

# Former sheriff heading Casino Control Commission

ATLANTIC CITY — Former Cape May County Sheriff James T. Plousis, who has served in law enforcement for more than four decades, was sworn in Dec. 26 as the eighth chairman of the New Jersey Casino Control Commission.

"I want to thank Gov. Christie for giving me this opportunity and I promise him, Governor-elect Murphy and the people of the state of New Jersey that I will do my utmost to maintain the high standards of integrity for which the commission is known," Plousis said.

"This is a crucial time for

Atlantic City and its gaming industry which is so important to the economy and social well-being of the city, the region and the entire state. I want to work closely with the industry, the Division of Gaming Enforcement and the entire community to help move Atlantic City forward," he added.

Plousis resigned from his position as chairman of the state Parole Board prior to taking the oath of office as Casino Control Commission chairman. The commission is the state agency that licenses casinos in Atlantic City and their key employ-

ees. It also holds hearings on appeals of decisions by the director of the Division of Gaming Enforcement.

Plousis' career in law enforcement started in 1975 as a police officer in Woodbine and later in Ocean City where he still resides. In 1984 he was elected sheriff in Cape May County and repeatedly won reelection to that position until 2002. As sheriff, he was responsible for the county jail, boot camp and fugitive apprehension. He instructed more than 200 law enforcement agencies in community policing, assisted in writing the US Justice Department's com-

munity policing curriculum, and served on the Board of Directors of the National Sheriffs' Association. In 1994 he started New Jersey's first youth academy for juvenile offenders. He served on the State Correction Commission, State Fugitive Committee and Victim Witness Commission.

In 2002, President George W. Bush appointed Plousis as U.S. Marshal for New Jersey. In that position, he was responsible for the security of federal judges and the staff of the US Attorneys' Office in Newark, Trenton and Camden. He coordinated the New York/

New Jersey Regional Fugitive Task Force that serves as a national model for the apprehension of wanted persons. He established the Gang Education and Awareness Program in Jersey City, one of five pilot programs in the nation. He established New Jersey's Fugitive Safe Surrender program that led to the nation's second- and third-highest peaceful turnouts of wanted fugitives, in Camden and Newark.

Christie appointed Plousis to be chairman of the New Jersey Parole Board in 2010. In that position, he headed New Jersey's lead reentry

agency, and worked to ensure ex-prisoners return to society as law-abiding citizens. The state Parole Board is New Jersey's primary law enforcement agency responsible for sex offender supervision and its officers actively participate with multiple federal, state and local law enforcement agencies and task forces. Members of the Parole Board and its staff conduct also more than 20,000 hearings a year for inmates seeking release from the state's 15 correctional facilities and its sworn officers supervise more than 15,000 offenders across the state.

## West Cape May bids Kaithern adieu

By RACHEL SHUBIN

Special to the Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — The Borough Commission meeting Dec. 27 was the last for Pam Kaithern as mayor. She was elected to Borough Commission in 2001 and appointed mayor in 2005.

"I would like to thank Mayor Kaithern for her service and good stewardship of West Cape May," Commissioner Carol Sabo said.

Deputy Mayor Peter Burke echoed Sabo, agreeing with her statement and thanking Kaithern for her service to the borough.

In November, John Francis won a seat on Borough Commission, joining Burke and Sabo. A West Cape May resident thanked Kaithern for her many years of service.

"What stands out to me is that you were dedicated, intelligent and were conscientious," the resident said. "You went above and beyond what was called for by educating yourself in municipal finance and workings and being committed to the community. You acted selfless, which is some-



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thing we rarely see in public service and you have been a hallmark to West Cape May."

John Schmidt, of Gloucester City, traveled to the meeting to thank Kaithern.

"Very few municipalities operate efficiently and there are not enough who put public service first and work for betterment of local government," Schmidt said. "I have a lot of respect for this town and the leadership and I am sad to see when public servants move on."

Schmidt added that he hoped Kaithern would stay active in the community.

"I don't live here, but I frequently visit here. Good government starts at a local level and it's the job of every person to make society better, and I wanted to come tonight and wish you, Mayor Kaithern, all the best and say thank you."

Borough Commission has approved Justin Vitola as the new Deputy Code Enforcement Officer.

"We unfortunately lost our deputy enforcement officer of four years," Sabo said. "Mike moved on to a full-time job

doing the same job in a larger municipality."

She added that with the activity and growth in West Cape May, Vitola is here to keep his eyes on the streets.

"We are hopeful that Justin will be able to step in and do the same," Sabo said.

Commissioners adopted an ordinance amending the borough code regarding landscaping and vegetation. The board has been working on adapting the change since the summer.

On Jan. 12, the Environmental Commission is hosting a movie and craft night at Borough Hall. It will be held 6 to 8 p.m. and all are encouraged to attend.

Burke reminded residents that blood donations are highly needed during the holidays and the winter season.

West Cape May will be hosting the Red Cross from noon to 5 p.m. Thursday, Jan. 25, at Borough Hall. All donors will receive a coupon for a free medium hot coffee and doughnut. More information can be found at redcrossblood.org.

