

Tennis courts to be replaced at Bennett's Crossing

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Lower Township Council voted to approve a contract for engineering services for the replacement of tennis and basketball courts at Freeman Douglass Jr. Memorial Park.

with this thing and getting competing bids?" asked Beck.

Township Clerk Julie Picard said the resolution covering taking bids for special projects had expired Dec. 31, 2015.

Township Manager Jim Ridgway said replacing the tennis courts was in last year's capital budget. He said the courts are more than 10 years old and cracked.

"Before I even went to council, I wanted to make sure before we spent any money, was the surface below those courts such that there was wetlands under them?" Ridgway said. "What could have caused these things to crack in 11 or 12 years?"

He said Lower Cape May Regional High School approached the township asking for a shared services agreement to use the tennis courts in the park and in turn allow township youth to use the school athletic facilities at night. The high school will build a field house on the site of its tennis courts.

Ridgway said he was confident with the suggestions received from Hatch Mott MacDonald. He said construction costs could be \$150,000 to \$190,000.

Resident Ed Butler said the township solicitor should investigate if there was negligence on behalf of the contractor that built the tennis and basketball courts.

Councilman Erik Simonson, who is vice principal of the Richard M. Teitelman School, said if a field house were not being constructed on the site of the high school courts, new tennis courts would have been constructed at both Bennett's Crossing and the high school.

"Instead of having two sets of tennis courts, they have one set of tennis courts that's going to be used by all the youth of Lower and junior

high and high school, and instead of another set of tennis courts, you're going to have a field house that is used by all of Lower Township," he said.

Ridgway said one basketball court would be eliminated and one additional tennis court created at the park. He said much of the excavation of the park's tennis courts would be handled by the township's Department of Public Works.

Cold Spring resident Bob Hartman said Freeman Douglass Park was a \$1 million

project that went \$1 million over budget. He said something was wrong with the ground in the park. Hartman said he installed a tennis court 35 years ago at Village Road and the beach and it's still in use.

He asked the result of test borings taken at the tennis courts. Ridgway said a compaction issue impacted the courts.

Hartman asked that the contractor offer a 10-year warranty on the new courts.

ERMA — Lower Township Council voted 4-1 to approve a professional services contract with Hatch Mott MacDonald for engineering services totaling \$45,395 for tennis and basketball court replacement at Freeman Douglass Jr. Memorial Park.

At a Feb. 1 council meeting, Deputy Mayor Norris Clark said last year council voted to compile a list of engineers designated for special projects to put out to bid. He noted the township does not have to go out to bid for professional services contracts but when accepting bids for items such as materials, there was a threshold of \$40,000.

"I just want us to get clear the rhyme or reason behind when we do go out to bid and when we don't, and so that we can protect the taxpayers, get the best deals," he said. "I think it's worthy of discussion."

Councilman Tom Conrad said he concurred but going to a list of engineers for bids should be done at the beginning of a special project.

"We're at that point where we have to get the work done," he said. Mayor Michael Beck suggested in the future any special projects with costs of \$40,000 or more would be put out to bid. Conrad suggested a council work session on the topic.

Councilman David Perry said council needed to define what was a special project. "What would have been the harm in turning around



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Cape May Police Capt. Robert Sheehan presents Cape May City Elementary School sixth-grader Naada Moustafa with a certificate for being chosen Student of the Month.

Pizza

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gathers information. If the call needs further investigation, detectives conduct interviews, he said.

Marino said officers receive physical training at the police academy and study for tests.

"The tests you're taking now, you kind of keep taking tests when you get older. They don't go away," Sheehan told the students.

A student asked Marino about all the items on his belt. He explained he had

a gun, extra bullets, pepper spray, a two-way radio, handcuffs, gloves, a flashlight and a baton.

Sheehan told students that officers carry laptop computers in their vehicles to write reports and communicate with the dispatcher.

He said officers would like to have lunch at the school with the students on occasion.

The pizzas were donated by Cappelletti's in Cape May, Sheehan said.

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