

City requires new certifications to sell property

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council passed an ordinance Aug. 16 requiring all new property owners to have a current flood elevation certificate with a copy to be kept on file with Cape May's flood compliance officer.

The ordinance also requires the issuance of a certificate of continued occupancy and revises the requirements for certificate of zoning compliance when a property is sold.

Mayor Edward Mahaney said a steering committee including five local Realtors met during the last several months to assist the city produce a modified version of the ordinance.

City Solicitor Tony Monzo said the ordinance created clear standards for the certificate of flood damage prevention compliance and the certificate of continued occupancy. He said the new requirements were mainly aimed at making

sure when there is a change of ownership of a property, an inspection is conducted to make sure the property meets minimal safety standards such as making sure none of the ingress and egress areas are blocked and there is no clear public safety hazards in the building.

"It's not a detailed type of inspection that you would undergo when you obtaining a certificate of occupancy," he said. "This is a visual inspection that takes on those standards which came out of the Uniform Construction Code."

Monzo said the requirement for a certificate of flood damage prevention compliance would enhance the city's position with the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and the Community Rating System (CSR).

Under the CRS, flood insurance premium rates are discounted five to 10 percent to reward community actions that meet the three

goals of the CRS: to reduce flood damage to insurable property, strengthen and support the insurance aspects of the NFIP; and encourage a comprehensive approach to floodplain management.

Homeowners are required to get a flood elevation certificate and submit it to the city's construction office unless one has been recently provided or unless it is new construction. The ordinance requires all properties in flood zones have a minimum number of flood vents for flood damage prevention.

The ordinance has exceptions such as when a certificate of occupancy has previously been issued in connection with new construction within two years of the transfer and when the title of the property is being transferred without financial consideration such as to a relative or heir. If a buyer signs a certification stating they will demolish the building in 90 days or

when the title of a property is being transferred due to foreclosure or sheriff's sale, they are also exempt from the requirements.

The certificate is not needed when a property is being placed into a limited liability corporation, according to Monzo.

If a certificate of flood damage prevention compliance has been issued within the past two years to a single unit or condominium complex containing more than one unit, no other unit within that structure shall be required to obtain a certificate of flood damage prevention compliance.

Homeowners and prospective buyers need to be aware of the new requirements and work with their real estate agents, make sure the proper certificates are obtained in advance of closing dates.

During public comment, resident and real estate agent Patricia Hendricks asked if the flood elevation certifications were needed

for homes not located in a flood zone. Monzo said flood elevation certificates were not required for properties not located in a flood zone. He said a review was necessary to clarify the property is not in a flood zone.

"Once that determination is made, no flood elevation certificate will be required nor will the flood vents be required," said Monzo.

Council voted to delay the implementation of the

requirements of the flood damage and occupancy certificates until Nov. 1. Mahaney said City Manager Bruce MacLeod would be meeting with Realtors in early September to explain the changes.

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Van Drew bill would boost shore protection funding

TOMS RIVER — Legislation sponsored by state Sen. Jeff Van Drew to increase the amount of money credited annually to the state's Shore Protection Fund, from \$25 million to \$50 million, was approved the Senate Environment and Energy Committee and the Assembly Environment and Solid Waste Committee in a joint meeting in Toms River.

"Dedicating additional funding to help repair and protect the shore is essential to helping local governments shoulder the cost of these projects that are so important to these communities and their economies," said Van Drew, D-Cape May, Cumberland, Atlantic. "New Jersey's coastline has been battered by recent storms and needs the resources to restore the areas that were affected both in residential areas as well as the shore areas that mean so much to the state's tourism industry."

The Shore Protection Fund helps counties and municipalities finance projects

aimed at protecting public and private property and infrastructure from coastal storm damage, erosion and shoreline migration, and sea-level rise. Projects include beach replenishment and construction and maintenance of bulkheads, jetties and seawalls. For projects that received congressional support, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers also provides additional federal funding.

Funding for the Shore Protection Fund comes from the collection of realty transfer fees, which are imposed on the recording of deeds transferring real property. It is a progressive fee calculated on the basis of the amount paid in the deed. In 2015, the realty transfer fee brought \$272 million to the general fund, of which \$25 million was dedicated to the Shore Protection Fund, \$5 million to the Highlands Protection Fund and \$66 million to the Extraordinary Aid Account. The committee approved the bill 4-0. Once enacted, it would take effect immediately.



Betty Wund/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

Halvorsens volunteers of year

Cape May Point Commissioner Bob Mullock, left, Mayor Bob Moffatt and Commissioner Anita vanHeeswyk presented Larry and Linda Halvorsen with a plaque as Volunteers of the Year at the Borough Commission meeting Aug. 11. The Halvorsens have run the Pavilion Circle games for children Saturday evenings for 34 years.

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DeSatnicks

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kindergarten at Ardmore Elementary School in Lansdowne, Pa., while her husband was teaching in Philadelphia. After three years, they moved to Cape May and began a new life. She chose to be a stay-at-home mom after her sons were born and decided to use her education and experience to form the first "play group" with the other stay-at-home moms.

"In 1975, after a conversation, approval and blessing from then city librarian Emma Elwell, the famous 'Story Hour' was born. Throughout the years, Anita has met countless families who attend 'Story Hour,' Wyatt said.

Anita DeSatnick served on the Cape May City Board of Education for 18 years, serving 10 years as president, and was recently appointed to fill an unexpired term. She also served as a member of the Cape Regional Medical Center Foundation for four years.

In October 2015, Dennis and Anita began advocating for beach safety in Cape May as a result of a spinal cord injury suffered by their son Chad in 2001. They established the DeSatnick Foundation to offer emotional and financial support to local families affected by a spinal cord injury.

"Their vision is to find a solution to make the surf zone safer by working with the Army Corps of Engineers, the Department of Environmental Protection, as well as the City Council," Wyatt said. "They have faithfully attended City Council meetings to keep beach safety an important and relevant issue. As a result of their efforts, this spring the city installed new signage stressing safety awareness at each beach entrance, revised brochures and three new safety awareness videos."

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