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11/5	4:44	4:54	10:32	10:56
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DON'T FORGET TO SET YOUR CLOCKS BACK SATURDAY NIGHT!

Cape May Jazz Festival booklet inside!

Freeholders talk issues at candidate's forum

By **CHRISTOPHER SOUTH**
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE – The four candidates for the Cape May County Board of Chosen Freeholders participated in a candidates forum Monday night sponsored by the Cape May County League of Women Voters.

Democrats Steven Bacher and Robert Jackson along with Republican incumbents Gerald Thornton and Ralph Bakley gave remarks and answered questions from the public – or not – as the case may be.

Teri Calloway, a Republican candidate for Dennis Township Committee asked the candidates what

they would do to bring real jobs to Cape May County – jobs paying a living wage and benefits. Thornton responded by saying Cape May County had a tourist economy and how he had gotten Crest Haven Nursing Home employees raises beyond the union contract.

Bacher said he spoke to a woman who worked at the nursing home for five years and who was a single mother making \$20,000 a year. Bacher did say the county should make an effort to create a tax incentive package to attract light industry and create high tech jobs. Thornton responded saying in the past five years all the attempts to develop light industry at the Cape May County Airport have failed.

Bakley said an unskilled county employee can get a wages and benefits package worth \$40,000.

Jackson responded saying while benefits were good, people can't eat healthcare benefits. He said people have to deal with cost of living increases that eat into their wages. He also said a \$3 million profit made by Crest Haven Nursing Home should have gone back to the people who made that possible – the employees.

Bakley introduced himself as a lifelong Cape May County resident, born in West Cape May, who served 30 years on the Lower Township Police Department. He also highlighted his 40 years on the Lower Township Elementary Board of

Education, and his five years on the freeholder board.

Jackson said he was a former mayor of West Cape May and a member of the board of Cape Human Resources. He said the freeholder board needs a new energy, new ideas, a fresh look and a balanced board (the sitting board is made up of five Republicans.) He said government works best when, balanced, and said a dissenting view is needed.

Thornton said of the 33,066 counties in the United States, Cape May County was recently awarded for being the number one county in the nation. If light of that, he said, it was difficult for him to see why the management of the county was being criticized.

Bacher is a five year resi-

dent of the county, working the entire time as the director of the Center for Community Arts. He has also worked with the Housing and Urban Development office in New York, as well as with an adoption program. He said he got involved in the race to promote change in the county, such as controlling carbon emissions and changing over to solar power.

Fielding questions from the audience, the freeholders were asked to address the problem of illegal immigration. Jackson said illegal immigration was a "monumental problem," but the primary issue was a federal border problem. He said the federal government needed to

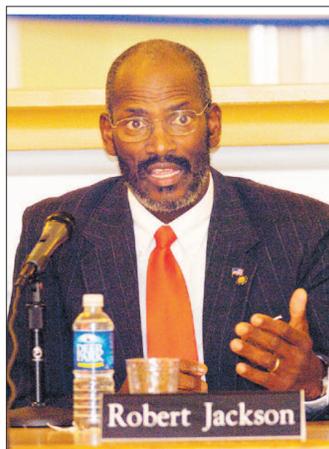
Please see **Forum**, Page A2



Gerald Thornton



Ralph Bakley



Robert Jackson



Steven Bacher

David Nahan/Cape May Star and Wave

Architects recommend new library for city

By **LESLIE TRULUCK**
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – While many county libraries are in need of maintenance and repairs to get up to code, the Cape May City branch has been deemed unfit and recommended for demolition by an assessment firm.

Garrison Architects was commissioned by the Cape May County Board of Chosen Freeholders in May to perform an assessment of needs of various library branches throughout the county.

While many neighboring branches require improvements and replacements to comply with standard codes, the evaluators concluded the Cape May City Library would best benefit by demolishing the current building and creating an entirely new one.

The summary describes the facility as "old, undersized and in poor condition. The exterior and interior, HVAC (heating, ventilation and air conditioning), toilet rooms, and electric need extensive repair work to bring them to

code and working order.

"The limited space and current layout will be very difficult to bring into compliance with ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) requirements."

Garrison Architects recommends the existing library be demolished and a new larger facility created on the site to increase the circulation and functionality of the library while providing more on-site parking.

