

Cape May Star and Wave

159TH YEAR NO. 40 CAPE MAY, N.J. SERVING AMERICA'S NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK CITY WEDNESDAY, October 2, 2013 50¢



HOUSE OF THE WEEK

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LOWER CAPE MAY HOSTS BUENA IN HOME OPENER

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School funding formula discussion continues

By CAIN CHAMBERLIN and CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY - Councilman Jack Wichterman proposed city council have a closed session meeting with Attorney Vito Gagliardi on Oct. 1 to discuss Cape May's current fight to change the regional school funding formula.

Gagliardi, who is representing the city in its attempt to withdraw from the Lower Cape May Regional School District, will meet with council to discuss how the city should proceed now that

Lower Township has hired Attorney Frank Campbell to oppose the issue.

On Sept. 17, Wichterman said he wanted to make it clear that the 65 pupils sent to the district from Cape May will keep attending the school even if the city is allowed to withdraw.

"Nobody, to my knowledge, in the city of Cape May wants to harm the educational system that we have down here... not one bit. All we want to do is make the funding more equitable," Wichterman said.

He said recent statements made by Lower Township,

which he has heard and read in local newspapers, portray Cape May residents and its council as "a bunch of terrible people that don't want to take care of the kids." Wichterman said this is not the case at all, as Cape May is just trying to save its taxpayers money. A feasibility report prepared by Gagliardi and his team said Cape May is presently paying over \$79,000 per student sent to the district. Gagliardi has had success changing regional school funding formulas in other districts around the state, which Wichterman said makes him confident the city

will prevail.

Wichterman said New Jersey Commissioner of Education Chris Cerf recently recommended the funding formula for the Manchester Regional School District in Passaic County, be revised to reflect 50 percent based on the number of students sent to the district and the other 50 percent based on upon property values.

At a recent Lower Township meeting, Campbell told the audience the school funding formula was set by the state legislature, and the Commissioner of Education

does not have the authority to change the formula.

North Haledon has been paying 51 percent of Manchester Regional's operating costs while sending just over 20 percent of the student population.

"Just to give you an example, if that was to happen down here, the city of Cape May with our 65 or so students, would save probably in the area of \$3 million," Wichterman said.

According to Wichterman, the recommendation made by Cerf can be appealed to the appellate court within a

45-day period and he will be following the matter closely.

Wichterman said Cape May pays much more per student than North Haledon does to the Manchester Regional School District and more than Oradell pays to the Riverdell Regional School District. Gagliardi has represented both municipalities in their attempt to change the funding formula.

According to school records, Oradell residents paid approximately \$20,360 per

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Point smoking ban in on October meeting agenda

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY POINT - At their September meeting, the Cape May Point Board of Commissioners introduced an ordinance designed to snuff out smoking on Point beaches.

The ordinance came at the recommendation of the Cape May Point Environmental Commission.

"Yes, it did," said Environmental Commission chair

Eddie Schuhl. "It originally came up through a public request."

Schuhl said the Environmental Commission has no authority to legislate, or enforce ordinances, but merely advises the Board of Commissioners. She said a couple people contacted the Environmental Commission and asked them to try to

work on the issue.

All three commissioners voted to introduce the smoking ban ordinance.

"As a non-smoker I'm in favor of it," Mayor Skip Stanger said. "I'm glad the Environmental Commission took the initiative and recommended

it." "I'm fine with it," added Deputy Mayor Anita vanHeeswyk. "There are many other beach communities who have done this, so we are on solid ground for doing it."

Schuhl said the discussion actually started over controlling litter.

"We started in May talking about the litter created by the cigarette and cigar butts. At the meeting we were talking about hand

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Christopher South/Cape May Star and Wave

Run for the Fallen

Above, runners from the New Jersey Run for the Fallen campaign carry flags on their 176-mile trek, stopping every mile to honor one military member who died in action during Operations Iraqi Freedom and Enduring Freedom. The event would take three days and involve many volunteer runners. See more photos on page A10.

WCM moves ahead on electricity

By CAIN CHAMBERLIN
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY - The Board of Commissioners have adopted an ordinance allowing Commercial Utility Consultants (CUC) to begin compiling information in order to conclude if residents would receive lower rates with a third-party electricity and natural gas provider.

Representatives from CUC gave a presentation at the July 24 regular board meeting, claiming the borough could set up a contract with the electricity provider and residents would ultimately receive a cheaper rate than they are currently getting with Atlantic City Electric, which would still continue to maintain the lines.

According to CUC represen-

tative John Fish, West Cape May would account for 1,000 electrical meters (customers), allowing CUC to reach its goal of 30,000. According to Fish, the ordinance does not commit the borough or its residents to anything, but simply allows CUC to gather rate information, which will be used for an auction. He said the indicative round of the auction will determine if it makes sense for West Cape May to join and if residents will save money on its electrical services by using an energy aggregate.

Fish said if and when an agreement is made between the borough and a third party supplier there would be a monthly report given to the borough pertaining to monthly bill changes. The only change residents would

notice is a portion of their bill showing the energy aggregate charges. Fish said Title 14 of New Jersey statute (July 2012) allowed entire communities to band together and get a commercial rate, rather than individuals getting various rates. He said Title 14 also allowed municipalities and individuals to compete against the state auction known as Basic Generation Services (BPS).

"Before we can get to the point where we make that comparison from a local level compared to the state level (rates) that were given to us, we have to do this ordinance," Fish said.

If a third party provider is selected, he said the borough and individual residents can

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WCM street projects advancing

By CAIN CHAMBERLIN
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY - Engineer Ray Roberts announced the borough's water and sewer improvement project is ahead of schedule and all underground work will be completed by the end of the week.

At the Sept. 26 Board of Commissioners meeting, Roberts said all of the sanitary sewer and sanitary services have been installed on Central Avenue between Park Boulevard and Broadway, as well as on Maple and Willow Avenues.

Main sewer work on Grand Avenue began Thursday, Sept. 26 and is expected to be completed by the end of this week. Once the new sewer line is in place, he said

the contractor, F.W. Shawl & Sons, Inc., will return to Maple, Willow and Grand Avenues and put in the laterals.

"With that being done, then all of the underground work would be completed," Roberts said.

He said the contractor will then finish work on Park Boulevard between Leaming Avenue and Broadway. The contractor recently dug trenches on the street for underground work and will be refilling the trenches when work proceeds.

"The materials we found in the trenches have been very good material and we'll be using that material. It's going to be a small saving for the backfill material we'll be putting in," Roberts said. "The project is moving along fine

and we're pleased with the progress of the contractor," he said.

Roberts said the contractor is required to maintain the street after has been filled in and repaved. He said a sub base known as "PGA" has already been put down.

"They put it down properly, compact it properly, grade it properly, so it stays a nice smooth surface," he said. "If for any reason they do not, due to weather, whatever, heavy trucks and starts kicking up that material, the contractor will have to go back and re-grade it, re-shape it and if we find that if the situation were they can't re-grade or re-shape it, at that point we would be directing them to rework on the base

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