

Cape May plans technology upgrades for City Council

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — City Council will consider three items early in 2015 in the realm of technology that would make council meetings paperless, improve the quality of meeting videos on Livestream on the web and improve the sound system in City Hall Auditorium.

At a Jan. 6 council meeting, Dan Shustack, the city's purchasing agent and network administrator, said the city administration has discussed paperless council meetings for several years. Currently, council members receive a

thick packet of information containing resolutions, ordinances and a bill list.

"I think with the new council it would be a good idea to actually make the plan go into effect," Shustack said.

He said he considered iPads and a Windows-based device that seemed to better fit the needs of council, in particular for viewing and typing documents and offering Internet access. He said the Surface Pro 3 tablet from Microsoft offers the full version of Office Outlook and includes Excel for spreadsheets.

Agenda packets for council would be emailed to each member. Shustack said coun-

cil members could archive the PDF files "forever."

"If you have to go back to a certain agenda item or something that was attached to an agenda item, you can always go back and search the tablet," he said. "It's going to save a lot on paper and a lot on clutter. I think it's the wave of the future as far as going paperless."

Mayor Edward Mahaney said the tablets started at \$799. Shustack said they could be purchased through a state contract. He recommended ordering a detachable keyboard with the tablets. All told, he said the Surface Pro 3 tablets would cost about

\$1,000 each.

On the topic of improving the quality of live streaming council meetings on the web, Shustack said only council meetings were currently being broadcast. He said he would like to expand the webcasts, adding a second video camera, and also live streaming the city's board and commission meetings.

Shustack said an additional "broadcaster" box could be purchased for \$495 and a second video camera for about \$200. He said if an additional camera were available, meetings could be recorded even if the Internet was not functioning.

"We would still have a recorded copy of the meeting that we could upload then to Livestream," Shustack said.

The final suggested technology upgrade discussed was a replacement of the sound system in City Hall Auditorium.

"The current system that we're using now has its limitations," he said. "As a new council, I guess you'll get used to a spider's web nest of wires that's actually underneath the council table."

The proposed wireless audio system would have enough wireless microphones to not only cover all the members of City Council but also boards and commissions, Shustack

said. He said 16 microphones would be the maximum number needed for any board or commission meeting.

Shustack said the system would link to the device that records the minutes of council meetings. MacLeod told the Star and Wave the audio system would cost about \$28,000.

Mahaney said the audio system should be put out to bid to receive price quotes.

City Manager Bruce MacLeod said the system would become part of the city's capital budget, so it would not be purchased until late summer. Shustack said the Surface Pro 3 tablets would also not arrive until late summer.

Executive director

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to regulatory agencies by mid to late February, he said. Replacement of pipes in this area needs immediate attention, O'Connor said.

Roper reported there is an immediate problem with level transducers. They are part of the wet wells and are outdated and in poor condition, he said. Roper said it is costing a lot of money to keep them operational because they can be easily broken. A contractor charges \$2,000 per visit for each wet well repair when a transducer breaks during maintenance. They will be replaced as necessary, he said.

The centrifuge is also in need of replacement, according to Loper. It affects the sludge volume.

"The centrifuge breaks down the sludge into liquid form," Loper said. "We need it to run and would have to haul sludge out if the system is not working."

There are two units, one large and one small, he said. The small one is out of service and the large one works only intermittently, Loper said. He recommended the centrifuge system be replaced and said he will get figures together to present to the board to show that they would save money with replacements costing less than repairs.

He reported that the in-



Betty Wund/Special to the CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE
The new Vac-Con truck purchased by the Lower Township MUA.

come from water services was \$734,141.06 and from sewer services \$655,113.24, totaling \$1.3 million.

Vice Chairman Tom Frisoli said he has compiled figures on the cost of making the entry doors to the MUA building automated for easy access for the handicapped. The cost would be \$6,400. Providing automated access to the meeting room would require another \$3,000. He said he would follow up with the Township Clerk's Office to find out whether the project qualifies for a grant.

"I have been in touch with two different companies. It is my sincere belief that we should have these," Frisoli said. "This is a priority. It should have been done when we built this building. Even if we just go with the two it will make me feel

more comfortable."

Also requested was a sound system for the meeting room. Frisoli said he has conferred with in-house computer technician James McDonald, who is responsible for the website. It will be updated and the result should be easier for the ratepayers to negotiate, he said.

In later comments after the meeting, O'Connor said that it is time to attend to the infrastructure repairs needed for the system to meet current standards.

A closed session followed reports. The result was announced before the meeting ended. A new resolution referring to the on-call policy and a second to place ads requesting bids for deep water line placement were added to the agenda and approved.

Outdoor food, drinks

Continued from Page A1

one of the city's boards to seek approval. In a few cases, variances were granted, he said, such as Uncle Bill's Pancake House on Beach Avenue.

MacLeod said there were a number of factors to be considered on rules and regulations for outdoor dining, such as ensuring the health and safety of patrons, creating an enjoyable atmosphere for customers while maintaining quality of life for neighboring properties, and outlining conditions and requirements for approval of outdoor dining.

