

County working hard while mosquitoes lying dormant

By ERIC AVEDESIAN
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE — Even during the winter months, as mosquitoes lay dormant, the Cape May County Department of Mosquito Control attacks areas where the insects breed.

The department is now clearing and improving mosquito ditches along Roosevelt Boulevard in Ocean City.

The department is enhancing tidal flow through the channels with an amphibious excavator.

"One of the questions we get is 'What do you guys do in the winter?' This is what we do in the winter," said Ed Sikora of the Cape May Coun-

ty Department of Mosquito Control. "A lot of the stuff is winter work for our outside crew, and cleaning these ditches is so important for keeping the water flowing so that there's no stagnant water for mosquitoes in which to reproduce."

The Cape May County Department of Mosquito Control originally began as the Cape May County Mosquito Commission in 1915. The current buildings used by the commission at one time housed Civilian Conservation Corps workers during the 1930s and German prisoners of war during World War II. In 2005, the Cape May County Board of Chosen Freeholders abolished the commission

and made mosquito control a department of county government.

Last summer the Cape May County Department of Mosquito Control collected mosquitoes that were positive for West Nile Virus.

The Department of Mosquito Control primarily monitors Eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) and West Nile virus, two diseases mosquitoes can spread.

The department's 13 full-time and eight seasonal employees work together to locate and reduce the prevalence of mosquitoes via water management, spraying larvae and spraying adult mosquitoes.

Spring and summer are when the department shifts gears and begins its spraying. The department hires seasonal employees who be-

gin collecting mosquitoes, testing them, conducting surveillance and monitoring wetlands and tidal areas for mosquito activity.

"It's an entirely different cast of characters and jobs being done in the summertime as opposed to the wintertime," Sikora said.

But during the slow wintery months, when the mosquito population lays dormant, the department works in the field, digging and clearing drainage ditches.

While the department is focused on Ocean City right now, other areas need attention, Sikora said. No projects are planned for Upper Township, but the department would like to meet with officials and discuss what it can do to reduce the mosquito population.

"Going into freshwater en-

vironments is a whole other game," Sikora said. "At least with the salt marsh projects there seems to be a slightly larger window of opportunity to take care of those."

The department is also eyeing a possible project off Sunset Boulevard in West Cape May, but timing with state permitting has postponed that endeavor until this fall.

Sikora said a drainage ditch connected to catch basins on Sunset Boulevard where Pacific Avenue ties in needs attention.

"I have the project in the pipeline but it's not finalized yet," Sikora said. "I don't want to get anybody's hopes up."

The Department of Mosquito Control is restoring a pond at the Cape May County Park and Zoo. Last fall the

department performed shore restoration of the pond and dredged upstream. While a contractor dredges the pond, the department works adjacent, Sikora noted.

"The water is extremely stagnant there from years of goose droppings and accumulation of plant material. There's feet and feet of muck and very little water," Sikora said. "The idea is to get as much of that muck out of there and it will improve the quality of the water."

Landscaping work that would prevent geese from using the pond is also part of the project.

Sikora said the pond project is a joint effort by the Cape May County Department of Mosquito Control, county engineer's office, and the county park and zoo using a \$500,000 state grant.

Fire, police station tours offered March 16

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city's firehouse and police station will be open for tours from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. March 16 to give the public a look at why officials believe they need to be replaced.

"There are some people in the public that may not be as well in tune with the buildings we're talking about," Fire Chief Alex Coulter said. "We'll give the tour and you can see what we're talking about."

Coulter said he hoped to see many residents take the tours.

City Council unanimously introduced a bond ordinance Feb. 21 providing preliminary expenses for the construction of a new public safety building. The ordinance would appropriate \$300,000 by authorizing the issuance of \$285,000 in bonds with a \$15,000 cash down payment. A public hearing for the ordinance is scheduled for 6 p.m. March 20.

During a City Council meeting March 6, Public

Safety Building Advisory Committee Chairman Jerry Gaffney said tours of the police and fire stations would "open a lot of eyes if anybody has any doubts about the need for a public safety building."

Committee member Barney Dougherty said the city's master plan 2009 update recognized the inadequate facilities.

