



HOUSE OF THE WEEK

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BARBARY WARS FIRST U.S. CLASH WITH ISLAM

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JCP&L to begin Lafayette Street remediation

Wall 55 feet deep will create watertight perimeter around contamination

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY — Cementlike material will be injected underground to create walls 55 feet deep to contain contaminants on the future site of Lafayette Street Park as part of remediation by Jersey Central Power and Light. Representatives of JCP&L and Arcadis Design and Consultancy held a public information session Jan. 28 to outline upcoming remediation efforts along Lafayette Street from Cape May City Elementary School to St. Johns Street from a former manufactured gas plant.

From 1853 to 1937, the gas plant burned coal to provide Cape May with gas for heating, cooking and lighting. In the process, benzene, naphthalene and other chemicals were left underground.

Through a number of mergers, JCP&L inherited the site that includes the former Vance's Bar property, the city's dog park and property on St. Johns Street, all

part of the future site of a city park.

Remediation plans call for the installation of a vertical barrier around the perimeter of the former manufactured gas plant site extending 55 feet underground. Groundwater will be pumped and filtered until it meets DEP standards.

Work on the site is set to begin in early March, which may disrupt traffic on Lafayette Street and reroute elementary school students, who will need to use the sidewalk

on the opposite side of Lafayette Street.

JCP&L spokesman Ron Morano said crossing guards would be provided on both ends of the site to help children cross Lafayette Street. Traffic-control personnel will also be present.

Dust will be kept under control with water trucks and foam can be sprayed on the ground if noxious odors are present, he said.

David Caballero, an engineer with Arcadis Design and Consultancy, said a machine called a

one-pass trencher would hasten the remediation work.

"It's much, much faster than the old technologies where you would excavate everything down, you'd bring the soils up, you'd mix it with bentonite, with your cement and other materials and then you would actually put that material back in the ground," he said.

Caballero said the project would use a one-pass trencher, which is like a "giant chainsaw" that in-

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Water fowl, weather fine in Cape May



Jack Fichter/CAPE MAY STAR AND WAVE

The weekend was just ducky in Cape May. A high temperature of 61 degrees Sunday, Jan. 31, had many thinking of spring. Even Punxsutawney Phil indicated that spring would come early on Groundhog Day.

Lower Twp. budget calls for tax rate to stay same

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Lower Township's proposed 2016 budget, introduced by council Monday, contains no property tax increase.

The budget totals \$27,113,754, up \$61,910,061 from last year, but a large surplus account is contributing to no increase in the local purpose tax rate, which would stay at the rate of 55.5 cents per \$100 of assessed value. The municipal purpose tax would be \$555 for every \$100,000 of assessed property value. The local purpose tax totals \$20,086,897, up \$74,443, or 0.37 percent, from last year.

Township Manager Jim Ridgway said the township's tax-collection rate in 2015 was 98.56 percent, up from 98.32 percent in 2014, which added over \$1.3 million in surplus funds. The township's

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School bond referendums get voter OK

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

ERMA — Voters in Cape May, West Cape May and Lower Township went to the polls Jan. 26 and approved bond referendums to make improvements to Lower Cape May Regional High School, the Richard M. Teitelman Middle School and three elementary schools in the Lower Township School District.

In unofficial results for the Lower Cape May Regional School District referendum question: 1,356, or 59 percent, voted yes, while 911, or 40 percent, cast negative votes.

In a bond referendum question for the Lower Township Elementary School District, 1,283, or 66 percent, cast yes votes while 641, or 33 percent, cast negative votes.

Lower Cape May Regional Superintendent Christopher Kobik said he was very appreciative of the support from

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Split crowd debates changes to beach paths

By JACK FICHTER
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Residents filled the meeting room of Township Hall on Monday to express their opinions on a project to make changes to 33 beach-access paths along Delaware Bay. Deputy Mayor Norris Clark asked for a show of hands from the audience to gauge how many favored the project and how many opposed it. The room split to about 60 percent opposed to the project and 40 percent supporting the changes.

Steve Morey, a senior project manager with the engineering firm of Hatch Mott MacDonald,

presented plans in a PowerPoint presentation. He is also a member of the township's Recreation Board.

Lower Township Council approved a contract Dec. 7 with Hatch Mott MacDonald to design plans for changes to the paths and for the firm to apply for a Coastal Permit for Maintenance Permit from the state Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) that lapsed.

The project would place gravel roadbed on the paths and split-rail fencing on either side. The changes would replace roll-out mats on beach paths that can become slippery and have caused the township to

lose an expensive lawsuit due to an injury. Councilman David Perry said the township has a settlement in excess of \$100,000 with more pending concerning roll-out paths and slopes.

Morey said the genesis of the project began in 2009 when Hatch Mott MacDonald met with the township's Recreation Department and Public Works proposing to carry out the township's new beach-maintenance plan. Initially, the township asked the firm to prepare a preliminary design and cost estimate for two elevated wooden dune crossovers.

"The cost of the walkovers was a little extreme over the

recreation director's budget, so we sort of put that on the shelf for now," Morey said.

He said last year the township requested the firm ask the DEP for permission to make repairs to a few beach paths, although the township lacked a beach-maintenance permit at the time. Morey said repairs were made to beach paths at Rosehill Parkway and Whittier Avenue.

Hatch Mott MacDonald identified 31 paths from a total of 82 that accessed public beaches. In December, the firm took topographic surveys of each path to get elevations and to determine

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