In a report to council, he listed several factors to be taken into consideration to help set rules, regulations and guidelines for outdoor dining.

Private property vs. public property, including areas in the right of way, businesses that own property with lawns, porches and decks that would like to create outdoor dining versus public property where the city has control by issuing patio permits on the mall and Promenade.

Zoning: issues regarding lot coverage, setbacks and storage for tables and chairs when not in use.

Noise, lighting, time limits for operation: Should outdoor dining be limited to certain districts or zones such as C-1?

Barriers such as fencing or landscaping, signage and logos, and parking.

MacLeod asked whether applicants seeking outdoor dining should be required to submit a site plan review and approval.

"Do we have enough information built into our master plan regarding outdoor dining and the effect it has on the city?" he asked.

Is outdoor dining an accessory use or an expansion use? asked MacLeod. He said in the case of Uncle Bill's, the primary use was as a restaurant, so outdoor dining was an expansion.

"But if it's a hotel or motel, the primary purpose of that is for overnight accommodations, so the dining component is an accessory or conditional use factor," he said.

He said rules must be established for alcoholic beverages in outdoor dining areas at establishments that have a liquor license versus a BYOB operation. He said there also

should be regulations regarding wait staff service versus take out and when food is picked up by the customer inside the establishment but eaten at a table outside.

Also up for discussion is the need for just a mercantile license or a special permit for outdoor dining, MacLeod said. He said restaurants now purchase a mercantile license from the city based on the number of seats.

"If we allow for outdoor seating, what is the effect on the mercantile license?" asked MacLeod. "Is there a differential, a different fee set for that type of seating since it is only for part of the year versus all of the year?"

He asked if the number of tables and chairs allowed should be based on the square footage of the space available or based on the lineal front footage of the property or percentage of the interior seating.

"If I have 50 seats inside, am I limited to 10 seats outside?" asked MacLeod.

He said the impact on pedestrian and vehicular safety must be considered as well as access for firefighters and emergency medical technicians.

"Whatever we prescribe needs to have some level of enforcement for those who don't comply or want to march to their own beat, which means the establishment of fines and penalties, a methodology for the loss of mercantile licenses or any special permit and, subsequently, forced removal of any outdoor dining area," MacLeod said.

He asked who would be involved in enforcement: code enforcement, the zoning officer or other city department personnel. MacLeod recommended the mayor and City Council appoint an advisory committee to review and update the municipal code regarding outdoor seating.

A number of establishments in the city have added outdoor seating without formal recognition of the outdoor dining space, he said.

Councilman Shaine Meier asked how enforcement of outdoor dining was currently being handled. MacLeod said if it is taking place on city property it is generally covered by an ordinance in the case of the mall or Promenade.

While some have sought ap-

proval from the city, a number of others have "crept in," said MacLeod, which means the city is not collecting fees from the proper type of mercantile license.

He said the city needed to decide if outdoor dining is a business component it desires and if so, what are the ground rules.

Councilwoman Bea Pessagno asked if the issue has caused discontent from merchants. MacLeod said some property owners have the capability to create outdoor dining while others do not. He said in some cases, if the property is large enough, a restaurant owner could put in another dining room outside the building, potentially increasing revenue.

MacLeod said some of the city's infrastructure was not meant to handle added patrons. He said an establishment could create an 80-seat outdoor dining space when the infrastructure approved by the city for the restaurant was for only interior dining.

City Solicitor Tony Monzo said mercantile fees are based on the number of tables and chairs where there is table service.

Mayor Edward Mahaney said the city would like to afford the opportunity for outdoor dining but do so in a way that quality of life is maintained for everyone involved, the playing field is level for everyone and the city is in compliance with its master plan and zoning ordinances.

"I don't look at this as a punitive measure. I look at it as a growth factor and recognize it as a new need for the city," he said.

The mayor recommended starting with a city-based committee and after information is developed, adding general public members to the group. He recommended the city-based committee be comprised of the city manager, city solicitor, a code enforcement representative, a construction office official, a zoning officer, a board engineer and planner to look at what other towns have done, a police officer, a fire/EMS representative and two members of City Council.

Pessagno and Councilman Jerry Underwies Jr. volunteered to serve on the committee.

Mahaney suggested council pass a resolution at its next meeting naming the members of the committee. He said it would be unfair to introduce a new set of rules governing outdoor dining for the 2015 summer season.

Mahaney said any proposed ordinances would need to be reviewed by the Planning Board.



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Taking the oath

Cape May City Board of Education members Tom Rippman and Trudy Grogan receive their oaths of office Jan. 8 during the board's annual reorganization meeting.

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15	3:10	3:17	9:15	9:14
16	4:05	4:18	10:13	10:09
17	4:58	5:15	11:07	11:03
18	5:48	6:09	11:59	11:55
19	6:37	7:00		12:48
20	7:26	7:50	12:47	1:37
21	8:15	8:41	1:39	2:25

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Night at the Museum: Secret of the Tomb PG 2:20
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Into the Woods PG 11:00, 1:40, [4:40, 7:20, 10:00]
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