Kate Wyatt, secretary to the committee, said she did not understand the depth and breadth of the problem until she began her work with the committee. She said coun-

cil and the city's taxpayers have a shared responsibility to keep the project moving forward.

Wyatt noted the current fire station has pre-engineered steel frame which does not meet current coastal wind requirements. The March 2 nor'easter produced wind gusts to 71 mph, just short of hurricane strength, she said.

"We need to build a safe, functional and efficient building for the fire and police departments with capacity for future needs," Wyatt said.

Public input

Continued from Page A1

city should look in 20 years.

"Those kinds of exercises help build consensus and a plan so that we are all on the same page," Hurlless said.

He said the committee discussed land use and population trends, including a trend toward a decline in year-round residents and the lack of workforce housing. Hurlless said the committee discussed the tourism economy and Cape May's environmental assets.

"We talked about possibly coming up with a streetscape development standard, we talked about branding," he said. "When

you talk about land use, you talk about parking in relation to land use."

Hurlless said the committee focused on coming up with a detailed survey as an online tool. He said while Cape May has 3,500 residents, the population swells to 46,000 during summer.

"We want to give them an easy access to be engaged and have their comments so we can consensus build and figure out how we need to plan for the future," he said.

Van de Vaarst said another scenario for discussion would be how Cape May would be rebuilt after the great fire of 1878 under current zoning rules.

"Are they appropriate for what we need today?" he asked.

Planning Board Chairman Bill Bezaire said the goal was to vet the issues people think are a problem or an asset for the city and develop something to address those issues.

Budget

Continued from Page A1

in surplus than last year. Costello said the city was \$619,000 below the state spending cap and \$207,000 below the 2 percent cap on spending. He said the budget does not cut any services or defer any payments.

"It's a very sound fiscal budget," Costello said.

The city's budget totals \$29.3 million, with \$9.3 million to be raised by the local purpose tax. That figure is up \$384,000, or 4.8 percent, over 2017.

Salaries and wages total \$6.9 million, up \$204,000 from last year or 3 percent. Debt service totals \$2.9 million, up \$269,000 or 10 percent over last year.

In 2017, there was no increase in the local purpose tax rate.

Young said council had the opportunity to amend the budget or adopt it without change. A public hearing for the budget is scheduled for 6 p.m. April 3.

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Dear Friends,

The Lenten season is a special time for prayer and reflection. I invite you to attend our Lenten Series and our parish retreat day and to receive the Sacrament of Penance that evening in preparation for the great feast of Easter. On Palm Sunday, we will walk in procession with Psalms to commemorate Our Lord's entrance into Jerusalem.

On Holy Thursday we celebrate with great joy Jesus' institution of the Holy Eucharist.

On Good Friday we recall the Passion and Death of Jesus.

The Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday evening is the first celebration of Our Lord's Resurrection.

Please make a special effort to join us in celebrating the great events at the heart of our beliefs.

On behalf of the Parish Staff, I wish you a happy and blessed Easter.

Yours in Christ,
Father Frank

2018 EASTER SCHEDULE

LENTEN PARISH RETREAT DAY

Starting with the 11:00 AM Mass
Wednesday, March 14th

RITE OF RECONCILIATION

Penance Service: 7:00 PM
Wednesday, March 14th

HOLY THURSDAY

March 29th, Mass 6:00 PM
Adoration of the Blessed
Sacrament until 9:00 PM

CONFESSIONS: Tuesday of Holy Week, March 27th after 11:00 AM Mass

GOOD FRIDAY

March 30th
Celebration of the Lord's Passion
3:00 PM

HOLY SATURDAY

March 31st
Solemn Easter Vigil Mass: 8:00 PM

EASTER SUNDAY

April 1st
Mass 8:00, 9:15, 10:30, 11:45 AM

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ATTENTION

Dog & Cat Owners of West Cape May,
Cape May and Cape May Point

ANNUAL FREE RABIES CLINIC

Tuesday, March 27th • 4 PM - 5 PM
Cape May Point Public Works Building
801 Lighthouse Avenue, Cape May Point

ALL DOGS MUST BE ON A LEASH AND
CATS MUST BE IN A PET CARRIER.

Licenses will NOT
be sold at this free clinic.

You must purchase dog licenses from your
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