Freeholder Ralph Bakley said he does not foresee the county building an entirely new library for Cape May, but he believes it would probably be renovated in the future.

The existing 4,211 square foot library on Ocean and Hughes Avenue was constructed in the early 1900s

and is a converted Bell Telephone building. There are currently seven metered parking spaces on site with a few along the side streets, but the adjoining lot is for municipal parking.

Garrison Architects' summary focused on the building's faulty electrical service capacity because of problems with wiring.

The assessment summary recommends the electrical service be upgraded because "a significant portion is old, obsolete and in poor condition."

Some may want to take their reading elsewhere as the assessment determined the lighting is also in need of replacement or an upgrade. Halogen lamps on the high ceiling provide bookworms with little visibility.

"It's probably the original lighting system," Cape May City library branch director Linda Smith said. Smith has worked for the library since 1979.

The library is dedicated to Emma G. Elwell, who is considered the first librarian in the city. Elwell began working part-time for the library in 1962. She donated many hours of unpaid time and encouraged others to volunteer.

Smith worked with Elwell from 1978 to 1986. Since 1962 the library was located in the present-day City Hall basement which was once Cape May High School. The library's former location now serves as the violation clerks area.

"We had 30,000 volumes in a small basement," Smith

said, "There was not much shelf-space and we had to pile the books on tables by author to stay organized."

The library acquired the vacant Bell telephone building in 1982.

"It was an old telephone switching station and just looked like a gymnasium but we were ecstatic to have more space," Smith said.

The library also gained a backroom addition with bathrooms.

When the library moved from City Hall in May of 1982 the community got involved and formed a "Book Brigade," in which residents formed a long line between the two locations to pass books down and move them to their new home.

Please see **Library**, Page A2

Concern over use of former Wawa

By **LESLIE TRULUCK**
Cape May Star and Wave

LOWER TOWNSHIP – The site of a former Wawa in North Cape May became the topic of controversy when what was thought to be a routine transfer of a liquor license from one municipality to another was opposed by a few residents.

Council approved the transfer of an inactive pocket liquor license from C.J.'s American Grill in Cape May to Lower Township for the purpose of a restaurant and bar venue at the site of a former Wawa in North Cape May.

Nolan said the resolution was taken off the consent agenda because residents requested public dialogue.

"The last thing we need is another bar in the neighborhood," Resident Denise Venturini told city council.

Venturini was concerned about the effect on the youth with the additional liquor license in the neighborhood namelessly referring to another liquor establishment she believes to be a bad influence. Venturini was con-

cerned about noise, trash, odor and traffic would transpire with the additional liquor venue.

"I'm not a happy camper," Venturini said.

Carol Paget who lives behind the location simply said "I don't want a bar in my backyard."

Paget was concerned for the safety of her 12 year-old child and if the bar would bring down the value of her property. Paget said the noise would be disruptive and bring the possibility of graffiti and drugs close to her home.

Owner Jim Hanson said he and his business partner Cecil Bryan have a zone 4 permit, all necessary building permits and no legal impediments to convert the former Wawa into a bar and grill.

As a resident of Lower Township Hanson assured council and the residents his establishment would primarily be a food service business with 10 to 15 of the approximate 75 total seats dedicated to the bar area.

Please see **Wawa**, Page A2



Boo to you, too!

Above, West Cape May Elementary School fourth grader Quinn Bithell portrays a smiling zombie during the school's annual party and Halloween Parade, right. Above right, Julia Grossman as "Velma" from Scooby-Doo complete with doggie snacks.

Photos by **Leslie Truluck**



Wawa

Continued from page A1

Hanson said the site has been cleaned of trash and overgrowth since he purchased the lot in August. "We are not going to have rock bands at all hours of the night," Hanson said the bar would host some live music but it most likely would end around 11 p.m. Hanson and Bryan bought the site for \$750,000, paid \$365,000 for the liquor license and \$1.2 million to renovate the building. "We've already invested

about two million into the property," Hanson said. Paget conceded the property looks better now and requested a buffering zone between her property and the site of the bar. "You've spent two million, what's another few hundred to buy a higher fence?" Paget said. Mayor Walt Craig said the 6-foot fence behind the site is the tallest zoning regulations will allow and the liquor license will be subject to

township approval for annual renewal. "This is an improvement to the area and they have made a concerted effort to clean it up," Deputy Mayor Robert Nolan said. "I don't see the same problems at this establishment that persist at the other one," Craig said. Council approved the liquor license transfer in a 4-0 vote; Council member Wayne Mazurek was absent.

