



HOUSE OF THE WEEK
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Lower to keep Public Safety Building at airport

County to bond improvements, lease portion of complex to township for 20 years

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — In a 3-2 vote Monday, Lower Township Council agreed to turn over the township's Public Safety Building to the county, which will in turn reconstruct the World War II-era structure and lease Lower Township half the building for a police station. The vote fell along party lines, with Republicans Tom Conrad, Erik Simonsen and

David Perry voting for the project and independents Mayor Michael Beck and Deputy Mayor Norris Clark casting "no" votes.

County Emergency Management Coordinator Martin L. Pagliughi said the county was seeking a new location for Office of Emergency Management and County Emergency Operations Center. He said the cost of renovating the Public Safety Building at the county airport was estimated at \$4 million.

Pagliughi said the Lower Township portion of the building renovation is estimated at \$2 million, requiring the township to pay back that amount over 20 years with an annual payment of \$146,000 as a lease, for a total of \$2.8 million. The agreement notes while the township will not incur bond debt for the renovations, it will be required to reimburse the county for the cost of reconstructing the township portion of the building.

The county would be obligated to design structural improvements to the building and its systems, including heating, ventilation and utilities, design interior spaces for the township and bond the cost of the project.

The township must provide the county access to environmental and structural reports on the public safety building, including plans and designs to the building, access to maintenance records and utility bills. In addition, the township must

provide a list of any or all claims of injury or illness relating to environmental conditions in the building and indemnify and hold harmless the county for any environmental claims submitted during its control of the building, which has a history of mold problems due in part to a leaky roof.

Pagliughi said a contract for construction could be awarded by July,

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WET AND WINDY

Rainstorm soaks area; hurricane heads east

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Once concerns of the track of Hurricane Joaquin subsided after the storm began an eastward track, the city still had to deal with persistent rain, high winds and tides from a wave of low pressure moving along a stalled front offshore.

Each high tide brought water further up on the city's beaches and winds battered trees and brought down small cable and telephone lines.

Before it became clear Joaquin was no longer a threat, preparations were made throughout the city for its possible arrival when ear-



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

A sailboat washed up on the beach behind the Fisherman's Memorial in Cape May. The area was deluged with heavy rain and blown about by strong winds for days as Hurricane Joaquin threatened, but the major storm headed out to sea, sparing the region worse conditions.

lier forecast models showed a chance of Joaquin making landfall in Delaware or close to Cape May.

Mayor Edward Mahaney said the city prepared for higher than normal tides from Oct. 1-4.

"All the lifeguard equipment is off the beach, all the concessionaires' beach equipment is off the beach," he said.

Public Works employees re-

moved a few benches from the Promenade and all trashcans and recycling cans.

The city of Wildwood loaned Cape May a bulldozer and an operator to help build temporary dunes behind Convention Hall and other buildings on the Promenade. Mahaney said temporary dunes were put in place at street ends where higher than normal tides have sent water onto the Prom-

enade and Beach Avenue.

The mayor said the city was able to move sand to create temporary dunes under a 5-year beach-management permit from the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). He said the DEP approved moving sand for storm protection.

Mahaney attended an Oct. 7 meeting with the DEP.

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Design complete for first phase of Lafayette St. park

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — The design for phase one of upgrades to the park on Lafayette Street adjacent to Cape May City Elementary School is complete.

At a special City Council meeting Sept. 29, plans for phase one were presented by design and engineering professionals contracted by the city.

Grants consultant Jim Rutala said plans for the park started in 2008 after the city's Planning Board revised Cape May's master plan. It suggested land acquisition and upgrading recreation space. He said the park is 50 years old, built at the same time as the elementary school.

Rutala said the entire property is 38 acres. In 2009-10, Temple University landscape architecture students produced a number of suggested plans for a park followed by public meetings that produced a conceptual plan, he said.

"The city received \$1.6 million for acquisition of private properties — Vance's Bar and other properties — through both Blue Acres and Green Acres money, and more recently in 2013, just after Superstorm Sandy, the city applied for \$1.5 million from

New Jersey EDA (Economic Development Authority)," Rutala said.

He said the \$1.5 million grant would fund the first phase of a Lafayette Street park, which will entail a multipurpose field and the elementary school's playground area. The city is leasing property from the school district for 25 years, Rutala said.

Phase one must be completed by July 2016 to receive the EDA money, which requires no local matching funds, he said.

Rutala said phase two of the project would encompass Del-las' Field and a parking area for which the city has received a \$400,000 Green Acres loan that would be augmented with city open space funds.

Phase three of the park project covers the area from the current dog park to St. John's Street. He said the city would receive funds from Cape May County Open Space Fund in the amount of \$1.1 million. Plans call for phase two to be completed by summer 2017 and phase three by summer 2019.

Phase four would cover trails through a wetlands area, Rutala said.

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Christie visits Sea Isle City amid bluster

By ERIC AVEDESIAN
Cape May Star and Wave

SEA ISLE CITY — Gov. Chris Christie met with federal, state, Cape May and Atlantic county and local officials Oct. 2 at Sea Isle City's City Hall for an emergency briefing on extreme flooding, even though Hurricane Joaquin, which had been threatening the region, veered out to sea away from New Jersey.

Meteorologists on Friday placed the storm's path toward the Atlantic and away from land, though a nor'easter was expected to drench New Jersey with heavy rain and severe flooding.

"We're very fortunate, at least at the moment. The hurricane is heading out to sea and

not towards the coast," Christie said. "Let's keep our fingers crossed, say our prayers where appropriate, and hopefully in the next 48 hours we've done our best and dodged a bullet."

Although the media attended a few minutes of the emergency briefing to take photos of Atlantic and Cape May county officials meeting with the governor, they were ushered from the room while officials discussed emergency preparedness plans.

At a news conference in Sea Isle City's Fire Department after the emergency briefing, Christie noted the amount of rain would be less than initially predicted. He advised residents to prepare for "moderate

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Eric Avedissian/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

Gov. Chris Christie speaks following a meeting with local and county emergency management coordinators Friday in Sea Isle City.

Police arrest Lower man in fishing boat shooting

COLD SPRING — State Police arrested Ernest Davis, 43, of Lower Township, in the shooting of a Whitesboro man aboard a fishing vessel.

Troopers responded to Lund's Fisheries on Ocean Drive at 10:32 p.m. Oct. 3 following a report from Lower Township police of the shooting.

According to State Police Sgt. Jeff Flynn, Doris Howell, 38, was shot in the lower leg from a shotgun and was transported to AtlantiCare Regional Medical Center for treatment of injuries not considered to be

life-threatening. The shooting occurred aboard the fishing vessel Storm.

Davis was charged with attempted murder, aggravated assault and various weapons offenses. His bail was set at \$1 million full cash and he was lodged in Cape May County Jail.

The State Police Marine Service Bureau responded in addition to the State Police Criminal Investigations Office and Crime Scene Investigation Unit and the Cape May County Prosecutor's Office.



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