

Lower OKs redevelopment plan, paves way for airport tech village

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

ERMA — Lower Township Council approved a redevelopment plan Monday for a section of the county airport currently occupied by the Everlon Building, a defunct manufacturing facility that has been closed for decades.

The county is planning to build a “tech village” on the site of the building with the hope of attracting drone developers. The Everlon Building is being demolished and

has been reduced to a frame of the original building.

In 2017, the township’s Planning Board conducted a study and recommended the site of the building be declared an area in need of redevelopment. Council followed the advice of the board for the 14-acre site.

In June, Louis Joyce, of the South Jersey Economic Development District, told council the county was applying for grant funding to construct the first building that will occupy that site in

what is to be known as Cape May Airport Tech Village.

“That will be for technological companies that are involved in research and development in aeronautics and aerospace and UAV (unmanned aerial vehicle) and UAS (unmanned aircraft systems) industries,” he said.

The redevelopment plan will become an overlay to the zoning that’s in the airport, which is zoned industrial and includes general business.

The county has begun the process of a shared services agreement with the Atlantic County Improvement Authority because it is empowered to enact plans in redevelopment areas, according to Joyce.

The architectural concept is buildings that will mirror the historic hangars at the airport with arched roofs, he said. The first building would measure 20,000 square feet and cost the county \$6.5 million to construct.

The Everlon Building

measured about 140,000 square feet, according to Joyce. The new building would occupy about 30 percent of the site. The first building constructed would be one of a series of six buildings proposed for Horner Road.

In other business: council approved a resolution opposing implementation of senate and assembly bills to reduce adjustment aid to schools in Lower Township. (See story in this edition.)

Councilman Tom Conrad

said if the governor signs the legislation into law, township schools would lose \$9.6 million in state aid by 2025. He said it would result in a tax rate increase of more than 26 cents.

“It’s not just Lower, Middle is getting hit very hard,” Conrad said. “Out of 18 school districts in Cape May County, three are not seeing a reduction, but for the taxpayers of Lower, we have to do what we can to try to protect them. A 26-cent tax increase is very significant.”



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Fire damages Cabin City Motel

Erma Fire Company, with assistance from multiple other fire companies including Cape May and Cape May Court House, answered the call at 9 a.m. July 17 to a fire in two rooms at the Cabin City Motel at 756 Route 9 in Erma. According to Erma Fire Chief Dave Lepor, the second-floor end unit was fully involved when crews arrived on scene. Residents were evacuated and there were no injuries. The county fire marshal is investigating the cause.

County sues opioid makers

Continued from Page A1

requiring increased doses to achieve pain relief and making the users susceptible to addiction.

Controlled studies revealed opioids were effective for short-term usage, not longer than 90 days in managed settings like hospitals, the lawsuit states.

“Despite the foregoing knowledge, in order to expand the market for opioids and realize blockbuster profits, the manufacturer defendants sought to create a false perception of the safety and efficacy of opioids in the minds of medical professionals and members of the public that would encourage the use of opioids for longer periods of time to treat a wider range of problems, in-

cluding such common aches and pains as lower back pain, arthritis and headaches,” according to the lawsuit.

The lawsuit alleges the manufacturers knowingly and deceptively marketed opioids to doctors, patients and others, stating that the “benefits of using opioids to treat chronic pain outweighed the risks.”

The federal government estimates that every day more than 116 people in the United States die due to an overdose on opioids. According to 2016 federal data, 11.5 million people had misused prescription opioids and 2.1 million had an opioid use disorder.

“Ever since I came into office I have been committed to fighting the problems that opioid use has brought into our county,” said Freeholder Jeffrey Pierson of Upper Township, the liaison to the county Health Department. “We are looking at every avenue to take action and this is the next step.”

At least 32 Cape May

County residents suffered opioid-related overdose fatalities in 2016. The numbers for 2017 show 206 people in Cape May County overdosed and 33 of those overdoses were fatal.

“We have seen the effects that opioids have had in our community,” Freeholder Director Gerald Thornton said. “We are going after the source of the problem alongside the efforts we are making in our county to reduce addiction.”

According to the lawsuit, since 1999 the amount of prescription opioids sold in the United States quadrupled, and 254 million prescriptions for opioids were filled in 2010.

“While Americans represent only 4.6 percent of the world’s population, they consume 80 percent of the opioids supplied around the world and 99 percent of the global hydrocodone supply,” the complaint states. “By 2014, nearly 2 million Americans either abused or were dependent on opioids.”

In 2012, opioids generated \$8 billion in revenue for drug companies, with \$3.1 billion going to Purdue for OxyContin sales, according to the lawsuit. Opioid sales increased to \$9.6 billion by 2015.

The FDA recognized opioid addiction as a “national health crisis,” while the National Institutes for Health identified the defendants’ “aggressive marketing” as a major factor, the lawsuit states.

According to the lawsuit, pharmaceutical distributors fail to identify suspicious orders of opioids instead of reporting them to authorities and then fill them.

“The rising numbers of persons addicted to opioids have led to significantly increased health costs as well as a dramatic increase of social problems, including drug abuse and diversion and the commission of criminal acts to obtain opioids throughout the United States, including the state of New Jersey and the county,” the lawsuit states.

Earlier this year, Gloucester County and Camden County joined in a lawsuit against opioid manufacturers.

In 2017, New Jersey sued Purdue Pharma, the Connecticut-based manufacturer of OxyContin, claiming the company instigated the opioid crisis through deceptive marketing practices.

New Jersey’s lawsuit accused Purdue Pharma of making false claims, creating a public nuisance and engaging in unconscionable practices, misleading the public as to OxyContin’s effects for treating chronic pain.

There were 1,409 opioid-related deaths in New Jersey in 2016, a rate of 16 deaths per 100,000 people.

Other states, including Delaware, Florida, Nevada, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio and Texas, filed similar lawsuits against pharmaceutical companies for deemphasizing the addictiveness of opioids. Around 14 counties in New York and 30 California counties also filed complaints against drug companies.

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DATE	HIGH		LOW	
	A.M.	P.M.	A.M.	P.M.
18	12:43	1:28	6:59	7:20
19	1:40	2:28	7:53	8:23
20	2:40	3:28	8:48	9:27
21	3:41	4:25	9:43	10:29
22	4:41	5:19	10:36	11:26
23	5:37	6:07	11:26	
24	6:27	6:52	12:18	12:12
25	7:13	7:33	1:04	12:56

MOON PHASES
First quarter, July 19 • full moon, July 27

Cape May Star & Wave

CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE (ISSN 519-020)
Volume 164 Number 29

Published weekly by Sample Media, Inc.,
801 Asbury Ave., #310, Ocean City, N.J. 08226

Published Weekly (52 times a year)

SUBSCRIPTION PRICE: By mail for \$42 a year; \$75 for two years; \$22 for six months. Periodical Postage at Cape May Court House, N.J. and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER: Please send address changes to the Cape May Star and Wave, P.O. Box 2427, Cape May, N.J. 08204.

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