



**House of the week**  
Real Estate Resource



**Major project in the works at Pond Creek**

Page B1



## CAPE MAY MASTER PLAN RE-EXAMINATION

# City solicits ideas, urges long-term thinking

More trolleys, young people, parking, housing on wish list

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — “Think big,” Planning Board engineer Craig Hurless said. “Think forward, don’t necessarily think of something that needs to be done a year from now, two years from now.”

Hurless hosted an open forum for discussion of what should be included in a re-examination of Cape May’s master plan April 16 at Convention Hall.

“What do you envision the city to look like in 10 years, in 20 years?” Hurless continued. “Tell us what you like about your city. Tell us how to make it better. Where do you want the city headed in the next 20 years?”

Hurless said none of the public’s ideas would be considered too big or too small.

Resident Corbin Cogswell said many European cities have taken their historic center and made it vehicle-free. He asked if that was a possibility in Cape May.

Cogswell said the city was built as a walking town in the days of horse and buggies.

Resident Tom Carroll said he didn’t want Cape May to change too much, noting its charm and uniqueness.

“I think we should change very slowly, very carefully and look at everything new that’s proposed and say, ‘Does this fit within the environment?’” he said.

Barney Dougherty, a former Planning Board member



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Planning Board engineer Craig Hurless, right, listens to suggestions as Jen Heller writes a list during a public meeting regarding Cape May’s master plan re-examination April 16 at Convention Hall. “Where do you want the city headed in the next 20 years?” Hurless asked.

and fire chief, said the city needs a parking garage. He noted Victorian Towers is a six-story building. Dougherty said he was not endorsing a six-story garage. He noted tax abatements could be offered to a developer.

Architect Mark Asher said the city’s zoning code needs reconsideration. He submitted suggestions for changes to the zoning code to the city.

Resident Bill Murray said

the city should determine how it could persuade visitors to park their cars, leave them in one spot when they arrive and use alternative transportation. He suggested more trolley service, particularly for the east side of the city.

Families come to Cape May and believe they need their car to get to the beach, he said. Murray suggested there should be a way to unload beach gear and then have

a family member park the car at the elementary school parking lot, returning to the beach on a trolley.

Real estate broker Chris Bezaire said parking was a master plan issue 20 to 30 years ago. He said cars circle around the Washington Street Mall searching for a parking space, creating more traffic.

“If you don’t have the park-

City solicits, Page A2

# Officials looking to the future with help from public

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — A declining labor force, lack of employee housing, inadequate parking and residents living in a flood zone are all elements to be included in the city’s master plan re-examination.

The city hosted a packed open house April 16 at Convention Hall to discuss these issues and the direction of the city’s future. Planning Board engineer Craig Hurless emceed the evening.

He said the re-examination is just beginning and “pen had not been put to paper yet.” State law requires all municipalities to re-examine their master plan every 10 years. Hurless said a city’s planning policies must be updated to reflect and react to changes in population and economic conditions.

Hurless said Cape May’s population peaked in 1980 with 4,853 residents and has been in a steady decline since that year, with the greatest losses in the 1990s and early 2000s, he said.

“The data show that decline is starting to slow,” he said.

Population estimates for 2016 indicate 3,500 residents. The population in 2020, with the continuing decline at the current rate, is projected to be 3,429 residents, Hurless said.

The county has experienced a 4.9 percent decline in population in the past decade. Cape May has declined 10.6 percent in that same timeframe, he said. Many other coastal towns experienced population declines in the 20 percent to 40 percent range in the past 10 years, Hurless noted. Ocean City lost 23.90 percent, Cape May Point lost 20.70 percent and Avalon lost 37.80 percent. West Cape May lost only 6.50 percent.

Hurless said Cape May’s summer population is estimated to increase to 46,324 persons. He said the number of resident-occupied housing units is declining. In 2010, Cape May had 4,155 housing units, according to the census. In the last decade, the number of occupied units has dropped from 45 percent to 35 percent of the total, Hurless said.

“Seasonal units have declined. See Officials, Page A2



Robert Newkirk/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

## Oil tanker catches fire at airport

Lower Township police responded to the Cape May County Airport for a reported oil tanker truck fire at about 1 p.m. Thursday, April 19. Officer Kaitlin Black arrived and began evacuating the immediate area. The entrance to the airport was blocked off and the Erma Volunteer Fire Company arrived to extinguish the blaze. The tanker and another vehicle sustained major damage, as did a utility pole and transformer owned by Atlantic City Electric.

# Murphy signs bill banning offshore oil drilling in N.J.

POINT PLEASANT BEACH — Gov. Phil Murphy signed bipartisan legislation April 20 that bans offshore oil and gas exploration and its production in New Jersey’s ocean waters.

The bill also prohibits the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) from issuing any permits and approvals for the development of any facility or infrastructure related to offshore drilling within or outside New Jersey waters.

“Offshore drilling would be a disaster for our environment, our economy and our coastal communities,” Murphy said. “The bipartisan legislation I am signing into law, on the eighth anniversary of the Deepwater Horizon Spill, will block oil companies from drilling in state waters. We simply cannot allow the danger of drilling off our coast. The societal, economic and environmental costs would be detrimental to the overall quality of life for



Provided

Pastor Jeffrey Elliott, of Cape May Lutheran Church, Councilwoman Patricia Hendricks, Gov. Phil Murphy, Assemblyman Bruce Land, Mayor Chuck Lear and Deputy Mayor Shaine Meier at the signing ceremony in Point Pleasant Beach.

our residents.” In addition, the bill requires the DEP to review any proposed oil or natural gas development in the Atlantic region of the U.S. exclusive economic zone to determine if the proposal can reasonably be expected to affect

New Jersey waters. Last year, President Donald Trump signed Executive Order 13795 to encourage oil and natural gas production off the Atlantic coast.

According to the Governor. See Murphy, Page A3



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