

Work necessary

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multiple times each year by veterinarians and are vaccinated and dewormed. They also get new shoes every six weeks, year-round, to protect their hooves from the pavement. “Every one of our horses gets custom-made shoes for every hoof,” Semanchik said.

The horses usually start off as Amish plough horses before being taken to an auction, where the company will often bid against buyers who would take the horses for slaughter. When training the horses for the job, Lattuca-Bonamico said it’s important to build a trusting relationship between the caretakers and the horses.

“If they don’t have trust with their handlers and their caretakers, they would be fearful of everything and they would not accept what they’re doing. You have no physical ability to have any control over these animals. It’s more about gaining trust and working together,” he said. “They’re comfortable and accepting of the job. They’re not being forced to do it.” Draft horses tend to have a calm and gentle nature. Something that Semanchik and Lattuca-Bonamico have noticed is that people will often mistake the horses’ content, relaxed demeanor for exhaustion. Semanchik explained that

a draft horse that has its head up and looks like it may explode is uncomfortable in its environment. “If they’re comfortable enough to put their head down and cock up one of their legs — and literally take a nap — that means they are comfortable. In their minds, there is absolutely nothing there to fear,” she said. “They can let their guard down.” Horses sleep standing up; they lie down only about half-hour to an hour each day. After an half-hour long carriage ride, the horses have about 10 minutes to take a “cat nap,” Semanchik said. Since draft horses are bred for power, they can

pull around three to five times their body weight. The carriage itself is easy to pull. The wheels of the carriage can be turned with just two fingers, and the carriage can even be pulled by a human. Semanchik and Lattuca-Bonamico explained that the exercise the horses get when drawing the carriage is important, especially because it enables them to maintain the strength they need to be able to get up if they lie down. “One of the biggest things we hear here constantly is you should retire them to a sanctuary. However, if they lose their muscle and then they lay down, they can’t get their 1,800-pound

body off the ground,” Semanchik said. “They have to do something; they can’t just sit around.” She has been considering offering tours of the stables in the future to show visitors the horses’ food and shoes, the horses themselves and the carriages, as well as potentially letting visitors pull the carriages. She said she feels that it is important to educate the public about the horses and their habitats. Cape May Carriage Co. has retirement homes arranged for the horses for when they finish their work. “None of these horses are ever going to an auction again,” Semanchik said.

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Committee

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a right of way that stretches to the Cape May Canal. City Manager Paul Dietrich said that would not be a Cape May issue but a West Cape May and Lower Town-

ship issue since the path would transverse both municipalities. Dick said Atlantic City Electric Senior Public Affairs Manager Ronnie Town suggested Cape May send a letter of request for use of its right of way to the utility. He said most of the bike path would be located in Lower Township. Dietrich said Cape May is installing a water transmission line from Canning House Lane toward the canal. He said Canning House Lane is narrow and would not be a good road for bicyclists to access a bike path. “If we were to get a comprehensive trail from all the way to the canal down, then possibly yes, but just

to connect the short strip from Canning House Lane heading south or east toward Park Boulevard doesn’t really solve anything,” Dietrich said. Dick said since Park Boulevard is a designated bike lane, the path could be extended up the dirt road, continue past Cape May’s water treatment plant on the Atlantic City Electric right of way and then to the bridge. He questioned how bicyclists entering town would be able to make a left onto Canning House Lane. Last year, City Council awarded a contract to the engineering firm of Greenman-Pedersen Inc. (GPI) to begin a traffic study and safe streets action plan for Cape

Island. A \$200,000 grant paid for the work aimed at preventing roadway deaths and injuries. Member Hilary Pritchard asked if the committee should direct GPI to consider a bike path on the Atlantic City Electric right of way. “The issue with the consultants that I struggle with every time I meet with them, they continue to say they want to be data-driven and they’re using these hot spots,” Dick said. “There’s not enough data to make it statistically significant; they need to go out and look at all the routes.” He said he offered at each meeting to take the consultants out onto the streets and have them “almost get hit by a car four or five times easily on any day, any time of day.” “You have to go see it to make a plan,” Dick said. Committee member James Moffatt suggested eliminating parking on the shoulder of Broadway near Duckies Farm Market, but acknowledged residents along the road may be upset about losing their parking spots. Chairman James Vecere noted Broadway is a county road. Moffatt noted the committee produced a safe bicycle route map several years ago that is now out of print. Vecere said the committee needs to produce a digital map.

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