

Meters near mall to operate later in fall, earlier in spring

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council approved an ordinance May 1 to keep parking meters operating around the Washington Street Mall during the Christmas shopping season and early spring to prevent mall employees from taking up all the parking spaces.

The ordinance covers both sides of Carpenter's

Lane from Perry Street to Ocean Street, both sides of Lyle Lane from Decatur Street to Perry Street and the southern portion of Mansion Street from Jackson Street to Perry Street. Meters will operate through the month of December, be turned off in January and reactivated in April. Previously, meters at the mall were turned off Oct. 31 and reactivated May 1.

During public comment, Bank Street resident Christine Miller said the city sells 225 parking permits for the summer season for the Bank Street parking lot. "All winter the parking lot is empty," she said. "So, instead of turning the meters back on, I would like to propose, because it would cost zero dollars, the city ask the Business Improvement District (BID) and the mall merchants,

how about if the city issues winter permits to mall merchants and their employees for free for the winter season because there are 225 issued for the summer and not so many businesses are open for the winter."

Miller said the Bank Street lot would be full during the winter and there would be no need to keep the parking meters operating around the mall. She suggested the city repair

the pumping station on Bank Street so the parking lot would not flood from rainstorms.

During a meeting in April, Councilwoman Bea Pessagno, who is liaison to the BID, said the reason for the parking meter change is there are no parking places available for the merchants themselves or their customers during those times of year. She said when the

parking meters are turned off at the end of October, mall employees take all the parking spaces on the mall. She said many of the employees are requested to park away from the mall but do not.

Pessagno noted drivers could simply go down onto Decatur Street and park for free at those times, since the ordinance affected just the streets immediately adjoining the mall.



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Much of the interior of the school already has been gutted. The Center for Community Arts has tried for years to restore the school but was always hampered by a lack of funding.

Architects inspect school

Continued from Page A1

She said some environmental work was completed on the building, bricks repointed and windows replaced.

Proposals for the feasibility study must be submitted to the county by May 16, she said. McMahon said the winning bidder would have 90 days to produce the study.

"Within your proposal package, we expected three comparable projects with similar historical emphasis within the past 10 years," she told the architects.

She said the school measured about 8,500 square feet with a detached gymnasium that has no direct access to the school building. McMahon said phase one would require the architect to supply a schematic design and

cost estimate.

"We want you to analyze the structure to handle any additional loads from the library stacks or any additional furniture or equipment we plan on putting in the building," she said.

McMahon said items to be included in the proposal should include electrical, plumbing, energy upgrades, accessibility recommendations and possibly a generator.

"Definitely keep in mind the sensitivity to preserve the historical aspect of the building," she said.

An evaluation committee would include county personnel, the library commission and Cape May City Council since the project costs would be shared between the county and city,

McMahon said.

She said the architect should have experience in similar projects.

The inside of the building has been gutted. The former classrooms are three walls and windows facing Franklin Street. Two classrooms, containing original blackboards, are split by a wooden divider.

Restrooms and locker rooms in the basement have some remaining plumbing. An architect remarked that electrical service was insufficient.

The building has been largely unused for 30 years other than as storage space for the city.

Water, sewer rates rising in Cape May

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city is proposing to raise water and sewer rates to compensate for a growing use of surplus funds and balance the water and sewer budget.

During a meeting May 1, City Council introduced an ordinance to raise water and sewer rates. City Manager Neil Young said the rates have not changed since 2010.

"We're at a time where we need to increase these rates," he said. "If we do not within the next year, we will not be able to properly fund our budget."

From 2013 to the present, the city lost about \$400,000 in surplus funds, Young said. On an annual basis, the surplus fund was decreasing from \$150,000 to \$200,000, he said.

"If that continues, next year we'd just maybe be able to fund the budget but it would be close and I'm not willing to take that risk," Young said. "This is the year and the time to adjust water and sewer rates."

Water charges are based on actual current consumption as measured by meters four times a year. The water charges consist of a minimum water rate for the first 5,000 gallons consumed in each billing period and a separate excess water rate for each 1,000 gallons of water consumed over 5,000 gallons.

The current water rate would rise from \$36.25 per quarter to \$39 for a minimum bill. The excess water rate

would rise from \$8.25 per 1,000 gallons of excess to \$9.

The current sewer rate is \$65 per quarter, which would increase to \$70, with the excess rate per 1,000 gallons increasing from \$16.50 to \$17.75.

The sewer charges consist of a minimum sewer rate for the 5,000 gallon allowance of water consumed in each billing period, read four times per year, and a separate

excess sewer rate for each 1,000 gallons of water consumed over the 5,000-gallon allowance for each billing period.

All gallons of water consumed in excess of the 5,000-gallon allowance would be deemed excess consumption and would be billed at the excess sewer rate.

Young said the new water and sewer rates would become effective in July, affecting third-quarter billing.

Cape May, West Cape May share court administrator

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council approved an agreement with West Cape May to share the services of borough's municipal court administrator, Bernardine Shearouse.

During a meeting May 1, City Manager Neil Young said he had been working for the past several weeks through both municipalities' conflicts solicitors for an agreement to share the court administrator, who is a full-time employee of the borough. He said Cape May would have her services Monday, Wednesday and Thursday and half-days Tuesday and Friday.

"West Cape May will keep her services for just a half-day Tuesday and a half-day Friday," Young said. "We'll share in her health benefits cost and it is pretty much a \$15,000 cost savings to us and a greater cost savings to them."

Cape May solicitor Frank

Corrado said such a shared-services agreement is permitted by both municipal and judicial code.

Young said the agreement with West Cape May differed from an agreement with Cape May Point in which the city handles all its court services. He said West Cape May would keep its judge, prosecutor and public defender.

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