

MAC tour part of national Network of Freedom

CAPE MAY — The Center for Community Arts' trolley tour, "The Underground Railroad in Cape May," has been accepted as part of the National Park Service's Network to Freedom. The Network to Freedom is a national program that documents, preserves, commemorates and educates the public about the people, places and sites throughout the country connected with the Underground Railroad.

The Park Service extensively vetted the materials used by the CCA to support the stories and information about people and places in Cape May connected with the railroad.

As part of the Network to Freedom, the trolley tour will appear on the National Park Service website and the Network to Freedom logo will appear in tour announcements. The CCA will also collaborate with other members of the network.

"We are thrilled to be a part of the Park Service's effort to educate Americans about the great civil rights movement of the 19th century and to show Cape May's role in that," said the CCA's Barbara Dreyfuss, who led the research and wrote the tour. "And we applaud the Mid-Atlantic Center for the Arts and Humanities (MAC), which co-sponsors the tour, for using the script for a Power-Point presentation to bring

this same information to schools, community centers and other venues.

"We are proud to have our work substantiated by the Park Service," CCA Director David Mackenzie said. "The tour builds on 20 years of looking into the history of the African-American community in Cape May by members of CCA's community history group. It rounds out its work, building an archive of African-American history in Cape May that includes photos, oral histories and documents, which are used for exhibits."

"We at MAC were very impressed by the fascinating Underground Railroad material unearthed by CCA

researchers," MAC Director Michael Zuckerman said. "We are delighted to integrate it into our trolley tour lineup. Our decision has now been validated twice over — by the public, which has flocked to it beyond all expectations, and by the critical reviewers at the National Park Service."

On the tour, visitors learn little-known facts about Cape May's role in the Underground Railroad. Cape May was the place where many freedom seekers from slave states across the Delaware Bay first touched free soil.

Wealthy businessman and UGRF leader Stephen Smith spent summers for decades in Cape May. Once

enslaved himself, he risked all he had to ferry people to freedom in his railroad cars. In Cape May, Harriet Tubman earned money for her freedom runs to the Eastern Shore. And the city was home to a community of free blacks who helped freedom seekers on their way farther north.

Regular tours are conducted from June through September, periodically during the spring and fall, and by appointment. Call (609) 884-7525 for more information about the CCA. For tour reservations, call (609) 884-5404.

The CCA is a multicultural educational nonprofit organization whose arts and humanities programs

foster creativity, community building and appreciation for the rich diversity of our world. The CCA's Community History Program is dedicated to preserving, interpreting and celebrating Cape May's African-American heritage through exhibits, tours and its John and Janet Nash African-American History Archive. The CCA is currently rehabilitating the Franklin Street School, a Cape May African-American Historic Site, to house a community cultural center, runs youth arts programs and operates WCFA-LP 101.5 FM, a community radio station. For further information, visit centerforcommunityarts.org.

Windows issues spark debate

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request to replace their windows, which had previously been replaced with nontraditional wood windows, what would take place.

City Solicitor Frank Corrado said the city has window standards that do not allow for the replacement of pre-existing clad windows with the same type windows in buildings that are either key or contributing to the historic district. He said the ordinance before council allowed like for like substitution for pre-existing clad windows in contributing structures.

Furlin asked that HPC Chairman Warren Coupland be permitted to address council on the topic. Mayor Chuck Lear said council discussion was taking place and public comment could be received later.

Corrado said council could allow someone from the audience to comment.

Lear said his recollection of the task of the committee referred to by Furlin was to address responsibilities among HPC and the planning and zoning boards because the relationship between the groups had become strained.

He said the public should know what to expect and not have to appear before a board or commission to learn what they may do

with their property. Lear said that was the intention of the section on windows added to the ordinance.

Councilwoman Bea Pessagno said she felt the ordinance had been held in abeyance.

"We tried for months to pass this," she said.

Furlin said part of the discussion of the committee was the separation of duties between the HPC and the zoning board.