Library

Continued from page A1

Even a bride and groom who were just married at the Methodist Church joined in the line to strengthen the brigade. The brigade moved over half of the stored volumes until noon when rain threatened the books and then city workers began to take them

by the truckload. The library was run by the city until 1995 when the libraries became a county system. "We only own half of the grassy area in the back; I can't figure out how we could have a bigger facility on this property," Smith said. The

grassy strip behind the library is shared with a neighboring house. The city-owned property could expand upwards with a two-story building but the architects' assessment is currently only at the recommendation stage.



Christopher South/Cape May Star and Wave

Lower Cape May Regional Homecoming Court 2007

Lower Cape May Regional High School celebrated its Homecoming Weekend last weekend. (See related story, Page B1). Pictured, left to right, are Bill Porch, Victoria Wermuth, Patrick Miller, Eliza Lotozo, Joe Sippel, Kim Douglass, Mike Chan, Stephanie Dugan, King Rory Rosenberg, Queen Sarah Jackson, Ray Hawthorne and Candance Podgorski.

Forum

Continued from page A1

address that problem and then a policy should be developed to address the illegal immigrants who are already in the country.

Thornton said the question rests with the federal government, which he said has done an "abysmal job" of dealing with. He said illegal immigrants are a burden on county services, but was not in favor of withholding those services from children. He said the government needs to fine employers who hire illegals.

Bacher said the illegal immigrant issue was a law enforcement problem - one he said would be better addressed if the freeholders would give the prosecutor the staff he requested.

Bakley said illegal immigrant families put a drain on schools and said local law enforcement should have a freer hand to arrest illegals.

Addressing a question on dual office holding, Thornton said that issue was being addressed by the state, but the practice has been legal until recently.

"I believe the issue will take care of itself," he said.

Bakley echoed Thornton's remarks saying he believed the state had banned the practice but was allowing current dual office holders to keep their positions. Jackson referred to dual office holding as "the hypocrisy of government, and said no one should hold two elected offices."

"People need to stop electing them to office," he said. At this point, the moderator attempted to bring the questions down to the county level. One audience member then asked about the proposed takeover of the Beesley's Point Bridge by the county Bridge Commission. The privately owned bridge, which connects Cape May and Atlantic Counties, is part of a state highway with a federal designation.

Bacher said he supported the plan to take the bridge by eminent domain and force the owners to pay back \$1 million loaned to them by the state to make repairs. Bakley said the bridge should be opened for the sake of public safety. Jackson said he suggested the county take over the bridge

two years ago when he ran for freeholder, and said the bridge should be forced to open "by whatever means," including eminent domain.

Thornton said he believed there should be a new bridge constructed rather than sinking \$8 million into repairs.

Asked what was the most significant challenge facing Cape May County, Bakley said it was repairing roads and bridges, while acknowledging the high cost of these repairs.

"It's a big step but it has to be done," he said. "That's a concern," Jackson said, "but the biggest thing is concrete planning."

Jackson said there needs to be a long-term plan for replacing aging infrastructure.

Thornton agreed with Jackson, but said there has been planning for years in Cape May County, mentioning the 208 waste water management plan, complying with the state Smart Growth Plan, as well as the county's efforts to address the future needs of seniors in the county.

Bacher said he felt there needed to be better management in the county "across the board." He said a lack of planning for the future has caused a number of barrier island communities to consider removing their libraries from the county system, as Avalon has already done. Bakley called the idea of island communities pulling out of the county library system a rumor and a misconception.

Jackson said current plans for library renovations ignored recent retro-fittings, and called it "money going down the tubes." Thornton suggested the Avalon situation was unique; that the municipality wanted a library that complemented the school system.

A question on "pork barrel spending" in the county caused Jackson to comment on the county giving \$2 million to municipalities for capital improvement projects.

"You would think they would want to give it back to the taxpayers," he said.

