City Council looks to bond for police land swap

Plans $5 million structure at St. John and Lafayette streets that will require DEP land swap

By JACK FICHTER

CAPE MAY — City Council voted 4-1 in favor of a resolution to proceed with a $5 million for the construction of a police station on the corner of St. John and St. Mary streets. The plan would involve the submission of an Environmental Protection (DEP) application to the DEP for permission to contact the DEP Green Acres Program proposing to dispose of 0.14 acres of future parkland along St. John Street near the intersection of Lafayette Street. A compensation, the city proposed to dedicate about 4.96 acres of city-owned land at the freeway tract near parkland. At a March 16 council meeting, Deputy Mayor Stacy Sheehan, who voted against the ordinance, said she does not support the police station but upset because the city is not publicly trans- parent in the process of deciding the location. She said the city did not conduct a feasibility study.

"Here much is it going to cost at this location, the size, the parkland, the public parking," Sheehan asked. "At one time, we had talked about putting it at the Welcome Center, which is publicly owned property by the city. "The spot where we want it, is a city place not even the property as of right now," she continued. "It's my understanding that the city is going through land swap to get this land."

Sheehan said the proposal should have been presented to council, asking how far land swap dealings with the DEP and Jersey Central Power and Light, which owns some of the park property, have progressed. "We should have had a public presentation on this. This is a step forward with this police station," she said. "Full disclosure, the timing of the project, the cost to the taxpayers, the annual operating expenses," she said.

Sheehan asked if Cape May Point and West Cape May which pay Cape May for police services, would contribute to the construction cost.

Mayor Zack Shackford said a new police station has been debated for decades. "We don't have millions of reasons could be found to build it," he said.

Sheehan asked if the city would have separate fire and police stations, he said.

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City proposes no tax hike in its new budget

Rate to remain at 36.5 cents

By JACK FICHTER

CAPE MAY — City Council introduced its 2022 municipal budget March 15 featuring no increases in the local property tax rate, which will remain at 36.3 cents per $100 of assessed value. The budget totals $58.6 million to be raised by taxes. The city has $25 million in unreserved state aid to contribute. The budget is up $606,438.

At the end of 2021, the city had $9.4 million in surplus funds. The 2022 budget uses $3.4 million, leaving a balance of $6.4 million.

"The final number is a number that should have been presented to council, but the public should be aware of," said Deputy Mayor Stacy Sheehan, who said the public "should have been involved in the process."

Councilman Shaine Meier expressed concern about the budget's financial stability. "You guys are interested in the budget," Meier said to council members. "We are interested in the budget."

Councilman Meier asked Costello if the city was prepared to pay its bill. Costello said he did not know how much it would "impact on the city. He said he bought his house in Ocean City for 8 years and he went the ocean every summer. He didn't want it," he said. "You guys said as a community we will be cause travelers schedule short driving trips. "I don't see any problem with the tourism revenue, the beach revenue," Costello said. "I'm confident that Cape May will be able to pay the bill," he said. "I'm confident that Cape May will be able to pay the bill," he said. "Costello said it is important the city was involved in the process."

Chief Financial Officer Neil Young said the city would be paying its bill.

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Pair winery tour, visit to pot facility, experts say

Cannabis tourism creates chance to reach new clients

By JACK FICHTER

GALLOWAY TOWNSHIP — If you are in a tourism-related business, you may want to add cannabis to your fare such as emu yoga and pot painting.

"We did complete a concept study," said Councilman Shaine Meier, who said a cannabis facility "will not be able to have a cannabis facility on the premises. The state has 560 municipalities but only one currently permit consumption lounges, he said.

Brian Applegarth, founder of the Cannabis Tourism Association, said it would be a $5 million facility an "opportunity for New Jersey Hospitality and Tourism."

Jane Bokunewicz, director of the Lloyd D. Devenson Institute for Environmental Studies at Stockton University School of Business, said development of a recreational cannabis industry in New Jersey will have significant benefits on the state's existing businesses and will create new and unique opportunities for hospitality and tourism.

Panel member Robert Meija, an adjunct professor in Stockton's Cannabis Studies Department, said it would be a $5 million facility an "opportunity for New Jersey Hospitality and Tourism."

Applegarth said there is a stigma "Dispensaries are great. That's about cannabis travel. Farms such as those held at wineries. "We're talking about cannabis travel of underground contamination. "I don't see any problem with the tourism revenue, the beach revenue," Costello said. "I'm confident that Cape May will be able to pay the bill," he said. "I'm confident that Cape May will be able to pay the bill," he said. "Costello said it is important the city was involved in the process."

Chief Financial Officer Neil Young said the city would be paying its bill.

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Cape May names poet laureate

Cape May Council declared Sylvia Kucher Baer its 2022 poet laureate on March 15. She is a retired school teacher and a writer who has been living in Cape May for 30 years.

"At some point in time, we'll have a poet laureate," said Deputy Mayor Stacy Sheehan, who said she is in favor of building a police station at the corner of St. John and St. Mary streets, which is publically owned property.

Sheehan asked if Cape May Point and West Cape May which pay Cape May for police services, would contribute to the construction cost.

Mayor Zack Shackford said a new police station has been debated for decades. "We don't have millions of reasons could be found to build it," he said.

Sheehan asked if the city would have separate fire and police stations, he said.

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