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OCTOBER TIDE TABLE

	HIGH		LOW	
	am	pm	am	pm
10/11	8:44	8:56	2:18	2:44
10/12	9:17	9:31	2:49	3:22
10/13	9:50	10:05	3:19	4:00
10/14	10:24	10:40	3:49	4:39
10/15	11:00	11:17	4:20	5:20
10/16	11:40	11:59	4:54	6:06
10/17		12:27	5:36	6:59

Feral cat issue linked to beach management

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
 Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – Public Works director Robert Smith said he sometimes feels he is caught in the middle when it comes to managing feral cats on Cape May beaches.

Smith said the U.S. Department of Wildlife and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection require the city to take measures to protect endangered and threatened species on its beaches. One of those requirements is the elim-

ination of feral cat colonies near protected areas.

In order to comply with the federal and state regulations, Smith said, the city formed a committee to discuss ways to address the feral cat problem. The committee, he said, included himself, two members of city council, the animal control officer and the city manager. Their goal was to create a satisfactory beach management plan to meet federal and state requirements.

Smith said the higher governmental agencies recommended the city

develop a policy requiring all cats to be kept indoors within the city.

The local committee recommended the city establish a cat registration/licensing program within the city.

"I'm totally for that because," Smith said. "I have an indoor cat, and I'd like to know if the cat gets out he would be returned, and the only way to be sure of that is through registration like we have with dogs now."

Other recommendations from either the committee or the state included:

• Conducting a census of all cats and

dogs within the city.

• Enforcing the state statute prohibiting the abandonment of animals.

• Modifying the current Trap, Neuter and Release (TNR) Program to require trapped feral cats be taken to animal shelters for possible adoption rather than place them in TNR colonies.

The state would also like the city to ensure there are no feral cat colonies within the recommended buffer zones surrounding protected areas. Smith

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Wilbraham Park once again provided the setting for West Cape May's annual Lima Bean Festival held last Saturday. Among the many vendors was Meg Reno, above, who worked her family's T-shirt booth; and bottom left, Claire Nagel, Diane Close, Beverly Shields and Vickie Tryon, all members of the Oceanside Community Club selling lima bean soup. The highlight of the day, as usual, was the crowning of the king and queen. The 2007 winners were Jana Schaick-Borg of Princeton and Michael Wilkinson, age 8 of Haverford, Pa. and Cape May, top left.

Photos by Christopher South

Middle Thoroughfare Bridge project waiting for FHWA

By LESLIE TRULUCK
 Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE – Despite local concerns about the safety of the Middle Thoroughfare Bridge, Cape May County Engineer Dale Foster said it would be at least five years before breaking ground to construct a new bridge at the cost of about \$130 million.

The Cape May County Bridge Commission discussed the condition of the 67-year-old "Two-mile" bridge between Lower Township to Wildwood Crest at its meeting Oct. 9.

Foster said the county is currently waiting for the New Jersey Department of Transportation (NJDOT) to communicate with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to review their alternative analysis report in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act.

Meanwhile, the county hired engineering firm PB America, Inc. which began inspecting the bridge for miscellaneous structural deficiencies Thursday, Oct. 4. Foster said the commissioners expect to take bids next spring for strengthening and repair work.

The Commissioners accepted a proposal from a second engineering firm – Gibson Associates – for the federally required bi-annual in-depth inspection for 2007-2008 due this month in compliance with the National Bridge Institute's standards.

Lower Township Police Chief Edward Donohue recently restricted all municipal vehicles from the Middle Thoroughfare Bridge because of the approximate 15-ton weight limit.

Foster said the weight limit has not changed since 1992. He said the commission received a weight posting from the Erma Fire

Department for the overall weight of the vehicles but is anticipating more detailed information about the vehicles' load-per-axle and space-per-axle specifics to be sure municipal vehicles can safely cross.

Freeholder candidate Steven Bacher and running mate Bob Jackson were concerned about the timeline for rebuilding the Middle Thoroughfare Bridge.

Bacher told the commission the current bridge impedes the growth of the fishing industry, which he noted is the fifth largest fishing fleet in the country.