Thornton said the \$2 million would only work out to \$10 or \$12 per taxpayer and would cost the county money to process the rebates. Bacher said the county should cut the tax rate more and collect \$10 or \$12 less from each taxpayer. He said the county budget

has grown from \$96 million in 2000 to \$131 million in 2007. Bakley said the county only hired 20 new employees in the last five years, and said the county budget was "bare bones."

Thornton added that the 20 new employees in health services were actually self-sustaining because of the revenue their services bring in.

"And Cape May County has the lowest tax rate in New Jersey. How can we do any better?" he said.

Jackson said that while the county tax rate has gone down, individual taxpayers are still paying more taxes each year and thus see no savings.

Asked what the candidates would do as freeholders to help young people in Cape May County, Bacher said proposed changes to reduce carbon emissions would create jobs in the areas of solar and wind power. He said he also wanted to attract light industry and high tech jobs, which would benefit younger residents of the county. Bakley said the Technical High School is already addressing the future needs of young people, offering training in cosmetology, culinary arts, small engine repair, law enforcement and others. Jackson said he didn't believe enough was being done to get

young people into such programs.

Bacher said improved public transportation was a key to getting young people started on a career path. He said there was a need for improved public transportation to the county branch of Atlantic Cape Community College.

In closing, Bacher told the audience there was a clear choice between the challengers, he and Jackson, and the incumbents. He said there needed to be a dissenting voice on the board who would question spending he believes now passes with a unanimous voice.

Thornton said he has always tried to represent "honestly and sincerely," and talked about a county record that he said shows good management.

Jackson said he believed there needed to be more balance on the board and the people should know exactly what goes on in county government. He said the voters could have better government if they want it.

Bakley finished his remarks saying an individual really needs to be retired to serve on the freeholder board, considering all the time the position requires.

Voters will choose two of the candidates for the available seats on Nov. 6.

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**BY CHRISTOPHER
SOUTH**

Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – While some business people fret over the amount of revenue they have brought in over the first two quarters of 2007, the city is apparently doing OK.

City manager Lou Corea said the city is actually ahead of last year.

“Out of the past seven months, six are above and one below last year,” he said.

The city uses several indicators to keep tabs on how many people are visiting Cape May throughout the year and especially in the summer season – the accommodations tax, beach tag sales, and parking meter revenue.

In 2006, Cape May collected \$1,032,279 from room tax, \$852,343 in parking meter revenue, and \$1,606,476 from beach tag sales.

According to Corea, beach tag sales are on par with last year’s sales, parking meter revenue is down slightly, and the room tax collected for the first quarter is up. Corea said the tax figures are supplied by the state are normally received about two months later, saying he recently received the numbers for April.

“In September we will get the numbers for June and July,” he said.

Corea said it is hard to know why parking meter revenues are down, but there were a few changes made dropping times when meters were in effect.

Overall, Corea said indications are roughly the same number of people have visited Cape May in the first half this year as the first half of last year.

“There has been no significant drop off, no impact at this point,” Corea said, adding it is difficult to get a picture of summer revenues until September.

“Based on those three statistics, my take is (this year is) pretty much as good as last year if not better,” Corea added.

Beach birds

Corea said the city has requested representatives from the New Jersey Division

Please see Birds, Page A2 of Fish and Wildlife to address city council and answer questions from council members at the Aug. 7 city council workshop meeting. Corea said Fish and Wildlife requested the city change its ordinance to eliminate maintenance of feral cat colonies. The state believes the cats are a threat to endangered bird species. Corea said the state would provide information that night, and would be answering council questions, but he did not believe there would not be a question and answer session for the public.

**By CHRISTOPHER
SOUTH**

Cape May Star and Wave

WEST CAPE MAY – The Borough of West Cape May is working on getting money to install solar panels at Borough Hall as a way of saving money on monthly electric bills.

The board of commissioners passed a resolution last week authorizing the borough to apply to the county for funding for the project, estimated to cost about \$80,000.

According to Commissioner Dick Rigby, Cape May County is offering a \$50,000 grant, which can be used for improving infrastructure or tourism. Last year, the county offered the same amount, which was to be earmarked for beautification and recreation. West Cape May used \$10,000 toward the new playground at the West Cape May Elementary School and \$40,000 to create a space for the farmers market behind Borough Hall.

Rigby said with a state rebate, the cost should be reduced to approximately the \$50,000 grant amount.

