



HOUSE OF THE WEEK

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BAREFOOT IN THE PARK COMING TO CAPE MAY STAGE

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Leopards and tigers and bison (oh my!) Zoo continues to raise, breed endangered species

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE — A 2-month-old bison was walking on a leash, bleating in a baritone voice and occasionally kicking up his rear legs like a mule. The Cape May County Zoo seems to always have a unique baby animal in residence in summer.

The so-far-nameless bison, born May 9, weighs 100 pounds and is expected to top out at 1,500 to 2,000. At birth, he had a number of medical issues, according to veterinarian Alex Ernst. He said the bison could not stand up to nurse from his mother and was bottle-fed by the zoo's veterinary staff.

The youngster will be reintroduced to the zoo's herd of bison in the near future. Ernst said bison can develop a number of diseases as babies and are dependent on antibodies from their mother's milk.

"These kinds of animals are basically born with no immune system, they have to get all their immune system from mother's milk, so if they can't get up and they can't nurse within that first 24 hours, then they have no immune system," he said.

The bison was quarantined and now has developed an immune system, Ernst said. The zoo was cautious to give him a



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Rocky, the Cape May County Zoo's resident Siberian tiger, always draws a crowd. He stays cool in summer by bathing in a pool in his enclosure. Rocky and hundreds of other animals are being raised at the zoo and many are part of the global Species Survival Plan.

name due to his precarious health.

Freeholder Marie Hayes said the zoo's participation in the Species Survival Plan (SSP) puts the zoo on the world map. The zoo's snow leopard breeding program

has been highly successful and will grow, she said. A new snow leopard habitat is open, designed to accommodate a pair of snow leopards with modifications to include an area for a mother and a cub.

The zoo introduced a new pair of snow leopards to the habitat: Tysa, a 3-year-old female from Wichita, Kansas, and Bataar, a male from the Bronx Zoo. Hayes

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Beck questions Lower contract for supervisors

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Lower Township Council approved a collective bargaining agreement with the Lower Township supervisors union, providing 13 township supervisors with a 2 percent annual raise for the next four years with merit-based or market-adjustment raises of up to 6 percent available.

Council voted 3-2 at a July 18 meeting, with votes falling along party lines. Republican Councilmen Erik Simonsen, David Perry and Tom Conrad voted for the agreement, while independents Deputy Mayor Norris Clark and Mayor Michael Beck voted against it.

Clark said a key provision of the memorandum was a 2 percent annual raise for supervisors and a provision that Township Manager Jim Ridgway, at his sole discretion, may give a "market adjustment" or a merit-based increase of no more than 6 percent of the employee's

base salary once during the term of the contract, with no more than three supervisors receiving such an increase in any calendar year.

Clark asked whether Ridgway had done an assessment of the cost to the township of the new agreement. Ridgway said among salaries for supervisors, there may be a distance between "Supervisor A" and "Supervisor L" of \$25,000.

Beck asked if any of the 13 supervisors made more than \$90,000 per year. Ridgway said the highest supervisor's salary was in the mid \$80,000s. He said the township has seen savings when an employee earning \$90,000 per year was replaced by an employee earning \$70,000, which he said would cover the cost of raises.

Beck said the language in the new contract is different than previous agreements with "Section F" removed, which previously stated the

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Cape May short 5 cops, ex-chief says

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The Cape May Police Department is short five police officers, according to former police Chief Robert Boyd.

He said the city is short three full-time officers — which was confirmed by City Manager Bruce MacLeod at July 19 City Council meeting — and that an additional officer is out due to an injury, making a total of four officers.

"We also have a fifth officer who is on restricted duty — he doesn't go on the street — so now we're down five full-time officers that are not available to work on the street," he said.

Boyd noted the shortage represents 20 percent to 25 percent of the department's manpower in the busy summer season.

Boyd asked if an officer has been hired to replace Lt. Chuck Lear who retired.

City Manager Bruce MacLeod said Lear's position has not been filled and acknowledged that three open positions exist. He said the department has been working on its internal procedures for the interview process that included background verification.

"We have a certified list from Civil Service, so the process in moving forward," MacLeod said. "You also overlook, Mr. Boyd, that two of those officers that retired gave very abbreviated notice in June to retire July 1."

Boyd said he hoped MacLeod was paying attention to the "arbitrary assassination and murder of police officers" on the national level. He said it could happen

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Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Tysa is one of two snow leopards the zoo recently acquired. The zoo's snow leopard breeding program has been highly successful, resulting in seven healthy cubs that now live in other zoos. At right, a bison born May 9 soon will be reintroduced to the herd after being bottle-fed.



Fund for Cape May to help with park maintenance costs

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council approved an agreement between the city and the Fund for Cape May for further improvements and to ensure the upkeep of public spaces including Rotary Park.

At a July 19 City Council

meeting, Deputy Mayor Bea Pessagno said the fund's first project was to improve and enhance Rotary Park.

"The city's obligations regarding the park include snow and trash removal, maintenance of the fountain, gazebo, gas lamps and electric street lights," she said. "The Fund for Cape May will provide all land-

scaping services, lawn care and maintenance, irrigation system, landscape lighting and the flag pole."

She said the Fund for Cape May would keep in force a liability policy for the benefit of both the city of Cape May and the Fund for Cape May.

The Fund for Cape May is a nonprofit organization set up

by Curtis Bashaw, co-owner and co-managing partner of Cape Resorts. Mayor Edward Mahaney thanked the fund for \$500,000 of extra amenities it made possible in Rotary Park.

"What was really nice was they realized the concern of the taxpayers about the ongoing upkeep of that park, so they set up a fund and

are taking on a significant measure of the upkeep and maintenance of that park in future years," he said.

The first concerts were held in the refurbished park July 22-24 featuring the Cape Harmonaires, the Quiet Men and the Congress Street Brass Band. Mahaney said a formal rededication of Rotary Park would be held

either Aug. 5 or Aug. 12, subject to the availability of state and federal officials who were key in getting the city grant funding for Rotary and Lafayette Street parks.

He said Lafayette Street Park would be open before the start of school and be ready for the children to play upon.

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