



HOUSE OF THE WEEK

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ROLLER SKATING RETURNS TO CAPE MAY

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STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

Mahaney delivers annual speech

Key points include school withdrawal, flood maps, parks and infrastructure

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Mayor Edward Mahaney delivered his annual State of the City Address on New Year's Day, focusing on sustaining the city's economic growth, its infrastructure — which he called "tremendous even for a small city" — preserving the city's natural assets and creating affordable housing for younger families.

He said City Council, which has three new members, would meet with special attorney Vito Gagliardi concerning the status of the school funding issue with Lower Cape May Regional High School District. In November, Cape May voters approved withdrawing from the regional school district, while voters in Lower Township and West Cape May rejected the move.

Following Hurricane Sandy and the updating of Federal Emergency Management Agency flood maps, the city and mayor have been participating in data gathering and planning meetings with FEMA, U.S. Rep. Frank LoBiondo, the Governor's Office, state Department of Environmental Protection and other officials to make sure new flood maps are accurate, he said.

Mahaney said the city has provided major input to LoBiondo so the city can

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Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Cape May Mayor Edward Mahaney delivers his annual State of the City Address on New Year's Day. He focused on flood maps, the city's school-withdrawal bid, infrastructure and grant funding for city projects.

GOP-led Lower axes manager, solicitor, others

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — The first meeting of the year was contentious as Lower Township Council reorganized Monday, with a new Republican majority voting 3-2 to remove and suspend the township manager and replace the solicitor and bond counsel.

Republican incumbents Tom Conrad and Erik Simonsen received their oaths of office along with newcomer Dave Perry, the township's longtime Fire Official.

Throughout the meeting, votes fell along party lines with the three Republican councilmen casting "yes" votes and independents Mayor Michael Beck and Deputy Mayor Norris Clark casting "no" votes. The November election switched the balance of power on council from independents to members of the Lower Township Republican Organization.

A 3-2 vote replaced Township Manager Mike Voll with James Ridgway, Lower Township's assistant superintendent of parks and recreation. Ridgway's title is acting township manager until a final resolution is reached with Voll.

"We've had no discussion on this at all," Beck said.

"No, just like the prior times," Conrad said.

"You've got three votes and you can do what you want, but do it the right way," Beck said.

He said the Republican councilmen should have called a closed session of council and announced they were contemplating getting rid of the township manager.

"I think he has done a phenomenal job and there's a lot of people out there in this town that feel the same way," Beck said.

He suggested Voll be allowed to finish the final year of his contract and a request for proposals for the position be offered with council conducting a search for a new manager.

Clark said Conrad called Voll the day after the election and informed him "we're getting rid of you." Clark said the law required Voll to be paid for the next three months.

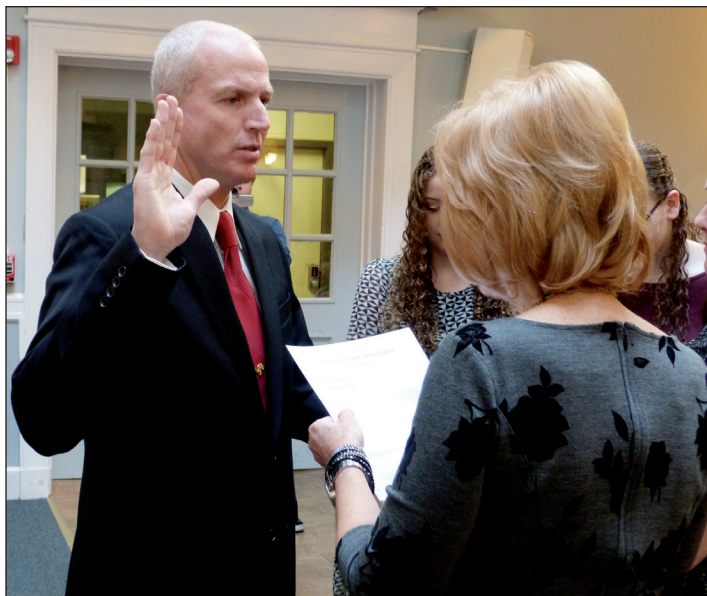
Simonsen said Voll treated Conrad with disrespect at a number of council meetings. He said he was tired of having information "shoved in his mailbox over the weekend."

"It's time to move on," Simonsen said.

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City Councilwoman Bea Pessagno is sworn in with the help of her sister, Isabelle Gauvry, right, who held the Bible.



Jerry Inderwies Jr. receives the oath of office from City Clerk Louise Cummiskey.

Gabor, Morey receive oath to 2nd term as freeholders

By ERIC AVEDESIAN
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY COURT HOUSE — A packed crowd filled the freeholder's meeting room on Jan. 5 in the William E. Sturm Administration Building as the Cape May County Board of Chosen Freeholders held its annual reorganization meeting.

County Sheriff Gary Schaffer and Freeholders Will Morey and Kristine Gabor were administered the oath of office.

Schaffer, of Upper Township, is serving his third term as county sheriff. He stood with his family as Superior

Court Judge John C. Porto administered his oath.

In keeping with a motif of honoring law enforcement, Schaffer thanked his fellow officers and police chiefs in the county.

"There's no better law enforcement than here in Cape May County. It's the best around," Schaffer said.

Morey, of Wildwood Crest, and Gabor, of Upper Township, were each sworn into their second term on the board.

Assemblyman Sam Fioocchi administered the oath of office for Morey, president and CEO

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Preliminary flood maps offer homeowners some relief

By ERIC AVEDESIAN
Cape May Star and Wave

The Federal Emergency Management Agency's revised flood elevation maps offer some relief for homeowners in flood-prone barrier island communities.

But changes to the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) could put the squeeze on some homeowners to raise their homes or face higher premiums.

Cape May County Planning Department Director Leslie Gimeno said

FEMA is holding public outreach forums to raise public awareness of the maps and solicit public feedback.

Gimeno said FEMA is changing the maps only if there are technical errors on them.

"The current flood maps were adopted a few years back. The preliminary ones are just advisory at this point, except when doing reconstruction from Hurricane Sandy," Gimeno said.

FEMA held an open house for Cape May County residents on Dec. 12 at the Cape May Convention

Center, where county homeowners met FEMA representatives who presented the preliminary Flood Insurance Rate Map and data for the county. Property owners also were able to locate their properties on the preliminary FIRMs and learn about their flood risk.

Property owners in Atlantic and Cape May counties can access the flood maps online at www.region-2coastal.com.

The maps serve as a guide for homeowners, telling them if their properties are at risk and how to mitigate

those risks.

According to the FEMA Region II website, homeowners who want to reduce the risk from flooding should know if they are living in a high-risk flood zone. Tools provided on the website can inform homeowners of the Base Flood Elevation of their homes and whether they are living in a high-risk flood zone.

Congress established the NFIP in 1968 to combat escalating costs to taxpayers over flood disaster relief. The NFIP is based on the assurance that federal flood insurance will be

available to communities practicing sound floodplain management.

FEMA maps show flood-prone areas, including the Special Flood Hazard Area, which depicts areas having a 1 percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year. Development can take place in such areas, providing that development complies with floodplain management ordinances and federal criteria.

Advanced Base Flood Elevation (ABFE) maps were under develop-

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