Rigby said as the commissioners went through the bills every two weeks it became obvious how much the borough was spending on electricity.

“I was struck by how much we are paying Atlantic City Electric. Between Borough Hall and Public Works, it averages over \$2,000 for the two buildings. That’s a fair amount of change,” he said.

Rigby said it is estimated that 40 panels would save the borough about \$400 per month.

“With this step, if it works, it will cut the borough’s electrical outlay and serve as a demonstration to people in the borough. For people with air-conditioning and electric heat, it may well serve them to look at this,” he said.

Rigby said the grant money came rather quickly last year, and when it is approved the borough would seek bids or requests for proposals. He said there may be action taken as early as next week. Otherwise, his only concern

Please see WCM, Page A2 is that the installation of the solar panels would not result in roof leaks.

Rigby said the New Jersey Clean Energy website lists suppliers for solar panels, and he easily found 13 suppliers/installers in the 08 zip code who have done 10 or more installations. Rigby said it would be nice if the borough could find an installer who would be willing to float the rebate amount until the borough receives it from the state.

“It will be interesting to see what comes in the doors,” he said.

By CHRISTOPHER
SOUTH

Cape May Star and Wave

LOWER TOWNSHIP – The former Ponderlodge Golf Course, purchased by the state to become a wildlife management area, has deteriorated to the point where Lower Township officials are worried the facility will become a health and safety hazard.

At the May 7 township council meeting, Mayor Walt Craig said he asked Walt Fury from the code enforcement office to visit the wildlife management area and identify code violations. Fury came back with a list of nearly 40 violations for which any township property owner could be cited.

On Tuesday, Craig said the township is still investigated whether or not it can issue summonses to the state for municipal code violations.

Craig said township manager Joe Jackson drafted a letter to the state and included the list of violations and photographs, asking for them to reply within 10 days. Jackson said the letter has gone through a number of revisions and should be sent out by the end of the week.

The problems center around deterioration of the former golf course facilities, including the hotel/banquet hall, the clubhouse, pro shop, maintenance building, and the owner/guest house. Craig said there were about 10 hotel rooms, which were left as they were when the facility closed – with linens, towels, etc., which can be seen through the broken windows.

There are also fallen light stanchions, broken fences, and debris littering the facility. Fences around pools are down, and the pools are filled with stagnant water.

“I think it’s a two-fold problem. It’s an on-going safety problem, but with the deterioration of property there could be health problem as well,” Craig said.

Craig said the stagnant water would become a mosquito breeding ground.

He is also worried about individuals, especially kids, getting into buildings. He said graffiti has been found inside some of the buildings.

Please see Dump, Page A2

Craig said there has been a kind of domino effect, with problems creating or leading to other problems. At this point, he said, rehabilitation of the facilities is no longer feasible.

“We certainly are not going to invest up to \$1 million in a park shadowed by dilapidated buildings,” Craig said.

The state, he said, apparently has no long-term interest in the buildings, which seems contrary to their position last August.

“When we negotiated with them for land for recreation I understood they were negotiating in good faith with other organizations to take over the lodge,” Craig said.

He said it has been almost a year since the township talked with the state Department of Environmental Protection about leasing about 20 acres to use for recreation. He said the state asked the township to provide a letter stating its intentions for the property, and about six months later they responded saying they wanted a more detailed letter.

At this point, the township is simply interested in getting the wildlife management area cleaned up, the buildings closed up, and fire and safety hazards removed. Craig said he spoke with Assemblyman Jeff Van Drew and State Sen. Nick Asselta, who he said were willing to work on a remedy to the problem.

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH

Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – Two of the more contentious ordinances on the Cape May City Council agenda passed unanimously, Tuesday night.

City council approved Ordinance 99-2007A regulating tents on Cape May beaches by a 5-0 vote. The ordinance, scheduled for second reading and a public hearing, received no public comment.

During council comment, however, several council members described the ordinance as a compromise solution to a controversial subject.

“This has been a hot topic,” Deputy Mayor Niels Favre said. “There has been a lot of public input and this is a fair compromise.”

Favre said the city has tried to craft a tent ordinance that made sense for the city.

Councilman David Kurkowski said he thought the ordinance would meet the needs of the community and the businesses running beach concessions.