"This just makes it foggy again," he said. "I'd just like the attorneys to look at that and make sure it's consistent with everything we agreed to in our meeting as far as the duties of the different boards."

Meier said if someone moved to Cape May and purchased a key or contributing building with more modern windows and they wanted to replace the windows with the same type of existing windows, it would be unfair for the homeowner to be required to change all the windows back to the type of window the home had historically.

Furlin said he was not arguing that point but was concerned with the process. He said the ordinance was being changed without the involvement of the committee.

"If the committee agrees with it all, fine," he said, "I'm only one vote on the committee but I think they should have the opportunity to review it."

Lear said the ordinance

was only being introduced and there was ample time to look at the ordinance before its public hearing.

Councilwoman Patricia Hendricks said she did not think the directive of the committee to define the roles of the HPC, planning and zoning board was "followed to the letter."

She said the ordinance was just an iteration of what was introduced last spring.

"There still isn't a very clear delineation of HPC or zoning or planning roles, responsibilities and the scopes of the responsibilities that could help the real reason we did this, to help property owners understand the rationale, understand the protocol and understand how to complete the application and prepare presentations," Hendricks said. "The window sections were removed in the spring, that didn't need to be removed."

Pessagno said the ordinance was arbitrarily added to and did not represent the work of the committee.

Corrado said council could amend the ordinance during its public hearing which would require a second public hearing if the amendments were substantial. He suggested the committee meet before council's next meeting and offer its opinion at council's Nov. 21 meeting.

The consensus of the committee was the window

issue be deferred and left out of the ordinance, Corrado said. He said members of council wanted the window section reinstated into the ordinance.

The ordinance must have a consistency review from the Planning Board, Corrado said.

Pessagno asked council to allow Coupland to offer comments. Lear said he was not interested in opening the meeting to public comment at that point.

A motion to eliminate the section of the ordinance dealing with windows failed in a 3-2 vote with Lear, Hendricks and Meier voting "no" and Pessagno and Furlin voting in the affirmative.

Furlin asked if public comment would be heard. Corrado said there was no requirement for public comment during introduction of an ordinance but could be permitted at the discretion of the presiding officer of the council.

"I hate to say this but it seems like there is an awful lot of lack of transparency here tonight," Pessagno said.

She asked how council could vote on the ordinance if it was not allowed to hear from someone who may have more facts.

Corrado said he presumed the advisory committee would present its opinion at the Nov. 21 public hearing for the ordinance.

Corrado said for the

brief time he has served as solicitor, if someone wanted public comment

on a first reading, council has allowed it but it was not mandatory.

Car accident causes power outage in Erma

ERMA — The Lower Township Police Department was notified of a motor vehicle crash at about 8:08 p.m. Saturday, Oct. 21, on Tabernacle Road in the area of Goldenrod Court.

According to police, a multiagency response was activated with assistance from Erma Fire Department, AtlantiCare medics and Lower Township Rescue. It was reported that one vehicle was overturned and that it involved an entrapped occupant.

Upon arrival to the crash scene, Lower Township police made contact with the driver of one vehicle. A dark-colored Ford Expedition was upside down on its roof in the roadway with the driver still inside.

The driver, later identified as Stephanie M. Cresse, 30, of Erma, was able to free herself from the vehicle with the help of police and fire personnel. She was then evaluated by rescue

personnel and ultimately declined to be transported to the hospital.


The crash investigation revealed the vehicle was traveling east on Tabernacle Road when it ran off the right side of the road, first striking a wooden fence, followed by a utility pole and several piling, then overturned, coming to rest in the eastbound lane of Tabernacle Road. The vehicle was towed from the scene after being deemed safe to do so by fire personnel.

Atlantic City Electric responded to the scene and made repairs to the utility pole, resulting in a brief power outage throughout various sections of the township.

Cresse was issued a mo-

tor vehicle violation for careless driving and an-

other for failure to maintain a lane.



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