

# Cape May Star and Wave

161ST YEAR NO. 26 CAPE MAY, N.J. SERVING AMERICA'S NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CITY WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 2015 75¢



## HOUSE OF THE WEEK

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## CAPE MAY WATER FALLS TO THIRD PLACE

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Frank Scott/Special to the CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

## Good neighbors participate in Paddle for a Purpose in Cape May Harbor

Jeff Martin, of Aqua Trails, front, gathers kayakers prior to heading across Cape May Harbor during Paddle for a Purpose on June 20. The two-hour guided kayak tour in and around the harbor raised money for the Nature Center of Cape May's Good Neighbor Fund, which provides scholarship money for Coast Guard dependent children so they may attend summer programs at the Nature Center.

# Lt. Lear to face discipline for comp time abuse

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Following a lengthy closed session June 16, City Council reconvened to an empty auditorium and passed a resolution in a unanimous vote to discipline police Lt. Chuck Lear for use of comp time. The alleged comp time abuse is at the center of the demotion of chief Robert Sheehan and county Prosecutor Robert Taylor placing a monitor in the police department.

Members of the public complained Monday that council's Livestream camera was turned off for the portion of the meeting after the closed session, so passage of the resolution was

not seen on the Web.

The resolution states Lear "was the subject of complaints and an internal administrative investigation concerning allegations of accrual and use of compensatory time contrary to city personnel policy, contrary to the express terms of his contract and otherwise in violation of state statute and Cape May Police Department Rules and Regulations."

The resolution further states "Bruce MacLeod, the City Manager, has been identified through a parallel administrative investigation and report by the Office of the County Prosecutor as a potential witness; and whereas due to the perceived conflict of interest, the govern-

ing body of the city of Cape May has reviewed the administrative disciplinary complaint and having determined that in the event the charges may be sustained, the charges represent just cause for disciplinary action."

The resolution also states the governing body has determined to direct the issuance of the administrative disciplinary complaint to be executed and issued by MacLeod in his capacity as civil service appointing authority, with the governing body having reached this determination independent of any input or suggestion by MacLeod.

A civil service Notice of Disciplinary Action will be served on Lear and any administrative disciplinary hearing will

proceed in accordance with the governing statutes, Cape May ordinances and Civil Service statutes and regulations and be presided over by an independent hearing officer appointed formally by separate resolution.

Resident Charles Hendricks, who is part of a group to recall Mayor Edward Mahaney, said the stated purpose for the executive session was "litigation-police matters," to which the resolution does not apply. He questioned whether the county prosecutor could bar MacLeod from taking any action against Lear.

Hendricks also questioned why the resolution was not on the agenda and was not made available in advance.

## Motion to reinstate Sheehan as chief fails on divided vote

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — A motion to reinstate former police chief Robert Sheehan, offered by Councilman Jack Wichterman during a June 16 City Council meeting, failed in a split vote. Wichterman and Councilman Shaine Meier voted to reinstate Sheehan, while Mayor Edward Mahaney and Councilwoman Bea Pessagno cast "no" votes. Deputy Mayor Terri Swain was absent from the meeting.

Pessagno said the issue had always been about the law. The audience groaned at her response.

"We are in the middle of litigation. We've got to get the answers, we have to, there are so many other issues here," she said. "I'm sorry, I can't ... when the time is right, yes, but not now."

Before offering the motion, Wichterman said since he returned to City Council on April 2, he has read every

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Diane Reed-Rutgers School of Engineering

## Historic day for drones

The first drone was launched from the Cape May Airport the week of June 15 in a partnership of researchers associated with Virginia Tech and Rutgers University through the Mid-Atlantic Aviation Partnership. See story, more photos on A2.

# Leaks continue to plague City Hall

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — How many times should you fix a leak and how much money should be poured into an old building?

Those were questions asked of City Council on June 16 concerning City Hall, the former Cape May High School building constructed in 1917. Council approved a resolution to spend \$18,200 with the

city's contracted engineering firm of Hatch Mott MacDonald to perform an investigation of water infiltration into City Hall.

Former mayor Jerry Indervies Sr. asked how much more money would be spent on City Hall. He said money had been spent on leak repairs for many years.

City Manager Bruce MacLeod said the city owns the building, which has been recognized on the National

Register of Historic Places. He said water was entering the building through brick pointing, the mortar between the bricks.

"As you've pointed out, we've spent a good amount of money in the recent years replacing the roof in its totality, also replacing the windows around the whole building," he said.

MacLeod said over the past

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## OUR VIEW

Police officers deserve a healthy workplace.

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# Lower appealing V zone designation

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

VILAS — A number of Lower Township residents who live near Delaware Bay received the news last August from the Federal Emergency Management Agency that their homes were in a V zone, meaning they are more susceptible to flooding and their flood

insurance rates could skyrocket.

At a June 15 Lower Township Council meeting, Mayor Michael Beck said a conference call was held two weeks ago with U.S. Rep. Frank LoBiondo that included Township Manager Jim Ridgway, Lower Township Planning Director Bill Galestock and Stewart Farrell, director

of Stockton University's Coastal Research Center.

"Our appeal of the V zone determinations is going up to FEMA. Probably this week we'll have a final draft of our objections to the delineation of our bayfront and the V zone," the mayor said.

Beck said it was based on two arguments, the two primary ways FEMA de-

termines if a town is in a V zone. One method is "frontal dune," which means a house is sitting on a dune that goes to the landward side behind the house, so the V zone comes to the first dune, which puts most of the township's bayfront in a V zone north of Cox Hall Creek, he said.

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