The city had been attempting to amend the ordinance to correct discrepancies between the city code and beach regulations. One portion allowed tents up to six feet in height, and the other allowed a maximum of seven feet. Some businesses were seeking an ordinance allowing nine-foot high tents, which drew criticism from a number of residents. Ordinance 99-2007A sets the maximum height for beach tents at eight feet, and with a maximum area of 100 square feet.

The second “hot topic” ordinance was Ordinance 104-2007, a bond ordinance appropriating \$3.5 million for capital improvements to the Washington Street Mall. Unlike the previous ordinance, Ordinance 104-2007 received public and council comment before being passed 5-0.

Resident Jules Rauch told city council the mall is in need of revitalization, but he said the business owners are not participating in the process.

“A new pedestrian surface and appendages are essential, but concurrently the business and real estate owners must make their own commitment and participate in providing individual improvements, making this a real mall revitalization,” he said.

“Is it fair and equitable for the taxpayers to pay for mall improvements, when they must be responsible for and pay for their individual sidewalks reconstruction?” Rauch asked.

That sentiment was echoed

Please see Pass, Page A2 by other city residents, such as Larry Muntz, who told council he had to pay \$5,000 to replace a sidewalk behind his Alexander’s Inn, located next door to City Hall. Muntz said a fair compromise would be to enforce the city’s sidewalk ordinance with regard to mall property owners. Muntz said requiring mall property owners to pay for the replacing the sidewalk portion of the mall walkway abutting their properties. He said doing so would go a long way in gaining public support for the project.

Gus Andy of the LaMer Motel told council the mall business and property owners are accountable for nothing.

“There is nothing to motivate them to help themselves,” he said.

Like other, Andy said it wasn’t fair to burden all the taxpayers of Cape May with paying for a bond ordinance that would only benefit mall business and property owners.

Mall merchant and subcommittee members Hilary Pritchard asked Andy who replenished the beach in front of his hotel.

“The federal government,” he said.

“So people in Idaho are paying to replenish the beach in front of your hotel. Talk about fair,” she said.

Pritchard said the community needs to understand what the mall merchants give back to the community.

“If the business community disappears, who is going to keep the non-profits going?” she asked.

Joe Bogle of the Fudge Kitchen said since April 1 his business has received over 100 solicitations for donations. Bogle also said he employs two residents of the Village Green area and two residents of Victorian Towers year ‘round in his candy shop, when it might make more business sense to close. Bogle said it upset him to hear people say the mall merchants are not carrying the load.

Bogle also said he and his brother invested \$15,000 in painting their business, and received an estimate of \$42,000 to put on a new roof. Paul Andrus of the Dellas store said the Dellas family invested \$1 million to reno-

vate the landmark business.

Andrus said the \$3.5 million the city will spend on the mall revitalization is “a drop in the bucket compared to the revenue it will generate.”

Bogle also said they pay far more taxes on their business than they do their home, a remark echoed by Vince Casale of Casale’s shoes.

“No one pays taxes like the mall does,” he said.

Casale, who has at times has seemed pained by the conflict over the mall said, “Stop the bickering...the crap that is going on in this room.”

“What we have here (the bond ordinance) is a pittance of what it will do for the community,” he said.

Jeanne Powick said she just wanted city council to represent the citizens of Cape May on a fair and equitable basis. She said the Remington and Vernick engineering firm estimated the cost of an all brick walkway to be \$2.75 million, and she believed the \$3.5 million ordinance was too much and unnecessary.

“I believe the over estimate...is substantial,” she said.

Powick was referring to a cushion amount built into the ordinance for contingencies.

Mayor Jerry Inderwies said just because the city was bonding \$3.5 million it did not mean they would spend the full amount.

Christine Miller repeated her call for a complete plan before the money was bonded. She said no one knows the scope of the work, the final cost, not even what the walkway surface would look like. She said the city should show the public a schematic of what they plan to do and how they plan to maintain it.

During council comment, Favre said there was a plan for the mall, which was presented by the mall subcommittee to the Revitalization Advisory Committee. He also disputed what he labeled as misinformation being disseminated in the community saying there was no “Phase II” of the mall project and no \$20 million convention center. Favre said it was time to move forward with the ordinance and the project, saying it was too late for new ideas.

“We’ve done our best, its time to move on,” he said.

