

# Coldren

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improvements and establishing Cape May's desalination plant.

"I had a lot of interaction with Fred as a citizen, a board member, a councilman and as mayor. I was shocked by his death. He was a major contributor to the development and quality of life we have in Cape May Today," Mahaney said. "He was a really, really good guy and was always interested in what was best for the city." "Fred's passing is a tremendous loss," the mayor added, "I believe any-

one who has been a long term resident or visitor who knew Fred appreciates what he did for us and the city."

Coldren continued his public service as an administrator for Stone Harbor from 1997 to 2000 and was business manager for the Cape May-Lewes Ferry from 2001 to 2011. Heath Gehrke, director of ferry operations for the Delaware River Bay Authority (DRBA), said Coldren was considered the "unofficial historian" of the Cape May-Lewes Ferry.

"He had thousands of articles, photos and documents.

He gathered more information about the ferry than anyone," Gehrke said. "We lost a lot of historical knowledge when Fred passed."

Gehrke said because of his extensive knowledge, Coldren was one of the first people to be interviewed for the documentary being done on the Cape May-Lewes Ferry by WHY-TV in Delaware. Gehrke said the network has been filming for just over a year and expects to be finished in May.

Gehrke said Coldren was an enormous fan of technology and was always very orga-

nized. He said Coldren was his first acquaintance at the ferry.

"Fred was the first person to greet me when I came to Cape May. He gave me the tour of the facility and introduced me to everyone," Gehrke said. "He was a good guy - really down to earth. We were all shocked to hear the news. It seems like he was here just the other day helping with data and cataloguing. He'll be sorely missed."

Dr. Joe Salvatore, co-founder of Naval Air Station Wildwood said Coldren was a supporter of the aviation

museum and also treasurer for Historic Cold Spring Village, where Salvatore's wife, Anne, is the executive director.

"He had that mid-western goodness. Just a great person," Salvatore said. "It's just sad to see him go."

Lower Township Deputy Mayor Norris Clark said he knew Coldren when he was the city's manager.

"He was a true pillar of the community. He cheered on all that was good in our area," Clark said. "And you couldn't think of the Boy Scouts without thinking of him. He had

one arm holding up the Boy Scouts and the other arm holding up the history and culture of this area. He was always cheerful and joyful as well."

A remembrance ceremony was held on Sunday at the Coldren family home to honor Fred's memory. He is survived by his wife Diane Lafferty Coldren and his children Jeffrey Coldren, Jill Fegley, Jay Coldren and Jen Warren, as well as eight grandchildren.

# Rehab

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who is spearheading the tax abatement program in the township, the planning board concurred with the proposal.

Clark said it will now be passed along to the state Department of Community Affairs (DCA), which has 30 days to review the proposal before council drafts an ordinance enacting it.

He said the abatement can be structured in different ways, giving a full five-year tax break or doing an abatement in annual increments, which is the option the township and the 10-member Economic Development Committee are considering. With this particular option, taxes on an incoming busi-

ness's improvements would be zero the first year, 20 percent of the standard rate the second year, 40 percent the third year, 60 percent the fourth and 80 percent the fifth. The standard rate would be applied in the sixth year.

"So, it's phased in over a period of five years," Clark said. "The idea is that this is a capital investment that would bring jobs and should be encouraged."

The option chosen by the township could change. The ordinance, which Clark expects to be finished by April or May, would outline the option chosen and of course, require a public hearing before adoption. He said the township's tax assessor, the county and the Delaware

River Bay Authority (DRBA) will all have a chance to provide input on the ordinance. The airport is owned by the county but leased to the DRBA.

Clark said a number of residents have asked why the township is only considering this tax abatement program at the airport, rather than across the entire township.

"The answer is we think the airport is especially in need of rehabilitation," he said. "It's off the beaten path, so to speak, and has a lot of buildings that really need some help."

Dr. Joseph Salvatore, co-founder of the Naval Air Station Wildwood (NASW) Aviation Museum at the airport, said there have been

several businesses that have sprung up at the airport over the last 10 years such as Hertz Rent a Car, the Flight Deck Diner and Cape May Brewing Company. However, there are still a number of vacant buildings and lots at the airport.

Salvatore spent seven years fighting for the recent historic designation NASW received, which has led people to take notice of the airport, Clark said. Salvatore said the entire property has a fascinating history behind it, but more economic development and visitation needs to occur in order for it to survive.

"The airport is a treasure that has not been utilized for many reasons - the economy, politics in the past...and I'm not blaming anybody -

it's just the way it's been. Through the course of time, things gain attention," he said. "Economic development here isn't unlimited, but there's certainly room for a lot. This place has so much potential."

Salvatore said the airport has received \$3.4 million over the last 12 years in grants. He said depending on the type of grant; the funding can be used for economic development. He said this program could be another catalyst to attract new businesses.

If the ordinance passes and the program is established at the airport, each developer would have to apply for the tax abatement and the township would have to approve it, according to Clark.

"There has really been a lot of people coming around in a way that they haven't before. I mean, there's been a lot of talk about the airport over the years and what we can do with it," Clark said.

