



HOUSE OF THE WEEK

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EDUCATION PART OF FUN AT THE ZOO

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Parking trust fund may be used to finance garage



'The sooner we get on with it, with some municipal parking, the better because we are a village and no one can create on-site parking without destroying the historic fabric of what makes people want to come here.'

—Curtis Bashaw, Cape Resorts

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Some hope for more parking in the city was offered last week when the Seasonal Outdoor Seating Committee discussed the possibility of a public-private partnership to create a parking structure using a parking trust fund.

The committee had been examining how to regulate the proliferation of outdoor seating at restaurants and motels and

the possibility of paying into a city parking fund to remediate a lack of parking spaces. The parking fund could then help fund a parking garage.

At a July 26 committee meeting, Mayor Edward Mahaney said the city was exploring three options: a municipal garage, a public/private garage or a private garage.

Committee member Curtis Bashaw said when he opened the Virginia Hotel 25 years ago, Cape May had a three-and-half-month

tourist season that expanded to five months and now is almost a 12-month season.

"That is a good problem, and the sooner we get on with it, with some municipal parking, the better because we are a village and no one can create on-site parking without destroying the historic fabric of what makes people want to come here," he said.

Bashaw said because of his plans to expand the Beach Shack Hotel, his staff has been surveying customers of the Rusty Nail

restaurant. He said the survey has indicated fewer people are driving in to Cape May at night to eat in restaurants than in the 1980s and early '90s because good restaurants have opened in other towns.

"We don't have as many people driving in to eat at night as we did 15 years ago because we got a reputation of there's no place to park," Bashaw said.

Cape May has people using
See Parking garage, Page A4

Lower calls on county's dispatch

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Lower Township Council voted unanimously Monday to turn over public safety call answering and dispatching of police, fire and emergency medical service calls to the county effective Sept. 15.

The enabling resolution states the township has determined for reason of efficiency and economy to contract with the county Office of Emergency Management for dispatch services. The agreement will run for five years. The county Office of Emergency Management is expected to relocate to a refurbished Lower Township Public Safety Building at the Cape May County Airport next year.

Nothing in the agreement requires the county to accept or retain any Lower Township employees, but the county has the right to transfer township employees to become county employees. Township Manager Jim Ridgway said one dispatcher was retiring, another resigned "and the rest are all being picked up."

Lower Township will pay the county \$600,000 per year for the length of the agreement. The fee may be raised based on the Labor Consumer Price Index.

The agreement also states the \$600,000 annual fee may be reduced if additional municipalities enter into an agreement for county dispatch services. Only two

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Lower Township bond rating the best it's been in nearly 20 years.

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Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Summer traffic in full swing

They're here! Cape May was so full of tourists during the past weekend that it seemed the city would have burst if one more person checked in to a local hotel. This week looks to be just as busy.

Clark, Beck off Bayshore Council

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Lower Township Council voted Monday to appoint Republican Councilman Tom Conrad and Township Manager Jim Ridgway to represent the township on the Delaware Bayshore Council.

Council members tabled a motion July 18 to reappoint Deputy Mayor Norris Clark as the township's representa-

tive to the Delaware Bayshore Council and Mayor Michael Beck as an alternate member.

Clark and Beck, both independents, have served on the Delaware Bayshore Council since its inception.

The Delaware Bayshore Council was formed in March 2015 with the assistance of state Sen. Jeff Van Drew, D-Cape May, Cumberland, Atlantic. The council has brought together 13 municipalities and government

regulatory agencies concerned with the bay and its beaches.

Beck said he wished to see Clark stay on the Delaware Bayshore Council since he was one of the initiators of the group. He said he believed Clark would remain on the council for one year as an establishing member.

Councilman David Perry repeated his comments from the

See Clark, Beck, Page A2



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

All work, no play at park on Lafayette

Work continues on Lafayette Street Park in Cape May to meet a deadline of opening for the school year. Sod is scheduled to be installed later this week. Playground equipment will come later.

Committee discusses fee for outdoor seats in city

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city's Outdoor Seating Committee is examining a draft ordinance that would place fees on seasonal seating.

City Solicitor Tony Monzo offered a draft of an ordinance to regulate seasonal outdoor seating at a July 26 meeting of the Outdoor Seating Committee.

The committee is tasked with making recommendations to City Council on how to regulate the increasing number of seasonal outdoor seats at restaurants and hotels, in particular seats not included on mercantile licenses and site plans, and to lessen parking impacts.

Monzo said as a starting point, he used an ordinance for regulating seasonal outdoor seating prepared several months ago for council that was not introduced. He said a temporary outdoor seat should be associated with a retail food establishment. Monzo said a seat in the proposed ordinance is defined "as anywhere you can sit." He said the ordinance was not meant to include a restaurant table and chair since they were already regulated through the establishment's site plan and licensing process.

Monzo said temporary seats are "any seats that a private retail food establishment, where drinks or beverages can be consumed in or adjacent to any principal or accessory building, which is not otherwise devoted to a function essential to the site." He said temporary seating should not include any seats that were previously approved as part of a site plan application or have been determined to be pre-existing, nonconforming condition.

"If you have an establishment that predated the current zoning requirements but it's a pre-existing condition and the seats have been licensed over the years, we view that as pre-existing, nonconforming conditions that would be permitted under zoning," he said.

Poolside seats at hotels would not be considered as temporary outdoor seating nor hotel and restaurant seating areas used as waiting areas, Monzo said.

He said the ordinance would exclude seats without dining tables on porches and verandas of restaurants, hotels, motels or guesthouses from the designation of temporary outdoor seating. Monzo said temporary seats would not include any seats set up for special events that have all necessary approvals such as chairs in ballrooms, under tents for weddings, anniversaries or fundraisers.

Monzo said initially it was thought City Manager Bruce MacLeod would approve temporary outdoor seating plans. He said it would also be a burden on operator and Planning Board to have a full site plan approval.

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