Cape May Point on Preservation NJ's endangered list

By JACK FICHTER Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY POINT - The borough made the state's 2021 list of the Top 10 most endangered places from Preservation New Jersey.

The list spotlights irreplaceable historic, architec-tural, cultural and archaeological resources in New Jersey that are in imminent danger of being lost. The act of listing these resources acknowledges their importance to the heritage of New Jersey and draws attention to the predicaments that endanger their survival and the survival of historic resources statewide, according to Preservation New Jersey.

The list, generated from nominations by the public, aims to attract new perspectives and ideas to sites in desperate need of creative solutions.

The listing states Cape May Point resembles its original roots, a community with a diversity of housing, landmarks, irregular street patterns and historical landscaping.

Thirty-three percent of the buildings were built before 1955, and landmarks such as Lake Lily, Cape May Point Park and the Cape May Lighthouse make visiting a wonderful expe-rience," it states. "While many of those who visit Cape May may consider Cape May Point a neigh-ervation commission, volun-

borhood of Cape May, the two communities are in fact distinct municipalities with their own governments and standards. While Cape May is protected by a strong district designation and local HPC, Cape May Point currently has neither."

"Many of the buildings in Cape May Point have undergone changes without diminishing architectural merit which contributes to the borough's distinct community character that deserves protection," it continued. "The threats to Cape May Point are through beach erosion, and demolition and redevelopment. Cape May Point does not have a preservation ordinance, a historic preservation commission, or architectural design guidelines. Increased property values may result in changes to the size, setback, height, and facade rhythm of buildings in Cape May Point's historic neighborhoods. Additionally, the borough's master plan opines that new restrictive ordinances imposed upon older buildings are an unjust economic

The top 10 listing notes the borough has an historic preservation element in its master plan and Preservation New Jersey supports the strategies, including

hardship to their owners — a problematic statement."



File photo/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

In 2016, the Sisters of St. Joseph announced the historic St. Mary by-the-Sea Retreat House may be demolished after this year, with the property returning to nature. According to the Library of Congress, the building was constructed in 1889 as the Shoreham Hotel.

tary cooperation of property owners and municipal agencies to encourage successful historic preservation, educating the public about historic preservation issues, and maintaining a list of properties that meet the criteria that apply to local historic sites.

"To help Cape May Point's residents afford historically appropriate improvements and rehabilitation work, Preservation New Jersey strongly supports the recently enacted statewide

Historic Preservation Tax Credit program," it stated.

Deputy Mayor Anita van-Heeswyk said she was not troubled by the report since the borough has so many positive qualities. She said the Point just received a very positive report on the condition of its beaches from Stockton University's Coastal Research Center.

"I'm not seeing that we should be on this list," she said.

The borough has an historic preservation element

in its master plan, van-Heeswyk said.

She said the borough was not endangered as a municipality. The Point serves a great purpose as part of the Atlantic Flyway for migra-tion of birds and butterflies and has plenty of green space.

VanHeeswyk said she is not in favor of overregulating what property owners can do to their homes such as banning vinyl siding. The

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borough has made Council on Affordable Housing Funds to help homeowners repair their homes, she said. A total of 35 percent of the Point's residents are classified by the state as low income.

The endangered list spot did not panic vanHeeswyk. "I think that the people in

this town are for the most part are very happy," she said.

A real estate broker told vanHeeswyk one of the reasons persons buy a home in the borough is "because it is so green." The walkability of the town is another reason the borough is loved, she said. Lake Lily is better con-

dition than it has been in

years, she said. "I don't see these issues of losing Cape May Point," vanHeeswyk said. "We have more than what they are saying we don't have.

In 2016, the Sisters of St. Joseph announced the historic St. Mary by-the-Sea Retreat House may be demolished after 2021 with the property returning to nature. According to the Library of Congress, the building was constructed in 1889 as the Shoreham Hotel. The convent has owned

and operated St. Mary's since 1909 except for the years 1941 to 1946 during which the Army leased and occupied the building.

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sentatives of Insa were on hand recently for a formal check presentation need," Insa Co-Founder at Volunteers in Medicine of South Jersey to support the organization's efforts to meet the increased demand due to the COVID-19 pandemic of people in need throughout the region.

Through a \$2,500 dona-tion from Insa, patients at Volunteers in Medicine will receive the care they need to manage their chronic condition such as

CAPE MAY - Repre- is greater than ever and we care when available and are trying to do our part to support our neighbors in Steve Reilly said. "Supporting and integrating ourselves into the communities we operate is at the heart of the mission of Insa and we have been proud to work with Volunteers in Medicine to help ensure they have the resources to provide care for their patients.²

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prescription medicine assistance. As the economy continues to be impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic demand for VIM's services have increased. "This last year has been

quite a challenge. Our thrift stores were closed. We canceled our fundraiser. But our patients still need care. We really appreciate this support from Insa, that they share our commitment to our neighbors in need," said Jackie Meiluta, executive director of Volunteers in Medicine.

Volunteers in Medicine (VIM) has more than 100 physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses and administrative personnel who volunteer their time, skill and expertise to care for their patients, who are treated with the highest level of respect, dignity and medical excellence. VIM receives no state or federal funds but relies on a very generous community.

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diabetes and hypertension. at Volunteers in Medi-"The need for help dur-ing the COVID pandemic primary care, specialist

Differing rules

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ney general's guidelines in interacting with juveniles and adults, as well as marijuana delivery companies that will be operating in the area, he said.

The situation could be complicated if regulations differ in the three municipalities the department serves.

default which provides for a wide range of cannabis uses for five years: wholesale and manufacturing in industrial zones and allow retail sales of marijuana in commercial zones as a conditional use. He said cannabis delivery cannot be outlawed due to state regulations.

City Council also is considing banning all smoking.

would be in line with public health and safety regulations, entirely within council's purview. Gillin-Schwartz said he drafted an ordinance that would be an amendment to the prohib-ited acts on the Washington Street Mall.

Mayor Zack Mullock suggested Councilman Chris ezaire speak to the mall business improvement district for its opinion on such an ordinance.

families offended with cigars, marijuana or any other smoking device.

ELIC East Lynne Theater Co.

Fashaw said.

Gillin-Schartz said ongoing discussion has been taking place between the solicitors of Cape May Point and West Cape May.

"A lot of the rules of engagement in terms of cannabis police regulations, a lot of that is going to come from the AG's (Attorney General) office because of that state regulation and the officers have to careful about how they roll that out and that's one of the reasons we wanted to keep our ordi-nance simple..." he said.

Gillin-Schwartz said if a municipality does not pass a cannabis regulatory ordinance, it becomes statutory both tobacco and marijuana products, on the Washington Street Mall.

During a council meeting May 18, Gillin-Schwartz said the city has banned the smoking of marijuana in public spaces. He said Fashaw expressed concerns of enforcement on the mall due to the heavy pedestrian traffic.

"It may be something that council wants to consider, just saying 'no smoking on the Washington Street Mall,' so that Class IIs (police officers) are not having to determine whether it is cigar smoke or something else," Gillin-Schwartz said.

He said the ordinance

City Manager Mike Voll said children and senior citizens sit on benches on the mall and he did not want to see them offended by any type of smoking.

He suggested putting "courtesy signs" on the mall until the ordinance is passed, stating smoking is prohibited on the mall. Voll said once the ordinance is passed, the signs would include the ordinance number.

Voll said Class II police officers would inform smokers of the regulation. He said the city does not plan to make arrests but does not want

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