He said if established, this tax program would apply to any new construction or improvements made to an existing business. Clark said Cape May County is ranked eighth highest in the country in terms of unemployment.

"We can't do anything to help unless we look at every opportunity to draw people here and look for ways to help local business," he said.

# Tourism Committee members express mixed feelings

By CHRISTOPHER SOUTH  
Cape May Star and Wave

CAPE MAY - The opinion of the Advisory Committee on Tourism varies wide depending on what members you talk to, however, those contacted acknowledged meetings were cancelled in 2013 and they received no meeting schedule this year.

By ordinance, the Advisory Committee on Tourism is supposed to meet six times per year with the purpose of advising the Tourism Utility

on means and methods for promoting tourism in Cape May. The city created a list of 17 organizations they asked to provide a representative on the committee. The list is supposed to be submitted Dec. 1 for approval at the annual reorganization meeting in January.

"We were all wondering what happened," said Bernadette Matthews, executive director of the Center for Community Arts.

Matthews said she remembered the last meeting of

the Advisory Committee on Tourism being held in March or April 2013, the meeting being attended by City Manager Bruce MacLeod and Assistant Director of Marketing Michael Chait.

"I didn't feel like we accomplished a lot," she said.

Matthews said she wasn't sure what role the committee was supposed to play.

"They talked about a slogan and a logo and I think that went by the wayside," she said.

Matthews said for the time commitment she would have liked to have seen more accomplished - but she felt the committee was a good idea.

"If it was structured more it could work," she said.

"We were to have met four or six times and discuss tourism ideas and incentives and make recommendations for the benefit of tourism in the

city and to support Convention Hall," said Kate Wyatt, who represented the Cape May Taxpayers Association.

Wyatt said if she were provided with a calendar of meetings she would be available. Wyatt said she remembered meeting in January or February 2013 and then nothing in summer, fall or late winter.

"It should be on a schedule. We should meet based on (ordinance)," she said. "But it's gotten off my radar."

Wyatt said she thinks one of the reasons a meeting schedule wasn't established was Assistant Director of Marketing Michael Chait didn't have the help he needed.

"I think he is working pretty much unassisted since one person resigned and one retired," she said.

"If he is running the department by himself (tourism

meetings are) probably not high on radar," Wyatt said.

Wyatt said the Department of Tourism, Civic Affairs and Recreation was set up to have a director and assistant director.

Wyatt said she thought the Advisory Committee on Tourism was supposed to be an idea forum, but said it had to be more structured for that to happen. She said there was also supposed to be a liaison from city council to take their ideas and recommendations back to the city. Wyatt said she was hoping the committee would get feedback from the city on, for example, how successful was the Stockton summer concert series and children's playhouse.

"How do we know to recommend next year? With no data how can you judge where to go next? There was no formula for next meeting, no agenda... I don't think it's the fault of the chairperson, just the fault of the structure."

Wyatt said she envisioned as a committee coming up with tourism ideas.

"We're not marketing our-

selves, not being creative. You need a lot of people to have creativity," Wyatt said.

Committee member Deanna Brown said the last meeting of the committee was held before last summer, and remembered meetings being scheduled in the fall. She said those meetings were not held and hasn't heard of a current schedule.

"Nothing happened this year...we'll probably have to wait until March," she said.

Brown said she thinks perhaps Chait, who was left to chair the meetings when Director of Marketing Mike Whipple resigned, is wearing too many hats. She also thought the meeting agenda's were too broad.

"I suggested we had too broad a topic and needed subcommittees. Set a topic and have board members report back. We're not getting things done. There is discussion but we're not seeing action. To me that is the downside of the advisory board," she said.

Brown said she would like to see the committee continue, but to form subcommittees and have them report to the larger committee. As far as marketing and promoting the city, Brown said, "It hasn't happened."

Committee member Mary Stewart said the committee had not been meeting, and she would prefer the committee would meet on a regular basis, as did the Tourism Commission.

"It's a good sounding

Please see Mixed, page A3

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# Forgot

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didn't think the advisory committee would have the authority or enthusiasm of the Tourism Commission.

"I didn't think it was a good idea," Murray said last week. "I thought the (Tourism Commission) was working well."

"It seems like everybody pretty much shocked that committee pretty much fallen by side," Murray said. "For some reason this has escaped us."

Murray said he spoke to Deputy Mayor Jack Wichterman about the matter and Wichterman said he would try to find out what happened.

Wichterman told the Star and Wave not meetings had been scheduled this year, and he spoke to City Manager Bruce MacLeod about it.

"I talked to Bruce and he said a meeting would be scheduled," Wichterman said.

Wichterman said no member of Cape May City Council had been named to the committee, which he said was odd.

Deanna Fiocca said the Advisory Committee on Tourism was rarely ever talked about on council. Asked if she knew who the council liaison was, Fiocca said, "Technically it should be me since I was that before (on the Tourism Commission. But no one ever said anything."

The city manager did not return the Star and Wave's phone call before publication.