"I would like to encourage all who are able and willing to donate, to do it for our neighbors and friends," Burke said.



Susan Krysiak/MAC

## Feeding the needy

The Mid-Atlantic Center for the Arts & Humanities presented the Cape May Community Food Closet with two grocery carts full of donated groceries Nov. 30 at the First Presbyterian Church of Cape May. Food Closet Director Tina Johnson, shown here at center, accepted donations from MAC Director of External Affairs Eliza Lotozo, left, and MAC Chief Outreach Strategist Mary Stewart. The Food Closet provides supplemental groceries to people in need who live in Cape May, West Cape May, Cape May Point and a portion of Lower Township. The Hill House Office at the Emlen Physick Estate, 1048 Washington St., collected food donations from the public during MAC's Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony on Saturday, Nov. 18.

## Redevelopment

Continued from Page A1

with development arranged in five buildings including the Acme market, according to the report. The lot provides 223 parking spaces and the three groupings

of buildings constructed in 1973, 1983 and 1998.

The report calls the Acme and three vacant storefronts "generally dilapidated and obsolete." Building B of Washington Commons contains 11 units

and is located near First United Methodist Church. The report describes the stores as dilapidated and obsolete. The third grouping of buildings are located nearest the corner of Ocean and Washington streets and described in the report as generally in good condition. The parking lot is described in generally poor condition.

"Development of this site has been stagnant," states the report. "The last development application was approved in 1994. The site is substandard with regards to current standards requiring sufficient off-street parking and loading areas."

The report mentions Macedonia Baptist Church as in generally good condition and a key rated structure by the city's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC). The adjacent former parsonage is described as dilapidated but a contributing structure by the HPC.

The report notes the city owns the Franklin Street School with the gymnasium in use by the recreation department. The interior of the front section of the school is described as in

poor shape with no electric service.

The city's fire station is listed in the report as in good condition but appears to be obsolete for current use.

The Greater Cape May Historical Society home constructed in 1775 is described as in good condition and key-contributing building to the historic district.

First United Methodist Church was described in the report as in good condition but not meeting current off-street parking standards.

The report describes the Blue Rose Bed and Breakfast Inn as in good condition and contributing to the historic district although the site does not meet current standards for sufficient off-street parking.

City Hall, which also houses a portion of the police department, was described in the report as in good condition but not meeting standards for off-street parking.

The report places the total assessed value of the study area including municipal and church properties at \$30.2 million. Commercial parcels total \$16 million, church properties total \$4.1 million with mu-

nicipal properties totaling \$10.1 million.

According to the report, in order to meet the criteria for an area in need of redevelopment, one or more of the following conditions must exist:

Generality of buildings are substandard, unsafe, unsanitary, dilapidated or obsolescent.

Discontinuance of use or abandonment of buildings previously used for commercial, manufacturing or industrial purposes or same being allowed to fall into so great state of disrepair as to be untenable.

Land that is owned by the municipality, the county, a local housing authority or unimproved vacant land that has remained in that state for 10 years.

Areas with buildings or improvements which by reason of dilapidation, obsolescence, overcrowding, faulty arrangement or design, lack of light or sanitary facilities, excessive land coverage, deleterious land use or obsolete layout are detrimental to the safety of the community.

A growing lack or total lack of proper utilization of areas caused by the condition of the title, diverse ownership of the real properties therein or other

similar conditions which impede land assemblage or discourage the undertaking of improvements resulting in a stagnant and unproductive condition of land.

According to the report, Local Redevelopment and Housing Law allows the inclusion of parcels necessary for the effective redevelopment of the area by stating "a redevelopment area may include land, buildings or improvements, which of themselves are not detrimental to the health, safety or welfare but the inclusion of which is found necessary, with or without change in their condition, for the effective redevelopment of the area in which they are a part."

Courts have ruled over the year that a determination finding an area in need of redevelopment "shall be supported by substantial credible evidence and supported by credible expert testimony," states the report.

"The courts have also made it clear that any determination that an area meets the conditions under N.J.S.A. 40A:12A-5 must also be consistent with a finding of 'blight' that has a significant decadent effect on the surrounding properties," states the report. "The term 'blight' in its most basic understanding means deterioration or stagnation that negatively affects surrounding properties."

According to the report, the underutilization of the study area has impacts on both the local tax base and employment conditions.

"The lack of investment in the study area has resulted in reduced property values, a lack of new jobs and a lack of highest and best land use and lack of development in an area designated for growth," states the report. "These conditions have an overall detrimental effect on a community."

The report notes a lack of new investment in the area has led to reduced property values. The conclusion of the report notes one or more conditions listed in the Local Redevelopment and Housing Law must be found to exist. Several buildings meet the standard of substandard, dilapidated or obsolete as well as buildings or portions of buildings have been discontinued in use or remain in a state of abandonment.

The meeting is scheduled for at 6:30 p.m. in the City Hall Auditorium.

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