

City to reach out to realtors, builders on certificates

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city has delayed local enforcement of the requirements of flood elevation certificates and certificates of continuing occupancy.

City Council passed an ordinance in the fall raising construction fees, which had not been raised in nine years. The ordinance, which legally went into effect Dec. 15, also covered the two certificates.

At a Dec. 15 City Council

meeting, Mayor Edward Mahaney said the state Department of Community Affairs advised the city to increase construction fees.

Mahaney said upon the ordinance's passage, he asked enforcement of the ordinance be delayed until Jan. 1.

"I did not feel when we were considering it, in the late summer or early fall, that it was appropriate to put these additional fees and requirements onto the public when they have already made plans," he said. "I

don't want to have a downturn in the real estate industry or the construction industry."

One phase of the ordinance deals with the ongoing flood hazard code compliance issue, which requires flood elevation certificates when houses are being sold or major improvements are undertaken, Mahaney said.

He said the need for flood elevation certificates started two years ago as an outcome of National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP), FEMA (Fed-

eral Emergency Management Agency) and the Community Ratings Service program, in which Cape May participates, offering residents a 20 percent discount on flood insurance. The requirement for flood elevation certificates will begin Jan. 1 to keep in compliance with NFIP, Mahaney said. A total of 2,700 properties in the city are covered with flood insurance through NFIP, he said.

A third element of the ordinance deals with obtaining a certificate of continuing occu-

pancy in which an inspection of the property focusing on fire safety is conducted prior to the sale or rental of an existing structure.

"There has been some confusion about that and I had hoped when this ordinance was passed and I had asked, that there be meetings and dialogue between the construction office and the city manager with the real estate community and contractors," Mahaney said. "Evidently, that has not occurred."

He asked if council was willing to delay enforcement of the certificate of continuing occupancy section of the ordinance until April 1 so discussion could be held with the real estate industry and contractors to make sure when it takes effect, it's a seamless process and does not generate undo concern with the transfer of properties.

Council concurred with the mayor. Mahaney asked City Manager Bruce MacLeod to reach out to realtors and contractors to set up meetings.

Beach slope study recommends moving sand

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found that the beach fills resulted in steepening of the beach slope."

If finer grain sand were placed on existing beaches, it would quickly be winnowed away and sent downstream, Gaffney said.

He explained ratios used to measure beach slopes such as a 1 on 10, meaning a 1 foot difference in elevation for a 10 foot distance in the horizontal distance. He said a 1 on 20 slope would be much gentler, so the larger the number, the gentler the slope.

Cape May received its first beach replenishment in 1989, Gaffney said.

"Prior to that, the beaches in Cape May were virtually nonexistent in a lot of places, and the reason for that, of course, is the Cape May inlet jetties," he said. "The purpose of jetties is to keep sand out of the inlet, so those jetties worked quite well to do that, but at the same time they interrupted the littoral transport, which means the sand that is flowing from north to south basically in this part of New Jersey."

Sand is being retained in Wildwood Crest and not getting to Cape May, Gaffney said.

He said the Army Corps' original design for Cape May's beach replenishments assumed a gentle 1 on 25 slope, but it turned out not to be natural slope. Gaffney said the current design has been changed to recognize the 1 in 10 berm slope.

A 1954 report noted a 1 on 9 slope just north of Wilmington Avenue and also the Perry Street beach. Madison Avenue beach had a 1 on 25 slope, he said.

"Basically you could say, the

native beach material in the 1950s was a fine-grain beach sand," Gaffney said.

Baltimore Avenue beach was one of the steepest beaches with a slope of 1 on 7, he said.

Gaffney offered two alternatives to bulldozing sand: shortening stone groins along the beach, an expensive proposition, or decreasing the size of grains of sand in future Army Corps beach fill projects. He said it was unlikely changing grain size would have any effect on the beach slope. He said sand on the city's beaches is coarser than it was 30 years ago due in part to pumping sand from a borrow area offshore in 2006. In the past four years, the sand has been returning to a more natural size, Gaffney said.

Gaffney outlined four types of waves seen on Cape May's beaches, with plunging waves being the most hazardous, resembling a miniature version of the pipeline at Oahu, Hawaii, loved by surfers.

A goal of reducing the beach slope would be to reduce the prevalence of plunging waves and produce gentler spilling waves by adding sand where the waves break.

Changing the template of the beach from an Army Corps design could reduce protection from flooding, Gaffney said. A question remains if the Army Corps and state Department of Environmental Protection would issue permits for such work, he said.

"Specifically, you're actually precluded from doing this kind of work. It's not in your beach maintenance permit," Gaffney

said.

The proposed project would move sand from the downdrift side of the stone groins into the surf zone, creating a uniform 1 on 25 slope with excess sand moved to enhance dune widths.

Engineer Tom Thornton, of Hatch Mott MacDonald, said the base project would extend from the Queen Street groin to the Grant Street groin, about 3,700 linear feet, at an estimated cost of \$850,000. He said extending the project one block in either direction would increase the total cost to more than \$1 million.

Resident Dennis DeSantnik encouraged council to do "much more homework" beyond the feasibility study. He said he wrote a letter to

the Army Corps outlining more than 500 injuries in nine years on Cape May's beaches.

"Before we start moving sand, we have to do our homework to make sure it's going to be safe," he said.

Mayor Edward Mahaney asked council to review the feasibility study and be prepared to vote at council's Jan. 5 meeting on future action with an implementation plan and budget. He said there needed to be an increase in safety education, informing all bathers in Cape May of beach hazards.

"I think we have an anecdotal record that shows that most of the injuries occur to people who are coming here to visit. But even if it's not a local person, we've had two tragic

injuries where the people were very familiar with our beaches and they were critically injured, so we need to look at every aspect of increasing the

educational component, and I have some direct ideas that I'd like to explore there and to put some people together to work on that," Mahaney said.

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25	7:30	7:57	12:52	1:46
26	8:16	8:45	1:41	2:33
27	9:01	9:32	2:28	3:19
28	9:44	10:18	3:15	4:05
29	10:27	11:05	4:01	4:49
30	11:11	11:53	4:48	5:34

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