

# Police to oversee code enforcement in Cape May

By JACK FICHTER  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — In a 3-2 vote, City Council approved placing the city's code enforcement department under the supervision of the police department.

During a council meeting July 18, Middle Township Police Lt. James Loftus spoke of the success of placing Middle Township's code enforcement under the supervision of the police department. He said the police department began overseeing code enforcement in January.

"For the first six months that we've had it, the transi-

tion has gone very smoothly," Loftus said. "There have been no issues."

He said before the police department took over control of code enforcement, the department was supervised by Middle Township's business administrator and Township Committee. Loftus said he meets with the township's two code enforcement officers on a daily basis or communicates by email. In the past, some code violations were overlooked or not fully followed up, he said.

Code enforcement is able to use police department computer software to accurately keep records of

violations, Loftus said. He said police and code enforcement are able to work hand-in-hand.

Code enforcement officers remain civilians, Loftus said.

Cape May Mayor Chuck Lear said moving code enforcement under the supervision of the police department would not change the existing structure of the department. The enabling ordinance states code enforcement will handle animal control, property maintenance, zoning and planning issues.

"This is not going to become a police function," Lear said.

He said the police department would not become the code enforcement depart-

ment. Code enforcement would no longer report to City Manager Neil Young.

Young said he was not able to "go out on the street every day."

Police Chief Anthony Marino said code enforcement officers would still have the discretion to act on their own. He said if a code enforcement officer has a question on enforcing a violation, he or she would check with a police supervisory officer. Marino said his department would need to create a standard operating procedure for code enforcement.

Lear said code enforcement is not in a rush to issue summonses and could issue warnings instead.

City solicitor Frank Cor-

rado said code enforcement would be plugged into the police record-keeping system so a code enforcement officer will know if an address has had multiple violations.

"These folks will have no less power than they have right now and the ability to get their questions answered faster," he said. "That's the whole purpose of this."

Council members Roger Furlin and Bea Pessagno voted against the ordinance. Furlin said Middle Township's code enforcement needs are slightly different than Cape May's needs. He said Cape May has a tourist economy and is a National Historic Landmark, which affects code enforcement.

Furlin said he had a concern about police standard operating procedures that would encompass code enforcement.

"I think we need some kind of review to make sure that our historic preservation needs are being met," he said.

Councilwoman Patricia Hendricks said the intent of the ordinance was for code enforcement to preserve the quality and the value of public and private property and maintain a very high standard of living by eliminating conditions that threaten the health, safety and general welfare of the public. She said the goal was voluntary compliance from Cape May residents and businesses.

## Inspections

Continued from Page A1

the fire code is a joke," Schatz said.

Young said of the 3,000 properties to be inspected, 2,000 are rental properties currently not receiving inspections from the state. He said local inspections would ensure the safety of people renting those properties.

Councilwoman Patricia Hendricks, who is also a real estate broker, said sales transactions are fed onto a state website with payment and one of two things occur.

"It spits back the certificate to you or says that you're the winner of a random on-site inspection, but there are no on-site inspections for any of the sale transactions that take place in the city of Cape May," she said.

Councilwoman Bea Pessagno said when she ran for council in 2014, she heard from innkeepers

and business owners who wanted fire inspections to be handled by city staff.

Deputy Mayor Shaine Meier said part of the reason so many bed and breakfast inns closed in Cape May was the expense of keeping up with "sometimes extreme requests to change parts of the building" by state inspectors.

Young said the salaries of three staffers for a city Bureau of Fire Prevention would be paid by fees for inspections.

"The revenue that comes in, I believe, will be at least \$200,000," he said. "So the expenses are expected to be much less than that."

Lear said the city would see increased revenue by identifying rental properties currently not holding mercantile licenses.

Councilman Roger Furlin, who cast the lone dissenting vote, said he wanted to see the administration of fire inspections handled by the fire department rather than creating a new city department.

## Coast Guard medevacs woman off charter boat

CAPE MAY — The U.S. Coast Guard medevac'd an ill woman from a fishing charter July 21 near Cape May.

Watch standers at Coast Guard Sector Delaware Bay were notified by the crew of the Cape May Lady that a passenger was experiencing seizures.

A nearby 45-foot response boat-medium crew from Coast Guard Station Cape May overheard the broadcast for aid and diverted to the charter boat to assist.

The Coast Guard crew

transferred the woman to its RB-M and transported her to shore, where she was met by local EMS.

"The crew of this boat did the right thing by letting the Coast Guard know when the problem began," said Petty Officer 1st Class Stephen McIntire, a watch stander at Coast Guard Sector Delaware Bay. "Helping someone on the water can be complex, and the sooner we know about a medical condition, the faster we can get that person to the care they need."

## USCG assists unconscious boater off Cape May Inlet

CAPE MAY — The U.S. Coast Guard assisted an unconscious passenger aboard a recreational boat two miles north of Cape May Inlet on July 22.

Watch standers at Coast Guard Sector Delaware Bay received notification from

the captain of the recreational boat Fishing Fever that a man was reportedly losing and regaining consciousness at 6:53 a.m.

A rescue crew from Coast Guard Station Cape May launched a 45-foot response boat-medium with an emergency medical technician aboard from the Coast Guard Training Center Cape May Fire Department at 7 a.m.

The Cape May rescue crew arrived on scene and transferred the EMT aboard the Fishing Fever to provide first aid. The crew then escorted the Fishing Fever to the pier, where they met local EMS personnel.

"The fast actions of the captain of the Fishing Fever to start heading back to shore while simultaneously calling the Coast Guard expedited the rescue immensely," said Petty Officer 1st Class Jason Ruffenach, coxswain of the response boat. "Having a VHF radio helps rescuers get to you quickly and accurately."

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DATE	HIGH		LOW	
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
26	11:09	11:23	4:50	4:57
27		12:00	5:38	5:50
28	12:11	12:52	6:26	6:45
29	1:01	1:45	7:15	7:41
30	1:53	2:39	8:04	8:40
31	2:49	3:34	8:55	9:40
1	3:47	4:28	9:46	10:37
2	4:44	5:19	10:36	11:30

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