



HOUSE OF THE WEEK

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TWIN CAPES MAY MAKE FINAL TRIP TO SEA FLOOR

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Marino named police chief

Replaces Sheehan, who is suing city over demotion

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council voted 4-1 Monday to appoint Sgt. Anthony Marino as the new chief of police. Councilman Shaine Meier cast the lone dissenting vote.

The city has been without a police chief since March 2015, when council chose not to renew Robert Sheehan's contract. Sheehan has continued to lead the police department as a captain. He is suing the city to regain his position, with civil proceedings expected to begin in early 2017.

Council convened at 8 a.m. to accommodate Councilman Roger Furlin, who was leaving on a vacation trip before council's regularly scheduled meeting on Aug. 16.

Council interviewed four Cape May police officers for the open position of chief Aug. 12. Interviewees included Sheehan and sergeants Dekon Fashaw, John Bobik and Marino.

The interviews were held in closed session but 20 members of the public were present in the auditorium for the brief opening of the meeting. Sheehan received applause from the audience when he entered.

Council returned to open session Monday following a nearly two-hour closed session to vote on the appointment of a new chief. Councilwoman Terri Swain offered Marino's name in nomination.

Furlin voted yes, stating he tried to be as "fair and impartial as possible." Deputy Mayor Bea Pessagno said all four candidates were excellent.

"It was a very difficult decision," she said.

Meier said his choice was Sheehan, naming him as the best candidate for the chief's position "by far." He said he wished to support Marino but he was still voting "no."

In March 2015, due to the release of what he termed confidential information from an internal affairs investigation and other actions by the city, County Prosecutor Robert Taylor installed a retired State Police major as a monitor in the police department.

On Tuesday, he told the Cape May



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Cape May City Clerk Louise Cummiskey swears in Anthony Marino as police chief while his wife, Barbara, holds the Bible on Monday, Aug. 15, at City Hall.

Star and Wave that the monitor "would increase his activity in light of the new chief being chosen."

"He will observe the performance of the law enforcement duties in the police department," Taylor said.

During public comment, Middle Township Chief of Police Christopher Leusner, who is president of the Cape May County Chiefs of Police Association and vice president of the New Jersey Chiefs of Police Association, criticized City Council for the way it handled the Sheehan demotion and investigation.

"I'm still one of those folks that believes if you do the right thing, that you're honest, that the system will work," Leusner said. "And I will tell you the system does not work here."

He said Sheehan shared with him

that he had received an internal affairs target letter in reference to Lt. Chuck Lear's use of overtime. Leusner said he informed Sheehan the internal affairs investigation was illegal.

Leusner said he recalled all the wonderful things Mayor Edward Mahaney said about Sheehan at his promotion to chief in 2014. He said the mayor later accused Sheehan of trying to hijack the Lear investigation.

"He didn't try to hijack the investigation, he was following the law, he was doing his duty," Leusner said.

He said Sheehan's lawsuit would be resolved and council was putting Marino in a very difficult position.

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City panel to set fees, number of temporary seats

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city's Outdoor Seating Committee is continuing to refine a proposed ordinance to charge an annual fee and regulate the number of temporary outdoor seats at restaurants and hotels.

At an Aug. 9 meeting, City Solicitor Tony Monzo said he more clearly defined the definition of a dining table as one that is a minimum of 30 inches high and 36 inches in diameter to distinguish it from a low coffee table. He said the ordinance would define a temporary seat as one typically used in warm weather but may occasion-

ally be used in the offseason. "The definition really isn't going to have a clear objective standard as to when it can be used," he said.

A change in the proposed temporary outdoor-seating ordinance alters the width of a seat in a multi-seating area from 24 inches to 30 inches. He said a bench that was 90 inches wide could seat three guests.

Monzo said once a property owner has an outdoor-seating plan approved, changes that take place in ordinances and zoning would not affect their approval as long as their plan was consistent with the plan

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Fishing Creek School's desks to be filled again

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — The voices of children will be returning to a one-room schoolhouse that first opened its door and rang its bell in 1888.

Built by Civil War veterans, the Fishing Creek School is owned by the state and leased to Lower Township. The building served as a school for 38 years before closing in 1926, when it became a private home.

In the days before the use of school buses, one-room schoolhouses were located in every section of the county, Deputy Mayor

Norris Clark said at an Aug. 15 Township Council meeting. He said the schoolhouse originally educated students in grades one through eight. In the 1920s, the Fishing Creek School served grades one through four, he said.

"The thing about these one-room schoolhouses is that all the kids were in the same classroom and they got what we would call today a customized education," he said.

Clark said the students advanced in math or reading according to their own speed because they could

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Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Rotary Park back in business

Curtis Bashaw holds the ribbon as longtime Cape May business owner Vince Casales cuts it to officially reopen Rotary Park. See story, A10

Atlantic Cape puts focus on careers as students start 10th year in county

By JOHN ALVAREZ
Special to the Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE — The Cape May County campus of Atlantic Cape Community College held an orientation day for incoming freshmen Aug. 10. This is not an uncommon event for this time of year for the rural campus located in Cape May Court House. Nor was it uncommon for an orientation day held at Atlantic Cape's urban campus located in Atlantic City or on the 500-acre suburb campus in Mays Landing.

It is also not uncommon for the new students, some arriving alone, others with parents or former classmates from their high school days, to walk through the front door of the college not sure what to expect.

Perhaps there were even a few students who had ex-



John Alvarez/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

Atlantic Cape Community College held student orientation Aug. 10 at its campus in Cape May Court House. The college is focusing on career readiness and transferable degrees.

pectations this day was only the first day of their fifth year of high school or, as some people have referred

to community college in the past, the 13th year. But these students would have been mistaken.

Although the Cape May Court House campus is celebrating its 10th year, Atlantic Cape is in the midst of celebrating its 50th year of offering people in southern New Jersey a chance to advance their education as well as their careers.

"We offer, as do most community colleges, an opportunity to earn an associate degree," Atlantic Cape President Peter Mora said.

He was one of the lecturers who attended orientation day at the county campus to help make students feel welcome.

"We are a two associate degree credit institution. Everything we do, all the planning, the resource development, course development and all activities for students are all about having a high-quality, as-

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