Foster said the commission is currently having problems with their request for the NJDOT to move the project from the local aid department to the project management department.

Foster said the commission has turned in the alternative analysis report that reviews all possible alternatives for

the project and has met with NJDOT director Kris Kolluri.

"The project is still on the local aid level but the problem is that it is too large of a project for that level," Foster said.

Foster said other projects most likely have NJDOT priority over the Middle Thoroughfare Bridge.

The alternative analysis report for the National Environment Policy Act explored seven bridge type alignments, and ideas for restoring the existing structure.

The Army Corps of Engineers must now look at different suggestions since the U.S. Division of Fish and Wildlife bought privately owned property on the north side where the alignment for the bridge was initially planned, Foster said.

Foster said the county is looking for leadership from NJDOT but is having difficulty with the state agency com-

municating on their behalf with the federal.

"It's not fair to blame legislation when the Department of Transportation is the lead agency," Foster said.

The existing bridge has a 25-foot clearance and is 1,070 foot long with a 50-foot navigation channel for boats to move through.

The proposed 4,500 foot long span bridge would have a one-mile approach on the south side and a 300-foot navigation channel that could allow dual boat traffic. The commissioners agree the bridge should be high enough to allow vessels to pass under without requiring a draw-bridge that disturbs traffic.

The U.S. Coast Guard requires a 125-foot clearance to accommodate a 108-foot tall fishing vessel.

Bob Jackson suggested changing the design of the bridge because he fears the guide wires will interfere

with passing birds.

"If we change the bridge design we will not all be pushing our shoulders through the same door," Vice-chairman William Henfey said.

Henfey said the commission has met with residents of Wildwood Crest and the fishing industry and basically "everyone is happy and we want it to stay that way."

"We can't splinter or it will be more difficult for the federal government to help us," Henfey said.

"If we don't accommodate the fishing industry we won't get the new bridge because we need its lobbying efforts," said Stephen O'Connor, Bridge Commission executive director.

Foster said the Federal Government would assist the bridge project up to \$1.6 million.

Commissioners compared

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Citywide WiFi system not forgotten

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
 Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – Talk of bringing citywide wireless Internet to Cape May and surrounding communities seems to have fallen under the radar lately but according to Cape May Councilman David Kurkowski, discussions on WiFi have yielded more than dead air.

Last March, representatives from Cape May, Cape May Point, West Cape May and Lower Township met to discuss sharing a local area network (LAN), which would

provide wireless Internet to anyone within the range of the transmitters.

Since then, Lower Township opted out of the project saying it would benefit only a small number of residents. Additionally, Kurkowski said, the group studying the WiFi system has discarded the notion of providing free wireless Internet to all residents. However, an affordable subscriber model is still being discussed.

"We had two conference calls recently with a supplier," Kurkowski said. "We just wanted to get further information on what it would cost

and technically what the process might be."

Kurkowski said information is now being gathered for a city council work session in December.

"The issue is not dead," Kurkowski said. "I know it's under the radar with what's been going on."

Kurkowski was referring to recent developments with the Beach Theatre Foundation and the lawsuit filed challenging the city's actions regarding the mall renovation project.

He said the city received about 350 responses from residents saying they would

subscribe to a citywide WiFi system.

"We only need 400 to break even, so we're pretty close," Kurkowski said.

Kurkowski said the high number of affirmative responses prompted city council to want further investigation into the possibility of citywide wireless Internet.

Earlier in the year, it was estimated the cost of bringing wireless Internet to Cape May and its neighboring municipalities would be around \$1 million. Kurkowski said the construction cost of

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Town Meeting set in West Cape May

WEST CAPE MAY – A town meeting on the question of whether the Borough should offer two liquor licenses for sale will be held at 7 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 22 at Borough Hall, 732 Broadway.

A four-person panel consisting of West Cape May Borough Auditor Leon Costello, West Cape May Borough Solicitor Jennifer Russo-Belles, Cape May Police Chief Diane Sorantino, and West Cape May Mayor Pamela Kaithern will be present to provide information, answer questions, and accept public input. The format will be like that of the previous town meeting held in March of 2007 on this same question.