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APRIL TIDE TABLE

	LOW		HIGH	
	am	pm	am	pm
5	10:21	10:39	4:14	4:04
6	10:54	11:13	4:51	4:35
7	11:29	11:52	5:31	5:10
8		12:10	6:17	5:52
9	12:39	1:02	7:10	6:46
10	1:37	2:09	8:11	7:53
11	2:44	3:24	9:14	9:08

Inside!
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Marathon meeting over beach tent ordinance

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – Near the end of a four-hour city council workshop, Cape May City Council voted 5-0 to introduce an ordinance regulating beach tents on leased portions of the beach. On the promise of Deputy Mayor Niels Favre, city council broke tradition and allowed public comment on Ordinance 99-2007 – “an ordinance amending the regulation of structures on beach strands.”

The ordinance was created principally to regulate beach tents or cabanas on portions of the beach leased to private businesses, such as hotels. Beach tents, which have long been a part of Cape May history, became a public issue

after a Beach Avenue condo owner complained large tents belonging to Congress Hall were blocking his view of the ocean.

Favre said the new ordinance was certain not to please everyone, but was a compromise between businesses that wanted larger tents and opponents who claim tents take up too much of the beach. Favre said the ordinance also tightened up regulations on beach tents and resulted in less beach coverage than was allowed by the existing ordinance. The city code allows beach tents up to seven feet, and the new ordinance allows a height of up to nine feet to accommodate a peaked roof. Flags, banners or any other device are considered in the total height. The ordinance also allows for tents of up to but

not exceeding 150 square feet in area.

Tents exceeding four feet in height must be placed two times their width apart from each other. City Manager Lou Corea said this was more restrictive than the current legislation, which he said would allow tents to be placed side by side the entire breadth of the beach parcel.

“This ordinance will end up making no one completely happy,” Councilman David Kurkowski said, adding that the ordinance would expire in four years. At that time, he said, the legislation would revert back to what presently exists unless action was taken to extend the updated ordinance.

City council amended the ordinance before introduction to remove a section prohibiting wooden floors. City

solicitor Tony Monzo said the city did not want to prohibit something that might make the tents more ADA accessible.

During public comment on the ordinance, about 48-percent expressed opposition to the ordinance and about 39-percent indicated they were in favor of passing the ordinance. Several others gave comment indicating neither support or opposition.

Former councilman Gerry Gaffney said he was concerned the ordinance would allow nine-foot tall tents on the entire Cape May beach front. Corea said that was not the case, since the ordinance restricted tents to 20-percent of the beach parcel, and tents would only be placed on the four leased parcels.

“Who will benefit from this?” Gaffney asked. “I don’t

think the public wants it, and I don’t think the public will gain from it.”

Diane Hutchinson said she felt everyone benefits from improvements in one way or another. She said when she moved to Cape May in 1978 the Virginia Hotel had boarded up windows and was condemned. She said certain people invested in properties such as the Virginia, only to be “beaten up” by others for their efforts. She said the people who improve these once tired looking properties are providing people what they want when they travel, which may include beach tents or cabanas.

“All of us benefit from what they are doing,” she said.

Her remarks were echoed by Chris Bezaire, who said

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Happy Easter!

Cape May is coming alive with color. Above is a Saucer Magnolia in Cold Spring and daffodils abound everywhere. Before we know it, it will be summer!

Photos by Jennifer Kopp



Center for Community Arts addresses council

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – Steve Bacher, director of the Center for Community Arts told city council CCA has been awarded a \$750,000 grant from the New Jersey Historic Trust for the Franklin Street School Restoration Project.

On Tuesday, Bacher was giving city council the annual CCA update, which is required under a lease agreement for the school.

Bacher told city council CCA was interested in extending their current 25-year lease to a 50-year lease. Mayor Jerry Inderwies said the extension would help leverage the matching funds

grant from the Historic Trust. Bacher said some large donors have said they would give more if they knew CCA had a longer lease.

He said the organization has grown substantially since it entered into the lease in 2001, and is looking forward to moving into the renovated school.

Bacher said all the window

restoration work has been completed. Phase II of the restoration project, which began in August, included structural steel work and restoring the windows.

Phase II costs are about \$600,000 of the \$740,000 project.

Bacher said CCA is attempting to raise about \$1 million above the grant from the

Historic Trust.

Once completed, many CCA functions will be relocated to the school, which will hold historical archives, provide space for art classes and community events, and become the home of WCFA-FMLP, the city’s lower power FM radio station.

