



Caper Tiger football tops Cumberland, improves to 3-1

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House of the Week

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169th YEAR NO. 38 CAPE MAY, N.J. Serving America's National Historic Landmark City WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2023 \$1.00

HUD, Housing Authority OK holding up park

City cannot advance Lafayette Street facility, police station without deed notices

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Development of Lafayette Street Park continues to linger and the city still has a few more hoops to jump through before finding out whether it can build a police station on a section of the property.

The major holdup is a deed notice from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development and Cape May Housing Authority.

During a City Council meeting

Sept. 5, former councilman Chris Bezaire asked about the status of the park project. He said he believed the Housing Authority has not signed off on a deed restriction on the property.

Mayor Zack Mullock said the project cannot move forward until HUD approves an agreement between JCP&L and the Housing Authority.

"I would love to have someone from the Housing Authority come and give their side of the story," he said.

City solicitor Chris Gillin-

Schwartz said it is not the police station but the HUD and Housing Authority approval holding up the project.

"Even if we didn't have the police station, that would still be an impediment to constructing the park because until that's resolved, it's not cleared for other uses other than remediation," he said.

Gillin-Schwartz said the county, Cape May City Elementary School Board of Education and city have resolved their deed notices. In order to proceed, the

state Department of Environmental Protection would need to issue a letter stating it did not need the park property for remediation purposes.

JCP&L and the Housing Authority were working on a joint submittal to HUD.

"Hopefully, that's going to lead to HUD approving it, which is a condition of their settlement agreement," Gillin-Schwartz.

Bezaire said he would like HUD or the Housing Authority to explain to the public why it is taking them so long to sign off on

the deed notices.

Mullock said the part of the agreement with the Housing Authority was about some remediation on their property.

"Once we have HUD approval, the ball is really back in the city's court and we want to see that park done as soon as possible," he said.

During the meeting Sept. 5, City Council authorized a professional services contract with Environmental Resolutions Inc.

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MTRAC suggests city hire a firm to track rental units

Panel believes many ignore annual license requirement

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The city's Municipal Taxation and Revenue Advisory Committee (MTRAC) has recommended City Council hire a firm to track compliance with the requirement that owners of short-term rental properties purchase an annual mercantile license.

At a Sept. 14 meeting, MTRAC member Martin Van Walsum said the city realized 10.6 percent new mercantile licenses from 2022 to 2023.

"Every short-term rental is required to contribute \$50 to the tourism fund and \$25 to the parking fund — that's three different codes," he said. "Three different codes mean six different combinations."

The largest increase, 43, was seen in rental licenses for less than 1,000 square feet, Van Walsum said, adding that Cape May had 125 new dwelling units in 2023

that obtained a license, a 12.3 percent increase.

Van Walsum said the marketplace has expanded, with some towns reporting a 20 percent increase in available rental units. He said some properties may have changed ownership and become rentals.

The city sent a letter to residential rental property owners in February reminding them of their obligation to purchase a mercantile license. Van Walsum said the letter had some effect but not as much as the committee had hoped, noting the city took a "soft approach."

He said there were 18 dwelling units that had licenses in 2022 but did not renew in 2023, which may have been the result of property owners choosing not to rent their property and some who ignored the requirement.

"The biggest concern that I have is I don't think

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Craig Massey/Special to the STAR AND WAVE

Surf's up as Hurricane Lee passes out to sea

Large, strong waves slapped the shore Sept. 15 at the Cove in Cape May — much to the delight of surfers such as Jackson Price of Mount Ephraim — as Hurricane Lee passed by well offshore.

West Cape looks to control parking near dispensary

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY — With the county's only cannabis dispensary expected to open in a few weeks on Sunset Boulevard, homeowners in the neighborhood of the Fow Tract are concerned their streets will become parking lots for the business.

During a Borough Commission meeting Sept. 14, Commissioner George Dick said he visited the site of the dispensary last week with two lieutenants from the police depart-

ment and Superintendent of Public Works Eric Prusinski.

"We're looking at making sure all the driveways (of neighbors) are marked properly in the Fow Tract and if we need to, we'll go right up Pacific (Avenue)," Dick said.

Streets are not marked from the corners and lines for stop signs are not painted on the streets in the Fow Tract, he said. Dick said the city would begin marking the streets.

The curb in front of Shorehouse Canna was mistakenly painted white when it should be a yellow curb and

it will be corrected, Dick said.

"We're definitely going to do all the driveways, so when people park there, they are not in your driveway," he said.

Dick said the police department needs lines painted in the street in order to write parking tickets. He said they would evaluate how far from the corner parking would be prohibited.

West Congress Street is a concern because it becomes jammed when

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City wants to recognize Black community's role

Seeking to amend landmark status

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council has endorsed an application to the state Historic Preservation Office and National Park Service for recognition of the African American contributions to Cape May's National Historic Landmark status.

During a meeting Sept. 5, city engineer Paul Dietrich said the city's Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) wants to amend the city's national historic district to recognize the contributions of the African American community during the city's period of significance.

He said the application has been revised several times over the years and the city's consultant made a final revision based on some comments from the state Historic Preservation Office.

The HPC forwarded a letter of endorsement to City Council, Dietrich said. With state approval, the amendment would be sent to the National Park Service for consideration.

On Sept. 1, HPC Chairman Warren Coupland called the application an impressive document.

"As a result of reading it, I feel like I've improved

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