplain changes and that the question of changing the home's rating could recur all over Cape May.

He said the HPC worked with the owner of the home to ensure the changes were keeping with the design of the house. The basic shape of the house remains despite the fact it is now elevated, Cogswell said.

HPC Commissioner Bonnie Pontin asked if removing the house from contributing status would set a precedent.

Carroll said if a home in the historic district becomes non-rated and a homeowner

See **Raised home**, Page A3



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Members of the Historic Preservation Commission were not able to come to a consensus on whether this home at 329 Jackson St. should lose its historic status because it was raised.

## West Cape May might pay tribute to J. Vasser

By BETTY WUND  
Special to the Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — Relatives and friends of the late John "Jack" Allen Vasser appeared before Borough Commission at a Nov. 25 meeting requesting the commission honor the former mayor by renaming Green Street for him.

Vasser not only was mayor of West Cape May for 24 years, serving from May 1977 to May 2001, he was honored by the New Jersey State League of Municipalities by induction into its Hall of Fame at its gold level. This honor is given for 20 years of mayoral service. In 1999, he was selected as Republican of the Year and he served on the county Municipal Utilities Authority for many years.

Vasser represented the third generation of an African-American West Cape

See **Vasser**, Page A3



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

## Cookie charity provides a sweet treat

Frank Squeo presents Naomi Porch, 3, with a stuffed Mickey Mouse after awarding her family with an all-expense-paid trip to Disney World on behalf of Baking Memories 4 Kids on Nov. 24 in North Cape May. See **story, more photos on A2**

## State orders Cummiskey to give Lear city records

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The state Government Records Council (GRC) in a Nov. 17 interim order ordered City Clerk Louise Cummiskey as Custodian of Records to provide documents denied one year ago to Cape May Police Department Lt. Chuck Lear.

He requested documents from the city Nov. 12, 2014, with a response from Cummiskey on Dec. 10, 2014, denying the records. Lear filed a complaint with GRC on Dec. 12, 2014.

The requests were related to City Council directing City Manager Bruce MacLeod to issue disciplinary charges against Lear, noting he was the subject of complaints and an internal administrative investigation concerning allegations of accrual and wrongful use of compensatory time.

City Council approved a settlement agreement Oct. 13 with Lear, allowing him to retire in July 2016 and not face any disciplinary action for alleged unauthorized misuse of comp time.

Lear had requested copies via email of documentation that authorized the city to conduct an investigation of the Cape May Police Department and its members to include resolutions, authorizations and documentation authorizing the city to hire and compensate an investigator to conduct interviews of police department members.

In addition, Lear requested records of payments to police officers for "buy back" of vacation, sick, personal, terminal leave, and any other time: compensatory and on-call from 2001 to the present. The records would reflect the officers' years for which compensation was paid, the amount paid and identification of the time bought back.

GRC found that although Cummiskey responded in writing to the complainant's OPRA requests within the extended time frame, her response was legally insufficient because she failed to provide a specific lawful basis for denial of access.

GRC stated in its interim order that Lear's OPRA request seeking "buy back" compensation information for Cape May Police Department officer time was a valid request for payroll information. Specifically, OPRA provides that the responsive payroll information is expressly considered a government record under OPRA.

"Thus, the custodian unlawfully denied

See **Records**, Page A4

## Mad Batter's owner seeks year-round porch dining

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The Mad Batter Restaurant & Bar has applied to the city's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) to extend a roof and enclose its porch for year-round use. The HPC granted conceptual approval of extension of the porch roof with the provision that the framing to hold glass panels is removable in summer.

Architect Adam Crossland, of Bachich Associates, presented his case before the HPC at a Nov. 23 meeting. He noted the HPC approved a canopy over the outdoor dining porch

some years ago.

"Upon fully studying the building, I realized that the canopies that are currently there are covering up all the beauty of the building," he said.

Crossland said the porch could be kept as it is and the canopy could be enclosed with screening and glass. He said his preference was to take the existing porch and extend the roof toward the street about nine and half feet, removing awnings and enclosing the porch.

The hotel, at 19 Jackson St.,

See **Mad Batter**, Page A3



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

The Historic Preservation Commission said the Mad Batter Restaurant & Bar could extend its porch roof with the provision that the framing to hold glass panels is removable for the summer.

## CHRISTMAS TAP TAKEOVER

DURING DECEMBER WHILE SUPPLIES LAST... RARE, UNIQUE & VERY LIMITED

Featuring

EVIL GENIUS Santa! I Know Him! • FEGLEY'S Rude Elf Reserve

HEAVY SEAS Yule Tide • ANCHOR STEAM Christmas Ale • TROEGS Mad Elf • OMMEGANG Adoration • ROGUE Santa's Private Reserve

SAMUEL ADAMS Merry Makers • SIERRA NEVADA Celebratio Ale • SHMALTZ BREWING Hanukkah, Chanukah: Pass the Beer

## LUCKY BONES BACKWATER GRILLE

OPEN FOR LUNCH & DINNER DAILY

1200 RT. 109 SOUTH CAPE MAY, NJ

• 609-884-BONE (2663)

• WWW.LUCKYBONESGRILLE.COM

