

City Council OKs engineer to design church bell tower

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

\$13,500 contract with Czar Engineering for design, engineering and construction administration to restore the bell tower on the city-owned Allen AME Church on Franklin Street. The restoration of the church has been broken

into phases and includes restoration and reconstruction of the bell tower. In June 2018, the church caught fire as the result of a moving truck driving down Osborne Street catching a guy wire from a utility pole, which pulled the pole over into the church. The high-voltage lines ignited the church's steeple tower. The church was sprayed with foam to prevent rekindling. Later in the afternoon, the church's tower, heavily damaged by the blaze, was demolished.



Jack Fichter (file)/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE
The bell tower at Allen AME Church in Cape May was destroyed by fire in June 2018. The city purchased the structure, conducted some restoration and leased it to a theater company.

Czar Engineering will provide structural engineering analysis and design, preparation of construction drawings including plans, sections, details, note specifications and construction administration services for the bell tower phase of the project. The contract includes \$2,000 for schematic design, \$9,000 for construction documents and \$1,600 for construction administration payable as a lump sum fee.

Earlier in the year, council approved a 25-year lease with East Lynne Theater Company for use of the church. The city purchased the building in 2021 following a 2019 fire that damaged the steeple, bell tower and parts of the interior. The lease agreement states ELTC proposes a framework for financial support for the continued restoration and preservation of the church and continued recognition of its historical significance.

ELTC will pay the city \$1 per year for the lease which notes the property may be used for the limited purpose of performing arts programs. As part of the lease, the church will be available to the city as a public facility mostly during the off season of ELTC. The city may allow private groups to use the building for events for a fee to offset expenses and maintenance costs.

The church was built in 1888. Stephen Decatur Button, one of the most prominent architects in Cape May and Philadelphia in the mid-1800s, designed the bell tower. The building was constructed by the Hand and Ware Co.

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City police answer 2,483 calls in July

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

sons/vehicles and one narcotics investigation. Police answered 59 alarm calls, 115 citizen assists, seven fire department assists, 83 medical assists, 354 property checks and 1,083 public service/miscellaneous calls.

CAPE MAY — For the month of July, Cape May police answered 2,483 calls for service with 770 requiring multiple officers. Officers conducted 135 criminal investigations which included four assaults, 48 disorderly conduct complaints, 37 thefts, 45 calls of suspicious per-

A total of 238 motor vehicle stops were made with 75 traffic summonses issued, 2,166 parking sum-

mons written, four driving while intoxicated calls, 14 traffic enforcement/radar and 27 accidents investigated.

Five persons were arrested for shoplifting, five for driving while intoxicated, six for trespassing, four assaults, three disorderly conduct, and one controlled dangerous substance arrest for a grand total of 26 arrests.

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