Lower’s 13.7-percent tax increase questioned, adopted

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

VILLAS – After a public hearing, Lower Township Council voted 4-1 to adopt the 2007 municipal budget without the capital budget.

Township auditor Leon Costello told council it could adopt the budget without approving the capital budget. However, Costello also advised council cutting the capital budget would not amount to much savings for the taxpayer. Referring to a

graph charting the township’s capital debt, Costello indicated a line of debt including principle and interest payments.

“If you take \$1 million off the capital budget it wouldn’t change the line much, and it would only cut about a quarter-cent off the tax rate,” he said.

Costello said with all the money being spent in the township’s \$15 million municipal budget, spending on capital projects was where the township got the “biggest bang for the buck.”

“People is the biggest cost,” Costello said. “The whole capital plan could be done with one year’s salary increase.”

Former Councilman Mike Beck, speaking at a council meeting for the first time since his term ended in December, said the problem with the budget isn’t “things” but “people.”

“You are going to have to cap salaries,” he said. “When you have salaries of \$80,000 or \$90,000 and give a 3-percent raise, that’s a lot of money.”

Beck said the 13.7-percent tax increase was not small, and would crush the people already hurt by the revaluation.

“You should look at this. Leon pointed out where the bleeding is. It’s not things. My advice is don’t pass this,” Beck said.

Council did pass the budget with only Councilman Wayne Mazurek casting a no vote. Mazurek said despite the low impact, he would still like to see where the township could save even a little money. Mazurek said the township is

hoping to buy new trash trucks in 2007, and he would like to see if that could be put off to give the township time to investigate the feasibility of trucks manned only by a driver. The truck lifts and empties cans without the driver getting out. Mazurek said the trucks are not able to be used on narrower streets.

During public comment resident John Morrison told council there was not much they could do now. He said much of the spending is tied

up in contracts. He advised council to take a stand on contracts in the future.

“When contract time comes up, it’s no longer a time to lie down,” he said.

Costello said contract negotiations are tough because if there is no agreement the matter goes to arbitration – and the municipality normally doesn’t win.

Morrison suggested council make a symbolic gesture and

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CM City budget questioned by TPA

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY – The Cape May Taxpayers Association is asking Cape May City Council to take a long hard look at how city services are funded, and to take steps to eliminate a tax increase.

Jack Wichterman of TPA was joined by TPA president Kate Wyatt in presenting their recommendations for the 2007 municipal budget. The city is facing a 13.7-percent tax increase in the new budget.

Wichterman said the police department has asked for additional personnel, and

TPA is questioning whether this is necessary. Wichterman said the additional personnel would not reduce overtime.

Wichterman also referred to a decision made not to operate parking meters in an effort to boost commercial activity during the Christmas season.

“You now have a \$50,000 hole because of the parking meters,” he said.

Wichterman said the city was supposed to cut \$50,000 from the budget in light of reduced parking meter revenue, and he asked city council to rescind the ordinance reducing meter times.

The Taxpayers Association

also believes the city is underestimating revenues and thus is looking for too much from the taxpayers. The association also believes the taxpayer is going to have to shoulder too much of the cost of the citywide revitalization project.

Wichterman said TPA was asking if, since beaches were going to be guarded until the end of September, whether beach tags would be sold to offset the cost.

City manager Lou Corea said it was unlikely the beaches would be guarded the entire month of September, but would probably be guarded until Sept. 15. However, he added that the

cost came from the beach utility, which is self-liquidating, and would have no impact on the tax rate.

Wichterman said local revenues are still underestimated and the figures were adjusted there would be no need for a tax increase. He said the taxpayers not fund 46-percent of the budget, and are the only source of new revenue.

Deputy Mayor Niels Favre said the Revitalization Advisory Committee recently formed a Revenue Generation Subcommittee, which is being chaired by TPA member Dennis Crowley.

Washington Street Mall public meeting April 12

CAPE MAY – The Mall Advisory Committee will hold a Town Hall meeting on April 12 at 7 p.m. in City Hall Auditorium. Citizens will have the opportunity to view conceptual plans for the Washington Street Mall, with the main focus on potential streetscape materials.

Cost options for several alternative materials will be provided by city engineers from Remington and Vernick.

After public input, the design will be modified and reviewed by Rhodeside and Harwell, city contracted landscape and planning consultants. Final plans will be presented to council with public input to follow.