Fire and ice on Delaware Bay

Severe cold freezes ferry for three days

Homes near bulkheads can appeal V zone rating

By JACK FICHTER

CAPE MAY — Lower Township residents who live near Delaware Bay received the news last January from the Federal Emergency Management Agency that the area was classified as a ‘V’ zone, meaning their flood insurance rates could skyrocket.

During a special meeting Feb. 23, Stewart Farrell, director of Richard Stockton University’s Coastal Research Center, updated residents on the potential for wave damage.

Farrell said if PERMA produces a 3-foot wave elevation by 2050, a 2-foot storm surge and a 1-foot wave on the water’s surface at the flood elevation, properties located in a ‘V’ zone would be considered.

“Then you must build above that 3-foot wave elevation by 1 foot. If the base flood elevation is 9 feet, the 3-foot wave takes you up to 11 feet plus the floodboard,” he said.

In that case, the first horizontal floor of the home would be at an elevation of 12 feet. Farrell said he plotted a number of oddities associated with PERMA and Zone Requirements. If a horizontal 12-foot elevation is not feasible, the electricity meter must be raised, which requires a platform with stairs and a railing.

“Don’t try to do it on the cheap — you can’t get a 4-by-4 foot square platform on your property,” Farrell said.

PERMA is about to build a 90-day appeal process. The official appeal deadline is March 23.

Farrell said, “I know of no other company that would cost a homeowner a penny more than what they paid for their home.”

Farrell began working with FEMA in 2007 and has been working with them daily.

By JACK FICHTER

CAPE May — Councilman Jerry Inderwies cast the lone vote against the $29.3 million budget of the 2015 municipal budget, which must be restored to the Fire Department’s budget for paid personnel and that more monies could be made available.

“I cannot support even the introduction of the budget without the public hearing and debate on the proposed $70,000 for a School Resource Officer (SRO),” Inderwies said.

He said City Manager Bruce MacLeod asked Cape May Fire Chief Chris Counihan to supply him with an in-depth report on the potential for wave damage on a 100-year storm basis.

“I was my hope that report would be given to City Council members prior to this meeting. Unfortunately, it was not,” Inderwies said.

Inderwies wants Fire Dept. funds back in budget

He said he felt the report held very valuable information and if it could affect council’s concept of what was going into the budget.

He said there was an inci- dent Feb. 14 involving a call for a second ambulance and a fire call to Cape May. “The city has a limited number of paid firefighters. He called for $70,000 that was removed from the Fire Department’s budget. That deliverance fee is expected by using more maritime funds or diminishing one new city position outside the Fire Department.

Inderwies noted his parent company is a large company and there are a lot of employees working for them. “I’m one of them and an ambulance doesn’t show up when you need it,” he said.

Inderwies said he could call for $70,000 but he felt it needed to be restored to the Fire Department’s budget. He acknowledged the $70,000 is not a cut but a reduction due to circumstances.

By JACK FICHTER

CAPE May Star and Wave

VILLAS — One of the year’s largest Single Family Residence property tax increases was approved during the Lower Township Council meeting Feb. 16. The proposed 1-cent property tax increase represents a 4.6 percent tax hike.

Township Manager James Ridgway presented the budget to Council manager Feb. 16. He noted the property tax levy is $20,224,231 compared with $19,268,320 last year, an in- crease of $955,701.

The amount of revenue expected from the 1-cent property tax increase would decrease from 2014 by $202,400, or 1.8 percent Ridgway said that was due to several adjustments made to the fund balance in 2014 that can be reasonably anticipated in 2015.

There are revenues that will be included in the 2015 budget, including half of the amount of the Temporary Employment Tax for a School Resource Officer (SRO). The SRO is retiring and the school will not be funding the position. That means that in 2016 there will be an addition to the current budget.

There are four additional properties proposed for a 2.5-cent property tax increase.

Lower Twp. proposes budget with 2.5-cent increase in tax rate

By JACK FICHTER

CAPE May Star and Wave

VILLAS — Lower Township’s proposed 2015 budget includes a 2.5-cent property tax increase representing a 6.6 percent tax hike.

Township Manager James Ridgway presented the budget to the Lower Township Council meeting Feb. 16. He noted the property tax levy is $20,224,231 compared with $19,268,320 last year, an increase of $955,701.

The amount of revenue expected from the 2.5-cent property tax increase would decrease from 2014 by $530,000, or 2.7 percent Ridgway said that was due to several adjustments made to the fund balance in 2014 that can be reasonably anticipated in 2015.

There are revenues that will be included in the 2015 budget, including half of the amount of the Temporary Employment Tax for a School Resource Officer (SRO). The SRO is retiring and the school will not be funding the position. That means that in 2016 there will be an addition to the current budget.

There are four additional properties proposed for a 2.5-cent property tax increase.

There are more properties that will be included in the 2015 budget than in 2014.

Washington Inn

Washington Inn

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